Chapter II

Assertion: A First Step in the Direction of Making New

The Stone Angel is a story of Hager Shipley who thinks herself as an angel of the Currie’s Family; the Scottish inheritance is a bold, resolute woman with self-reliance. She is anxious to be neat and orderly and thinks life has been created to celebrate tidiness. Jason Currie the father of the narrator Hagar Currie, a shop keeper who proudly called himself a self-made man and one of the richest men in Manawaka. He boasts himself being a highlander at Scotland, where he hailed at castle and also he is pious and hardworking man. Hagar was sent by her father to have a training academy, as she is not having any one to teach her how to dress and behave like a lady. After she finished her studies she is expected to assist her father, but she is fond of teaching but her father refused to send her to the school, because the school was situated near the place where she might have a chance to meet many low class men. The guess of her quick witted father happened she was attracted by Brampton Shipley.

She married Brampton Shipley without her father’s knowledge. Brampton Shipley a widower whose two daughters were married and having small farm and house to live. She leads happy life with Bram there is no scarcity of love between them. She gave birth to two sons and expected her father’s arrival to see his grandson but he didn’t. When the time moves on she can realise many changes starts from the house, furniture, and dress. Hager who wants to lead the life of the Currie’s cannot endure the poor farmer who doesn’t care about his manner, dress, house etc. Once she said “We’d each married for those qualities we later found we couldn’t bear, he for my manners and speech, I for his flouting of them” (79). So with her second son she decides to leave him after the commotion happens to them, which make her to come to the conclusion, she should not
come back to Manawaka. She moves towards the unknown destination and finally settles herself in the house of Mr. Oatley as a house keeper in the Shadow Point. Hager is introduced to the novel as a ninety year old lady who is hailing with her own house with her elder son Marvin and her daughter in law Doris. She felt a lack of freedom and care provided for her. Her son Marvin, who is sixty years old and his wife Doris wants to sell the house of Hager and like to be nursed in the old age home. Hager thought, she must be careful not to speak aloud but she does so. Though sometimes she could understand their needs and worries but she doesn’t want to be treated like a fool by them.

The adamant Hager throws the arrow of her words and denied that her belongings cannot be sold out in her presence. She doesn’t want her possession to be sold out very easily which is collected by her through her solitude hard work. She has been taken to the hospital and to the old age home by her son to make her to accept his wish. When she was taken to the home, there is a hard stain in the heart of Hager that she is being neglected by them. So the old Hager decided again to go to the Shadow Point a known destination. A proud bold women Hager has the power to stimulate her whenever she faced a problem. In the age of ninety she decides to go alone to the Shadow Point only because of her self-confidence and she can boost herself against her physical disability. Hager finally reached the Shadow point alone. Till the end she never expects anybody’s mercy. She met Lees to whom; she shared her loss of beloved son John and her present status, which paves the way to Lees to inform about her to Marvin. Marvin takes her to the hospital the place, where she didn’t like to stay and wants to go back to her home but died there itself. Hager decides her own destiny. Like her father she is also self-made and doesn’t want to change herself for anyone. Till the end she remains as Hager who cares her dress and her needs who never trust God though she resembles more of her father who is very pious, but doesn’t want to beg god for her need, not even her father. She
prepares herself to survive alone. Hager Shipley, the leading character of the novel, proud bold women who like to attain the state of freedom and satisfaction. Throughout her life, she has been losing all men: her father, husband and son, in order to establish her own identity and to fulfill her expectation. Thus she narrates and sometimes she recollects her memory to tell the story of re-establishment and transformation, which she has desired to be taken place through of out her life. While taking the decision Hager projects the quest of the modernist search, for example she prefers freedom, search, and inwardness than achievement and outwardness. Hager Shipley has been approved in the beginning of the novel, as a persistent ghost who can pass beyond the limits of history and location, as she has been described as ghostly story teller. It is expected from Hager that, she has to let her pride and fear to go away. As Hager speaks clearly about her life, she focuses while forming her story in the background and community relation of it. The novel however leads into actuality and unknowingly unity of the people under one roof.

This roof can be called as a community or a society, and its task is to unite the people in a society. The society may differ in its area from region to a city, to a country or a world. This thought of society can be continued, when the distance develops wider with help of technological inventions and transportation though it is considered as a boon as well as bane. Similarly in the case of Hager Shipley, the train represents the image of leaving and then loss. She looks at the train as a current device for reallocation place and situation, a way of hiding rather than looking for until she wants to hide herself from Marvin and Doris. Hager makes use of the train in two important parts of her life, when she disobeyed her father and attends the young ladies academy in Toronto, when she left her husband and goes out of the city with her younger son John. Hager sees,
We passed the shacks and shanties that clustered around the station, and the railway building and water tower painted their dried blood red. Then we were away from Manawaka. It came as a shock to me, how small the town was, and how short a time it took to leave it, as we measure it. Many a mile, Many a mile, many a mile, said the iron clank of the train wheels … (142)

Hager exaggerates and looks at the train, as a dragon and forming herself as a person who is doing a brave venture. When she looks through the window while traveling in the train Manawaka looks very small, the instrument which she has chosen shrinks the locale and it looks like a wounded landscape to her.

But Hager didn’t realise it at this juncture that she has been travelling with landscape’s wounds. Though she thought she left Manawaka, where she doesn’t want to go back but the town has already glued with her flesh and blood. Marianne De Koven in her *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* uses the imagery of sea change “to speak of deep pervasive change, encompassing all levels of life as it lived” (38). She associates this transformation with twentieth century Modernism and its impracticable vagueness: “it encompasses at once death suffering…horror. . and at the same the redemptive transformation…. with its connotations the one hand of fascination, luxuary, indulgence (-nuisance), and on the other of excess, transgression, and bizarre” (3). The intentional restoration, the notion of sea change “rewrites simple dualistic …valoration, where death and suffering are the entirely negative rice aid for an entirely positive redemption and rebirth” (3-4). In Hager’s most transformative moment, she carries out a sea change when she turns to death in to beauty by adoring and enlivening her hair with dead june bugs. Though Hager physically detached from her homeland and its influence,
unknowingly without an effort, she connects death and beauty in to the image of her body. In this moment, Hager is connected to, not distant from the land and its offerings. She takes what the land gives her and incorporates death and beauty in to her body image. Hager’s image called sea change, an extraordinary change that happens in her life due to her quest for identity before the reunion and freedom are understood.

The beginning of the novel The Stone Angel describes the stone angel which was built by her father on the remembrance of her mother, on her grave which is a symbol of persistence, strength and impaired vision, “not only the stone but un endowed with even a pretense of sight. A person who carved her had left her eyeballs blank. It seemed strange to me that she should stand above the town, harking us all to heaven without who we were at all” (3). Again the image of the Stone Angel is declaring, the modernist thought of beauty and death. It further refers to the impermanency of the living beings and the permanency the stone and nature. It has been hailed for reflecting her father’s dynasty. But this stone angel cannot be taken as an image which reflecting Hager. On the other hand it is to sad Regina Wesse’s petty angel and to the lettering on Regina’s tomb that

“Rest in peace
From toil, surcease.
Regina Wesse. /1886”. (4)

She can be a symbol looking for Racheal’s fate the virginal victorian angel in the house who upkeeps for her mother only to die from some “obscure and maidenly disorder” (4) and to be stared throughout eternity by directing the euphoric cupid. The male-controlled father, and his remaining daughter. The daughter repels the tomb of her mother while rejecting the personality of her father. She evades suitable either the blind stone angel or ecstatic leering cherub. Hager fights with these problems because none of them desires to
spread her father’s dynasty, not be the mother who outlasts the child, hitherto she is in threat of becoming both.

The geography of Manawaka was divided not only by the people of Manawaka and also by the railway tracks. *A Jest of God* gave a detailed picture of the landscape and the people. As per the novel The Tonnerres are living near Wachawaka River, where on the other side was occupied by the Scottish and Irish people. The railway track becomes the mediator which is a symbol of loss and separation of class, status and divides the nations unity. But for Hager the train is an instrument, which has power to transport her from male dominated society and marital damage. According to Hager, If the financial development of the single is measured as country’s development then Jason Currie can be a perfect example of the Canadian citizen.

Hager’s attitude towards the society is also very narrow she maintains the diversity, when she is in Shipley’s place she thinks herself very high. She looks at others as lower:

I thought of Polacks and Galicians from the mountain, half breeds from the river valley of Wachakwa, or the daughters and spinster aunts of the poor, forgetting that Bram’s own daughters had hired out whenever they could be spared, until they married very young and gained a permanent employment. (51)

These lines make it clear that Hager who sees marriage is an alliance based upon a financial status. Hager classifies public according to their race, origin, or financial position; she does not perceive persons as individual till they are the descendants of her man. She expresses with certain realisation of her previous bias in her old age. Her language reveals an unawareness of her treatment of different race.
Jason Currie is an embodiment of Anglosaxon superiority. He had an influence of Presbyterian work ethic with his anglosaxon past. According to Hager she has been brought up with the same doctorine followed by her father. She does have her own identity as she is a creation of Anglo saxon superiority. Though she can’t go always with his father’s thought and chose Bram Shipley as her husband, an anglosaxon but a poor low class farmer and contrast to their life style especially suits to the criteria which father and daughter hates and fear of. He is described as “lazy as a pet pig” (46), “common as dirt” (47). Though Bram has many qualities which were hated by Hager she was attracted towards him. She was impressed by his physic but never fails to observe he is robust and unclean and wild:

I revealed in his fingernails with crescents of ingrown earth that never met a file. I fancied I heard in his laughter the bravery of battlions. I thought he looked a bearded Indian, so brown and beaked face. The black hair thrusting from his chin was rough as thistles. The next instance, though, I imagined him rigged out in a suit of gray soft as dove’s breast-feather. (45)

Anyhow apart from the things she hates in Bram his physic and power dominates in her dream. Earlier Hager was infatuated by the masculinity of Bram Shipley, she accepts Bram as he is. But later she changes her attitude towards Bram. She wants to develop as a protagonist, a supreme man, an aboriginal of their small town and to end with a man of high status like her father a good business man, the above stated were Hager’s longing. She couldn’t think about the fact that Bram’s identity as a low class farmer is fixed that cannot be changed easily. This craving of Hager indicates her Modernist and Feminist instincts to streamline her circle generated by her father. Hager’s
relocation of life from urban to rural makes the reader to realise that, it is probable for a woman to adapt with this new locale though she is from high class Scots Presbyterian pride, and attempts to retrieve what she has lost. At this juncture too she poses herself as authoritative, resolute and solid and never thought to give up anything. Though Hager sticks to the principles of her father as she was brought up with that she craves for supremacy, which should be diverse from her father holds on. She keeps her partiality.

The forerunner of the Canadian identity is classified into two: the merchants and the farmers, the urban pioneers and the rural one. Jason Currie and Bram Shipley are the perfect specimen for the above classified types. These two poles are creating an impact in the life of Hager. Although as it was tried by Hager who wants to make Bram equal to Curries at last she has done by burying Bram in the cemetery near her father and mother’s tomb. According to Hager they are the sides of the stone. “On the red marble name stone that stood beside the white statue I had his family name carved, so the stone said Currie on one side Shipley on the other” (184). In the last part of the novel when Marvin and Hager visit the grave a young caretaker at the place shows their family tomb: “This here’s Currie-Shipley stone. The two families was connected by marriage. Pioneering families, the both of them, two of the earliest in the district” (306). This tomb stone paves the way for unity in the community as people may not aware of the fact that Bram and Jason Currie never talked to each other but, Hager who has made them to join after death. According to the people, they considered it an interesting and unusual as they unaware of the discord between the families instead spread the story of harmony.

Margaret Laurence’s perception on Modernism reflects through her narrative technique the abridgement of time and space. The present narrator tells her present as well as recollected her past, which is advancing towards her present gradually in
sequential order. Further it can be explained that the story’s preceding is like a threaded needle that back stiches in to the current, dragging the present unavoidably advance systematically in a rolling presentation. Hager has been introduced in the year approximately 1955 and Hager is ninety years old “when time has folded like a paper fan” (90). The past and present meet each other, when the fan is folded completely. Rigid character of ninety years old Hager’s life has been narrated in all the stages of her life, when she was at twelve, twenty four, forty, sixty and till her demise.

Hager as a child has been brought among the men, her father and two brothers, Matt and Dan. Obviously she has no other chance to imitate or follows her father in responsiveness and strengths not her mother’s as she is no more. Both the brothers were sick at their young age and passed away soon. While Dan was fading of pneumonia, Hager declines to help Dan but in her position Matt helped him instead. As per her thought, helping him make her weak and to admit weakness and goodness. Jason Currie, a pioneer as an immigrant from Scottish highland descent becomes a successful businessman who holds the motto “Gainsay Who Dare !” (15). He is an embodiment of hardworking, firm, dominating in nature. He forms himself as a man of high status and one of the senior important people of Manawaka tries to craft his family of his desire. Once Dan has passed away Matt was asked to look after works at store and Jason Currie likes to send Hager to Toronto for two years to “training ring, the young ladies’ academy in Toronto” (42). Hager comes out as a perfect upper class lady and her father sees her as a credit to himself.

Jason Currie as a business man looks at her daughter as one of his successes as he does commercially. He considered that her value raised his status in the society: “It was worth every penny for the two years” (43) he said. She was taken to be a thing by
her father, which others never seen or bought and celebrated his victory and while sinks in satisfaction and happiness. He unawares that, Hager is a reflection in his sternness. From her childhood Hager dares her father. She hates his domineering nature. When he slaps her as she has “no regard for [his] reputation” (9). She never scream and to be quiet and finally declines to be his product. After she took training from the academy she likes to become a teacher which is actually opposed by Currie. As per Hager’s perception working under her father is like repaying her debt which he spent for her training, so she considered a right time for renounce and disobey. Finally, she disorders his order by her strong determination and she weds Bram Shipley. That was her ultimate effort in succeeding the dominating fore father of the Manawaka prairie.

A twentieth century Modernism is outlined by the critic Marianne De Koven as representing both death and indulgent, excessive, transgressed transformation. Hager’s father is an embodiment of stanch controller and sensible on the other hand Bram is amused, comfortable, extreme, and rustic infidel. Hager transforms her life from the one end to the other between these two extreme poles. This transformation took place in the life of Hager is like what Marianne De Koven has stated. She leads a life of uncertainties and feels pleasure without expression. She actually leads the life of the urban but resides at rural. She expects manners and propriety from the man she marries who is rustic doesn’t want to care anything. Though she practices her father’s racism at the same time she hates his superiority. In her father’s house she has been hailed as a victorian angel but the stone angel undergoes an alteration by time and memory and stand like stone and as a woman beside Hager and Currie’s names where her world and landscape have changed. So what is thought of the sculpture is also factual of her: “The Earth had heaved with frost around her, and she stood askew and tilted…someday she’ll topple entirely, and no one to bother to set her upright again” (305).
There are more resemblance between the Stone Angel and Hager both of them raised among the dead and plan their longing always upright, both exactly thriving and symbolically honest. But, she also realises that upright and uneven, methodical and unsystematic, and she represents such modernist blends, she changes throughout her existence. Margaret Laurence has written the story of Hager, with the backdrop of history of Canada. Her elder son Marvin decided to go to Army at the age of seventeen and not having an idea to return back to Manawaka. Canada’s Army takes part in World War I. So Marvin leaves the country: Martin Brell says, “the solitary figure in the distant furrow, that stooped from tending the hearth of isolated home symbol and types of our national necessities, our national virtues and our national strength were being forgotten in the rush to the cities” (Brown and Cook, 196).

Equally Jason Currie and Bram Shipley expose the hollowness of rustic lore. None of these men is the decent sole developer occupied in the field, though it is this legendary idol that burns Hager’s thoughts. Hager’s dreams and actualities conversely, scarcely match. In the course of the inter war period, where Hager efforts to create a new life, a life in which she lost her identity as a wife and formerly as a daughter. As she had faced failures and her ultimate conversion is to understand to settle the part played by her as a daughter and wife. If she has prepared for that would be a reunite of her losses and give her new identity which integrates her grief and happiness.

A major crisis in the individual, in the family and not except in the case of the country is that their effort to create their own identity. As it has been called as “daughter of old England” by Sir Wilfred Laurier, a former prime minister, (Brown and cook 351) that needs the care of her mother during the war. That was the time when the World War I breaks out Canada has been built by the brick of various countries and rightly be called
as a global village. That village possesses numerous ethnic, intellectual, cultural and economic bonds especially carried out by the Britain and France, there starts a tussle to reestablish an identity for them. The later Prime Minister Robert Borden, differed with Laurier’s opinion as Borden perceives Canada as an independent and not a colonial member. He portrays Canada in an optimistic way, where she has been described by him as a matured daughter, who can find a path of her own. Though she has been always linked with colonisers, now she is emerging not a subordinate daughter but an autonomous survivor. Another opinion has been stated by Henri Bourassa a Canadian political leader in discussion on the division between English and French Canada in the issue of *Le Devoir*

It is not the first time in the history of Canada that England and French Canadians have form themselves deeply divided over some great national issue. So long as English Canadian remain more British than Canadian, these differences are bound to happen every time there is a conflict between the demands of British Imperialism and the resistance of Canadian nationalism.(Brown and Cook, 274).

In fact Bourassa considers earlier that, as Canada is having an unbreakable bond with Britain and France it is necessary to take part in the war in order to join hands with the happiness by “those two mother countries victorious” (Brown and Cook, 251-2). But later, when he perceives the start of dissection culturally English and French Canadian made, Bourassa to call it as misfortune, which restricts Canada to attain peace and harmony.

Though these leaders projected three diverse opinions on the same state, there are parallel in their attitude, their views were formed on philosophies on binaries, on bi-
national conventions which are maintained by the establishment. According to them
Canada is separated into two British and French, the multiple Canadian identity is not
under their vision. Canada outside the Quebec is not completely British. Canadian is not
populated only by Britishers and people of France. There are many other expatriates with
their own culture, complexion and language etc who are unable to cut off their native
identity and hold it strongly than before. Like majority Anglo Canadian does in the
country, struggle a lot to adopt with new national identity as they feel very difficult to
break themselves emotionally from their great nation.

In *The Stone Angel*, Bram Shipley and Jason Currie were exemplifying this
thought. Thus the British and French aristocracies also like their leaders ignore the
minorities and their position. This blindness has been clearly shown through Hager
Shipley. Hager realises her blindness when she is in front of her childhood friend’s house
friend, Lottie. That was the age of prosperity in the 1920s. One Saturday evening she
likes to have money of her so she goes to Manawaka to sell eggs with her son John. She
has been referred to Lottie by her daughter Arlene as ‘egg woman’ Arlene has been
dolled up by her mother. “Her yellow ringlet hair topped with blue satin bow, and her
white crepe de chine dress was held with a pale blue sash” (132). She speaks ironically to
John about Telford Simmons: “Such a homely boy he used to be -I did not really want to
say a word, but out and out they came –and none too clever, either. He’s got there more
by good luck than good management, if you ask me” (132-133). She comes out of the
thought and understood her position when John asks her to shut her words.

She reexamines herself externally she spends her time at the public rest room of
Manawaka and asks John to let her alone. She says by looking at her appearance in the
mirror. She could believe that the mirror reflecting her as she looks completely in a changed look. To the extend she says the mirror lies:

On my head a brown tam was pulled down to keep my ears warm. My hair was gray and straight. I always cut it myself. The face--- a brown and leathery face that wasn’t mine. Only the eyes were mine, staring as though to pierce the lying glass and get beneath to some truer image, indefinitely distant. (133)

Hager’s bewilderment reflects through her fragmented sentences. This fragmented self is one of the characteristics of Modernism when Hager is moving towards transformation. She was at the juncture unable to bring her reality and imagination together as they are opposite to each other in her life. She looks herself disconnected from glass she believes the glass lies to her, similarly she separated herself from fashioning herself, from her body, from the men because she hates her body when it was treated as object, an object of others. She becomes a commodity to her father, pleasure to her husband, and life to her sons. She senses and explains all that happened out of her control. She started to walk amidst the mass of Saturday evening, amidst the rolled vehicles and booted hard crowd and her feet took her to her Father’s store, she thought of buying some clothes. When she was thinking of ask for credit she hears her husband voice, where he asks for stale doughnuts, but the clerk knows Bram’s demand for lemon extracts to sell to Charlie Bean. The Clerk informs the manager, “they get three times the price for it, from the Indians, for drinking” (135). She feels embarrassed she doesn’t know what the clerk communicated to the manager was true or not, but she decides to leave this life.
In Hager’s perception an independent women, who is not dependent financially on men. She believed the domination of men on women can be achieved through earnings for her. She repays her father when she stays there; she sells eggs while staying with her husband. But paradoxically she avoids her father’s domination by marrying Bram but leaves Bram to be independent and becomes the homemaker of Mr. Oatley. Actually Laurence has depicted the significant growth in the female paid labour force in Canada of 1921 and 1931. In John Herd Thompson’s words it is “Work of Last Resort” (150), more than the half of the escalation was in the service part, with home service. Hager considered her pension cheque as a last opportunity to move away from her son Marvin otherwise, she will be sent to the Silver Threads an old age home. Hager leaves Bram in order to get freedom; she doesn’t like to be a dependent financially. She moves farther than her prairie and her spouse, parting her ecological attachment and familial attachment to attain her independence. She has reached west coast and no longer want to be a wife of Bram but, she couldn’t neglect to do the part played by wife, she maintains another man’s house take care of his health and belongings, and yearns for Bram during the evening. She says,

I never thought of Bram in the days anymore, but I’d waken, sometimes, out of a half sleep and turn to him and find he wasn’t beside me, and then I’d be filled with such a bitter emptiness it seemed the whole of night must be within me not around or outside at all. There were times when I’d returned to him just for that. But in the morning I’d be myself once more, put on my black uniform with its white lace collar go down and serve Mr. Oatley’s breakfast with calm deliberation, hand him his morning paper with hands so steady that he couldn’t have known I’d been away at all. (160)
This paragraph contains the reminiscences of being’s body and mind paves the ways for one’s reunion with the earlier life that happens in the life of Hager quickly and concurrently a sequence of proceeds and advents. Hager wants to admit that her identity covers devastation and renaissance, defeat and advance, hiding and search for. Though she gains money through her isolated life she longs for her familial life, similarly physically she leaves Manawaka but she carries and recollects it often. She tries to conceal the poor life with Bram but there is blankness with in her when she longs for the pleasure. Hager can realise that, her identity is based on the landscape which she embraces and embraced her. Likewise the people she faces and faced her are responsible, so she tries to convert those same environment and people.

Hager thinks of Bram but she gains the similar identity in the house of Mr. Oatley who has been nursed, nurtured by the service rendered by Hager on the other hand, she has been paid for her duty in the form of a good accommodation and money by him, which she has longing for in the house of Bram: “I spend my first few months’ salary entirely on clothes, a delphinium blue costume for myself, hat, gloves, shoes, the lot”. (156). She completely desires to destroy her image as a lady from prairie she tries to dress herself like an urban lady. She believes the way, she dresses herself reflects her identity and not her financial status. Though she thought, she shows herself by creating a new image she never fails to remember her past costume and hat in which, she stood to confront her father years before when she returned from Toronto. She is now with hope and boundless dreams. This period in her life can be called “A period of waiting and of marking time” (160). She consider this as a beginning of all her success, this is the place which paves the way for creating her own identity. There is close resemblance maintained by Laurence while depicting the life of Hager and her country. When Canada is moving towards development, it was in opposition to face a war. The thing which
formerly protected them has become uncertain later, over sixty thousand Canadians deceased while guarding “unity, progress, and the new national pride” (Brown and Cook, 338). An exemplary of order is changed a sense of disorder. Hager couldn’t understand or even conceive that, she is standing between life and death, this is an entrance for the place between life and death both for her and her men. She is at the brim of death. Though she could accept her own leaving that was the phase when she parted her men and she parted her. “Every last one of them has gone away and left me. I never left them it was the other way around. I swear it” (164). Unrelatedly what Hager views and grasps are made up of moments of fragmentation, both in the family and financially. Hager desires to send John to college so she works hard and save money but her saving is not sufficient, she mislays her money in stock market loosed it. When she was working at Mr. Oatley’s house John searches jobs in the coast and the city but he is not interested anywhere.

That was the time of urbanisation, people move towards city and coast in order to earn money and for food but on contrast John, the younger son of Hager couldn’t feel comfortable to survive and decided to return back to Manawaka. This was the great disappointment to Hager and takes this situation as a failure of herself and Bram’s success. Hager attempts to discourage her son’s decision to return back to Manawaka and living with his father as she couldn’t endure her beloved son’s desire is to be with his father not with her:

“You have forgotten what he’s like, “ I said. “you’ll not stay. You’ll soon see, once you get there.”

“I haven’t forgotten” John said.

“Why go, then? There’s nothing for you there.”

“You never know”, he said. “I might get on famously.
May be it’s just a place for me.”

His laughter is comprehensible to me. (167)

Actually John resembles more of Bram both physically and mentally, as Bram known for his enjoyment and things related to that. John is searching that in the city and finds it ultimately in the prairie. This is called the physical reality which Hager fails to know in the beginning. That was an impaired vision, she has so ignores these reality instead she correlates person and his locale. She perceives Bram Shipley and his locale represent nothing. That blankness which fascinates John, which she fails to recognise in him but she couldn’t understand that comes through Bram, to Hager it, is unknowingly but unavoidably.

Hager’s bodily presence does not deal with desire but in growth. She closes her disintegration that environs her by creating herself more challenging, more solid, and further lively. When her wealth decreases, she forms herself factually as a lady of physical presence. But as she develops the rest of the world as inferior to her. Hager processes the two years ever since, John’s parting by irregular and simple letters from John. Mr. Oatley’s landscape shrinks, the Shipley place turn into gaunt, and Bram is a emaciated, weakened possibility. Hager, though, had “not grown slimmer. [She] was too padded on the hips and bust, but dress was becoming, a green cotton with pearl buttons down the front, a dress[she’d] bought in the autumn sales last fall” (170). In the aspect of decline and dearth. She quiet fancies herself a fashionable lady, and she still dealings her worth in the term of her stylish clothing. She goes to Shipley’s place, John, with a curtsy and a decoration, greets Hager over her married relation, her castle. In Hager’s home, she shows her opposition on the decline that environs her by building herself more noticeable. She considers Shipley’s residence is an indication of how one’s conflict is
restricted, at periods, to the control of one’s body. Nature is an inordinate equalizer, as is deceptive in Hager’s opinion:

The Shipley’s farm, I soon found, was in good company at last. However much or little they’d worked, the upright men and the slouches, it amounted to the same thing now. That must have been the worst, almost, to men like Henry earl or Alden Cates, who’d worked like horses all their lives, to see their laces looking the same as Bram’s, who’d been hey-day, go-day, God-send sun-day. (168)

When Hager enters into the Shipley’s home She didn’t considered about either the home or on Bram instead she things about the pride that she has gained through her hard work and suffering. The importance or respect which was given by the society to the people like her, who has been always upright and working hard, deserves to be considered as a respected person. On the other hand, those who are delight in ease, and not ready to work regarded as not as much of respected and inferior in the grading has been maintaining. Both the place for dwelling and financial background even out the locale and the persons is intolerable and unintelligible in Hager’s domain interpretation.

Similarly Hager is not ready to admit that, earning through farms and land is out of our control. She is not ready to accept that person cannot do anything against nature, and John questions her about this “What would you have done?” John said “Hired the rain maker? Got the ministries to pray or the Indians from the mountains to dance for clouds?” (170) Hager cannot raise her opposition to the question raised by John, though she has accepted that we need to depend on something to support. But she never fails to assert her doubt and determined dominance above Bram “I don’t believe it has to be this bad”, I said. “It gives him an excuse never to lift a finger” (170). She means to say Bram
needs something to support his laziness, as he is incapable to create a role of a respectable person both financially and through his manners. John, ultimately set up himself with the work needed to run a life: “It is my life’s work” (171) said John. Bram who sits in the front room:

Dust grew like mold over every single thing –the golden oak armchair in which Jason Currie had once sat and drilled me in the multiplication tables, the glassed in the china cabinet, the carved settee from the Currie house, my father’s British Indian rug and the dirt tracked over it that now the blue and russet vines and flowers were barely discernible. (171)

Bram sits amidst the properties which are the flagrant images of the imperialist superiority represented by Jason Currie, nurtured by Hager Currie. Like the same Hager sits amidst her belongings at the age of ninety years. But not like Bram, Hager adheres greatly to the thing both outward things and to the things inside “junkyard of her memory” (213). She could not accept the separation of herself and her belongings because she could not do more than that at that age as she loses her strength of body and mind. When Marvin decided to send her to the old age home, she doesn’t want her things to be thrown away or considered not needed like her by her family, because those things gave her identity, her previous life and to the people of her past. She fells if these assets were detached, she herself will come to an end to exit the world.

After the death of Bram, she stays with John then leaves to the house of Mr. Oatley, then during the summer return back to Manawaka. The event that converts her as stone is death of John. “The night my son died I was transformed to stone and never wet at all” (243). She feels that conversation makes her to stay close to John where he was buried near the double named stone. “The double named stone where the marble angel
crookedly stood” (243). The Stone Angel is a concrete, significant and permanent stood near the tomb reflects her state which she desires to have. After the death of Mr. Oatley she collected some of his possession and buys a house for her own to keep her thing. “the walnut corner cupboard, the oak buffet, the air chair and sofa, the few pieces of china that were left” (244).

After her return to Manawaka these things were at the front room of Shipley’s home where there was no one to take care of. Defeat and restoration is common in the life of people as well as in the country. Hager meets both when the life cycle turns.

A few years later, the war came. The price of the wheat went up, and the farmers who hadn’t had a cent bought combine now and anew cars, and installed electricity. A lot of Manawaka boys were killed……He might have been killed or saved. Who is to know? Or do such things depend on what goes on outside?. (244)

There is a transformation, which happens inside Hager that her inside gets vision and her concealment starts to dissolve. It took nearly twenty years after the death of John. Hager inquires the query; whether the world can create a sense even if its order is its disorder. This Modernist receptivity permits Hager to have different attitude towards life and reason for her most insightful renovation.

Hager doesn’t accept anywhere that she has a recurrent thought of thinking about Manawaka when she was at the sea coast. She has wept and spoken about her longings only she was at the age of ninety, while escapes from the home to avoid going to Silver Threads but never confessed her action. Hager parted Marvin and Doris to build new home of her own at the age of ninety with her dissatisfied irrepressible physique. She goes to an old fish cannery that she recalls visiting with Marvin and Doris. She creates
her home from “A place of remnants and oddities…. More like the sea-chest of some old and giant sailor than merely a cannery no one has used in years” (215). That was the considered as a suitable place for her uneven life, which is completed up of its own leftover and oddities. It is here she starts to grip on her oddities to discharge her conceited arrogance. This kind of realisation is a loss or re-creation. She loses her control when she met a stranger in the cannery she shares her food and her thoughts, she loses control over speech, but she has a peace, she attains insight she articulates her imagination. She adorns her hair with june bugs:

I have everything I need. An over turned box is my table, and another is my chair. I spread my supper and eat. When I’ve done, the light still holds and in one shell lying on the floor at my feet I see that half a dozen june bugs have been caught. I prod them with a finger nail. They are alive. Death hasn’t tarnished them, however. Their backs are green and luminous, with a sharp metallic line down the center, and their bellies shimmer with pure copper. (216)

At this juncture she is converted once more. She is no longer a stone, she located a house like a small children on the beach, like herself and Bram. But this time she does it unaided, and there is no one to smother her thoughts or her energy. She is still a mistress of the castle, the empress, the queen. Now she fits death to beauty and life, as the june bugs enliven her hair. She performs away her home embellishment and creates herself a new in order to outfit her nearby. In this place she no longer then “the terrible laughter of God, but can hear only the rapid chuckling of the sea” (234). She tells that, her anger at God for not compromise her prospect. She has degenerated her into accept her own perception. Hager has forms a new image for herself; it is made up of that which is both
inside internally and externally. She makes a home for herself and that this room needs both what is inside and what is outside:

Sickeningly, I recall, and look around me. He’s gone. My memory, happily clear as spring water now, bubbles up coldly. It could not have been I, Hager Shipley, always fastidious of nothing else; who drank with a perfect stranger and sank in to sleep huddled beside him. I won’t believe it. But it was so. And to be frank, now that I give it a second thought, it doesn’t seem so dreadful. Things never look the same from the outside as they do from the inside. (249)

According to Hager, she has to gain both insight and outsight, or consciousness that she is portion of a large society. If insight refers to the inner self of one’s awareness then the out sight means how they are related to the environment and people surrounds them. She doesn’t be existent in a space where no one disturbs her, where no body and not anything is permitted in to her inner place. Her misunderstanding sorts her more whole. Her life was shaped by a sequence of inflexible moralities and instructions, when it was methodical and controllable; it was a subtle illusion, an empty egg shell of an identity. Like Lottie broken an egg shell in a junkyard or the egg that becomes a medium of independence for Hager from Bram, her life is gentle and robust, full of both attractiveness and dismay. This moment is a transitory second, but it comprises features of the unending as Hager excels the imminence of locale and period by retention the terrible death of her son and by altering that hurt in to the formation of society. Laurence makes the readers of her novel to understand at this stage that, there is an insight inside Hager, by the reading the experiences of Hager at the fish cannery that was her redeeming seconds. And her ultimate re-vision into herself was attained, when the clergy man’s voice is transformed from speech to hymn:
“All people that on the earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with joyful voice.
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell;
Come ye before him and rejoice”.

I would have wished it. This knowing comes upon me so forcefully, so shattering, and with such a bitterness as I have never felt before. I must always, have wanted that-simply to rejoice. (291-292)

Hager grasps environmental images to define the wilderness inside her body, which she defeats bodily the wilderness in the forest but she has to destroy the wilderness prevails inside her. As an alternative of becoming a tragic hero who re-forms the waste and inside himself thus ending himself, Hager expresses her heroism by reforming herself even though Hager reflects herself “I am unchangeable, unregenerate” (293), she develops herself in the existence and expiry. She strives over words spoken and not spoken. The time mislaid and however insistent. Hager’s haunted self is widespread with memory. That memory is changeable and can be regenerated. As De Koven states, “death and tram figuration are both, simultaneously, with irreducible self -contradiction, terrible and wonderful” (4). Perhaps, the tragic comedy Shakespeare’s The Tempest, the text from which De-koven proceeds and suggest an image that aids clarify the authoritative promises of modification in an inappropriately methodical community.

In the play The Tempest the duke of Milan travels through water to change his identity. In order to drown his sorrow, blame and agony to change his identity. That juncture, he lefts from home and then return home assists the restoration of the public and persons. Similarly Hager’s central transformative occasion arises by the sea and away from her home. This is the place where Hager took a sea change that permits her succeeding tolerance.
Hager’s language and silence reveals her desire for transformation: “I am chocked with it now, the incommunicable years; everything happened and was spoken and not spoken”. (296). Hager has faced full of difficulties throughout her life, that balance her with affection, venture, liberty and vision. Her life would be sadder without these favours and without knowing them as favors but Hager does distinguish them, and she grips them without support, with obduracy, and with overthrow that, This is at the same time a conquest and joke:

I lie here and try to recall something truly free that I ‘have done in ninety years. I can think of only two acts that might be so, both recent. One was a joke—yet a joke only as all victories are, the paraphernalia being unequal to the event’s reach. The other was a lie—yet not a lie, for it was spoken at least and at last with what may perhaps be a kind of love. (307)

As there is ambiguity between signifier joke and lie as Hager says “pleasure and pain were one to me, meaningless” (52). The modernist’s blow of pleasure and pain shows how Laurence divulges the uncertainty of the domain through her difference of opinion.

Thus this Chapter enumerated Hager Shipley’s assertiveness in establishing her own identity in order to attain the state of freedom and satisfaction. At the same time she recollects how throughout her life she has been losing all men. As she prefers freedom, she overcomes the repentance and finally undergoes a transformation.