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Introduction

Canadian literature takes its strength from being straight forward and real. Canadian authors, and especially Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro, the two female writers who are the focus of this work, make a reader believe in the stories that are being created. The unique history of the country and its people makes the literature seem authentic and imbued with a genuine feeling of modesty. Cultural heritage and the ancestors play a significant role for the Canadians. For that reason the protagonists usually undertake a journey of discovery into the past: community is vital. As Jonathan Swift's famous statement underlines, "no man is an island"; this has even stronger connotations for Canada, as its people are mostly immigrants or their descendents.

The strength needed in the battle for self and the journey of discovering one's roots is vividly depicted by the protagonists created by Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro. Beverly J. Rasporich, in her book *Dance of the Sexes: Art and Gender in the Fiction of Alice Munro* claims, "In fiction by modern Canadian female writers, their protagonists like the gothic heroines of old, struggle to escape imprisonment and drowning, and attempt, in a modern, constructive way to manage space, to achieve room and office" (12-13). Del Jordan in *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971) and Morag Gunn in *The Diviners* (1974) are such characters. They try to juggle the life of a woman and that of a dedicated writer, which is not a simple task. Their struggle to lead the life of a successful writer who is also a satisfied woman will be analyzed further in this essay. I examine their ways of becoming self-confident authors, as well as their ways of assuming female roles. Diana Brydon, in her essay "Silence, Voice and the Mirror: Margaret Laurence and Women", points out:

although each novel focuses on a central female character in search of her identity, that identity is ultimately determined by her relations with others. As feminist theorists have noted, the female hero, unlike the traditional male hero, does not separate herself from others to mature. Instead, she defines herself in relation to others. (186)

I want to draw attention to the importance of this collective consciousness that is crucial in the lives of women, which is illustrated in the lives of Del and Morag.

The following chapter offers a brief context for the works to be analysed: a definition and introduction to the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* and its subcategory of the *Künstlerroman*, as well as some basic concerns in twentieth century feminism. The second chapter will be devoted to Alice Munro and *Lives of Girls and Women*, including Del Jordan's growth as a writer and especially as a woman. The *Künstlerroman* and *Bildungsroman* aspects are approached from different angles. The last chapter of the thesis examines Margaret Laurence and *The Diviners*. The author's profile is provided as well as her views on cultural heritage and importance of one's ancestors. The approach to Morag Gunn is similar to the one utilized for the protagonist of *Lives of Girls and Women*.

My initial research was focused on the *Künstlerroman* aspects of both novels. However, after some time I have realized how important it is for these protagonists not only to consider their efforts to become writers, but also to pay attention to their development as women. For this reason, the main focus was given to their growth into mature women. Despite the fact that many articles, books and essays have been written on *Lives of Girls and Women* and *The Diviners*, I have not come across anything that would avail similar approach to the novels as the one presented in this essay.

Chapter I

Context: the *Bildungsroman* and Feminism

As this essay focuses on the protagonists' growth and changes that they undergo on their way to become self-confident women, it is important for this study to consider the concept of *Bildungsroman*. Clarence Hugh Holman points out in *A Handbook to Literature* that the *Bildungsroman* is synonymous with the apprenticeship novel, which "recounts the youth and young adulthood of a sensitive protagonist who is attempting to learn the nature of the world, discover its meaning and pattern, and acquire a philosophy of life and 'the art of living'" (33). M. H. Abrams notes that the term *Bildungsroman* is German for "novel of formation", while *Erziehungsroman* signifies "novel of education", as he explains: "The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist's mind and character, in the passage from childhood through varied experiences – and usually through a spiritual crisis – into maturity and the recognition of his or her identity and role in the world" (119-20). Abrams suggests that the genre starts with "K. P. Moritz's *Anton Reiser* (1785-90) and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-96) and includes Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861), George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924), and Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915)" (120).

The *Künstlerroman* is "an important subtype" of this genre, as Abrams points out, defining the concept as representing "the growth of a novelist or other artist into the stage of maturity that signalizes the recognition of artistic destiny and mastery of artistic craft" (120). Among the representative works of this genre are "some of the major twentieth-century novels. Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-27), Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-15), Mann's *Tonio Kröger* (1903) and *Dr. Faustus* (1947), and Gide's *The Counterfeiters* (1926)" (120). In his definition of the *Künstlerroman* Holman adds important details when he notes that the struggles of the protagonist who is an artist or a writer "from childhood to maturity are both against an inhospitable environment and within himself toward an understanding of his creative mission" (241-42).

Significantly for the purpose of this essay, Holman stresses that the *Bildungsroman* "is frequently autobiographical" (52). The conditions that determine the *Bildung* or the development and destiny of women lies at the heart of feminism and in this essay it is important that the reader be familiar with the briefest outlines of the history of twentieth century feminism in order to situate Laurence and Munro. As is widely acknowledged, the fiction of the twentieth century "has always been a social indicator and, as an agent and the medium of the sexual revolution, has contributed to the disintegration of the sexual roles of Victorian society" (Rasporich xiii). *Lives of Girls and Women* and *The Diviners* are representatives of this trend, as I shall demonstrate.

When it comes to feminism and its program many of us women are more or less like Bridget Jones, "ambivalent about what the large project of feminism ultimately asks of us", as Leah Guenther claims in her article titled "*Bridget Jones's Diary*: Confessing Post-feminism". One can only agree with this statement: it is noticeable that many women are confused as their feelings are not always parallel with those supported by the feminist movement. Nevertheless, these women do not consider themselves as being ruled by men, weak or blind to the changes women are supposed to fight for. They want it all, and they do not want to have to apologise for it. In the article "*Sex and the City* and Third Wave Feminism: Defining Feminisms in Popular Culture" Joy Hawkins and Judith Howard state: "Over the past hundred years, feminism developed into a highly complicated theoretical and practical way of life" (6). They underline that, "It has become acceptable and expected, for women to vote, join the workforce, become financially independent, control their own bodies, and the like" (6-7).

Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young in their paper called “A Generation Divide Over Chick Lit” argue that feminism started with the so-called First Wave in 19th and early 20th centuries. Suffragists originated in the mid-1800s and their fight ended in the 1920s with the Nineteenth Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote (Hawkins and Howard 8). Virginia Woolf, one of the main figures of this period, expressed her concerns in her writings, reflecting those of the First Wave feminism on

women’s material disadvantage compared to men – her first text [*A Room of One’s Own* (1929)] focusing on the history and social context of women’s literary production and the second [*Three Guineas* (1938)] on the relations between male power and the professions (law, education, medicine, etc.). (Selden and Widdowson 207)

Woolf’s way of fighting with discrimination was by rejecting the feminine to achieve “balance” (Selden and Widdowson 208). What the First Wave can be accounted for is “getting women the right to vote, battling for the Equal Right Amendment (ERA) and cementing women’s right to an education” (Hawkins and Howard 9).

Betty Friedan and her *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) mark the starting point of the Second Wave. What the First Wave feminists talked about, the members of the Second Wave acted upon. As Hawkins and Howard point out in their thesis, feminism was parallel to a liberal movement, since there were several aims on their agenda:

1) equality in the public sphere, 2) freedom and autonomy from “unwarranted restrictions by others”, 3) the presumptions of natural sameness between men and women and the conclusion that therefore society should represent a “fundamentally sexually undifferentiated nature”, and finally 4) these all should be changed via an agenda of reform rather than revolution.

(Hawkins and Howard 9)

The feminists were not only concerned with the problems which women faced in everyday life, but they also recognized the importance of female portrayals in literature over the centuries. Peter Barry, in *Beginning Theory: an Introduction to Literal and Cultural Theory*, says: “in nineteenth century fiction very few women work for a living, unless they are driven to it by dire necessity” (122). Therefore, the discussion about the discourse and it still having male-dominant language was lively in those times. Socio-linguist Robin Lakoff argued, “Male utterance ... is ‘stronger’ and should be adopted by women if they wish to achieve social equality with men” (Selden and Widdowson 212). These feminists fought their battles by focusing on getting what was denied to them for all those years, forgetting the aspects of a woman’s life that do not have to be abandoned. On the way to achieve what the male part of the society already had, second-wave feminists slowly lost their own femininity. Their strict agenda to attain equality at all costs caused confusion and discouragement in many of their followers. Kay Eberling asserts that the Second Wave did not bring anything positive except the fact that women can receive education (qtd. in Hawkins and Howard 10-11). She claims that liberal feminism “encouraged women to leave their husbands, forget about family and start acting like men”, and later she insists that overworked and lonely women are the result (qtd. in Hawkins and Howard 10). Due to changes in society and obvious flaws in the programme and beliefs of Second Wave feminism, a new movement emerged.

Third Wave feminism started in the 1990s. Since it has no established goals or rules one may deduce that it valorises a range of opportunities for women. As Guenther stated in her essay those “feminists have engaged in such practice, using personal voice to found a version of feminism better suited to their present needs”. Anjula Razdan, in the article “The Chick Lit Challenge”, provides some explanations of this particular movement. She states that “one of the points of third-wave, ‘lipstick’ feminism, is exactly that – that women do not have to be one kind of human being with one kind of pleasure, all the time”. This ideology wants us to accept diversity and difference between all women, everywhere. As Przemysław Pilarski underlines in his article on Chick Lit, post feminism may be called “velvet revolution of some kind, which changes private sphere into public”, and he continues that those feminist writers are trying to domesticate subjects that were taboo before, like sex, weight, homosexuality and having children. Walker, in her *To Be Real*, explains that many women are confused with the

feminist way of life and what “is morally and politically right according to my vision of female empowerment” (qtd. in Hawkins and Howard 17). Post-feminism is therefore less confusing and has no fixed rules and postulates. It aims for equality, choice, and diversity. Post-feminists struggle to balance career, personal life and improving their appearance at the same time, which one may agree is difficult to achieve. Regardless of what one wants, whether it’s a desire to be a successful businesswoman or a housewife, no woman is excluded from this “movement”.

Alice Munro: Mother, Wife and Career Woman

Alice Munro states in *Riches of a Double Life*, “I really grew up in the 19th century.... The way lives were lived, their values, were very 19th century and things hadn’t changed for a long time” (qtd. in King). Munro and Laurence were writing in times when, “Virginia Woolf’s argument that the female author has the uphill battle of resisting the conventional female role, which is obviously historically and socially determined, [was] a familiar one” (Rasporich 11). As one can clearly see, both writers had a choice of following Woolf’s dogmas or arguing with them. They chose the latter.

Since the beginning of Alice Munro’s career her favoured genre has been the short story. *Lives of Girls and Women* was supposed to be a novel, yet as it clearly stands out that each chapter of this book can be read as a separate story. There is no need to know the previous chapters in order to enjoy e.g. “Princess Ida”, and each story has its own message to convey. Nonetheless, Gerald Lynch explains: “*Lives of Girls and Women* is a novel. Munro has said, too humbly, that it remains her one attempt at a novel” (215). Many arguments support this claim. Firstly, there is the same narrator in every chapter, whose voice belongs to the main character, which is also unchanged throughout the book. A young girl named Del Jordan is the leading heroine. “We read and hear the subjective and individual nature of the experience Del is remembering and recreating” (Besner, *Introducing* 14). Secondly, the characters that appear in *Lives of Girls and Women* occur throughout. Del’s family can be taken into account since all of its members appear or at least are mentioned in every single story. Mrs. Jordan is the only one from them who plays her role in every part of the book. Del’s aunts, her friend Naomi, and Jerry Storey are also presented in more than one chapter. Moreover, the almost chronological order of the stories should also be accounted for here. On the other hand, however, Alice Munro was always very cautious to call her work novel per se. She refers to it “as a novel in a prefatory disclaimer” since it is not hard to notice that each of the books chapters may actually be separated and read as an individual story (qtd. in Besner, *Introducing* 12).

Despite the fact that *Lives of Girls and Women* was purposefully written as a novel, Alice Munro is better known for the many collections with her stories that she has written and published, often as short story cycles; she is regarded as one of the best writers of the genre. Munro is an intriguing and brilliant writer. Beverly J. Rasporich, in her book *Dance of the Sexes*, declares that Munro is “an extremely sophisticated, literate and literary woman”, and adds that her dedication to writing has been everlasting from the day she started creating when she was 14 years old (3). As noted by Graham Holcombe, “Alice Munro has done more than any living writer to demonstrate that the short story is an art form and not the poor relation of the novel”. The admiration of Munro’s work is understandable and widely acknowledged in Canada by rewards that she has received. Her “superb sense of craft has won her the Governor General’s Literary Award, Canada’s highest, three times, as well as the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in short fiction” (Croft 15). One must admit that it is an impressive score.

Alice Munro (Laidlaw) was born in Wingham, Ontario. She spent most of her childhood there. Her father was a fox farmer who, after the Depression, went bankrupt due to the collapse of the “fox market”. Her mother was an intelligent woman and a great inspiration for Munro. She was “ambitious, a career woman ... who, in her youth, went west to Alberta as a

public school teacher and did not marry Robert Laidlaw until she was thirty” (Rasporich 7). Alice Munro went to the University of Western Ontario, where she wrote and published her first stories. She was married twice and is the proud mother of three daughters. Most of her life she has been either writing or teaching, following her passions and interests.

It is worth noting that as a developing author she was highly influenced by D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and others. Alice Munro recalls that together with her friend “we read all books by and about ... the Bloomsbury group, and ... we would get together and talk with incredible excitement” (qtd. in Rasporich 9). One can trace this influence in her stories; *Lives of Girls and Women* is among them. Although she admired Woolf’s work she did not adopt her ideology of becoming a single and independent writer, without personal life or responsibilities. Alice Munro is a happy mother and wife; moreover, she has never considered resignation from these roles. She never gave up that part of her life, despite the well-known argument presented and encouraged by Woolf. Alice Munro used that part of her life to enrich her creative career. She uses her experience to enhance her heroines. Del Jordan “inherited” those feelings and thoughts and that made her authentic, real and close to us, readers.

Rasporich notes that Munro’s “solution to the problem of artist-as-female was quite naturally and bravely to become the female-as-artist, and as an interpreter and puzzling critic of the roles of women and codes of sexual conduct she knew and witnessed” she became known in the literary circles (11). Alice Munro does not only write about women and their dilemmas concerning their lives as writers, discovery of their sexuality, difficulties in having families and careers at the same time, but she also bases these experiences upon her own. Del Jordan, one of her most memorable protagonists, feels and worries just as Munro does. On the one hand, the writer’s path includes both drawbacks of being a mother, and wife while trying to create. On the other hand, all these elements can be also called blessings, as they give satisfaction and fulfillment that one is able to achieve success in both of these spheres of life. As Munro herself admits

I’m much more aware of people and human relationships than when I was younger, and I want my children to be happy and I want my marriage to be good. I probably want these things in a far more conscious way, in a deeper way, than I did when I was a young woman. The dutiful, young mother was a mask for a very strong drive – a kind of monomania about being a writer. (qtd. in Rasporich 3)

Lives of Girls and Women confirms Alice Munro’s opinions on the role and importance of female as a writer and as a human being.

Through her life Alice Munro has gained a considerably wider circle of admirers and those who appreciate her work. She is a very successful and popular writer. Her stories have always been a fascinating topic for the critics. Charles McGrath, one of Munro’s editors, admits that she “is the proof that some people – not many – have a gift for the short story and the novel”, and adds “she writes novels in miniature” (qtd. in Awano 99). *Lives of Girls and Women* can be called such a “miniature”. It is the way she describes regular events, ordinary people, and common thoughts that make her a psychological writer. Walter James Miller, a poet and critic interested in Munro’s writing, agrees that she is “a master of representing how the mind works, how we come to truths through strange pathways” (qtd. in Awano 102). In her stories Munro depicts the complicated and unfamiliar world that surrounds us and, through her writing, she opens readers’ minds, making them stop and try to understand the complex ways of life. One of the examples may be her approach to sex. Her stories that illustrate seemingly odd ways of feeling or acting make readers feel relieved, as she reveals those thoughts that many of us are afraid to share are not so rare in appearing. Daniel Menaker explains that She makes readers, who may feel this amorality in themselves, feel understood – forgiven. To read a writer like Alice Munro is to be understood. To be understood is to be in a community. Munro’s readers create an invisible and often silent community for themselves. She never puts herself above us: She is with us. (qtd. in Awano 101)

The theme of community is very important for Munro as well as for Margaret Laurence. Both of the protagonists in their novels, Del and Morag, try to find themselves in a world that they

feel is not theirs, not yet anyhow. They look forward to that moment when they will finally feel that they belong to a bigger picture. What both of the heroines have to understand, and one of them will eventually realize, is that they have always had their place and they have always been connected through their families, and people that influence them along the way. Del Jordan, like Morag learns that her place is where her stepfather lives, will also recognize that she is not so different from her mother and it is she that plays an enormous part in shaping a woman, a mature woman Del is at the end of the novel.

Juliet Bright, in her article about Munro's life and career, states that "in story after story, Munro reveals the exhilarating character of life itself, with all of life's surprising but inevitable interventions in the form of a death, unexpected visitors, an unusual letter, whatever". One of the repeatedly appearing topics in her stories is the one of the constant quest of womanhood, a change that a young girl undergoes to become a woman. What goes without saying is that her second book of stories, *Lives of Girls and Women*, is the best example of that ongoing theme in her works. Alice Munro presents "ordinary experiences so that they appear extraordinary ... and she is widely regarded as a gifted short story writer whose strength lies in her ability to present the texture of everyday life with both compassion and unyielding precision" (*Contemporary*). This insight and her great language skills put Alice Munro among the best Canadian female writers, in company to which Margaret Laurence had long been accepted.

Margaret Laurence – "a founding mother of Canadian literature"

In the opinion of Kristjana Gunnars, "Margaret Laurence has been a founding mother of Canadian literature. She has given voice to the Manawaka prairie" (viii). Gunnars continues: "She has had an influence beyond the borders of Canada as well. She is read, admired and studied all over the world". There are many who would agree with this claim.

Margaret Laurence was born in 1926 in a town called Neepawa, Manitoba. She was raised by her aunts, as she lost her parents when she was still a child.

Though the household was dominated by an authoritarian grandfather who did not believe in education for women and denied it to her stepmother, and though 'suffragette' was at that time a term ridiculed, it was also a household in which women were expected to be intelligent; by women, that is. Her aunts were lively women who had their own careers. (Atwood 385)¹

These experiences and her grandfather are later depicted in her collection of stories titled *A Bird in the House*. The young protagonist, Vanessa McLeod, after her father's death, moves to live in the house of her mother's father, where Grandfather Connor rules over women, by diminishing their role and importance due to their sex and his money.

Laurence finished school and was able to graduate from the University of Winnipeg in 1947. She got married the same year. In those years the Second Wave of feminism was yet not heard of, thus even larger was her dilemma to juggle the two roles, as a wife and mother, and as a writer. Laurence had never expected that her vocation may cause so much conflict in her life. A thought had just come to me, with enormous strength: I can't be a nurse; I have to be a writer. I was appalled and frightened.... I had no idea how many difficulties there would be, but I don't think it would have made a scrap of difference if I had known. What I realized that day was that I had a life commitment and could do no other. (qtd. in Lundberg 21)

Choosing this path was easy for Laurence. Nonetheless, being a writer and women with motherhood responsibilities was never the easiest task. Similar to Morag, Margaret Laurence wanted it all. Rejection of the role of a mother for the sake of being a writer was not an option: "I always wanted both: children and a chance to write. And I had both, though at a

¹ Some of the biographical information is taken from the Afterword to *The Diviners* by Margaret Atwood (383-389).

price”, admits Laurence (qtd. in Lundberg 6). Being a full time mother is a very demanding and momentarily tiring duty. The same can be said about writing. It goes without saying that Laurence often felt as she was compromising one part of her life for the other one. As Morag is uncertain of her motherhood “skills”, she is constantly worried about Pique; Laurence had similar doubts. Fortunately, she discovered that being a writer gives her an opportunity to stay home and spend more time with her children. Thanks to being able to do her work at home, she could spend with her children as much time as she needed. Additionally, in many interviews Laurence underlines how her experience of bringing up children enhanced her creative side. “I don’t believe ... that [the challenges of motherhood] made women’s writing less powerful, less broad in scope. If I hadn’t had my children, I wouldn’t have written more and better, I would have written less and worse” (qtd. in Lundberg 7). Her point of view is easily confirmed by the novels she wrote, especially by her last book, *The Diviners*. Her portrayal of Morag Gunn as a single parent, who struggles to write while at the same time raising a daughter, could not be more authentic as a depiction of the author’s own experience. Her writing, like Munro’s, convinces the reader to her point of view and helps one identify with her message.

Margaret Laurence called herself a feminist, yet she did not entirely agree with their agenda. Harriet Blodgett, the author of one of Laurence’s biographies, points out: “She is in sympathy with the contemporary feminist demand that more thorough and honest portrayals be made of female experience” (6). However, she did not approve of the claim that women should abandon lives as mothers and wives in order to pursue their careers and become more competitive with men. “I would say that if a woman doesn’t want to have kids, that is her business and hers only. But if she deeply does, that does not mean that she is not interested in anything else” (qtd. in Lundberg 22). Alice Munro agrees with Laurence, and their lives are testimonies that there is no need to reject the feminine side in order to become more than a housewife.

Chapter II

Alice Munro and *Lives of Girls and Women*

Alice Munro's works are a lot about what she has already experienced, discovered or simply what she knows about life; as she herself admits the heroes of her stories are close to her, in some way "real", as they are in a sense "aspects" of her character (Rasporich 23). Many of the characters, events and views on life that Munro has gathered through the years are the foundations for *Lives of Girls and Women*. In the book *Introducing Alice Munro's Lives of Girls and Women*, Neil Besner states that the novel is "the most powerful and manifold exploration in contemporary Canadian writing of the development of a young girl's life, her imagination, and her imaginative life", and this novel will be the main focus of this part of the essay (13).

Many of the critics are concerned with the extent to which one can call *Lives of Girls and Women* an autobiographical portrait of Alice Munro. As Neil K. Besner argues, all interested in the field are trying to deduce of how much of her own "material, and impulse may be seen to be working in" that book (*Introducing* 28). He reports that Munro herself describes that "this is not a text which is 'autobiographical in form but in fact'" (*Introducing* 18). Alice Munro admits that her family and friends were not used as models when she was creating the "cast" for her book (Besner, *Introducing* 18-19). Margaret Laurence is also very reluctant in admitting that *The Diviners* is an autobiographical. Certainly it has similarities with the author's life, Morag is very much like Laurence, and nonetheless, there are too many differences to make such a bald and straight forward claim.

It is claimed that Del's mother was fictional. "She is quite a long way from my own mother", explains Munro, "she has quite a lot of people in her, and actually, she is about the only character I feel I have completely created because she is quite different from anyone I have ever known" (qtd. in Rasporich 23). The only similarity may be that at one point of Mrs. Laidlaw's (Munro's mother) life she was selling fox scarves door-to-door in order to help in her husband's failing business. Addie Jordan sells encyclopaedias to farmers; yet still other facts distinguish her from the author's mother. V. Sam Sahayan points out that the manuscript with the history of the Wawanash County, written by Uncle Craig, could have its equivalent in Munro's life: "It is poignantly reminiscent of Munro's own first novel, left in the basement, and eventually, was thrown away by her stepmother", just as the manuscript given to Del was forgotten and finally ruined by a flood (Sahayam 11). There have also been many speculations saying that Wawanash County is highly based on Wingham, Munro's home town. One might certainly find many detailed illustrations of objects or people that have a lot in common with the writer's personal experience and memories as Munro is a realist in her writings. The author herself admits that she records "the way people live. The way houses are furnished and all the objects in them. I am crazy about doing these ... I do a lot of surface things" (qtd. in Sahayam 14-15). She pays enormous attention to pure details, the whole setting of events, houses, neighbourhood, people and clothes, etc. One of the reasons for the great quality of those descriptions is the usage of her own observations of the world she sees around her. "The fictional room, town, world needs a bit of starter dough from the real world", declares Munro, nevertheless one will not be sure how much of that "dough" she used herself (qtd. in Bright).

Lives of Girls and Women is a picture of a young girl that is going through different stages in her life, described in the particular chapters, and who finally becomes a young woman. Janet Beer, in "Short Fiction with Attitude: The Lives of Boys and Men in the *Lives of Girls and Women*", argues that the story of Del's development

becomes our intimate possession as Munro draws her readers into the smell and taste of the vulnerability, ignorance and venality that is girlhood in the confused and confusing years of the 1940s and 1950s through a series of narratives linked not chronologically but topographically. (125)

Alice Munro in her book gives the reader a story of a young heroine who tries not to lose her identity and beliefs, against the people and events that she encounters. Del Jordan is presented as a powerful, intelligent and self-confident young woman; however, she is not flawless. Drawbacks of her character will gradually improve as she discovers her sexuality and her desire of being a writer. "As chapters go on and Del grows up; a sense of tension grows; each crisis seems serious, less easily resolved", and that is exactly what every reader experiences (Rasporich 160). The book may be read by many and there is always a fragment that a reader can relate to and find something special for oneself.

Del and Her Love of Reading

Del's story is not only about turning into a woman but also growing into a confident writer. In the opinion of Beverly J. Rasporich, "Del Jordan is on her way to become the writer that her creator, Alice Munro already is", and she continues "Munro's voice can be heard in Del's ... as the narrator of her own fiction, as a child and adolescent seen through mature memory" (44). That wonderful collection of stories is a portrait of an artist, with young Del Jordan in the centre of that picture. The comparison of *Lives of Girls and Women* to *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce is inevitable. "Munro's portrayal of Del as an alienated and misunderstood artist is akin to ... [the image of] Stephen Dedalus" (*Contemporary*). Sue Thomas, in her interesting work "Reading Female Sexual Desire in Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*", agrees with this statement; moreover, she draws one's attention to the symbolism in the book, which will point out this particular novel was certainly written in the *Künstlerroman* tradition. "Birds are symbols of artistic and intellectual aspirations ... in the typical *Künstlerroman* birds are broken, crippled, strangled or hung, as a sign of the difficulty the woman artist has in reconciling her ambition with her sense of femininity" (S. Thomas 118). That is the reason why Del, after her first sexual intercourse, tells the story of a bird killed by a cat. On one hand, she might want her mother to know about that important event, since she does feel victorious afterwards. On the other hand, that may also symbolize her fear against Garnet, who may stand on the way of her turning into a female artist. Del Jordan is a strong character. Nevertheless, she struggles as she realizes more and more that what she wants to be, a writer, does not exactly fit the convention of the world that she gets to know better every day. She, like Munro, faces the dilemma that asks of her to choose between a life as a writer or as a woman.

Let us consider for a moment how important for a maturing young girl the women that surround her are. Joy Kogawa and Sky Lee, another two brilliant Canadian authors, present in their novels how significant our foremothers, mothers and other females are. The very same claim can be made in those two cases. Laurence gives Morag many female characters to look up to and learn from. In *Lives of Girls and Women*, Munro encircles Del with many female role models that change, shape and complement her. The protagonist's role is to realize this fact and embrace it, and not let it work against herself. This is one of the elements that are highlighted in the definition of the *Bildungsroman*. It goes without saying that mother's mistakes are very often repeated by her daughter. The magic of that collective identity works when one of those trapped in this "vicious circle" is able to stop and appreciate the previous generations and learn from them. Once the heroine is able to understand this, her life starts to make sense and all the pieces slowly find their place.

Due to that borne sensibility women are more connected to their foremothers than men are to their male ancestors. That brings a relevant threat for a young protagonist as she unconsciously may fall into the pattern of a wrong behaviour following by her mother. That is

true for Del Jordan. In the opinion of Magdalene Redekop, the author of *Mothers and Other Clowns: The Stories of Alice Munro*,

Trying to understand this danger one must also involve trying to understand what the danger means in the life of the writer as a young girl.... The name Del forms part of the name Adelaide, reflecting the difficulty a woman has in saying I when her identity threatens to merge with that of her mother's. (63)

That is why; the belonging and the feeling of community cannot be the only aim of the protagonist's pursuit. In order to be a part of that bigger picture, a family, a society, the heroine must first find her own self. Let us take a closer look at the ways that Del chooses or are chosen for her on her path in becoming a writer.

What clearly stands out is the fact that from the very beginning of the story the author is making it clear to us that Del Jordan is a writer. Redekop elaborates: "We know that Del will be a writer because she is conscious of surfaces – the flowery surface of language itself, the surface of our conventions, our blankets, our enclosing houses, our masks, and our sacred cows" (69). Although the focus of that essay is Laurence's Morag Gunn and Munro's protagonist from *Lives of Girls and Women*, one has to admit that Del is much like other of Laurence's protagonists, Vanessa McLeod in *A Bird in the House*. Both of them are conscious and intelligent observers of the world around them. Del is a spectator who looks and listens; and all that information she later on, thanks to her brilliant imagination and love for language, uses to create stories. "Del chooses to write as a reader, constantly open to new texts, constantly invaded by other worlds. This openness, paradoxically, will lead to the development of a resilient self" (Redekop 80).

Those stories are always rooted in the reality that she experiences. She describes one of them: Though one day one of them – Pat Mundy – had smiled at me in passing, and I made up a daydream about her – that she saved me from drowning, that she became a nurse and nursed me, risking her life rocking me in her velvet arms, when I nearly died of diphtheria. (*LGW*² 59)

Her creative imagination, comparable to the one belonging to other protagonists, like Anne Shirley, together with her knowledge and passion for language are obvious clues concerning her future vocation.

The growth of Del into a writer is clearly depicted by the kinds of literature she is interested in at a given chapter of the book. In the article "The Art of Alice Munro: *The Beggar Maid* and *Lives of Girls and Women*", Rowena Fowler confirms this thesis, "Del sees the world in terms of her favourite novels, is disabused of her fanciful notions, and finally, we realize, undergoes experiences as exciting and disturbing in their way as anything she might read about" (189). Here Del Jordan may be cited: "The only world I was in touch with was the one I had made, with the aid of some books, to be peculiar and nourishing to myself" (*LGW* 113). Starting from the beginning one can list the types of literary works that occupied the young heroine's mind at particular stages of her development as a novelist.

The first chapter of the book, "The Flats Road", shows that Del reading of headlines of Uncle Benny's magazines helps her in expanding her imagination.

This paper was a world unlike the one my parents read about in the paper, or heard about on the daily news. The headlines had nothing to do with war, which had started by that time, or elections, or heat waves, or accidents, but were as follows: Father feeds twin daughters to hog; Woman gives birth to human monkey; Virgin raped on cross by crazed monks. (*LGW* 5) That is her only source of knowledge about the world beyond Jubilee. Her head is filled with images based on those short headlines which she was so curious of. "I read faster and faster, all I could hold, then reeled out into the sun, onto the path that led to our place, across the fields. I was bloated and giddy with revelations of evil, of its versatility and grand invention and horrific playfulness" (*LGW* 4). Thanks to that reading her imagination develops, is

2 The abbreviation *LGW* is used in my thesis instead of writing the whole title of Munro's novel.

stimulated. Moreover, she forms an awareness of a world that is beyond her own home, the Flats Road. This other world she will discover progressively from books and other written and oral accounts. This world will be for her a final destination, a promised land; until the time she will reach an understanding that being a part of the world of her childhood turned her into the person she is. At this stage of Del's life reading becomes a crucial way of organizing reality, a means by which she can begin to establish either connections or distances between her immediate experience and the events reported in texts ... reading provides her with one way of assessing what is "true" in experience. (Besner 37)

It is at this point where her fascination with language and words develops and is uncovered for the reader.

The next literary text important in Del's growth is Uncle Craig's historical account of Wawanash County. Since her uncle is gathering information, facts about the people of the county and then writing it down, the book itself is not compelling to her as a literary work. It is used deliberately as a comparison point for Del's fiction. Its purpose is to present to the reader what kind of a writer Del is aspiring to be and what is unacceptable to her. From the very beginning of the novel one can easily notice how important words are for the young protagonist. She is clearly enchanted by the language and its magic. She pays a lot attention to words spoken around her: "tomb! I loved the sound of that word when I first heard her say it! I did not know exactly what it was, or had got it mixed up with womb..." (LGW 39). She contemplates words, and it feels to a reader as if she can almost "see" and "touch" them. "Heart attack. It sounded like an explosion, like fireworks going off, shooting sticks of light in all directions, shooting a little ball of light – that was Uncle Craig's heart, or his soul – high into the air, where it tumbled and went out" (LGW 52). She is a wordsmith, just like Morag Gunn, her awareness of words, their forms and hidden meanings play a significant role in her development as a writer. The writer with such a passion for language could never appreciate the kind of document which was written by her Uncle Craig. Her aunts, who try to persuade her to follow Craig's path, do not see the real Del. They are in no position to assume that "they are talking to somebody who believed that the only duty of a writer is to produce a masterpiece", and not a soulless and empty file (LGW 52).

The destroying of the manuscript, mentioned at the end of "Heirs of the Living Body", shows Del's attitude towards it. She becomes aware of the fact that she does not want to create these kinds of documents. According to Del they are without life and meaning: "I didn't want Uncle Craig's manuscript put back with the things I had written. It seemed so dead to me, so heavy and dull and useless, that I thought it might deaden my things too and bring me bad luck" (LGW 62).

In the chapter "Age of Faith" where Del recalls her quest to find religion, various theological texts serve her as the means to achieve her goals. They are like guidelines, but they never cease to confuse her with their theological points of view on life and faith of the religious person. Del Jordan argues about faith and religion with her mother and her younger brother Owen.

Addie Jordan's opinion on that subject is unfortunately of no help for her daughter. Due to Del's grandmother, Addie lost her faith in her early years and started blaming religion for her unhappiness and the pain that she experienced in her childhood and adolescence. The whole episode with the Bibles, as Addie claims, "cured me of religion for life" (LGW 64). Because of the mistakes made by her grandmother, "a religious fanatic" – as Addie calls her – Del suffers, because her mother, trying too hard not to repeat those errors, fell into the opposite, yet similarly destructive pattern of behaviour (LGW 63). She is an atheist, who is unable to help her daughter understand and show her the way through that confusion. She wishes Del would completely abandon this quest. Her actions do not produce desired results, because her teenage daughter is in need of some answer.

God was made by man! Not the other way around!... Man at a lower and bloodthirstier [sic] stage of his development than he is at now, we hope. Man made God in his own image. I've argued that with ministers. I'll argue it with anybody. (LW 89)

This particular behaviour, and others like it, will bring forward the doubt in Del's mind about her mother's wisdom and she will eventually start to diminish her mother's role in her own development. Del's mother does not understand her daughter and cannot see the motifs behind her actions. Del's fascination with God and the idea of faith is linked with her creative imagination. She is one curious soul and she is eager to discover new spheres in her life at different stages of her development. Establishing one's beliefs is one of the steps in becoming a self-confident woman and a writer. She is curious of God, she believes in Him, yet she is in need of some kind of evidence for His existence. She contemplates His mystery.

Could there be God not contained in the churches' net at all, not made manageable by any spells and crosses, God real, and really in the world, and alien and unacceptable as death? Could there be God amazing, indifferent, beyond faith? (LW 115)

Her inner inquisitiveness leads her to many congregations in Jubilee; she slowly realizes, however, that the answers are impossible to receive.

Next, one of the significant literary sources for Del are certainly the encyclopaedias sold by her mother. As James Carscallen puts it in his book *The Other Country: Patterns in the Writing of Alice Munro*, "Del finds the encyclopaedias a treasury of stories and pictures; and stories and pictures have their own kind of wisdom, if we can take them in the right way" (378). One reads that Del is fascinated by the volumes as they are a bottomless source of knowledge. In "Princess Ida" Del's hunger for words is more vivid. The encyclopaedias satisfy this appetite. They are challenging at first, with time however she manages to learn by heart much of their contents. Her description of the volumes brings to mind a "touchable" pleasure, as Del could feel them while reading them.

I loved their sedate dark-green binding, the spidery, reticent-looking gold letters on their spines. They might open to show me a steel engraving of a battle, taking place on the moors, say, with a castle in the background, or in a harbour of Constantinople. (LW 55)

These volumes, as Uncle Benny's newspapers, are also a source of the information about other world; the world that is even now unknown to her.

The information that Del learns from them, she later uses with her mother as a promoting aid. They will also serve as the first of factors to trigger her embarrassments. "She is responding to the social register that her mother ... almost never acknowledges putting Del's reaction down to 'shyness and selfconscious'" (Besner, *Introducing* 54). Here, the collective identity of women, the "vicious circle" must be mentioned once more. Addie's behaviour was taken after her mother who, though never forgave her mother for making her sell the Bibles to farmers, asks her daughter, many years later, to do the same with the famous encyclopaedias. Del's grandmother was called "a religious fanatic", and due to Addie's behaviour, she becomes something close to "an educational activist".

"Princess Ida" is also a chapter in which Del experiences her first encounter with the idea of the past and how can it differ depending on the person who is talking about it. She comes to realization that one can change one's own perception of the past. That focus is similar to what Morag Gunn goes through; as she puts great emphasis on the accuracy of her memories, questioning the versions of the past she has due to different circumstances of recalling the past events. As Del does not reach such a stage of development as Morag in *The Diviners* these discrepancies are not as crucial for Del as they are for almost fifty years-old Morag. Addie's version of her family home is confronted with her brother's accounts, which produces surprising results. "Del is always eager to learn about any version of the past, and to discard, appropriate, or adapt what she learns for her own purposes", Neil Besner underlines; she "is as much concerned with what she remembers as with how she remembers her mother's story, and this is a focus that will culminate in Del's discussion of how fiction renders the past" (59). Her concerns only give us more proof for the claim of her predestined vocation.

In “Changes and Ceremonies” Del is in her adolescent years. Since girls and boys’ relationships are on the level of cruel comments, Del is being catalogued and given a role in accordance with her gender. Discomfort and shyness are the only reactions that Del can afford in this moment of her life. Except spending time with her friend Naomi, Del is kind of a loner. Carscallen admits that Del “with one side of herself likes to be lonely... For years she has been withdrawing into town library, where she reads... all tales of romance in a world of danger” (265). Even now she takes her retreat in a place where she feels comfortable, surrounded by “friends”, books that she knows almost by heart. Naomi accompanies her often in these sessions, yet her attitude toward reading is not as enthusiastic as Del’s. “Anxious to justify literature in Naomi’s eyes – like a minister trying to show how religion can be practical, and fun – I hunted around” in order to find the parts of texts that would draw her friend’s attention (*LGW* 100). The growing gap between those two young women is here underlined.

Generally, Del takes an enormous pleasure in reading. We are also presented with Del’s great awareness of words. Seemingly meaningless letters on the door LAD ES REST RO M, PUBL C RE DING ROOM, give us a sense of Del’s understanding of words and text. At that point in her life she also discovers that her interests are not within the conventional norms of the society she lives in. Naomi fits these norms and Del is smart enough to comprehend how different they both are.

Next, one should take a closer look at the last chapter of *Lives of Girls and Women*. The most insight into Del’s creative self is given particularly in this last story of the collection. “The Photographer” contains Del’s own novel, which she created while her friendship with Jerry Storey, yet she has not written it down. The novel is about Caroline Halloway, an inhabitant of Jubilee. Her model was Marion Sheriff, local tennis player who committed a suicide. Since Del cannot understand and does not acknowledge the explanations about her mysterious drowning, she needs to create her own version through words and language.

In Del’s novel Caroline is a woman who is not afraid to satisfy her sexual desires. She was a sacrifice, spread for sex on moldy uncomfortable tombstones, pushed against the cruel bark of trees, her frail body squashed into mud and hen dirt of barnyards, supporting the killing weight of men, but it was she, more than they, who survived. (*LGW* 204-205).

When the new photographer comes into town, Caroline seems to be the only person not afraid of him. As his pictures depict people in a plain and ugly manner, which seems to be an indication of their true nature; Caroline is the only one brave enough to face it. She is the only one not hiding her true self from people in order to fit their conventional norms. When the photographer disappears, Caroline walks into the Wawanasha River.

This novel has a vital role for our understanding of the protagonist’s personality. It is a kind of a gateway for her feelings and thoughts. Like Morag’s novels have a cleansing effect on their author, the same is in case of Del and her creation, Caroline. It

enables her to play out and control her fascination with the irrational, with sexual transgression in the abstract... Caroline’s madness seems to be a version of the “softening of the brain” Addie sees in female sexual desire; Caroline’s brother’s idiocy may be read as a projection of Del’s anxieties about her anti-intellectual brother, Owen. (S. Thomas 116)

Additionally, Sue Thomas claims that “Caroline Halloway seems to be Del’s fantasized double, her history realizing the dark underside of Del unreasoned ... sexual desire” (116).

Just like Caroline, Del is not afraid of her true self; she is confident and self-conscious. She is aware of the fact that she might not get her scholarship due to her “obsession” with Garnet French, yet she believes that the insight she gained thanks to that experience is priceless. Here one may almost say that Del has reached the final stages of her development as a writer. She is perceptive of the world around her and understands the difference between the reality and the fiction that she creates, the reality she herself invents to her own advantage and for her own purpose.

At the end of “The Photographer” Del is invited for lemonade and cake by Bobby Sheriff, Marion’s brother. This unexpected meeting helps her realize the truths that were hidden from her up till this moment. She finally finds what she was looking for.

It did not occur to me that one day I would be so greedy for Jubilee...

What I wanted was every last thing, every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark and walls, every smell, pothole, pain, crack, delusion, held still and held together – radiant, everlasting. (*LGW* 210)

Del is an observer, a spectator who longs for more information, details which will help her create her own vision, her own picture of things she can and cannot see; her own version of events that she experienced or heard about. “Bobby is not Del’s lover or even an ordinary friend – Del finds him a bore, in fact – and yet he gives her something that none of the other boys and men in her life has given her: a mysterious blessing and commission” (Carscallen 174).

As was presented above, tracing down the texts, occupying Del’s world, one can easily depict the process of *Künstlerroman* that is revealed in this novel. This road, however, is not without obstacles to be conquered by the young heroine. Rowena Fowler, in her essay on Munro, claims: “Del has two special handicaps to contend with in understanding the relationship between literature and life”, one of which is being Canadian (191). Elaborating on that she explains: “‘Reality’ is a special problem for a writer in rural Ontario, who cannot mention the nearest city without having to explain that her London is not the ‘real’ London” (Fowler 191). As for Del, the same can be said about Morag Gunn, who is particularly influenced by her nationality. Though, at first, that fact may be problematic, as the difficult and complicated history of the country makes things harder, at the end Morag Gunn turns her heritage, her Canadian roots into a great advantage to herself and her writing. Del Jordan seems also to be at peace with the place she grew up in, despite her strong desire to leave it when she was younger. Thus one has to agree that they were able to turn this so called “disadvantage” into “a possibility”.

The second problem that Del and Morag face is the fact that they are women. Being a female writer brings certain dilemmas and makes some women question their motifs in choosing such paths. “She is experiencing a distrust of language because of its biased interpretations of her as a woman, and repelling a statement which unfairly denies her credibility as a female artist because she may be inclined to interpret reality subjectively” (Rasporich 190). After Naomi’s father reads them a story from the Bible about virgins, her confusion is vividly underlined. Naomi’s father interprets it as a story about sex, more, a story forbidding it. Del does not agree with that version because she, as a young developing woman, wants to find out what sex is and try it herself. That particular scene raises a problematic question since it contains that “masculine bias”, which will be contemplated by Del later on, after she decides to become a writer (Rasporich 175). Del will doubt herself as a writer, as she certainly is a young woman of passion, aware of her needs and desires. Moreover, she will question herself as a woman. Unable to act according to the standard requirements set by men, she is afraid of being undesirable for the opposite sex. Questions like that are obviously less likely to occur in a male-artist’s mind, as he does not consider his skills and talents as a disadvantage in relations with women. Del

resists the seeming self-division of her mother, but also learns that to be a young woman with intellectual talents is to be tormented by the thought one might be unwomanly and hence unable to attract male love, the conventional sign of feminine power. (S. Thomas 112)

Del does not fit the conventional picture. Her interests are not focused simply on being a wife and mother.

What was a normal life? It was the life of the girls in the creamery office, it was showers, linen and pots ... then, turning it over, it was the life of the Gay-la Dance Hall, driving drunk at night ... listening to men’s jokes, putting up with and warily fighting with men and getting hold of them – by undertaking and getting used to them both, a girl is putting herself on the road to marriage.... And I was not going to be able to do it. (*LGW* 161)

Nevertheless, all the doubt and continuous search for answers turn Del into the young woman and a beginning writer she is at the end of the book. As Rasporich suggests “Del becomes in the course of the narrative not only a female adolescent heroine ... [but also] what Munro is

herself, a startling executioner of the image – of marvellous portraits frozen in time and space” (51). Since being a female writer is a path that requires taking difficult decisions, it was not easy for Del Jordan to become who she is. As she “grows up, is ‘baptized’ into direct sexual experience, suffers its tragedy, and decides for the womanhood of ‘real life’ beyond adolescent illusions ... she receives the vocation to be an artist” (Carscallen 163). Del Jordan at this point realizes that she cannot be attached to the confusing life of sex, passion and love in order to become true female author.

Del’s life’s experience, especially the memorable event in Wawanash River, where Garnet tried to “baptize” her into his religion and his way of perceiving women and their role in the society, makes her believe that abandoning him and feelings she had for him is the only option. According to Nancy K. Miller, “The heroine’s choice to go beyond love, beyond erotic longings, is the figure that the ambitious wishes of women writers (dreamers) take” (qtd. in S. Thomas 108). At least not at the stage of her life when she reaches the end of the last story she narrates. By comparing Del to Morag, one concludes that she was not as lucky as the heroine of *The Diviners*. With Del’s recent encounters with men, it is difficult for her to see any other path except the one that she is determined to take. One may only assume that it will change, too.

Men in Del’s Life

A central concern of this thesis is to present how the encounters with different people change and enrich our protagonists. At this point, let us take a closer look at Del Jordan’s path to discover her sexuality. In order to understand and see clearly this part in her development, the focus must be drawn to the analysis of men who appear in Del’s life. This part of the young protagonist’s life is vital for her realization as a woman, and as a writer.

During her growth, Del does not reject the fact that she is a woman; moreover, she plans not to neglect her desires and inner curiosity. Similar to Morag Gunn, she does not understand and will not agree with a statement that she cannot have it all: to be a successful writer and a happy and satisfied woman at the same time.

Let us here consider this process that pushes Del in the end to alter her thoughts and become a woman who feels that the female-artist has to abandon all that is feminine. In “Changes and Ceremonies” Del is going to experience her first sexual encounter. Her desires will be stronger in her, as she comes across a boyfriend of her Fern’s, who is her mother’s closest friend in Jubilee. His presence in the protagonist’s life, the feelings that it evokes, will make her question her own nature.

Mr. Chamberlain assumed without any trouble at all that there was treachery in me, as well as criminal sensuality, waiting to be used. He had known I would not mention it to my mother ... all the time [I have] been conscious of my depravity vigorous as spring wheat, my body flowering with invisible bruises in those places where it had been touched. (*LGW* 137)

Chamberlain’s behaviour is certainly morally wrong, yet Del is too young, and still too curious to discover this sphere of life, to reject the relationship that develops between them. She let herself “become the ultimate It of masculine and puritan invention” to him (Rasporich 49). At first, she fantasizes about being an object of Mr. Chamberlain’s sexual desires. Rae McCarthy Macdonald, in an article “Structure and Detail in *Lives of Girls and Women*”, explains that “Chamberlain paws Del secretly and assumes her compliance in his plan to rob Fern of his old love letters ... Del expects to be seduced” and because of that fact she let him manipulate her. Later on, she is not certain whether this whole masquerade was worth it. Their short relation reaches its climax when he masturbates in front of her. In the opinion of Rasporich, Del is “rescued from Mr. Chamberlain by absorbing the joke at her own expense; the gloomy landscape is dispelled when she realizes the ironic incongruity between her expectation and the mean reality of Mr. Chamberlain” (114). Del is disappointed by that

course of events, she does not feel impressed, and the whole situation is for her a theatrical act rather than a real experience. "It did not bring back any of my excitement, though. It did not seem to have anything to do with me.... In fact the whole performance, surrounded by calm flowering branches, seemed imposed" (*LGW* 170). Nevertheless, this episode provides Del with important information about the reality and the role of fiction. For the first time she is the partaker in the events. She does not acquire this experience through reading or tales she hears. That is the reason why from now on she will long for more direct contact, touchable evidence that she will be able to use in her stories. Besner provides an interesting perspective claiming that

the central irony is that her experience ... will not only reinforce the passive role in which almost all her reading casts women, so that her only recourse, perhaps, will be to become a writer – one who can describe, and fend off, the role prescribed for her by describing, and in this way deflating, the power that Mr. Chamberlain thinks that he wields. (*Introducing* 86)

In the chapter called "Baptizing" the reader comes across Del's short relationship with Jerry Storey. At this point it is true that "Del grows distant from her old friend, and the marital process generally, just as Naomi is consolidating her prospects" (Carscallen 413). The school and the future plans, of leaving Jubilee, become a priority; thus, Jerry becomes her closest friend. He is a misfit as his odd ways of being makes him not accepted and understood by other students. His ambition is to get a good scholarship and leave Jubilee. They share interest in knowledge and goals for the future. Their relationship is not a sexual one. There are moments where, mostly due to pure curiosity, they hold each other's hands or kiss. These single episodes are always amusing and awkward. Even the event when Del takes off all her clothes and lets Jerry examine her body turns out to be a comic and unfortunate moment. Nonetheless, this episode provides the reader with yet another proof for the power which language has for Del. When she is uncomfortable, language is used as a shield against those feelings. "When she undresses for Jerry Storey, she feels 'absurd and dazzling' but both of them reach instantly for language to clothe this confrontation" (Redekop 69). During her last encounter with Art Chamberlain she also falls back on words for help to soften the impact that it has on her.

In the previous chapter, "Changes and Ceremonies" Del expresses a different opinion about Jerry. As other kids she thinks that he is odd and laughs at him with others. In the chapter "Baptizing", however, her judgement of Jerry completely changes

I thought now there was something admirable, an odd, harsh grace about the way he conformed to type, accepting his role in Jubilee.... He offered up himself, not pretending to be an ordinary boy, but doing the things an ordinary boy would do, knowing that his performance could never be acceptable, people would always laugh.... He could not do otherwise; he was what he seemed. (*LGW* 199-200)

Getting to know him better has changed her opinion; and they become close friends. Eventually, however, Jerry and Del part as the differences between them are too big to overcome. Del is turning into a young woman who slowly develops feelings for Jerry for what he is not ready yet. Jerry Storey's thoughts are focused on scientific truths, getting the scholarship and being admitted to college; he is still too immature for Del. L. M. Eldredge insists, in her paper titled "A Sense of Ending in *Lives of Girls and Women*", that the end of this relationship for Del means "avoiding the torpor of Jerry Storey, who belittles her and lacks sex appeal". Although she feels disappointed, breaking off the friendship was the only possible way.

Next, let us consider the heroine's sexual relationship with Garnet French. One may say that this episode is about "the conflicting claims of individual freedom and biological destiny" forced on women (Fowler 192). At this point of her life Del is going to choose what role she is willing to take; she will decide on the way other people, including men, will look at her. As the next example will show, the choice is not so easy to make. The division between sexes may be here a statement from the book made by a New York psychiatrist, who claims that the discrepancies between man and women can be illustrated by looking into the way of thinking

of a couple admiring the sky. While he is contemplating the universe, female thoughts focus on the need to wash her hair. Fowler emphasizes here that, "Del knows that that is not how she thinks, but instead of doubting the article she doubts herself ... and feels trapped in a dilemma" (191). At the end she chooses "to be abnormal", and have both "men to love her and to think of the universe" when she looks at the moon (Rasporich 50).

Del Jordan's relationship with Garnet French is purely physical. According to Sue Thomas, "Del celebrates her sexuality in her relationship with Garnet in variety of settings... Caroline Halloway's sexual generosity is played out in similar, but darker settings", and she adds, "like Caroline, Del is interested only in the body of her lover. Del's double commits suicide in response to the return of what is repressed in Del's relationship with Garnet: the possibility of pregnancy and loss of her lover" (117).

Del's fascination with Garnet makes their connection hollow, only on a sexual level, as Del admits that she feels triumphant after their first intercourse. Janet Beer illustrates this relation; Such a physical obsession can exist only in a place where language is denied entry; Del cannot afford to hear the words he actually speaks ... the words when they are actually spoken are so disappointing, so affronting that Del must remove them from their status as forms of expression that might require a response. (129)

Her awareness of that threat comes from her mother, who systematically tries to convince her daughter that there is nothing good ever to come out of the relationship with a man, except children. As Rae McCarthy Macdonald describes, "in her [Del's] complete abandon, she forgets caution and burns her bridges. Her school work slides, and she fails too with the expected scholarship; that road to freedom, if it was one, has been lost", then she adds that Del is "left with Garnet and their passion suddenly seems to develop a second face. Garnet wants to get married.... She senses that he wants some kind of denial of her dreams – books, art, knowledge – which threaten him". Their affair ends in the Wawanash River, where Garnet tries to "baptize" Del into his religion. It also symbolises his attempt to convert her into being a woman that leads a life knowing her place in the men's world. Again, Del uses here language to comfort herself after these unexpected events. On her way home she is trying to remember lines of a childish rhyme, once more reaching for words as her lifeboat. Redekop summarizes that episode:

The scene is existential and what is dramatized is the fact that Del's reading and writing will be a form of survival.... Far from being a victim, Del here discovers her own power.... This rebirth of the self is accompanied by the return of Del as a reader. (84)

Del survives this test and goes home more confused and surprised than unhappy. Her reaction comes from the fact that she did not assume that Garnet would ever think that he may have any power over her, or that he would ever presume that he can make her devote her life to him like that. After that event Del Jordan seems to have chosen her path in life.

Despite the angst of the modern heroine, she continues to quest self-fulfilment.

Acknowledging, as [her mother] does that, 'All women have had it up 'till now ... with men', the modern heroine renounces the subordinate, maturing role of the past in favour of independence, social authority and her own humanity. (Rasporich xiv)

Regardless of this fact, she is able to regain her "humanity" and, her own self, she lost faith in men and abandoned hope for a happy relationship and a successful writing career at the same time.

Girls and Women in *Lives of Girls and Women*.

“There is a change coming I think in the lives of girls and women. Yes. But it is up to us to make it come” (LGW 146).

The importance of foremothers and women who surround our protagonist, this collectiveness of actions and thoughts was already underlined in this essay. According to Carscallen intervals of a different kind are indicated by the book’s title, with its suggestion of the lives of many girls and women. Yet these lives, while lived by others like Mrs. Jordan and Fern Dogherty and Naomi, are also of Del herself, who contains and transcends them all; and the work itself, for all its spacing and multiplicity, is as united as it is various. (163)

Del’s development proceeds in its way and is led by the events and people that she encounters. For a woman other females, who she has an opportunity to observe and interact with, have a major impact in her growth.

In the chapter “The Flats Road” one has an opportunity to meet Madeleine, Uncle Benny’s wife. Belonging to “Munro’s most striking models of female savagery”, she impresses Del “by her triumph, her raging acts against all and sundry, including men” (Rasporich 45). Del sees her as a very powerful figure; someone who is able to gain anything thanks to the fear she evokes in others.

Her violence seemed calculated, theatrical; you wanted to stay to watch it, as if it were a show, and yet there was no doubt, either, when she raised the stove lifter over her head, that she would crack it down on my skull if she felt like it = that is, if she felt the scene demanded it. (LGW 15)

Her behavior appears fascinating for young Del, who tries to give it more tragic meaning. Her influence may be traced later in the story when Del bites her cousin at Uncle Craig’s funeral. This incident is a copy of that outrageous, mad behaviour of Madeleine, which Del has witnessed. Del tries to incorporate her way of acting as she can notice that it gives Madeleine certain power, it is a way to achieve what she wants. That kind of behaviour suits the young heroine owing to the fact that she is a strong person from the beginning, who is also aware of her desires and is determined to satisfy them.

Moreover, Madeleine serves as a counter character to Del’s aunts, Grace and Elspeth. These old spinsters live together, and when one comes across them in the story for the first time, they seem entertaining, happy and satisfied with their lives. At some point of Del’s life their house was important to her; she was wise enough to notice its attractiveness and what she could learn there.

There was a whole new language to learn in their house. Conversations there had many levels, nothing could be stated directly, every joke might be a thrust turned inside out. My mother’s disapproval was open and unmistakable, like heavy weather; their came like tiny razor cuts, bewilderingly, in the middle of kindness. They had the Irish gift for rampaging mockery, embroidered with deference. (LGW 31)

Her visits at her aunts’ house made her feel “disloyal” to her mother. Their house is of a bigger interest to her than her mother’s home, additionally, their view on woman’s role was so much different from Addie’s, which made them even more alluring to Del, who, at this point was in the phase of constant negation of her mother’s word.

Their views on the role of a woman in the world are old-fashioned, and contradict not only Addie’s but Del’s way of thinking as well. They fully approve the higher importance of men’s work over women’s; therefore the centre of their existences is their brother Craig, later his manuscript about the Wawanash County. “They were prepared to believe in what he did” (LGW 27). Grace and Elspeth seem content and try to excuse their choice by preaching that married women should be sympathized with and not those that are single. As Rasporich illustrates, in the story Del Jordan discovers later that

beneath the facade of Grace's and Elspeth's girlish innocence ... an under current of hostile emotion. The spinsters seemingly accept their civilized and subordinate position, but in their jokes and conversation they betray 'tiny razor cuts' of malice and potentially murderous disposition. (53)

With the death of their brother, who was the main focus of their existences, their lives have changed and become pointless, what for Del means losing all their brightness and attractiveness.

They said the same stories, they played their old jokes, which now seemed dried out, brittle with use.... This was what became of them when they no longer had a man with them, to nourish and admire, and when they were removed from the place where their artificiality bloomed naturally. (LW 60)

Next on the list is Nile Morrison, Addie's brother's wife. She is quite different from the women mentioned above. She might be called a *femme fatale* of the book as she is the only woman that is cold-blooded and able to use men for her advantage without being violent as Madeleine. Although Nile seems unintelligent and dull, Del admires her for being so sophisticated, fashionable and beautiful. Beverly J. Rasporich explains Nile's role in the further development of the main character, "Cleopatra-like she is a striking example of the siren and the tempting invitation to Del to the female life of sexual desirability and possible conquest ... she anticipates the forthcoming eroticism of Del's own virginal female psyche" (47). At the point of their meeting Del Jordan fantasizes of being just like her. Nile is the only woman met by Del in her young life, who is connected to our heroine's sexual curiosity, desires and fears. Nile might be one of the models which are incorporated into Del's creating of Caroline. The protagonist created by Del is elegant and dressed with style, the characteristics recognised by Del in her aunt Nile.

Another female character in the story important to Del is her girlfriend Naomi. She is significant for Del's understanding of the transformation she is undergoing in her adolescence. Together they start a search in order to find answers concerning sex and that sphere of a woman's life. The only help her mother is able to provide her daughter with is to warn her against having sex, as it is straight way to having children. That is why Del and Naomi try to discover this sphere of a woman's life on their own. Together they spend long hours in the library reading and discussing problems, concerning men, sex, the body's anatomy, pregnancy or child birth. Despite the fact that Naomi accompanies Del in her voyages to the town library, she is not herself interested in reading books. "Del must lure Naomi into the library by finding passages about sex in the books she has read" (Macdonald). With time, however, they grow apart as a result of differences in their views on life and their future.

Naomi serves yet another purpose; she is a representative of a world in which Del does not feel comfortable. Her attempts to be like Naomi usually end up as big failures, lead the protagonist to a conclusion that her personality and the way she is make her much different from what Naomi and other girls are like.

Naomi, who quits school for an office job in the creamery, leaving Del momentarily in abject misery and isolation. Naomi has joined the small legion of trousseau-saving women who, depilated and deodorized, adopt a whole set of pots and payment and equally steely conventions of baby-showers, dress and hairstyles. (Rasporich 49)

Naomi serves as a mean to present a woman who chooses to be a wife and a mother, who does not consider her own intellectual development and business career as important. "Naomi philosophically accepts her fate (unlike Del she has vision of no other), yet part of her feels cheated, and she warns Del" so she would be careful with men (Macdonald).

Del is under peer-pressure to adopt and approve this kind of role that society has for her; fortunately for her, in the end she chooses to take a different route.

Before a more detailed analysis of the relationship between Del and her mother will be presented, one should devote one paragraph to Miss Farris, Del's school teacher. The reason for this is the fact that her life and tragic death give Del more insight into her writing prospects and teaches her more about the relation between reality and fiction. The description

of Miss Farris provided by Del is rather a pitiful one. She is an old spinster, living her life for what seems an eternity, in Jubilee. Due to her single status she is a subject of gossip and humiliating comments. There is only one thing that Miss Farris lives for; "The operetta was her passion" (*LGW* 103). Her life revolves only around those few moments in her career when she staged operettas for the town's community. "She sent those operettas up like bubbles, shaped with quivering, exhausting effort, then almost casually set free, to fade and fade but hold trapped forever our transformed childish selves, her undetected, unrequited love" (*LGW* 118). She is lonely and seems to take no pleasure in life, except the performances and skating. Her life appears "unreal" to people, her life is empty. Her suicide, according to Del, is the only "real" act she performs in her life.

Miss Farris is lost, unable to separate the life of her shows from reality. She sinks too deeply in the world of her dreams, the costumes and music, for it is too late for her to come back. As "the relationship between art and life, operetta and classroom are more ambiguous and more complex than this simple opposition", says Besner, "Del will not make the fatal mistake that Miss Farris does, of being forced to believe wholly in one of them, and to live as if it were the laws of the world of the operettas that would order her life" (*Introducing* 75). The protagonist is much stronger than her teacher and she is able to use fiction and art to her purpose, to develop her personality; not to destroy herself.

Finally, yet importantly one must bring forward Del's relationship with her mother as it will be crucial in the development of the young heroine. Due to the fact that this particular relationship is not presented as a leading one in the book, one has to focus more on analyzing the changes in the young heroine's personality. Addie Jordan has a huge impact on her daughter, which is discovered by the young heroine later on in her adult life.

The story of Addie Morrison is not a joyful one. She grew up in a poor family, run away and tried to make a life on her own, as an independent woman. Unfortunately, she did not succeed and in spite of her aspirations she married Mr. Jordan and moved back to the country. Mrs. Jordan was not happy in Flats Road, her pursuit of content and knowledge leads her to Jubilee. Her job as an encyclopaedias' seller makes her believe that she can finally make a difference. Xiaoxi Li and Caie Qu in their essay "The Understanding of Metaphors in *Lives of Girls and Women*" provide a description of Mrs. Jordan that reads: she writes letters to newspaper editors, including letters to a city paper. She signs them with the nom de plume "Princess Ida", a reference to Tennyson's poem "The Princess", in which the royal heroine sets up a college for the education and emancipation of women.... Addie who tries to lift herself out of her narrow life and who pursues rationality, independence and mobility is frustrated by people with conventional ideas and is presented by the author as the victim of a rural, male-dominated society. (Li and Qu 102)

Mrs. Jordan wants a change in life for her daughter. Addie wants Del to win the scholarship so she can move on and be able to manage her life freely. What clearly stands out is the fact that Del does not respect her mother, she always negates her, is embarrassed by her, and she constantly tries to confront her. Del challenges the story told by her mother about the times when she was a little girl, especially about the cruelty of her brother and their mother's blind devotion to the church. When Del's finally meets her uncle she gets to know his version of their childhood, which in fact turns to be entirely different from her mother's. His story is less bitter and contains more happy memories. Del does not believe in her mother's version and thinks that Addie's stories will at the end turn to nothing.

Despite all this, as Cinda Gault expresses in her essay "The Two Addies: Maternity and Language in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*", above all Del does take after her mother, whether she wants it or not. Most importantly she inherits her mother's love for a language and words. The young heroine, "builds on her mother's fascination with language, and she redefines her own teenaged rebellion against her mother as more about the language than content" (Gault 453-454). Mrs. Jordan is a representative of the 'old-feminism', and she does not understand the pleasures of

one's own body and sexuality in general. Sue Thomas points out, "Del thinks of her artistically and intellectually aspiring mother as romantic/sexual failure" (111).

Del wants to avoid her mother's fate and hers "attitudes, which embrace learning of any kind and deny sexual experience" (Eldredge). Yet, at the end Del will eventually make decisions her mother would like. Del's mother offers her a very different face of woman from either Madeleine or the aunts. The world of intellect, reason and the arts is her muse, and because she doesn't conform to any acceptable ideal of motherhood in a small town is a chronic embarrassment and a social humiliation to a conforming Del. While Del remains unconvinced about her mother's denial of romantic love and her somewhat prudish attitude towards sex, she is inspired by her despite herself. (Rasporich 46).

Mrs. Jordan is given importance by being the one to voice one of the most vital sentences of the book (28 in this essay), which somehow underlines the whole message of that work. Mrs. Jordan's fate is disappointing for her daughter, who does not recognise her strength and wisdom. Addie Jordan tries to manage her own life in order to give her daughter the possibility of choice and opportunities she never had. The changes that she mentions are meant to be made by her daughter, and Mrs. Jordan just wants to prepare Del for them. Regardless of the fact that Del tries to be unlike her mother, she rejects at the very end passion, love and her right to be fully satisfied; just as Addie wants her to. Her fate is not as cruel as her mother's, thanks to Addie's support; nevertheless, her attitudes and views on life parallel with the ones held by Mrs. Jordan. One can only speculate that later in her life Del, as Morag, will encounter positive models that will alter her mind and give her back her dream of being able to compromise life of a writer and a self-confident woman.

It seems very likely to happen, as Del Jordan is a young woman with strong desires, which are depicted by her in the black fable about Caroline, created in her high school years. Though, cynical at the end of the novel, she may want to abolish this kind of thinking and prove that a woman does not have to forget about her femininity and sexuality in order to be an acknowledged writer; she might want to prove that a woman can have it all. She might want to follow the footsteps of other Canadian heroine, Morag Gunn, who actually achieves it all.

Chapter III

Strength of *The Diviners*

The Diviners is an engaging novel, and its protagonist is one of the most memorable of the kind. Morag Gunn is among Laurence's best creations. She is smart, strong, independent, yet down to earth and authentic. In her work "Margaret Laurence's Manawaka Heroes: Hagar, Rachel, Stacey, and Morag as Archetypal and Feminist Heroes", Jolene Marion Davis underlines that "Laurence aims for 'real characters' in her work and she means for us to identify with her protagonists: this is why she makes them insecure, stubborn, prideful, and cranky" (120). That is also a reason why one cannot easily forget the world and life of Morag Gunn long after the novel is finished.

In order to discover her secret for satisfying life one has to take a closer look at the novel and Morag's journey. As it was presented above with *Lives of Girls and Women* and Del's life, *The Diviners* must also be approached from different angles. One will not focus exclusively on the artistic parts of the protagonists' lives. Del Jordan is not only a girl on the way to becoming a writer, but also a young woman on her way to adulthood. In the case of Morag that path goes even further. As *The Diviners* presents Morag's life beyond school years and her hometown, one can follow Morag until she is almost fifty-years old. She is a mother then, which is why this part of her life must be included in this analysis. It is highlighted throughout the novel how important the role of a mother is to Morag, thus our heroine has to be taken as a woman comprised of both of these functions: being a single parent and being a writer that publishes her works. Margaret Laurence, being a single parent herself, could utilize her own experience in creating more vivid and real female portraits, which only enriched her works. These women struggle with problems very similar to the ones faced by the readers of her novels. The following chapter will take a closer look at Margaret Laurence's last novel *The Diviners*. In her book, the author presents a life of a woman who decides to be a writer. The consequences of that decision will be hard to deal with, yet the intellect and heart of Morag Gunn will turn out to be a sufficient weapon against all odds.

Morag Gunn – the Wordsmith

From the very beginning of the novel the assumption that the main character is a writer is unavoidable. Her colorful imagination puts her in the group together with Del Jordan, Anne Shirley and others who unquestionably begin their lives as writers in the early stages of their growth. It starts with this imagination, tendency to embellish facts and reality, followed by daydreaming, writing short stories until they eventually reach their first publication.

In Morag's case this not easy road starts with her imaginative friend, Rosa Picardy, her alter ego, and her love for words. In her essay titled "A Portrait of the Artist as Laurence Hero", Sherill Grace admits: "From her early childhood, Morag loved stories and writing. She kept a scribbler full of her efforts and even attempted a poem on Jesus", which is used to underline how conscious Morag was about her writing even as a young girl (169). Morag's first poem "The Wise Men", about Jesus, is presented to her Sunday school teacher Mrs. McKee. She points out her mistakes, instead of finding out the strong points in a young girl's attempt to create. This teacher's error is exposed here, as she is unable to see beyond the substantial mistake, and focus only on the artistic side of the poem. Morag burns her poem and undermines her ability to write by comparing herself with an English poet; the comparison triggered again by Mrs. McKee's lack of knowledge. "Morag goes to her room. Sits thinking. Wants to cry, but will not, must not. *Blessed them till they flew away*. Oh. How could anybody write anything that good? She has shown 'The Wise Men' to Mrs. McKee, and there is no way

she can unshow it” (D 66)³. Although this episode depicts Morag as a self-conscious and very harsh critic of her own work, she does not give up her passion. In the words of Sherill Grace, “For Morag art and life are synonymous”, thus she will never abandon her path as a wordsmith (169).

Her awareness of words can be compared to the one possessed by Del Jordan. Both of the protagonists put an emphasis on the words and their meanings. The techniques cleverly used in the novel by Morag, like the snapshots, the Memorybank Movies all attests to her imagination and her ability to weave the fact and fiction of the past into a new whole. Moreover, the early parts of the novel are filled with the images of the young Morag writing.... Writing is central to Morag, and her growth as a writer provides the novel with much of its plot, placing it squarely in the tradition of *Künstlerroman*, as was already stated in the introduction (Ward 181). Let us now focus on that writing and how it all started.

Morag was given a great insight into language. Her unusual awareness and ability to create and perceive language is underlined from the beginning of the novel. Her imagination is her source of ideas, filled with characters to write about and events to describe. In the opinion of Kristin Ann Lundberg, who wrote a paper titled “Portraits of the Artist as Mother, Margaret Laurence’s The Diviners and Dance of the Earth” states: “This sense of characters as real people, as well as her emotional attachment to these characters, has been with Morag since childhood ... and it stays with Morag throughout her writing career” (43). Still, the serious attempts to write are triggered by stories, told by her step-father, Christie.

Christie Logan and his wife Prin agree to take care of orphaned Morag. Although Morag cannot see at first how lucky she is due to this fact, she is able to recognize their devotion and love when she is already a grown-up woman. Christie Logan is a strong and wise character. He tries to teach Morag to be tough, and fight for her own dignity. His words are always aimed at building up Morag’s confidence, despite the comments made by the townspeople. Owing to the fact that Christie is a garbage collector, his family has the lowest status in the society, which is a reason for people’s mockery. Christie wants Morag to understand that what people say and do cannot destroy one’s spirit. “They don’ touch me, Morag. For my kin and clan are as good as theirs any day of the week, any week of the month, any month of the year, any year of the century, any century of all time” (D 39). His words become understandable to Morag when she is older, and his teachings are the significant factors in building her inner strength and confidence.

Throughout the novel, one has a feeling that, regardless of what Christie says, he feels grief and the treatment he receives in town lies heavy on his shoulders. Nevertheless, in front of his little girl, to whom he undoubtedly becomes strongly attached, Christie plays a person who is immune to the outside world. It is his way of bringing her up, his way of preparing her for life where he will not be able to protect her. This is where he invents a story about Morag’s brave ancestor, Piper Gunn. Clara Thomas, in the essay titled “Pilgrim’s Progress: Margaret Laurence and Hagar Shipley”, fairly points out that “Christie, above all people, understands the need for dreams and he encourages in Morag these dreams that will lift her beyond and, though not until middle age, above the common lot” (159-160). The opportunity for the first tale comes when Morag reads, in “The Clans and Tartans of Scotland”, that “the chieftainship of Clan Gunn is undermined at the present time, and no arms have been matriculated” (D 40). This information, for already orphaned Morag, brings even deeper feelings of loneliness and detachment. Christie’s wisdom and his great insight into people’s souls make him react immediately. He invents for Morag an ancestor, not just a regular one, but the great Piper Gunn who led his people from Scotland to Canada. As Walter E. Swayze argues in his essay “Margaret Laurence: Novelist-as-Poet”, Christie “by his rhapsodic ossianic tales of Piper Gunn tells her who she is, where she comes from, what values she inherits” (13).

3 I will use a letter D in quotations to indicate that it was taken from the novel *The Diviners*.

Christie is not only an inspiration for Morag's choice of vocation, but he is also her guide and a teacher about people and the world. It is he that gives her back her faith in her parents. At the first opportunity he gets, Christie presents her father, Colin, as a war hero, who saved his life. Later she discovers that this story was also just one of his tales. "Well, d'you see, it was like the book says, but it wasn't like that, also. That is the strangeness" (D 73). His words excuse his storytelling, giving Morag a space to use her own imagination and decide on her own whether to believe in it or not. His storytelling is mostly done to lift Morag's spirit, and fill the emptiness that was created after death of her parents. As it is depicted in the novel, his tales seem to achieve their purpose. "As a Wise Old Man, Christie never tells Morag what to do. He allows her to make her own decisions. She must search for the truths within his stories and sayings", summarizes Davis, "he is a mentor and teacher for Morag's writing ... and he is the person who allows the hero to come to terms with her parents" (104-105).

He helps Morag believe in herself and, thanks to his talent for tales, provides her with the past that she can be part of. He gives her something she can be proud of. In spite of all Christie's doings, his role as her guide and as her protector is not clear to Morag when she is a young girl. In order to appreciate him, and see what the reader easily notices, Morag needs to abandon him and set on a long journey. After many years is she able to realize and finally recognize what he did for her, and how his teachings influenced her life. "If you want to make yourself into a doormat, Morag girl, I declare unto you that there's a christly host of them that'll be only willing to tread all over you", is a statement Christie uses to teach Morag self respect (D 88). That cynical and rather unique sense of humour is later adopted by Morag, who behaves and talks in the way she learnt from Christie. In the paper called "Genre and Gender: Autobiography and Self-Representation in *The Diviners*", Brenda Beckman-Long observes:

Quoted monologues, even those of the mature Morag, demonstrate the integration of Christie's words, proverbs, and tales, and their formative effect in the construction of the subject.... Christie's language acquires the force of a personal mythology in the construction of Morag's subjectivity. (94)

Thanks to Christie's tales and his inner knowledge of people and his faith in finding truths, Morag receives the insight into others minds and most importantly into her own soul. It is Christie who triggers in the young heroine the need to tell the stories in her own way, by writing them down.

After Christie's First Tale of Piper Gunn, Morag immediately creates her own story, based on the one just heard. She tells a tale of Morag Gunn, the brave wife of Piper Gunn. Later on, Christie's tales are being used to create more complicated story about one of Piper Gunn's men. "Although Morag's earliest stories were a retelling of Christie's, Morag now creates her own characters (Clowny McPherson) and situations, the ideas for her writing appearing to her seemingly by magic", emphasizes Laurie Lindberg in her essay "Wordsmith and Women: Morag Gunn's Triumph Through Language" (191). It is easy to notice that Morag is slowly learning how to create a story, and what it means for many to be a writer. "She does not know where it came from. It comes into her head, and when you write it down, it surprises you, because you never knew what was going to happen until you put it down" (D 70). From now on her attention will focus more on the surrounding her world, as she will look for inspiration for her writing. Morag is more aware of the fact that there is only one path for her and it is marked "being a writer".

The stories told by Christie serve many purposes. The main one, without a doubt is to trigger Morag's creative side and encourage her into writing and storytelling of her own. But the tales are also an escape from the difficult reality that the young protagonist has to face every day, owing to the financial and social status of her foster family. Furthermore, "The Tale of Piper Gunn and the Rebels" is told by Christie soon after Morag has her first intercourse with Jules Tonnerre. "Why does she want to hear it? She doesn't know. But the times when she was a kid and Christie would tell those stories, everything used to seem all right then" (D 105). She is confused and lost. Her insecurity makes her long for the times when all was easier and looked

brighter. In the words of Ken McLean, who wrote an essay "Dividing *The Diviners*", "Morag has just discovered her sexuality for the first time, and, unable to confront the responsibility and danger this means, she asks Christie to tell her one of his tales... Here she is hoping to use myth to escape adult reality" (100). Discovery of the sexual part of a woman's life is strictly connected with Jules "Skinner" Tonnerre, nevertheless this is not the only one of the roles he plays in Morag's understanding of herself. Jules comes from the Métis family, the only Indians in town, which puts his house just below the Logans. These circumstances give these two characters opportunities to develop a bond that would not be possible otherwise. They know what it means to be looked down at, mocked and have a father that everybody despises. But what they also share is a love for storytelling. As Lynn Pifer noted in her essay "It Was Like the Book Says, But It Wasn't: Oral Folk History in Laurence's *The Diviners*", "Through the deeds of Piper Gunn, Morag develops pride in her family history and in herself, even though the richer and more popular children at school mock her for being poor. Morag's experiences with her family story also help her understand Jules Tonnerre's family stories and his pride in his Métis heritage. (148)

Through Jules and herself she can see the power of storytelling. She discovers how important these tales are for both of them, what brings them even closer together. From the beginning of the novel one can easily notice how important are the tales told by Christie and these told by Jules. Thanks to them Morag is ready to tell her own stories.

As she becomes more conscious of the process of artistic invention, she also begins the purposeful development of her craft as a writer.... Morag does not choose to be a writer; her talent with language and her imagination have predetermined her course. (Lundberg 191)

As one can later discover Morag is not only concerned with the written language but she also gives a lot of focus to the words of speech. She is being raised by the town's scavenger and his not-too-bright wife Prin, which is not the best start she could get at school. The language register becomes an important component of her education as a person and as a writer. She is able to slowly understand the strength held by words. Jolene Marion Davis reasons that: Morag also learns that the proper use of language is a powerful tool. She realizes that she has an advantage at school because she learns to read and understand grammar quickly. She feels superior to Prin and to her classmates who are less adept than she, and she struggles to use language to her advantage. (88)

Morag notices how people call Christie a scavenger, and she understands that this word is used in order to mock him. When she is growing up she realizes that the language we speak can also indicate the belonging to a particular class in society. Since Morag lives in a poor household, and her foster family is not a respectable one, she longs for a change. Morag needs to fulfil her desire to belong with those who wear fashionable clothes, have haircuts done by hairdressers and are from so-called respectable homes. The language, which comes so easy to her, becomes the first step in her way to achieve this goal. Lindberg observes that Even at the age of seven, Morag is conscious not only of the role of a standard words usage as a criterion of respectability but also of speaker's intention. Morag's growing understanding of words makes it possible for her to censor her own language and thus avoid the negative reactions the vulgar language provoke in others. (189)

She changes the register, and rejects the speech taught to her by Christie. "Morag does not swear. If you swear at fourteen it only makes you look cheap, and she is not cheap, goddamn it. Gol-darn it" (*D* 89). Morag tries her best to fit where she does not belong; the truth which she discovers much later in her life. Nevertheless, she wants to achieve this acceptance that she always dreamt of.

This path leads Morag into the arms of an English professor Brooke Skelton, and the intelligentsia crowd of Toronto. Despite her most honest intentions she cannot stick to her husband's way of speaking. At the end it is Christie's teachings and his words that liberate her from Brooke's dominance. Before this however, one should devote attention to a man that was second in Morag's life, Jules Tonnerre and whose influence on Morag is just a little weaker than the one held by Christie Logan.

Jules was put on Morag's path to play many roles in her life, even though his presence in the book is rather short. Still, Laurence is able to equip him with such insight and knowledge of life that he serves, like Christie, as a mentor for Morag throughout her life. This kind of man, who Morag was fortunate to meet, was a luxury Del Jordan did not experience when she was growing up. Jules teaches Morag to be herself and follow her dreams even if that means going against the main stream. He teaches her about the role of his family heritage and her own and how important it is to be true to oneself. He also, despite his love of music and storytelling, shows her what meaning silence can have.

Jules is an outcast in the school and the society. He has a great voice for singing, yet words are not his domain. His behaviour teaches Morag how important silence can be for people. From the very beginning there has been very little oral communication between them. It starts with exchanging grins in class. Later on, when they develop a more intimate relationship, the words become even more pointless. They understand each other perfectly, supporting one another without any unnecessary commitments. Lindberg summarises: "Each has been an important part of the other's life, though the actual time they have had together has been brief. Although they have not talked much, or often, they have spoken truly, and the bond between them is solid" (198).

Jules "Skinner" Tonnerre is not so different from Christie. They are both disrespected by the society they live in, thrown at the margins of it because of their heritage or profession. The mocking is something that need to be dealt with on a daily basis. Christie and Jules share the same will to live and the strength not to let people get to them.

The Tonnerres (there are an awful lot of them) are called *those breeds*, meaning halfbreeds. They are part Indian, part French, from away back... People in Manawaka talk about them but don't talk to them.... They are dirty and unmentionable. (D 56)

It is a description by young Morag of Jules's family. Her point of view is being formed by the townsfolk, excluding Christie. He and his tales along with Jules's family stories teach Morag to overcome racism and intolerance; she grows closer to Jules. "Maybe Skinner does notice the passed remarks? Maybe he just doesn't let on", tries Morag to understand his behaviour (D 56). This attitude clearly pictures how alike Jules and Christie are. Cecil Abrahams, in his paper titled "Margaret Laurence and the Ancestral Tradition", underlines that Christie's response to mocking "corresponds in bitterness and frustration with that of Jules because both of them are the recipients of the irrational behaviour of the same narrow community" (141). Jules plays not only an important role in Morag's growth as a woman, but also a significant part in her development as a writer. According to Helen M. Buss, who wrote a paper called "Margaret Laurence and the Autobiographical Impulse", "Jules is the culmination and most complete expression of several characters in other works [by Laurence], and is vital to the liberation of Morag's artistic self" (161). As I mentioned above, Laurence puts Jules on Morag's path in order to provide her with a male character that encourages her to follow her chosen vocation no matter what. He is the example that proves to her that men do not always have to be a threat to woman's creativity. This fact allows Morag to liberate herself from the Second Wave of feminism, which proved to be insufficient for many women. Del Jordan from *Lives of Girls and Women* was not given this chance and because of this reason she still considers relationships with men as a threat to her career. Jules Tonnerre might be considered a blessing for Morag as he does save her when she is lost the most. From the moment he challenges her to cross the hanging bridge till their last meeting, Jules is pushing Morag forward and encourages her to do more, be better, even when it means a battle within her. He is her friend, her life-partner though the time they spend together is very short. Taking pride in his Métis heritage and acknowledging his father's role in his life, Jules presents to Morag how important the ancestors and the family are, despite the social status and people's opinions. He is the one who finally helps Morag recognise and understand Christie's intentions and his value to her.

"He's quite a guy, that Christie."

"I'm glad you think so."

“Don’t you?”

“He never tried to do anything,” Morag says...

“...You don’t like him being the Scavenger, do you? What if nobody would do it, eh? He’s worth a damn sight more than a lawyer – all those guys do is screw things up”. (D 109)

This conversation provides Morag not only with the opinion about her foster father that is not fogged by the discrimination or unfair judgment; it also proves once more how the experiences of both Jules and Christie form them to be bitter and angry with the world. They had their share of unfairness and hardship in life and they learn to deal with it in their own ways.

Despite the fact that Jules does not appear on many pages in the novel, his influence is underlined throughout the book by bringing him back to Morag at changing points in her life. The most important for our heroine is the moment when she meets Jules in Toronto as Mrs. Skelton, married to an English professor. Brooke Skelton, in the beginning, is portrayed by Laurence as Morag’s gateway to the world. He is her way out, her ticket to the better world, further and further from Manawaka. All the same, the reader and Morag are given hints to who Brooke really is and what kind of life with him can the protagonist expect.

“What do I like about you? I don’t even think I can say. You’re not exactly beautiful, but you will be. I don’t know. You’ve got a kind of presence. Perhaps it’s your mysterious nonexistent past,” he says. “I like that. It’s as though you were starting life now ... I mean genuine innocence.... But it’s a quality I love in you”. (D 158-159)

This indifference and lack of interest in her past reveals his self-centred nature and his need to be in charge. These words are a sample of his future behaviour that he will have towards Morag. As she is not pretty enough for him, he will create her just as he wants to: one of the qualities of an over dominant male. One can only wonder how an intelligent woman as Morag, and one uniquely sensible to words, has ignored these kinds of speeches and has agreed to marry a man who obviously is not what she was looking for. One may assume that Laurence let it happen in order to teach the protagonist a lesson and provide her with an opposite for Jules. Brooke is definitely a counterpart for Garnet French, who also wants to dominate over Del and is a threat to her individuality. Brooke sets himself on a mission to form Morag as he desires, and he initially succeeds owing to her lack of resistance.

Her transformation is clear. She attempts to shape herself in an image that Brooke has for her. She abandons the language she brought with her from home and works on altering the language in an effort to fit into Brooke’s world.... The formalized replies that characterize Brooke’s style of speech represent to Morag a way of identifying herself with the learned, cultured people whom she has always admired from afar. (Lindberg 193)

With time, Morag feels less and less herself and becomes nothing more than a trophy wife for her husband. He dominates over Morag, and she finally discovers that nothing in her life is as she desires; but all goes according to Brooke’s wishes. Helen M. Buss gives a fair description of Brooke Skelton, where she claims that he

prevents the progress of the feminine as surely as Timothy Connor prevents his daughter from going to college. Brooke not only becomes the authority on Morag’s life-style, clothing, intellectual development and writing production, but through her deeply felt need to “belong” ... he controls her femininity. (163)

Fortunately for Morag, Brooke is incapable of knowing the real her. That is why he cannot predict that she will eventually rebel against his will. Morag’s strength lies within her love for writing and her growing desire to become a mother.

She quit her university studies in order to marry Brooke and she explains it to herself as a necessary course of events. She still hopes that she will be able to write at home. As she tries to juggle her duties as a wife and writing of her first novel, she finally realizes how wrong she was about Brooke.

In marrying this teacher, Morag knows that she must learn to silence the voicing of her own perspective.... Initially, she is willing to sacrifice words to the man, but it proves to be a vow she cannot keep. Forced to choose, she finally chooses words and the freedom to mirror the

reality she perceives.... Here finding the voice (in Lilac) and shuttering the mirrors that have confined women to passive roles come together in the female experience as voiced and shaped by women. (Brydon 201)

Despite Brooke and her obligations towards him, Morag is at long last able to finish her first novel entitled "Spear on Innocence". The novels written by Morag play a vital role in her development not only as a writer but also as a human being. They are used as cleansing rituals, washing away the difficult past experience, leaving her with wisdom that derives from them. Thanks to her novels, Morag is able to rethink the past, relive it and come to terms with it. All her novels summarize past events, the ones recalled by her in the section THEN of the book. As Susan Ward states, "All of Morag's novels, from Spear of Innocence ... to the novel she is currently writing as the novel we are reading progresses, interweave pieces of Morag's past into the fictions she creates" (180).

The novels from *The Diviners* are easily comparable with the ones written by Margaret Laurence herself. Morag has written three novels and one collection of short stories, as Laurence did. As the protagonist finishes her fifth novel, which we are made to believe is the book we have just read, Laurence, at the same time, finished last masterpiece *The Diviners*. These similarities are certainly not accidental. Margaret Laurence gives one clues to enrich the interpretation of the novel as partly being autobiographical, which is also the case with Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* and is assumed by the definition of *Künstlerroman*. "Spear of Innocence" is Morag's Gunn first novel and it presents the life of Lilac, who, like Eva Winkler, goes through abortion. Brydon claims that this novel has much deeper meaning for Morag and especially for Laurence. "In writing Lilac's story, from Lilac's perspective, she is projecting the self-image of an oppressed group onto history" (Brydon 202). The decision of keeping the baby or having an abortion, in the author's opinion belongs to a woman and it is her own choice. Through Eva and later Lilac, Laurence wants to draw the reader's attention to this still unsolved problem. Eva has managed only thanks to Christie and the doctors who understood her situation, yet society is still not ready and not open to deal with these pressing matters. The decision of being a mother or not, as Laurence claimed, should always belong to a woman, and whatever choice she makes should not provoke intolerance and rejection in people.

The publishing of Morag's first novel also plays an important role in her inner development, as it gives her self-confidence a boost. She gains faith in her own strength with this success. This, together with her homecoming for Prin's funeral, gives her the necessary tools to liberate herself from the suffocating relationship with Brooke. The fight starts with her changing the register of her speech, and returning to the familiar language of Christie Logan. Little one. Brooke, I'm twenty-eight years old, and I am five feet eight inches tall, which has always seemed too bloody christly tall to me but there it is, and by judas priest and all the sodden saints in fucking Beulah Land, I am stuck with it and I do not mind like I did once, in fact the goddamn reverse if you really want to know, for I've gone against it long enough, and I'm no actress at heart, then, and that's the everlasting christly truth of it. (D 210)

In this speech, the words she knows from home, from her past, which she was supposed to forget, are all coming back to her. The familiarity with them is giving her strength. She discovers more and more how unsatisfying her life with Brooke is, and how wrong her judgment about herself was. Writing is her life and she cannot be with a man who denies her that. "Morag is secretly building an independent existence as a writer, apart from Brooke or his opinions; Brooke's appraisal of her work, and even his recognition of her as a serious writer, are growing increasingly unnecessary to her" (Lundberg 35). She becomes stronger, aware of her ability to write, and her skills. Her anger towards Brooke is growing inside of her.

At this point of the novel, Laurence, very cunningly, puts Jules Tonnerre once more on Morag's path. His confrontation with Brooke is the proverbial "last straw" that was needed for Morag in order to free herself from her husband. From the beginning of the story Morag is being linked with Jules by their social status, their character and by the most unbelievable

circumstances. The fact that she meets Skinner at this point, while walking down the street in Toronto is definitely unexpected, yet brilliant. Even more incredible is the fact that Christie, by giving Morag his knife, connects these two forever. As Clara Thomas points out, by that “Margaret Laurence has symbolically joined Morag to the Tonnerres” (147). Undoubtedly, the author prescribed to Jules a great importance in the protagonist’s life.

He is like a guardian angel who appears when he is needed the most. The situation Morag is in when they meet in Toronto is definitely one requiring a miracle. Morag is still not strong enough to leave her husband, though she is considering it. As every day she feels less complete as a woman, owing to the fact that Brooke is denying her a child, she faces a very difficult dilemma. She understands what is happening yet the decision is still beyond her grasp.

She perceives at once her mistake. He cannot ever say to her, finally, once and for all, that he cannot bear for her to bear a child. He will never say that. But he cannot agree to a child, either. She is, she now sees, forcing him into a corner and has been doing so for some years. (D 201)

This insight helps Morag with her decision. She knows that she will not have a baby with him but “Leaving him, however, remains unthinkable” (D 215). Her longing for a child is being pushed to a second place, deep inside her, and all her attention and mind is focused on writing. This fails, as she cannot just stop wanting a baby.

She gradually frees herself from Brooke’s tyranny. Morag realizes that she does not need a man’s approval to write, and more importantly to be a mother and this gives her strength to change her life. Kristin Ann Lundberg declares: “Morag begins by taking control of her writing. Despite Brooke’s patronizing attitude toward her writing, Morag spends a great deal of time working on, and invests a great deal of seriousness and devotion in, her novel” (35). The culmination of her quest to freedom to write is when she, despite Brooke’s criticism, “parcels up the mass of paper and sends it, submits it, to a publisher. She does not tell Brooke” (D 202).

In order to liberate herself as a woman, Morag needs here the help of her life lasting friend and lover Jules Tonnerre. He plays a major role in her journey, which she is never afraid to admit. It is also coded in the name and nickname given to him by Laurence. As “‘Jewels’, he is precious to her and she values her relationship with him. As Skinner, he is one who removes the outer cover to see the flesh and bones; he removes the facade to show the truths; he is a societal vivisector” (Davis 99). Their accidental meeting in Toronto, carefully planned by Laurence, is needed so Morag can open her eyes. He is required so she can feel her strength and stand up for herself.

Brooke Skelton’s encounter with Jules presents how racist and narrow-minded he is. His remark: “I thought it was supposed to be illegal to give liquor to Indians”, one last time proves to Morag how wrong she was about him (D 220). When she leaves with Jules, he again provides her with a truth about the reality she lives in. He wants her to understand the dilemma she is facing, and wants her to take a right, for her, decision. “Hey, listen, never mind what he said, eh? It goes in one ear and out the other, by me. Anyhow, it’s my problem, not yours. *He’s* your problem. Go on back” (D 220). Jules knows Morag better than anyone, and he already understands what she has yet to realize. After Morag and Jules’s first night together Morag goes back to Brooke to finally terminate their relationship. What happens later adds even more significance to the character of Jules. The time that they spend together after this incident will prove to be the culmination point in Morag’s empowerment as a woman. The desired pregnancy, which is a result of their reunion, seems to be a carefully and neatly planned “coincidence” by Laurence.

Those events lead us to another section of the novel, titled “Rites of Passage”. Here, Morag will struggle as a writer and as a parent in order to find her place and peace in life. Sherill Grace points out that “it suggests the ordeals that the initiate must go through in order to reach maturity or understanding. It encompasses Morag’s ordeals as a professional writer, her various sexual encounters, and the continuation of her journey in search of her past” (172). At

this point I would like to take a closer look at Morag's creativity, as she focuses on both roles simultaneously at this stage of her life.

McCullum states:

Writing is a means by which Morag can both formalize her denied past feelings and criticize them from the greater perception of present understanding. Each novel reworks her lived experience while simultaneously removing it from the limited particularity of a specific individual's experience. (qtd. in Lindberg 196)

All her novels, as was already mentioned, play a significant role in her ability to come to terms with the past, in order to find herself in the present and the future. The words, the vocabulary used in them are means to deal with the deepest of feelings. For Morag, the wordsmith, this is the only way to fight with her "inner demons". As was explained above, "Spear of Innocence" deals with the problem of abortion that young Morag faced through the example of her childhood friend Eva Winkler. The second novel, "Prospero's Child", is about a young woman, who marries this Excellency, the Governor of some island in some ocean very far south, and who virtually worships him and who has to go to the opposite extreme and reject nearly everything about him, at least for a time, in order to become her own person. (*D* 270)

It goes without saying that Morag's relationship with Brooke is the model for her story. She is willing to change for him, alter her personality and looks, and even forget her past in order to make him happy. Their marriage ends, as she is no longer "her own person", thus she needs to discover herself once more. Morag tries to close the chapter of her unsuccessful marriage with the publishing of this book.

"Jonah", is the next of her novels, and as the previous ones, leaves no doubts that it also concerns Morag's life experience. It "is a story of an old man, a widower, who is fairly disreputable and who owns a gillnetter in Vancouver... It is also about his daughter Carol, who resents his not being a reputable character" (*D* 299-300). Obviously, Carol from "Jonah" is Morag, and her "disreputable father" is Christie Logan. At this point of her life, Morag starts to realize how wrong was her perception of Christie, and how unfair were the attitudes of the people of Manawaka towards him. She sees how ungracious and unjust was her bitterness and anger. She recognizes his importance and wisdom. By telling the stories of him to her daughter, Pique, she acknowledges how significant his tales and Christie himself were. Clara Thomas explains: "Morag gradually comes to understand that Christie had made a world of innocence for her and peopled it with heroes to answer her needs" (151). Her recognition of Christie is not, however, complete until she goes and visits Scotland.

About Morag's short story collection we know very little. It is some kind of chronicle of Morag's Scottish ancestors coming to Canada. McLean offers yet another explanation of the book's hidden content, "'Presences'. This is all that we are told about this book, but it may well be based on Morag's recollections of Christie, for one of the Memorybank Movies about him is entitled 'Christie's Presence and Presents'" (102). In this case that particular book could be paralleled to Laurence's short story collection *A Bird in the House*, as it also treats about the young protagonist relationship, not with her father, but the strong and ruling grandfather Connor. More of such similarities between Morag's and Laurence's novels can be depicted, yet this would not add any merit to the content of my paper. Nevertheless, if McLean is right, this just enhances the significance Christie had for the protagonist. Laurie Lindberg summarizes, "the legacy that he leaves her is a love of a storytelling and a gift for speaking the truth. She is, though an adopted daughter, very much his child" (196-197). He gave her the gift of words, the love for language; things that enrich and change Morag's world.

As one can easily notice, the same function has Del Jordan's story for her. Her gothic fable about Caroline serves the same purpose as the novels serve for Morag. Both of the protagonists see no other efficient way to deal with their inner feelings, frustrations, and their past. Writing gives them strength and encourages them to deal with what is inside their souls.

As they have skills they use them to purify and cleanse their personal lives, to deal with the memories of places, events and most importantly, people.

Coming back, Morag's final recognition of her place and Christie's role in all that comes to her with her relationship with Dan McRaith. He is a painter, who comes to London in order to create as his large family in Scotland often makes it difficult for him. As he is an artist himself, he gives Morag what Brooke never could: her space. Although Morag longs for him, she knows that she cannot make the same mistake again.

"I was working on 'Jonah'. I picked it up as soon as I got back from the bookshop, and I forgot about the time. I should've phoned you, I suppose. But this is going to happen sometimes, Dan, and I just damn well cannot help it. I'm not on call. I am not. If it doesn't suit you, then I'm sorry – but that's the way it is"...

"I'm sorry, Morag – I should've realized. I didn't mean to sound as though I owned you. You know I don't feel like that". (D 307)

Here the reader has an opportunity to meet the mature Morag, an independent woman and a published writer. Her ability to stand up for herself is greeted with respect by Dan, who is married to a woman, who as Morag with Brooke, "does not know the strength of her own voice", and is afraid to disagree with her husband.

At this stage of her life, Morag is aware that being a single mother and a writer is hard enough; becoming dependent on a man would be for her too much to handle at this point. Fortunately, Dan understands Morag's perspective and accepts the rules of their relation. "He respects her writing, as she does his painting and they communicate well both sexually and verbally" (Davis 104). Dan is similar in his treating of Morag to Jules. They do not want to impose on Morag, they see her for the remarkable individual she is and they never try to change her. They acknowledge what is important in her life. Susan Ward, in the essay "Morag Gunn in Fictional Context: The Career Woman Theme in *The Diviners*", reasons that "both help her to develop as a writer: Jules by teaching her about the relationship between history and invention in fiction as he relates his Tonnerre stories, and McRaith by sharing his work with her and allowing her to share hers" (184). She loves them both, yet this time the love has no destruction force for Morag as a novelist. Again, one should mention Del who was unfortunate enough to meet only the kind of men who pose a threat to her writing and her femininity. One can only hope that in her life as a mature woman and a writer Del Jordan will be lucky enough to change her mind about the relationship with people and having a family. Dan McRaith gives also Morag an opportunity to visit the land of her ancestors, Scotland. Laurence gives him one more task to fulfil. Due to his invitation, Morag finally decides to visit his home, where she realizes the whole truth about her life and discovers answers she was looking for. "She learns her final, personal and cultural lesson through Dan, the Scot... [When she starts to understand] she can return to Canada, and to the heritage she shares with Jules" (Grace 172). This is where her journey makes a final circle and comes back to where she started, Manawaka and the house of Christie Logan. Looking at the land of her ancestors, Morag realizes where her home is and what was she really searching for all these years.

"I don't know that I can explain. It has to do with Christie. The myths are my reality. Something like 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 is not".

"What is, then?"

"Christie's real country. Where I was born". (D 319)

Christie Logan was always her real father, and she has no doubt about it now. She reconciles with her past, ready to face it. Her journey was long and bumpy, yet she learnt the truth and she knows that it was the only way to go. "This realization is crucial because only by returning to her own roots can Morag fully possess herself.... Christie's burial fuses the ancient Scots heritage with Canadian soil to reveal Morag's ancestral place" (Grace 172).

Morag is reunited with Christie on his deathbed, in one of the most heartbreaking scenes, given the chance by Laurence to apologise in a way to Christie and reveal her true feelings.

"Christie – I used to fight a lot with you, Christie, but you've been my father to me'. His

responding words are slurred and whispered, but she hears them. ‘Well – I’m blessed’ Christie Logan says” (D 323). In this touching scene Laurence portrays the significance of the old scavenger to the mature Morag-writer. She knows that in order to honor him she will pass on his teachings and his tales to her daughter Pique. This is all that she can do for him, now. This feeling of belonging and the importance of one’s roots live strong in Margaret Laurence’s consciousness as well as in her novels. And this will be the subject of the following section of this essay.

Laurence and the Canadian Roots

It is important for the novelist to open in her books a discussion on one’s heritage. Being Canadian means a lot for Laurence, and she sees the difficulties that are faced by her countrymen. Racism and discrimination against Indians was something that she witnessed herself in her life. How strong she feels about this one can see in her last novel, *The Diviners*. Cecil Abrahams fairly points out that

Laurence uses *The Diviners* to redefine the Canadian past, to instil a true sense of history into her fellow Canadians, and to stir within the Canadian psyche an awareness of and a pride in an ancestral past from which a part of the nation emerged. (139)

The novel itself presents its characters either in search of or aware of their ancestral background. Christie Logan, despite his social status, is a proud Scotsman, who provides little Morag with similar feelings toward her Scottish forefathers, who first came to Canada.

Through his tales he teaches Morag the importance of the ancestry; and tries to equip her with the feeling of belonging. Jules Tonnerre, as Christie, holds his tales as a valuable link with his past. He teaches Morag the differences that appear between the things that are told and those that are provided by the historical documents. Jules embraces his Métis heritage and in his songs he prolongs the line of his family. Morag gradually learns that in order to feel complete and whole she also has to find her roots.

When she finally reaches the conclusion about where her roots come from, her journey seems to be over. In the essay “‘Christie’s real Country. Where I Was Born’: Story-Telling, Loss and Subjectivity in *The Diviners*”, Paul Hjartarson admits that “Morag has gone from conceiving herself as an island to realizing herself in relationships, and in so doing, she lives not only with the knowledge of loss but with the recognition of inheritance, of community” (62). This community is needed in order to lead a satisfying life. Margaret Laurence put a great emphasis on the fact that people are important in an individual’s life. The feeling of belonging, or lack of it, is one of the main problems her protagonists deal with. The characters in *The Diviners* bring something unique with them; each of them has a different lesson to teach Morag. In the words of Sherill Grace “In writing *The Diviners* Morag (like Laurence) recognizes her position within something larger than self – the Canadian ‘sphere of consciousness’.... Morag Gunn forges the uncreated conscious of her race” (173-174).

This is one of the lessons given to Morag by Royland, the diviner of water, whom she meets in the last stage of her life. He shows her that community is vital for an individual development, and how people are all connected. He teaches her that even though his gift for divining water is lost forever to him, A-Okey is most probably taking over. Showing her that this talent is not lost, just passed on, he comforts Morag and proves to her that even if she will lose her writing ability, her “gift/talent” will be picked up by another generation. Just as she developed her love to writing thanks to Christie’s tales, Pique starts her life already equipped with her mother’s feeling of words and her father’s passion for singing and storytelling. Pique, on her own, decides to go to Galloping Mountain looking for her family, hence one knows how important her roots and this feeling of belonging are to her. Robert D. Chambers, in “The Women of Margaret Laurence”, states: “Inevitably, Pique moves with her generation into the future, but symbolically she moves backwards into her Canadian past to encounter her Métis set of cultural heroes” (212). Pique, being a child of a Scottish Canadian and a French Métis

has a difficult task ahead of her, yet she seems quite at peace with this challenge. Despite her young age one can easily notice that she understands how important for her development her ancestors are. She is the one who will need to unite two parts of her world that still cannot see how incomplete they are without one another. One can only assume that she will do her best to achieve this. The feeling of belonging; this collectiveness of consciousness is especially important for the female protagonists.

Morag Gunn – a Woman Who Has it All.

“*We think back through our mothers if we are women*” –
Virginia Woolf (qtd. in Buss 166).

The literature about women, who struggle to understand the aim of their journey and a purpose of life, leads to a conclusion that a lot of this is connected to their female ancestors. For each woman her foremothers and the women she meets in her life play a significant role in shaping her character and her development as a human being. I have presented how the women that Del Jordan meets, together with her mother, influence her further growing and her way of perceiving the world. At this point, one should compare this analysis to Morag Gunn’s experience.

As a developing writer and a growing woman, Morag is in constant search of the self. She struggles to understand what it means to be a woman and, why is it so hard to be a novelist simultaneously. Her childhood experience does not provide her with any appealing models of successful businesswomen, who are mothers and wives. Here Morag and Del search for positive examples is similar. Morag’s mother died when she was young, thus she cannot have any recollection of her, beyond a couple of her old photos. Her stepmother, Princess Logan, is not who the protagonist would want her to be. “Prin”, Hjartarson writes, “is the center of the ‘Halls of Sion’ section and she is a figure of silence, for women written by the discourse of patriarchal narratives” (51). Prin is not an intelligent woman, and though she is English, her status in the society is not higher than Christie’s. Her main struggle is her weight, and that fight lasts throughout this section of the novel and at the end is lost by Prin. In the words of Demetrakopoulos

Prin is a fascinating study of a woman trapped ... not by a man or society so much as her own limited intelligence and lack of will ... she is one of the terrifying (especially for women) faces of the feminine and represents the way that the flesh can swallow up the feminine spirit. (qtd. in Davis 89)

Throughout her school years, Morag is ashamed of Prin owing to her not being bright enough, fashionable enough, and being too obese. As Morag is being more and more influenced, at that time, by the townspeople and their opinions, she is afraid of being seen with Prin; she is ashamed of being her adopted daughter. Prin, herself is unaware that her sending Morag to a store for more doughnuts for herself exposes Morag to the ostracism from the people’s mouths. The society’s attitude toward Prin teaches Morag that a woman has a certain role to play in a community, and if for some reason she is not fulfilling it, she is going to be rejected by everyone. This might be one of the reasons why Morag tries so hard to be a perfect wife, with perfect looks and wellbeing of her husband always on her mind. Just after many years of marriage is Morag able to realize how unfair she was to Prin. Not only was Prin detached from her family, sent to a foreign land, with a stranger for a husband; she had no one who could understand her, and was alone to deal with whatever was piling up in her heart. Her funeral is the changing point for Morag in her perception of her step-mother. “And now here, in this place, the woman who brought Morag up is lying dead, and Morag’s mind, her attention, has left Prin. *Help me God; I’m frightened of myself*” (D 207). Morag sees for the

first time how she failed Prin. She was the one who abandoned her. Now the protagonist knows how much this woman did for her; she also sees how little she gave back. Prin Logan tried her best to raise little Morag and fight with her own demons, left alone without any women's help. Unfortunately, she was not strong enough to win over them.

Prin Logan's death serves as a turning point in Morag's life. It is after she comes back from Manawaka, when she can discover her own trap, prepared for her by her husband Brooke. Even though she did not know her biological mother, Prin's example will serve as a warning for Morag. At the end, she will be able to start her quest for independence and happiness thanks to revelations she finally understood about the life of her foster mother.

Prin Logan is not the only tragic female character in the novel. Just next door from the Logans, Eva Winkler, though just a young girl, has to deal with much more than one that small can handle. Although both Morag and Eva come from very poor homes, Eva's fate is cast upon her by her alcoholic father. Her younger brother Vern, who is also a subject of their father's abuse, manages to run away from his father, changes his name and ultimately cuts himself off his past. Eva is not strong enough, thus she is unable to change her life.

Eva's hair, the same whitish yellow as it always was, could be really nice but still straggles all over the place. And not always clean, either. Eva's dresses are still the same old cotton things like potato sacks.... Eva seems like she is beaten by life already. Morag is not – repeat not – going to be beaten by life. But cannot bear to look at Eva very often. (*D* 92)

This description of Eva suits her as a little girl and a growing teenager. The starting point for both Eva and Morag is the same; they both had too long dresses, unfashionable hairstyles, they were the poor ones. Their lives, however, go in completely different directions. Here, one may only assume that Laurence wanted to give the reader more clues on how vital for Morag were the foster parents who she was given to. Despite similar backgrounds and his tendency to drink, Christie has never hit Morag. He would never do anything to hurt her, as he obviously loves his adopted daughter. If Morag would not find herself in the Logans' house, she could only speculate where she would end up.

Eva is an example of an unfortunate home and unlucky fate. When she gets pregnant by a married man, it is simply one of those tragedies that seem to happen only to her. Christie helps Eva to the hospital, where doctors perform abortion and lie to her father that she is anaemic. Again Morag has an opportunity to notice how lucky she was, being adopted by Christie Logan. Eva Winkler, with her tragedies and unfairness that surround her slowly fades away. "Eva, when she returns finally [from the hospital], walks a little stooped. Goes out to work as a hired girl. Some not-too fussy guy will marry her someday, maybe. Or maybe not" (*D* 124). Her character serves as yet another warning; she poses a question about women's situation in society and their rights. Morag wonders about women's factual freedom, and whether they had any in those days. More and more she is convinced that she still lives in a male-dominant world. "But it's not fair. It's not fair. It's the man who has to take the precautions, and if he doesn't, forget it, sister. There are other ways. But how would you find out, or get whatever it is, if not married?" (*D* 124). Similarly to Del Jordan, Morag starts to realize how difficult it is for a woman to be independent, as so much in her life actually depends on men. Both protagonists cannot see yet how one can put together a successful and a satisfying life of an independent woman. "Having children means a profound 'sacrifice' and a 'responsibility' to something other than one's art, especially for a mother as opposed to a father. Morag, then, equates giving birth with the death of her artistry" (Lundberg 23). Del Jordan goes through a similar stage in the chapter "The Baptizing", where she relates being with a man, in a devoted relationship, to the end of her creative self.

Mrs. Crawley, the landlady during Morag's first year of college, is yet another example that will support Morag's idea that one has to dismiss dreams about a child in order to be happy and successful. Mrs. Crawley is a model of a dutiful wife and a hard-working mother, who has a fixed place in her society. Despite that, however, this little lady feels as the role forced upon her from the early years was unfair and the lack of choice when getting pregnant too early had not made her life what she expected it to be:

“I’d never go against my faith, Morag”, she declares, “but all the same, I sometimes think – well, you know – if I’d know before I was married what I know now, I’d have had some fun, eh? Not that we do anything to prevent God’s will, of course. We’re expecting again, did I mention, and soon I’ll be bloated up like a stout old lady with the wind. I wasn’t a bad-looking girl”. (*D* 142)

Her presence in Morag’s life just makes her realize how women find themselves trapped, first when they get married and even more when they are pregnant. Morag’s thinking is here parallel to the one of Del Jordan. They are both afraid, as they lack good models of women who succeeded in doing what they dreamt to do. Their hesitation is caused by the fear of making life-changing mistakes, the career ruining ones. Bordner explains that “As a young woman, the potential artist becomes concerned with the various aspects of her sexual identity, many of which deter her development as an artist ... by exploring her sexuality, she can endanger her artistic career” (qtd. in Lundberg 23). Del realizes this after her last encounter with Garnet French, and Morag, though does not want to give in to that, also sees it as visible danger.

Let us take a closer look at a positive model of a successful female for our protagonist. Ella Gerson and her family are vital for this discussion. Ella becomes Morag’s lifelong best friend, and thanks to her family she at last realizes that being a woman does not imply a weak personality and an unavoidable failure. Finally, together with Ella, Morag feels that she can share her thoughts: as she has found a soulmate. To her she speaks what really is her dream. “I want to be glamorous and adored and get married and have kids. I still try to kid myself that I don’t want that. But I do. I want all that. As well. All I want is everything” (*D*147). Ella becomes a person whom she can trust completely with everything. Talking about her past, her life in Manawaka without feeling of shame or embarrassment comes to Morag easily. “Ella gives her the encouragement she requires to carry on being a writer and a woman simultaneously” (Davis 93). Moreover, Ella gives her one more thing, the access to the house of the Gersons family. Mrs. Gerson is the first woman that Morag meets, who is happy being a mother. “Her daughters are her life. She considers herself blessed” (*D* 148). She is a widow, who after her husband’s death, had to take care of her three girls. To Morag, her house becomes an asylum; a place which proves that everything is possible. In their home Morag is treated as a part of the family, which has an immense impact on her soul and heart. “Morag has never known anything like this kind of house before. Its warmth is sometimes very much harder to take than any harshness could be, because it breaks her up and she considers it a disgrace to cry in front of anybody” (*D* 150). Morag is impressed by Mrs. Gerson’s strength, goodness and wisdom. Thanks to Mrs. Gerson, Morag discovers that there are women, who despite all odds make it safely and happily to the end of the journey. From now on Morag will look for this strength inside her own soul. Furthermore, Ella grows to be an example of a working mother and wife. Morag has a very close model for a female who is able to lead a life of a satisfied businesswoman and a loving and happy mother and wife.

Morag’s last landlady in Canada, Fan, has also a lesson to teach our protagonist. Despite her age, she tries desperately to hold to the career of an exotic dancer. Fan, at one point, proves to Morag that there is nothing a woman can do to help herself and succeed in life. Fan is strong, though at the end of their relation, Morag demonstrates that she is far more immune to the troubles that she encounters and is stronger than Princess Eureka believed she was.

Through the analysis of all those women we come closer to a point where the most important female character, for Morag, must be presented. Pique Gunn Tonnerre is a young woman who teaches Morag the most she had to learn about herself. First of all, Pique is very significant for Morag’s search for truths and rediscovery of her past. According to Buss, “Throughout the book it is Pique’s arrivals and departures, her questions and her accusations, her youthful successes and failures, that stimulate the autobiographical project in the mother” (165-166). Pique is essential to Morag’s development. Due to her ever-lasting longing for a baby with Brooke, her pregnancy by Jules serves a purpose of her total liberation from a life where a man dedicates a role to a female. After Morag has left Brooke, she moves to Vancouver where

she has to learn how to be on her own and in the close future how one becomes a single parent. The writing becomes a mean to earn a living for her and her baby daughter. Despite her liberation from life under man's rule, Morag's confidence is not yet fully recovered. She keeps questioning both roles she decided to take, and is constantly afraid of making mistakes. "Why had she imagined that she could look after and support a kid, on her own? It had seemed a perfectly natural notion at the time. Now it seems merely lunacy... What will happen to her, and to the child?" (*D* 243). Morag's disbelief in her talents and her strength comes from the observation, that the world is ruled by men, and that a woman without one is doomed to fail. "Morag's conflicting identities as a mother and a writer, for instance, reveal the limited self-representational models that are available to women in the protagonist's socio-historical context" (Beckman-Long 91). Nevertheless, she continues in her quest divorcing Brooke and starting to write articles for money.

Throughout the years of Morag's residency under Fan's roof one can easily see how important Pique is to her mother. The time and devotion given to the little girl are even noticed by Fan, who remarks, "You go on devoting the whole of your entire life to that kid, and I'm here to tell you what'll happen, sweetheart. She'll grow up and leave you without a backward glance" (*D* 259). Laurence wants the reader to understand what meaning Pique has in her mother's life, and how essential she is for Morag to find satisfaction as a mother and as a novelist. It was already mentioned that for Laurence being a successful writer does not exclude the role of a mother, and this is demonstrated on the protagonist's example. Although she doubts her abilities to make things work, she unquestionably tries her best to be a good mother to her daughter.

During these years Morag constantly struggles with writing, taking care of Pique and trying to satisfy her needs as a woman. "Although, after her divorce from Brooke, Morag never deserts the world of womanhood for the world of desexualized writer, she is often bothered by the disjunction between the two" (Ward 183). Her casual sex partners usually come to be failures, even dangerous ones. Still, she never rejects any side of her being. She is a woman that feels and desires, and a mother that loves and nurtures; moreover, a writer who creates and publishes. From the beginning of the novel, Morag continues to worry about her daughter. She is scared of passing on Pique all her bad qualities, she fears that she has not given Pique the best of possible homes. Parallel to these worries is Morag dissatisfaction with her work. Never happy with her writing, Morag undermines her skills and talents. She is "unsatisfied", "hates the title" and so on. Kristin Ann Lundberg fairly points out that "Despite this anxiety that neither the book nor the child is completely ready to be out in the world, both Morag and Laurence exhibit a strong capacity to adamantly defend either if it becomes necessary" (53). At the end of the novel, Morag reaches a consensus. Thanks to Royland and Jules she no longer feels the need to protect at all costs her daughter and her writing. Gaining an insight into the truth brought to her by Royland, the diviner, Morag realizes that her daughter is a grown up woman now who has to find her own self, as Morag found hers. Pique – to whom her parents passed on the love for words and passion for music – becomes her own person, a new protagonist who, with her double heritage, has even more to prove. "Who could ever enter anything with a guarantee? Let her go. This time, it had to be possible and was 'I hope everything goes well for you, Pique'" (*D* 359). Morag is finally at peace with her daughter's leave taking. Pique is much more mature at that point than Morag was at her age. The young woman needs to explore the other side of her heritage and she is not ashamed of this. She already came to terms with what took Morag most of her life.

The hurts unwittingly inflicted upon Pique by her mother, by circumstances – Morag had agonized over these often enough, almost as though, if she imagined them sufficiently, they would prove to have been unreal after all. But they were not unreal. Yet Pique was not assigning any blame – that was not what it was all about. And Pique's journey, although at this point it might feel to her unique, was not unique. (*D* 360)

Pique is setting off on a journey to find herself. The passage clearly presents that her baggage is not as heavy of bitterness, anger and sadness as was her mother's when she left Manawaka.

Pique is a symbol, she depicts the future generations that will try to fight the intolerance and bring the nation of double heritage together. The understanding of her mother's mistakes helps her to set the right direction. In her mind, the rejection of your ancestors, your past is unspeakable. She is who she is and she is proud of that.

Pique serves many purposes in Morag's life. Not only has she fulfilled the protagonist's desire to be a mother, but also is Morag's guide in search of her own inner balance and peace. Sherill Grace also adds that Pique

embodies Morag's urge to grow into full maturity, she completes Morag's existence as a woman in a way a man cannot, and in the final scenes of the novel she embodies Morag's understanding and acceptance of the future – she will repeat Morag's quest and Morag must allow her to do so. (173)

Thanks to Pique, Morag finally learns the lesson about her heritage. She teaches her about the bond, the connection one has to one's past and future of others.

At this important moment in Morag's life, Royland provides her with a revelation that enables her to "let her daughter be", as was once asked by Jules, and she now sees what it means.

"The inheritors. Was this, finally and at last, what Morag had always sensed she had to learn from the old man?...The gift, or portion of grace, or whatever it was, was finally withdrawn, to be given to someone else" (*D* 369). The protagonist's life has ultimately made a full circle.

The gift of storytelling given to her by Christie, and cherished by Morag all her life, is now being "inherited" by her daughter Pique. This eye-opener let Morag sit down to her last novel peaceful at heart, despite her knowledge that it might be her last book, to set down the title.

And this title, as we readers are made to believe, is *The Diviners*. Given this title Morag acknowledges the importance of community, of a bond that connects people with their ancestors, and all the people that surround them.

In this part of the thesis, one could clearly see what connection Morag has with the men and women she meets along the way. The results of those encounters are seen in Morag, as she would never be the woman she is at the last page of the novel without them. People she met, experiences she gathered are all part of her, and she is not searching any longer.

She has arrived home and accepted the fact that the past lives within her.... Most important, she can use her past as the material for her work. Instead of being crippled by her cultural heritage ... she is enriched. Like Christie, Jules, and Royland, she is a diviner, divining not only her own past, but also "the past of collective cultural memory", and finding the water of inspiration. (Grace 173)

She knows that people are connected, as she knows that now it is Pique's turn to tell the tales; to sing her own songs, to be a diviner.

Margaret Laurence very strongly felt the connection that she had with her land and her countrymen. "Laurence herself notes that her family brought her up with a great knowledge of her Scots background, and her protagonist Morag Gunn, is raised in much the same way"

(Pifer 143). *The Diviners* is in a way an autobiographical novel, as Laurence equips her protagonist with many qualities belonging to the author herself, the strong feeling of her roots included. What is also significant for Laurence and Morag is this community, and most crucially the women that surround them. Struggles and dilemmas faced by women were among the most important for Laurence in her novels. For the last time in *The Diviners* has Laurence created a strong protagonist, a woman who despite all odds had it all; love, maternity, passion and a successful career. As Broyden summarizes:

Her books give ordinary women their voices back. They reach out to their readers to establish a sense of community. And in claiming full humanity for all her female characters, her novels challenge the stereotypes that have limited women to preordained and constricting roles. (203)

For these reasons, Morag Gunn and her story will not be forgotten by the reader for a long, long time.

Conclusion

It clearly stands out that despite the fact that Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro place a special emphasis on the aspect of the *Künstlerroman* in their novels, the real strength of these books lies in the way the authors depict the main protagonists' road to adulthood. These skilful portrayals of that growth are revealed in front of the reader's eyes. The fact that both heroines' vocations happen to be writing careers only enriches their development. Making the process more interesting and engaging for the audience, the authors specifically chose this type of a career for them. As female-artists the heroines have to face many obstacles brought forward by the social convention and the norms dictated by the times they live in. Despite all odds, Morag Gunn and Del Jordan prove to be strong, independent and persistent in pursuing their life goals. Yet there are significant differences in their characters. The thesis provides evidence that the split between the protagonists occurred due to the people they meet along the way.

Del and Morag's journeys have a very similar starting point. With a unique imagination, love for the language and easiness with words they have the same chances in succeeding in their future vocation. They both come from rather poor backgrounds; however, do not let it stand in the way of achieving their life aims. Nevertheless, at the end, their life views differ fundamentally. Those differences help to establish my conclusion that Morag and Del belong to separate movements of feminism. And that division should be attributed to the enormous influence of other characters presented in the novels.

This thesis provides evidence that Del Jordan was created in accordance to the beliefs held by the Second Wave feminists. The protagonist's life is a very good example of a woman struggling to free herself from the "old" way of feminism. The division between the old-fashioned and new feminism is vividly presented by depicting the contrasting features of Del and Mrs. Jordan. According to Janet Beer "Alice Munro most obviously expresses the difference between the generations, between the lives of Del and her mother, Ada, in her treatment of sexuality and the conflict between the academic and the social life as it afflicts girls" (127). Addie is described as passionless women, who does not understand her own femininity and a woman that thinks that feelings like love and desire should be fought, as they might have damaging power over a young woman like Del. She treats being with a man and marriage as being a "domestic animal" (*LGW* 176). Sue Thomas admits that "Addie thinks female romantic/sexual desire contaminates the ideally rational, autonomous female self: that desire is set in opposition to the heterosexual couple's enjoyment of 'each others company'" (110). It is certain that Adela Jordan does not want her daughter to have the same life as she had.

Although to some extent Mrs. Jordan has been independent and had higher ambitions, it was impossible for her to lead a different life than one which ended in marriage and children. Mrs. Jordan, not perhaps with an example of her life, but through her words and opinion voices the doctrines of the Second Wave feminism. In the beginning, her point of view is not parallel to the way Del thinks and feels. One can assume that Del Jordan, contrary to her mother, is the representative of a new feminism and femininity. The young heroine is curious of her body and she wants to experiment with her sexuality. She fantasizes and tries to understand the feelings she has inside. Del Jordan refuses to be as "cold" as her mother, who she has to "pump to get her to say she fell in love with her husband [and her] only explanation of her love for Del's father is that 'he was always a gentleman'" (S. Thomas 112). She does not want to be treated like the women of her mother's generation. The conventional perception that women's only aspirations are marriage and children is to her ridiculous and unfair. As Janet Beer underlines in her essay, women's roles are demonstrably changing, and whilst Ada still inhabits a world where the woman is fighting to free herself from stereotype and the familiar figure of the young woman

in search of a husband, any husband.... Del herself is bewildered by stereotypical assumptions made about her, whether by magazine article, her mother, Mrs. Storey, or Garnet. (131) The young heroine undergoes changes mentioned by her mother and conclusively she has to choose what kind of a woman she will become. She tries hard to go against her mother's words, however the men and women that she meets on her path will not provide her with any positive model for this kind of revolution. She will probably have a different life than her mother, yet like her mother, at the end of the novel Del believes that in order to be a successful writer she has to reject her passion and desire for men and any thoughts concerning having a family.

Del Jordan is an open-minded, curious and intelligent girl. She aspires to be a writer, simultaneously a woman that is adored by men; a woman that creates and has relationships with men. Unfortunately, the more people she meets, the more she is convinced that her dream is impossible to come true. The last argument for this statement is her encounter with Garnet French in the Wawanasha River. From this moment forward, Del rejects her feminine side, her desires in fear of losing her creative soul. Her behaviour is in accordance to the doctrines of the liberal feminism. She decides on her fate and chooses to be alone, as a writer. The opposite happens to Morag Gunn. In spite of the fact that initially her image of a successful woman-writer and a respected housewife is not supported by any life-large examples, she manages to keep true to herself. Life demonstrates that her longings are worth and possible to fight for. Morag, together with Ella Gerson, prove this dream to be plausible, yet hard, to come true. This shows how much was Morag ahead of her times. In my opinion, she deserves to be called a post-feminist.

Despite the fact that *The Diviners* was published in the times of the Second Wave feminism, its main character has qualities that put her in line with the women that call themselves post feminist, belonging to the Third Wave. There are many examples that lead to a conclusion that Morag Gunn belongs to this wave of feminism. The decision of becoming a writer comes to Morag in her early adolescence; nonetheless this revelation does not deprive her of the desire to become a mother and a woman, who can have satisfying relationships with men.

Additionally,

Like all Laurence's heroines, she has had a compelling concern with social appearances; orphaned at 5, she was reared by Manawaka's eccentric garbage collector, Christy Logan, and his feeble-witted wife Prin; she has known the humiliation of hearing respectable matrons snicker at her uncut hair, her clumsy dresses. (Blodgett 14)

In her adolescence years, Morag is very aware of her appearance; she does associate looks with success, higher social status, and the chance of being adored by the opposite sex. Later on, in her life as a wife, she continues to pay a lot of attention to her good looks in order to be presentable in her husband's eyes. The revelations concerning rejection of this kind of life style comes to her with thoughts of leaving her husband and rebelling against the role of women predetermined by men like Brooke Skelton. When she is among the female family of the Gersons', she discovers again how important it is for a woman to look good in order to feel good. "Bernice does Morag's hair – a permanent.... Her hair is still long, and falls darkly shining into a pageboy style, very little curl, just enough to make her hair curve under. She feels peculiar. Not like herself. Yet better. Hopeful?" (D 149).

Margaret Laurence has assigned to Morag many roles. These include: being a woman and a writer, a child and a mother, a wife and a single parent, a friend and a lover; all that makes her deserve the name of a Third Wave feminist. Morag wants to have it all and she disagrees with giving up any of these roles only because she is a woman and convention calls for it. On the contrary to Del Jordan's experience, Morag is fortunate to meet men who let her believe that women do not have to become subordinate objects in the relationship with the opposite sex. She also witnesses, from a woman's perspective, that it is possible to have a successful career, a satisfying marriage and happy children. "In her wish to share both the career world and the world of the traditionally feminine woman, Morag Gunn is at one with most contemporary fictional career heroines" (Ward 183).

Laurence's *The Diviners* can be considered a post-feminist book. Laurence neither rejects men as an ultimate threat for her protagonist's career, nor does she deprive her heroine from having a desirable child. Diana Brydon explains that "Laurence writes from a woman's point of view. What follows is one woman's reading of the women in Margaret Laurence's fiction" (184). Morag Gunn is one of the most memorable heroines in Canadian literature. Laurence gave her protagonist intellect and the insight into a woman's heart and soul. Throughout the novel she is seeking her true self, looking for contentment. The female part of the audience has no choice but to identify with her.

In our day and age it is still difficult to reconcile the two roles given to women. Despite all the feminists' movements and all the rights gained by women, this task remains complicated and challenging. Due to their careers, many women postpone their motherhood, or even give it up completely. Being pregnant or raising small children is no advantage on the résumé or during the job interview. For that reason Morag Gunn's story is still so contemporary to us. It has been almost forty years since *The Diviners* was published, nevertheless women are still juggling their family time and careers feeling guilty, awaiting some changes. Laurence's works do not only focus on women who try to be more than just housewives. Above all, they are about a quest to find oneself; her heroines struggle to discover their inner selves, their purpose and their roots.

The thesis provides an insight that confirms changes depicted in both heroines are highly influenced by other characters mentioned in the stories. This is the way in which both Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro reveal the great importance that community has for them. This message is also conveyed in the titles of the novels. The plural forms of nouns used in *The Diviners* and *Lives of Girls and Women* indicate that the protagonist's life is not just one, but it consists of many life experiences, which she gains from those she meets and those she knew.

Do you mean that individuals must gather their identity from all the generations that touch them – past and future, no matter how slightly? Do you mean that an individual is not an individual at all, but a series of individuals – some of whom come before her, some after her? (Lee, 254)

My answer to these questions is – yes. Who we are is profoundly influenced by those we surround ourselves with, and the wisdom we gather from the stories about those who lived before us. The big break comes when we discover how to learn from all these experiences; how to use their life knowledge to our advantage – and that makes us free. Morag Gunn, though discouraged at first, realizes at the end the mistakes of the women she knew and is able to learn from them. Her daughter also teaches her a valuable lesson about one's heritage and importance of being true to oneself. For those reasons, Morag succeeded. One may only assume that with time Del Jordan will be able to discover the same truth and will join the Parthenon of the women that had it all, as they dreamt of it. And this dream should be granted to all the women struggling to live the life as they desire.

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