IMPERIALISM AND RESISTANCE IN THE WORK OF MARGARET LAURENCE

por

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ABSTRACT

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

1996

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR : DR.SUSANA BORNEO FUNCK

This thesis investigates the works of Margaret Laurence with the support of theories of colonialism and decolonization. A white Canadian born in the West, Laurence awakened to the problem of oppression, unequal rights and colonialism in Canada at a young age. Her job as a journalist in Manitoba, her experience in Africa, and her readings helped her to realize that Canada has something to share with other colonies. The author developed her conscience of a colonized throughout her life and her writing. From This Side Jordan (set in Africa) to The Diviners (set in Canada), her first and last novel respectively, **Margaret Laurence** denounces British colonialism and oppression over Africans and non-British Canadians, especially the Metis. The author recognizes that being a white Canadian of Scots origin she cannot speak for the oppressed people, but as a colonized, she can state solidarity to all those who suffer the burden of colonialism and imperialism. Laurence's works also propose resistance to any form of exploitation and oppression.

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RESUMO

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Este trabalho investiga as obras da esritora canadense Margaret Laurence sob uma perspectiva pós-colonial. Nascida no Oeste canadense, Laurence cedo pôde perceber o problema do colonialismo no Canadá. O seu envolvimento com movimentos de esquerda, seu trabalho como jornalista em Manitoba, sua experiência na África, suas leituras e convivências ajudaram a desenvolver idéias anti-imperialistas que são evidentes em suas obras. Tanto nas obras com cenário africano como nas obras com cenário canadense, a autora denuncia imperialismo, opressão e desigualdade de direitos.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

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Diese Doktorarbeit untersucht das Werk von Margaret Laurence aus dem Blickwinkel der Nach-Kolonialen Zeit.

Laurence, eine weisse Kanadierin in Westen geboren, wurde früh auf das Problem des Kolonialismus in Kanada aufmerksam. Ihre Erfahrung in Afrika und ihre Interpretation von Theoretikern des Kolonialismus halfen ihr bei der Bildung ihrer anti-imperialistischen Ideen, welche sowohl in ihre afrikanischen wie auch in ihren kanadischen Schriften deutlich werden.

164 Seite

56000 Worte

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INTRODUCTION

I'm glad you are doing a presentation on my work and I wish you every success with it. I would say that one thing that I hope comes across is the fact that every human individual really matters -- no one is unimportant and that we must try to understand the reality of others. (Laurence's letter to Linda Van Vossenberg)

English Canadian Literature is not so often identified with post colonialism as its French counterpart. According to Silvia Söderlind, "Post-Colonial endeavor is both more relevant and more visible in the Quebecois texts with their emphasis on the 'recuperative work' on the level of language which is inevitably reflected in territorial strategies" (Margin/Alias 228). Although this is undeniable, one can perceive indication of anti-imperialism in some English Canadian writers, as in the work of Margaret Laurence. But though Laurence treats the problem of imperialism and of colonialism in several of her works, there are not (as far as I know) many critics who write about Laurence's preoccupation with imperialism. Among the few who do are : Chantal Zabus, who, in her article "A Calibanic Tempest in Anglophone & Francophone New World ", compares Laurence's anti-imperialism outlook with that of Frantz Fanon; Margaret Osachoff, who, in "Colonialism in the fiction of Margaret Laurence " gives a general view of colonialism in the work of Laurence; Kenneth James Hughes, who, in "Politics and A Jest of God ", shows how A Jest of God can be read as a political text ; Barbara Godard, who, in "Caliban's Revolt: The Discourse of the (M)other", shows how The Diviners is a parodic rewriting of

canonical texts and a subversion of the dominant discourse, and Coral Ann Howells, with her article "Weaving Fabrications : Women's Narratives in A Jest of God and The Fire-Dwellers." It seems to me that, in general, Canadian critics tend to ignore the socio-political concerns revealed in Margaret Laurence's writing. As a Brazilian reader, I was attracted to Laurence's work for its attention to the dispossessed people who belong to marginalized groups: Third-World people (like the Africans under British domination), the Metis and the Ukrainians in Canada, and women in general. Laurence's political concern struck me when I started reading her works. Her sympathy for the marginalized people was confirmed through each new reading of her writings not only in fiction but also in her travel-book and her essays and articles. Thus, although my work is on her adult fiction and on her travel narrative, other pieces of writing maintain her political feature. In fact, on more than one occasion, Laurence herself confirms that her writings are political and should be read as such.

Researching in Canada, at the same time that I faced some disagreement with my political reading of Laurence's work, I received the important support of Linda Hutcheon, Barbara Godard and Diana Brydon. These critics assured me that little had been written about Laurence's works as anti-colonial texts and guided me in my investigation. They helped me to find connections between Laurence's writing and her environment, the Canadian West where she was born and educated, allowing me to perceive that much of Laurence's resistance to imperialist ideas and practices emerged from her experience in the Canadian West and in Canada as a whole, which she believed to be colonial in some ways. Thus researching Canada's history and culture, I could realize how the colonial condition of Canada affected Laurence's political ideas. Her experience in Africa would just ratify her thought that imperialism degrades all kinds of people. This idea is perceived both in Laurence's African and Canadian writing.

In this work I argue that Laurence's works can be read as texts which both denounce and present resistance to colonialism. In the first chapter I present the condition of Canada

as a colony, although different from any other colony, and theories which support a reading of Canadian literature as post-colonial literature. I base my argument mainly on the works of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt and Homi Bhabha without forgetting , however, that Mannoni's work was relevant to Laurence's awareness of the problem of colonialism. The influence of Mannoni in her works has been emphasized many times because Laurence herself confessed such influence. I believe, however, that the presence of Fanon's ideas in her works is even more clearly perceptible than the author herself perceived. The existence of Fanon's works in a section of C. P. Traill College library in Peterborough, a library which belonged to Laurence, makes me believe that Fanon's work was among the books about colonialism which she read. Some concepts of colonialism and strategies of decolonization presented in Fanon's theory are mirrored in Margaret Laurence's writing especially in her use of the past with the intention of opening the future. Other theorists of colonialism offer different perspectives for the analysis of Laurence's work. Edward Said's theory of the existence of a discursive power to justify and preserve colonialism is also visible in Laurence's work. Said contends that the discourse of the colonizers (Western) on the colonized (Eastern) is a strategy to keep the presence of the colonizer in the colony. The knowledge about the colonized is related to the power of the dominant people who produce the discourse. Like Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt comments on the way Europeans like to classify and systematize "the other" in order to keep dominating the subaltern. She suggests that people who are always observed and classified should also be heard. Another critic who emphasizes the discursive practices is Homi Bhabha. While for Fanon mimicry is the result of a colonial indoctrination process, for Bhabha mimicry may be a discursive operation which serves to undermine the authority of the dominant discourse. Bhabha's theory is also important for understanding Laurence's work.

After presenting these theories and arguing about Canada's colonial status, I present a brief summary of Margaret Laurence's biography which illustrates and explains her anti-

imperialist thought and attitudes. Her background in the Canadian West, her involvement with the Canadian Left, her experience in Africa helped to characterize her writing as anti-colonial. Her participation in many groups which struggled for social justice ratify the anti-colonial character of Laurence's life and work.

In chapter III, I investigate how the "African Writings" of Margaret Laurence reveal anti-colonial ideas. Of course the political concern is not all Laurence's writings accomplish: the author reveals a great skill in art and craft, and offers a multiplicity of themes. Not only her experience in Africa but also her contact with African writers such as Chinua Achebe help to form the anti-imperialist characteristic of Laurence's writings.

This characteristic is visible in her Canadian writings which I analyze in the fourth chapter of my thesis. Laurence's works set in Canada, known as the "Manawaka cycle," present an imperial society characterized by severe class divisions where Anglo-Scots are privileged and the Metis suffer deprivation. The social and racial prejudice perceived in Manawaka reflects a Canadian tendency to privilege Scots-British colonizers while degrading others. I read the Manawaka works as a unity, analyzing how the theme of imperialism receives increasing attention from The Stone Angel to The Diviners. Laurence's last work is the culmination of the author's concern with colonialism and with forms of resistance to it. One perceives that the strategies of resistance presented by Laurence's characters are not rigid. Recuperation of memory and valorization of the oppressed peoples, however, are constant in Laurence's strategies to change the order of the imperial world. The multiplicity of voices she incorporates in her fiction allows the reader to listen to the voices of the oppressed people in Canada, who have often had their history deleted from many works of literature and from official History.

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CHAPTER I

Margaret Laurence : A White Canadian Writing a Post- Colonial Text

We are citizens not only of our own country but of the world...
We must struggle in the causes of peace and social justice

(Convocation Address, University of Manitoba)

According to the authors of The Empire Writes Back (B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin), post-colonial literature is the literature produced by those people formerly colonized by British and other European empires. The authors state that the term post-colonial covers "all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). Furthermore, post-colonial literatures are those

written by people affected by colonialism or by "cultures which suffered the experience of colonization" and had to fight against imperial dependence. Thus they believe that it is possible to study Canadian literature within a post-colonial context. However, this concept appears to me to be too general and too loose. One has to be aware of the particularities of Canada as a colony when referring to the post-colonial there. One may even ask whether Canada has much in common with other post-colonial nations.

In general, critics from diverse fields of study agree that although occupying a position of relative power nowadays, Canada was once, indisputably, a colony. However, from this assertion, several questions arise. For example, to what extent has the country escaped the colonialism by which it was affected? What evidence exists to show that Canada has not completely thrown off the shackles of colonialism? Once a colony, countries usually take a long time to escape the burden of colonialism: is this the case with Canada? And, finally, is or is not Canada still a colony ? Perhaps, for the purpose of this discussion, it would be expedient to consider briefly the term "colony" and some theories of colonialism.

According to Albert Memmi, a colony is "a place where one earns more and spends less. You go to a colony because jobs are guaranteed, wages high, career more rapid and business more profitable" (4). The colonized, on the other hand, are the disadvantaged. If the colonizers' living standards are high it is "because those of the colonized are low ". If there is one who profits, there will invariably be the "other" who is exploited and whose rights are ignored. People who live in a colony are under the control of a "mother" country, whose dictates rule their decisions. Colonialism would be, then, the maintenance of the colony, that is, the control of other people's land or territory. David Spurr explains that the word *colony* like *culture* has its origin in the Latin word *colere* which means "to cultivate, to inhabit, to take care of a place ." The word *colonia*, for the Romans, designated a settlement "in a hostile or new conquered country" and *cultura* referred "both to tilling the soil and to refinement in education and civilization"

(5). Colonial situation, then, would be characterized by the domination imposed by a foreign people over a racially and culturally different one in the name of racial and cultural superiority. The supposed difference, or rather, superiority of the colonizer becomes an important question in the process of establishing and legitimizing authority over the colonized territory.

Octave Mannoni, whose Prospero and Caliban : The Psychology of Colonization was important for Laurence to comprehend Canada and Africa, says that in the colony the colonizer is not looking for profit only but also for other psychological satisfactions, which in his view "is much more dangerous "(33). Mannoni claims that in a colonial situation there always occurs the "dependence complex." The colonized needs something to depend on, and this complex meets the need of the colonizer who, in turn, needs to be surrounded by dependents.

Both Aimé Cesaire and Frantz Fanon agree with some aspects of Mannoni's theory. However, both strongly criticize Mannoni's thesis for ignoring the economic exploitation of the colonized and reducing colonialism to an encounter between two psychological types, which need each other. The "dependence complex " and other concepts introduced by Mannoni in The Psychology of Colonization have lost much of their impact in the study of colonialism. In Black Skin White Masks, Fanon criticizes several elements of Mannoni's theory. Although recognizing that Mannoni introduced the study of the pathological conflict in a colonial situation and gave rise to the discussion of decolonization, Fanon points out that Mannoni's analysis reveals a contradiction when recognizing an inferiority complex even before colonization. Fanon goes further in criticizing Mannoni when the latter says that colonial racism differs from other forms of racism. For Fanon, all forms of exploitation are similar because all of them apply to the same object, that is, man (88).

Fanon's work offers an assertion of the psychological and economic disgrace imposed by imperial power on the colonies. According to him, the psychological situation cannot be analyzed apart from economic and historical criteria. To the psychological

explanation for colonialism one should add that many Europeans go to the colonies because they can become rich very soon and that, with few exceptions, the colonizer is a businessman or a trader.

(Black Skin 137). Fanon's most famous work, The Wretched of the Earth, besides examining some points of colonialism, offers strategies of decolonization. Fanon asserts :

> Colonialism which has not bothered to put too fine a point on its efforts has never ceased to maintain that the Negro is a savage ; and for the colonist, the Negro was neither an Angolan nor a Nigerian, for he simply spoke of "the Negro". For colonialism, this vast continent was the haunt of savages, a country riddled with superstitions and fanaticism, destined for contempt, weighed down by the curse of God, a country of cannibals - in short, the Negro's country. (Wretched 170)

Although referring more specifically to the Algerian people, Fanon's theory can be applied to any colonial situation. He affirms, for example, that in a colonial situation, the colonized has to forget his culture in order to admire the culture of the colonizer. Feeling a stranger in her/his own land, the colonized has to adopt European culture as her or his own: "He will not be content to get to know Rabelais and Diderot, Shakespeare and Edgar Allan Poe, he will bind them to his intelligence as closely as possible" (Wretched 178). Like other theorists of colonialism, Fanon asserts that the admiration of the mother country's culture is characteristic of a colonial situation. This characteristic reminds us of Canada's admiration for American and British culture to which Margaret Laurence refers many times.

Raymond Williams, in Keywords, reveals a tendency to identify imperialism with colonialism. He explains that if we define imperialism as it was normally defined in late nineteenth-century England, imperialism "is primarily a political system in which colonies are governed from an imperial centre, for economic but also for other reasons held to be important... " (159). Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman agree with this view stating that

the terms colonialism and imperialism have been employed interchangeably. They contend that in a Marxist view, colonialism is understood as "the conquest and direct control of other people's land" and is "a particular phase in the history of imperialism" (2). Edward Said views imperialism as a generalized discursive form of oppression. In his work Orientalism Said undertakes a serious analysis of the relation between some writers and the political enterprises of the British, French, and American empires. According to him , travel writings, diaries and political speeches work to maintain the Orient as a colony. Believing that there is no discipline, or structure of knowledge, free from political interests, he gives several examples of how the system of knowledge underscored by literature has helped the West to govern the East. For example, Flaubert, Nerval, T. E. Lawrence and Kipling confirmed western ideas about the Orient, that Oriental people are terrorists, libertines mounted on camels with a wealth which they do not deserve. These "truths" about the Orient are supported by absolute power, which in turn depends on the permanence of this discourse. In other words, the discourse of the Occident on the Orient is a strategy of the West to keep authority over the East. So Orientalism is a western political strategy, a western discourse for classifying, inventing and dominating the Orient. Said says that the whole question of imperialism "carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward races, cultures and societies" (206). By objectifying the Orient as something to be examined, studied, judged, disciplined or governed, Orientalism is at the service of European and American colonialisms. Orientals can be associated with other colonized and oppressed people who cannot decide their own lives :

> Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved. (Or 207)

Said recognizes that what he says in Orientalism had already been said by Fanon and others. He believes that all who suffered the ravages of imperialism understand that they were reported to Europe according to European wishes (in Barker 17). Although Said fails to address sufficiently the heterogeneity of Orientalist literary and other writing, and although the concept of Orientalism is sometimes loose, as Aijaz Ahmad has demonstrated in his analysis of Said's Work (179), Orientalism contributed greatly to the analysis of imperialist practices in any geographical space which suffers the burden of imperialism.

In the introduction to Culture and Imperialism, Said asserts that imperialism "means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory". Imperialism is defined and re-defined as "thinking about", "settling on", "controlling land that you do not possess" and so forth (5). Colonialism , in turn, "is the implanting of settlements of distant territory" and is "almost always a consequence of imperialism" (9). In this sense, imperialism is more far reaching than colonialism. However, I do not think a clear distinction is necessary here. As Said states,

> both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination : the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races" "subordinate people" "dependency", "expansion", and "authority ." (Culture 9)

Further, Said argues that colonialism, which naturally follows imperialism, involves not only profit and hope of more profit but also a commitment to subjugating less advanced people (10). He maintains that colonialism affects culture in many ways. For the European colonizers, the colony was just "out there", an exotic place inhabited by exotic people. Further, a colonizing culture makes representations of the colonized in order to master and

control them: observation, judgment and codification of the oppressed culture favours the dependence of the colony on an authority based elsewhere. Colonialism, like imperialism, has monopolized the entire system of representation in order to keep the subordinate and the inferior, inferior. Moreover, Said claims that the oppressive situation of the colonized can generate a culture of resistance.

Said has been criticized for his somewhat troubled use of the terms "Orientalism" , "Culture ", and "Imperialism". Michael Dutton and Peter William assert that Said's approach to the concept of representation is ambivalent, and even contradictory (334). Like Ahmad, Duton and William affirm that Said generalizes too much and essentializes the West in opposition to the rest. These are important observations about Said's work which should not be ignored. Moreover, one cannot deny Said's important contribution to the analysis of various practices of imperialism and the inter-relations of power and knowledge. Thus Said's work is important to the reading of works of resistance. The discursive formation which permits the dominant people to classify others as inferior is an instrument of colonialism condemned by Laurence.

The Canadian critic Mary Louise Pratt adds that in a colony there is the belief that reality is elsewhere, outside the colony. In this aspect, she contends, Canada suffers a similar burden of colonialism and dependence as Latin America ("Margin Release " 247-255). Pratt's Imperial Eyes is a critique of the Euro-imperialist ideology manifested through travel books written by Europeans about non-Europeans. Making an "effort to decolonize Knowledge ", Pratt proposes to analyze "how has travel and writing produced the rest of the world for European readerships at particular points in Europe's expansionist trajectory "(5). Examining travel writing which served imperialism, the author says that these writings invented a knowledge which is a "Eurocentered form of global or planetary consciousness" (5). This knowledge forms a discourse on other lands which always supports commercial interests. It is in this sense, for example, that America was reinvented:

> The reinvention of America, then, was a transatlantic necessity process that engaged the energies and imagination of the intellectuals and broad reading publics in both hemispheres, but not necessarily in the same ways. For the elites of Northern Europe, the reinvention is bound up with prospects of vast expansionist possibilities for European capital, technology, commodities and systems of knowledge. (112)

Reinventing America as a neglected land in need of intervention was a way to legitimize European exploitation.

Like Said, Pratt comments on the way Europeans have tended to classify and systematize "the other", according to imperialist interests and not to the reality of the people who live in the colonized place. Travel works describe the land and everything on it but forget to mention the people who inhabit that space, thus "doing everything possible to minimize the human presence "(59). Further she adds that "the European improving eye produces subsistence habitats as 'empty' landscapes, meaningful only in terms of a capitalist future and of their potential for producing a marketable surplus" (61). When they do refer to the people, they often point out their "strange" behaviour and culture, and their inferiority to Europeans. If the Oriental is dangerous and ugly, the Africans or South Americans are lazy, incomplete beings unable to become what Europeans already are. According to European imperial eyes, what is different from the European order represents ugliness, incongruity, disorder and triviality. Referring to European discourse on South America, Pratt says : "One needed only to see a person at rest to bear witness, if one chose, to the trait of idleness. One needed only to see dirt to bear witness to the trait of uncleanliness." And she adds : "The essentializing discursive power is impervious until those who are seen are also listened to" (153). Thus listening to Non-Europeans is a means of refuting the viewing produced by imperial eyes. Like Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt believes that power is exercised through discourse. The "truth" about colonized peoples, whether African, Caribbean, American-Indian or South-American, belongs to a

system of knowledge constructed by Europeans. European writing, then, helped to ratify the European colonial administrators' view that the natural resources of colonized lands belonged rightfully to civilization and mankind rather than to the indigenous who inhabited those lands. Inspired by Foucault, Pratt , like Said, understands that power cannot be established without the production and propagation of a discourse which legitimates the authority of the colonizer over the colonized.

The notion of imperialism and colonialism is, therefore, far reaching and also ambivalent. The colonial situation goes beyond the colonial rule itself and the territorial domination and involves notions of ruling ideas and cultural hegemony. It is considering these characteristics of the colonial situation that, at the beginning of Imperial Eyes , Mary Louise Pratt says that English Canada was still colonial in the 1950s. Some critics, as we will see further in this work, say that Canada is colonial even today.

The British Empire divided its colonies into three classes: crown colonies, colonies with "representative" governments, and colonies with "responsible" governments (Spurr 5). The latter were eligible for elevation to "dominion" status as is the case with Canada. Canada was ruled entirely by British dictates until 1867, when it officially ceased to be a colony of the British Empire, becoming the "Dominion of Canada." However, even after that date, Canadians were still defined as British subjects. Until 1982, the British Canadian Act was the basic statute of Canada .[1] Accordingly , we can say that Canada remained a colony for a long time. Colonialism strongly affected Canadian history and still influences Canadian culture because, as one knows, dependence is not relinquished by just one decree. Dependence causes a state of mind which may prevent, or retard, the valorization of the colonized country by its own people. Signs of cultural dependence on and subordination to the mother country are visible in Canada long after 1867. For instance, the Union Jack remained the Canadian national flag until 1965, when a distinctive national flag was proclaimed. Moreover , the Union Jack is still flown in Canada on some occasions (Commonwealth meetings or in honour of the Queen). The other

fact which may be seen as an element of subordination is related to the national anthem : only in 1967 did the Parliament adopt a committee recommendation that the song "O Canada" become the national anthem of Canada and "God save the Queen" remain as the royal anthem.[2] This characterizes the colonial situation of the country. In 1971, in his preface to The Bush Garden , Northrop Frye states that Canada is "the only country in the world which is a pure colony, colonial in psychology as well as in mercantile economics" (III).

Margaret Laurence has likewise expressed her ideas about the colonial condition of Canada, stating that Canadians do not have their own judgment but depend on the colonizer's standards:

> My people's standards of correctness and validity and excellence were still at that time [1957] largely derived from external and imposed values: our views of ourselves were still struggling against two other cultures ...
> Who on earth taught us to think of ourselves that way ?
> The whole history of imperialism, of being defined in others' terms, not our own. ("Ivory" 257)

Laurence believed that it was necessary for Canadian writers to fight against this dependent state of mind, just as writers from other colonized countries do . In the same essay, for example, she declares that Canadian writers are like Third World writers, as both "have had to find [their] own voices and write out of what is truly [theirs] , in the face of an overwhelming cultural imperialism" (253). Laurence aligns herself with Third World writers like Chinua Achebe, because she claims that, culturally, her country is similar to his in that Canadian artists do not belong to the cultural forms of "that dominant imperial culture ".

Contemporary critics have also revealed a preoccupation with the colonial state of Canada. Linda Hutcheon, for instance, states that Canada as a nation has never felt central, culturally or politically, but warns against equating Canada with a Third World country

("Circling" 171). Diana Brydon claims that "Canada as a nation was created by imperialism and all that entailed : theft of the land from its original inhabitants, genocide, massive immigration from around the world, exploitation of our labour and our natural resources by imperial powers ... " (Ar 101). Therefore it is obvious that Canadians would be profoundly affected by colonialism. Moreover, the recognition of the colonial situation of Canada is important in generating discussions about ways of decolonization. In "Eruptions of Postmodernity: the Postcolonial and the Ecological", Linda Hutcheon comments that "historically, Canada has been -- has had to be -- sensitive to the issue of difference and exploitation : it defined itself as a nation in 1867, but it continued to be a colony of Britain until, some would say, it graduated to being a colony of the United States" (147).

The problem of Canada being a "colony of the United States " has been raised by many critics. They reveal a great concern for Canadian vulnerability to U.S. Power and influence, both in cultural and economic terms. Margaret Laurence worried about Canada's cultural dependence on the USA, complained that there were too many American publishing companies in Canada which led to Canadians being colonized by American literature: "The more American brands we have, the less books which are going to be published in this country because branch plants are going to bring in great numbers American books, which they already do, and they will publish relatively few Canadian books "(New 26). The situation may have changed somewhat, with Canadian ownership of publishing companies increasing since Laurence wrote this statement, but in 1991 McGoogan complained that these companies are still foreign dominated (16). In addition , Robin Mathews affirms that only three percent of films in Canada are Canadian and that ninety percent of text books come from outside Canada, most from the USA (119). Thus critics warn that Canadians are losing their voices because of American media invasion. They still have reason to lament the "continuing economic and cultural hegemony of the United States over Canada", as Hutcheon says.

Other critics are more direct in their assertion that Canada is a "colony of the United States". Tony Wilden, for example, states explicitly : "Canada is the richest colony of the United States "(15); he refers to a colony in economic and cultural aspects. Rudy Wiebe, in an Interview with Om Juneja and others, blasts Canadian foreign policy makers for continually tailoring their decisions to suit American ones (3). He laments that Canada's decisions depend on American decisions. For Wiebe, Canada is a cultural colony, a condition which sometimes has its origin in economic colonialism. Wallace Clement worries about the economic exploitation which Canada suffers. In his article "Uneven Development: A Mature Branch-Plant Society", he explains that American corporations began to penetrate the Canadian economy mainly after the Second World War, causing Canadian dependence to shift from Britain to the USA. He laments that the petroleum in Western Canada is largely controlled by US oil companies. So, he claims, Canada "is not master of its own house" and therefore "cannot be characterized as an independent capitalist society " (in Mandel 112). Likewise Norman Penner states that, even though there are no accurate figures, "there is no doubt that a large proportion of Canadian Industry is owned or controlled by American capital". He contends that after the Second World War Canada's colonial ties to Britain weakened, but the dependence on the USA increased (75). Daniel Drache, in his article "The Canadian Bourgeoisie and its National Consciousness", maintains that "for the past one hundred years Canada has acted as the safety-box for the British and American investments", that the elite profit from the colonial situation in Canada, and that Canadian nationalism is no more than a continuation of the British empire
(Lumsdem 20).

The suggestion, therefore, is that nationalism is dangerous when not a manifestation of the people but of some privileged groups. Nationalism, in this sense, is inextricably linked to colonialism. When nationalism means British-Canadian nationalism, there will invariably be a repression of other interests and desires. Benedict Anderson refers to this

kind of nationalism as "Official nationalism" which is a continuation of empire (91-101). The colony is transformed into nation but continues to be dependent, because the "nation " was "officially" imagined by the controller of power. As A. Lower states : "Some people are born nations, some achieve nationhood and others have nationhood thrust upon them. Canadians seem to be among these last "(in Goetsch 122). Scholars thus see Canadian nationalism sometimes not as a manifestation of common interest but as a construct of those who have thrust nationhood upon Canada. According to Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin, there are two kinds of nationalism : One is positive as it challenges imperialism; the other serves imperialism and sees a nation as a single voice (67). This latter type is connected with colonialism through a transference of British principles, customs and system of government to Canada, bringing to mind Simcoe's recommendation that "the utmost attention should be paid that the British customs, manners, and principles in the most trivial as well as serious matters should be promoted [in Canada]" (in Burroughs 112).

The idea is that the creation of Canada was artificial in some aspects and this may be, in part, responsible for the colonial situation there. The view of Canada as a British colony persisted as did the notion-- for some Canadians-- that England was the "great good place." Although acquiring its official independence in 1867, there are elements which evidence Canada's subordination to the "mother country". In 1984, in a letter, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe tells Margaret Laurence how surprised he was when, at a Canadian University convocation ceremony, he heard "God Save the Queen".[3] Colonial ties to Britain may have helped to foster the "superiority" of British Canadians over "other" Canadians. In this sense, as Tony Wilden remarks, "other" Canadians may consider themselves colonized by Anglo-Canadians --"other " meaning, for example, the Metis people, the natives and all those who have "primitive behaviour" like Third World immigrants and other "inferior people" (60-70).

If one can draw any conclusion from the discussion so far it is that the concept of Canadian colonialism is very complex; it is not so simple as to say, for example, that

Canada is still a colony of either England or the United States. While the settler Canadians feel post-colonial in relation to the British empire, they represent the central colonial power to the natives, Metis, and other dispossessed Canadians. The latter are undoubtedly farther from the centre which decides and defines their lives. If they cannot define their own lives and their decisions depend on "superior" Canadians, they are surely colonized. My argument then is that while all Canadians were affected by colonialism, the indigenous, the Metis and other non-British Canadians suffered (or continue to suffer) under colonialism to a far greater extent than the "charter" settlers (British, in my study). It is important, therefore, to be aware of Hutcheon's affirmation that Indigenous Canadian populations should, more than others, be regarded as post-colonial (Circling 172). In addition, one has to remember that colonialism affected diverse cultures in many different ways.

One has to be aware that as a white invader-settler colony, Canada, as Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman argue, was not "subject to the sort of coercive measures which were the lot of the colonies, and [its] ethnic stratification was fundamentally different" (4). Of course, Canada did not suffer the same cultural imposition nor the same degree of oppression as did the invaded colonies in Africa, India or the West Indies. Canadian colonialism is even different from other settler colonies.[4] Therefore the Canadian colonial or post-colonial condition is not equal to that of any other nation colonized by European empires. It is in consideration of this point that Hutcheon alerts us against equating Canada to a "Third World and therefore a post-colonial culture", claiming that it would be "both trivializing of the Third World experience and exaggerated regarding the (white) Canadian to equate Canada to invaded colonies". (Circling 171). Without question, Canada has a less oppressive history than African countries, India and the West Indies. But on the other hand, critics agree that when one considers the indigenous and less-favoured people in Canada, one sees a history of oppression. Here, Brydon's preference not to stress the difference between Canadian colonialism and post-colonialism and other countries'

experiences with colonialism seems to be relevant, as she believes that the emphasis on the "different" can lead us to "refuse to recognize" that Canadians have things to share with colonized people. (The White Inuit Speaks" 195). If Canadian culture was affected by colonialism, it is possible to say that this culture can produce a literature which condemns colonialism and emphasizes the need for decolonization. Such a literature would, of course, be different from other post-colonial literatures, but still post-colonial in that it could subvert colonialism.

According to Donna Bennet, "postcolonial is a viewpoint that resists imperialism -- or relationships that seem imperialistic". Furthermore, she claims that "to speak of postcolonialism is to focus attention on those who have sought independence and who view the imperial country's proprietary claims as invalid" (168). In this respect, "postcolonial" is not only a historical situation marked by the dismantling of the institutions of colonial power but also, as David Spurr says, "a search for alternative to the discourse of the colonial era." (6). Thus a literature which serves as an instrument to reproach any form of colonialism can be read as postcolonial. Postcolonial, in this sense, does not presume that the colonial condition has been resolved. The post-colonial is, first and foremost, anti-colonial and subverts the imposed "truth" of the colonizers. It has something to do with "de-colonizing". The "post-" in post-colonial, as Hutcheon explains, "on the one hand means, "after , because of , and even unavoidably inclusive of the colonial; on the other it signifies more explicit resistance and opposition, the anti-colonial" ("Colonialism and the Postcolonial Condition" 10). Post-Colonial, therefore, speaks against colonialism, interrogating European colonialism and proposing forms of resistance to it. Stephen Slemon's statement about post-colonial is appropriate for our discussion. The concept of post-colonial, he writes,

> proves most useful not when it is used synonymously with a post-independence period in once-colonized nations but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or *post*-colonial discursive purchase in culture, one which begins

> in the moment that colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its Others and which continues as an often occulted tradition into the modern theatre of neo-colonialist international relations... I would want to preserve for "post-colonialism" a specifically anti-colonial counter-discursive energy... (in Adam 3)

Post-colonial texts, then, are those texts which write against any kind of imperialism and colonialism, subverting and deconstructing the discourse of the colonizer. They reveal a culture of resistance to imperial domination, a culture which was caused by the very existence of colonialism. As Brydon and Tiffin state, "Post-colonial writers subvert the imperial perspective creating from the tensions of their colonial legacy new fictions which generate new ways of perceiving" (29). The post-colonial writers challenge conventional form, voice, and content, and introduce new perceptions of the world not only by rewriting traditional European texts which previously served imperialism, but by introducing the readers to different voices which were silenced by colonialism. This is a different view from some critics who believe that the term postcolonialism presumes we have resolved the colonial condition. These critics prefer the term "decolonizing" which , they affirm, stresses the existence of a process, a hard work to escape colonialism. From the perspective I have been using here, postcolonialism means a struggle to decolonize what still bears colonial characteristics. Moreover, I consider that postcolonial texts remind us of the continuous presence of neo-colonial forces in our world.

Thus it seems to me that it is possible to speak of post-colonialism from a Canadian perspective. If one is careful to investigate the peculiarities and avoid generalizations the concept is useful. Furthermore, I would contend that when a Canadian text -- even one written by a white Anglo-Saxon author -- suggests a reflection on the damage of colonialism and questions the colonial order, it is a post-colonial text, and could be read as such. As Susan Rudy Dorscht says, "even white middle-class Canadian writers have long felt alienated, despairing, uncertain and groundless" (141). Post-colonial writers in Canada adopt the perspective of the colonized and write against the

central imperial power, opposing the suppression of voices of the dispossessed such as the Indigenous, the Metis and other minorities. Post colonial Canadian texts challenge the colonial mentality which considers the British Canadian as the central voice with authority to define others' lives. Rudy Wiebe explains why he feels the necessity to write the stories of the oppressed non-white people : "When I then come to Canada, to grow up in a land that accepts my people, but has shoved the original inhabitants whom I see around me as the poorest people in the society... What can I think, a person who has some sense of justice and decency and honour?"(8). Wiebe rewrites the imperial history of the indigenous by presenting different angles from which the reader can perceive the voice of the oppressed.

Of course, one has to be aware of the problem of representation. A white writer produces texts which unavoidably have their "whiteness." As Terry Goldie warns, "any white texts about indigene, is writing about what you don't know" (9). For a white writer it is difficult to penetrate the world of the indigenous or other oppressed peoples and write from their perspective. She or he cannot become an indigenous or an African or any other colonized people. The real subaltern is invisible, voiceless, because re-presented. This, however, cannot prevent the writer from speaking in favour of the oppressed people. Depending on the moment and circumstance the text may be very helpful for the oppressed community. It is important to know who is speaking for whom and, as Barbara Godard points out, "who is speaking to whom" and under what conditions (201). Who is listening to or reading and in what time? There are moments when not speaking is much worse than speaking for the oppressed. A text written by a white writer in favour of oppressed peoples cannot be discarded just because it is a "white" text. As Gayatry Spivak comments: " when you say this is a white position again you are homogenizing" (57).

In this respect I believe a white, Anglo-Saxon , Protestant Canadian can be read as a post-colonial writer when she provides us with oppositional voices and speaks against the oppression imposed by a central power; suggesting a reflection on colonialism and its

damage to people, and proposing strategies to overcome colonial dominance. I suggest that this is the case of Margaret Laurence whose relevance for oppressed people is acknowledged both by Africans and Indigenous Canadians. Chinua Achebe, for example, in Morning Yet on Creation Day, refers to Laurence as the only Canadian or Commonwealth writer who cares about the Third World. Achebe states that Laurence does not play the colonialist role in her comments on African writing (12). This confirms that her African characters are convincing as are the Metis characters in her Canadian writing. The Metis writer Beatrice Culleton acknowledges Laurence's concern with the cause of the Metis and the support Laurence gave her in her career as a writer. In spite of that, Laurence is aware of the difficulties of representing the Metis. In a letter to Adele Stone [Wiseman], Laurence states: "I cannot ever write about another cultural and ethnic background from the inside ... This was a problem I had with The Diviners and the Metis."[5] Laurence was acutely conscious of this problem even before critics started debating the politics of representation.

Laurence is aware that sometimes she writes "from outside" and at the same time she knows that her writing offers a possibility for revision of the social condition caused by imperialism and colonialism. The environment where she grew up and was educated, her education, experiences and reading provided her with social awareness. As a Canadian who was born and grew up in the prairies and who involved herself in movements against oppression, she assumes a position against colonialism. In this respect I believe it is necessary to consider some historical facts which helped to form Laurence's world. Some of Laurence's biographical data will also provide us with understanding of the author's thoughts.

CHAPTER II

Margaret Laurence and the Prairies : Some Historical and Biographical Notes

...after certain time, the ancestors are everyone's ancestors - mine, in some ways, are not only the Scots but also the Métis; I had been born in a land which they inhabited, shaped and invested with their ghosts

(Letter to Al Purdy)

If I could choose a real life person that I might have liked to be, among the many heroic possibilities, I think it would be a Metis woman called Madeleine Wilkie (Interview to CBC).

Jean Margaret Laurence was born on the 18th of July 1926 in Neepawa, Manitoba, to Robert Wemyss and Verna Simpson. As she herself remarks, her background is not English but Celtic. Her people on the father's side were Scots and on the mother's side Irish.[6]

The town of Neepawa is some hundred and twenty-five miles northwest of Winnipeg, the capital of the most easterly of the prairie provinces of Canada. As critic Clara Thomas points out, Neepawa is not really a prairie town because it is more wooded than common prairie region, yet it is different from Ontario towns and can be identified with Western towns because of its "freedom of spirit" (quoted in Morley Margaret Laurence: 18). Neepawa (Cree word for abundance) was already well settled by the time of its incorporation in 1883. The town, like the whole Province of Manitoba and the Canadian West, played an important role in Margaret Laurence's thinking and writing, having inspired her to create the town of "Manawaka", the setting of her Canadian fiction. It becomes therefore relevant for an understanding of Laurence's world view to examine some aspects of the Canadian West, especially Manitoba, "where [her] World began."[7]

The province of Manitoba was first explored along the route of its great rivers by fur traders. Like the whole Canadian West, it has a history of protest and willingness to resist oppression and dependence. This characteristic was present in the region even before the annexation of the province to the Dominion of Canada in 1870. George Melnik suggests that "the history of regional discontent in the West began in the fur trade era of the late seventeenth century, when the West's fur resorts were being exploited for the European market (2). In 1670, Charles II granted the Hudson's Bay Company a royal charter that gave it control over all the land drained by the rivers flowing into the bay. White settlement in the region was transitory and tied only to the commerce and trading posts which were

had been living in the region for thousands of years, soon became important instruments in the fur trade, working as trappers. In 1763 Pierre Gaultier de la Verendrye reached the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, establishing a trading post on the site of present-day Winnipeg. In the following decades, French fur traders and their Indian allies would become the most important inhabitants of the prairies, helping to shape the region. These Metis people, descendant of white trappers and Indian women, hunted the buffalo of the prairies and supplied the trappers with buffalo meat (more specifically "pemmican"). In 1812 Lord Selkirk of the Hudson's Bay Company brought Scottish settlers to the Red River Valley. Therefore Scottish settlers also contributed to the development of a mixed-blood ethnicity through intermarriage. These people held an independent life and believed they had authority over the region. Their future, however, was in the hands of Central Canada.

As Southern Manitoba developed into an important fur trade centre and became a transportation centre between Eastern and Western Canada, colonizing forces outside the region were observing it and calculating its potential for future exploitation. In 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company absorbed the Northwest Company. Before this absorption the competition between the two companies provoked much tension among the Metis people. Fur trade remained, however, vitally important for the region, and the Metis continued to play an important role as buffalo hunters supplying food for the region. The Metis were proud of their land and considered themselves to be the true inheritors of it. The interest of Eastern Canada in the West, however, increased. In the 1840s George Brown, the owner of the Toronto Globe, a newspaper which represented the interests of Toronto's business elite, led a campaign to annex Hudson's Bay Company's land to Canada. Several politicians interested in Western trade took up the cause of Westward expansion.

In 1867, the Confederation, or Dominion of Canada , was established by the British North America Act. The centralized federation included the province of Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and made an agreement for the inclusion of the remaining North American territories under British rule. The West was destined to

connect with Central Canada which in 1868 bought the land that belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company . In 1869 the company transferred its territory to the Dominion without informing the people who lived in the area. The Canadian government paid no attention to the Metis; its main interest was planning the transcontinental railroad. Another concern of the government was the settlement of the area with the intention of forming a united British Canada from coast to coast. The Indians and the Metis, who shared similar life-styles and spoke the same language, claimed territorial rights as aboriginal people. However, since the Metis, unlike their "Indian cousins", did not have legal status, their situation became even worse than the Indians' (Morley Margaret Laurence 140).

In December 1869 the Metis leader Louis Riel, widely supported by the Red River people, led a resistance against the Canadian government, establishing the Metis's own representative body. This government was able to force the central government to negotiate. Through the Manitoba Act, resulting from these negotiations, the Metis received educational, cultural and linguistic guarantee, and the Province of Manitoba was created in 1870. The name "Manitoba" was chosen by Louis Riel himself and means "the spirit (*Manito*) that speaks" or, in another version, "strait of the spirit". Eastern settlers started arriving in the province , which experienced rapid growth in the 1870s and 1880s. In 1873 the Northwest Mounted Police was founded in order to serve as an instrument of federal control. The Mounted Police chased American traders and policed the Metis and the Indians. Having lived for thousands of years without police, the Indians saw no reason for the establishment of force in the area. To the Indians and the Metis the Mounted Police represented the colonizer's occupational force and therefore the oppressors.[8] In many cases the presence of the Police, supposed to "guarantee order", was really a source of oppression and agitation. Moreover, the Indians were losing their land rights and through many treaties were being sent to the reserves. In 1880 the Canadian Pacific Railway was charted. Charles Tupper, the minister of transportation, revealing no concern for Manitoba, declared that the interests of Manitoba should be sacrificed to the interests of

Canada.[9] Political authorities saw the Canadian west as an empty place, available for any enterprise. This illustrates Mary Louise Pratt's theory that the colonizers do not consider human beings when they look at the land available for exploitation.[10] There was no preoccupation, on the part of British Canadian authorities, with the Metis and the Indians who were facing very serious economic conditions and were close to starvation, with the end of the buffalo hunt in the 1880s. When, threatened by the large numbers of settlers, the Metis asked for assistance in obtaining seed grain, they were instead ordered to pay for their own land. In order to fight against injustice and their difficult conditions, Louis Riel, who had led the 1870 resistance, was called from the United States, where he had been living in exile since 1873, after the agreement which created the province of Manitoba.

In 1885 Louis Riel went to Saskatchewan to aid the Northwesterners in their constitutional struggle. In March he took power and established his own government. Two months later the Metis were defeated at Batoche and their main leader, Louis Riel, was arrested. He had been subjected to such great stress that sometimes he seemed to be insane. On November 16, 1885, after facing some trials, Louis Riel was hanged "for treason" under order of the Canadian Prime- Minister, John Alexander Macdonald. The Metis lost their land and some revolutionaries were sentenced to penitentiary terms. Louis Riel was considered by the British Canadian authority as "crazy", "poor ignorant" among other negative qualifications, very much in the pattern of the European imperialism described by Edward Said, who states that Europeans see resistance to colonialism and central assimilation "as the work of cliques, or of crazy millenarians, and so forth" (CI, 198). The Metis leader, however, received the sympathy of many Westerners and even Eastern Canadians. Douglas Owran relates that Charles Pitblado, a Presbyterian chaplain who marched with the troop to subdue Riel, preached not the evil of rebellion but the faults of central government. The minister said that the Metis had been robbed by unprincipled traders, pauperized by charities and corrupted by Canadian vices (Melnyk 92).

Not long after the 1885 revolt, the Metis were supplanted by hundreds of thousands of Americans and Europeans in the region, and the fur trade regionalism was ended. Their state after the rebellion was deplorable. Without land to cultivate, many of them retreated north to marginal lands. Margaret Laurence often reveals her sympathy for the Metis who suffered deep injustice. She refers to the Metis as her ancestors because she was born "in a land which they had inhabited, shaped and invested with their ghosts".[11] On several occasions she confesses that one of her personal heroes was Gabriel Dumont, the Metis rebel who fought with Louis Riel. Patricia Morley informs us that in "The Shack", Laurence's cottage near Peterborough, she had large portraits of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont (Morley 1990 : 23). In Margaret Laurence's Canadian writing, especially in The Diviners, they appear as victims of the British Canadian government, who considered British culture as superior to that of the Metis. The story of the Metis in the West has helped to characterize the people of the region as enemies of oppression and colonization.

The western farmers' impulse to mobilize against injustice is believed to have been inherited from the mobilization of the Metis. It is important to point out that after 1885 the social structure of the Canadian West developed into a class society. Ordinary farmers and workers formed the majority of the population but received the fewest benefits and had very little power. The farmers claimed that while the price of goods went up, the price for their grains was unprotected. While farmers were taking their own initiative to demand just treatment, the workers organized themselves in unions in order to fight for social benefits, better wages and fewer hours of work . The OBU (One Big Union) had an important role in the movement which culminated in the famous Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 which, as David Berguson suggests, "was the most complete withdrawal of labour power ever to occur in North America." (quoted in Melnyk 124). In the short run, the movement was a failure for the workers. The workers' dream of gaining dignity and respect and of receiving better wages, union recognition, and management's acknowledgment of the workers' power did not come true. However, in the long run, it brought up memories of struggle against

injustice and caused class polarization in the Canadian West. In addition, one can say, future victories of democratic movements and parties were also due to the strike. The movement raised basic questions concerning the nature and composition of "constituted authority" as well as a challenge to that authority.

The presence of religious leaders lent special characteristics to the movement. James S.Woodsworth, whose beliefs Margaret Laurence confessed to endorse, was the son of the superintendent of the Methodist Missions in Western Canada.[12] Woodsworth worked tirelessly to improve social conditions in North Winnipeg and had to leave the church for his unorthodox social ideas. He was the editor of the strike bulletin and was arrested for some days. Later he would be the founder of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation), a socialist labour movement.[13] Woodsworth helped to create militancy and a belief in social justice which revealed evangelist characteristics common in the Social Gospel, another important Western movement when one considers Margaret Laurence's ideas.

The Social Gospel was a political movement which influenced both farmers and workers. It appeared within the Canadian Protestantism in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. Robin Matthews contends that religion in Canada has been a significant partner in the formulation of philosophy, political ideas "and in the founding and development of the most influential Left non-Marxist forces in Canada". Referring to the Social Gospel, Matthews says: "The notion that Jesus and the earliest church were the first socialists, had played a role in legitimizing socialism..." (66). The movement indeed combined Christian morality with social justice and struggled for the end of class exploitation and for a system which would strike out poverty and ignorance. Christian beliefs and teachings supported the attack on the exploitative relation of capital to labour. Some Church colleges in the West, among them Wesley, Manitoba, and Brandon Colleges, became disseminators of the Social Gospel. E. A. Partridge, a farm leader of the early 1900s wrote in 1909 that "Christ wasn't trying to save his soul for the next world ... but

was trying to serve humanity by showing men the truth about the proper relations to set up between themselves and God and themselves and others.[14] The leader preached that love of God should be manifested in love for one's neighbour or in politics. Another important leader was Henry Wise Wood, who was an assiduous reader of the Bible and of works on social theory. Wood produced a social philosophy for the agrarian movement and held that the church should recognize that Christ, as a leader, offered the great social deliverance which men were seeking.

In this way, the Social Gospel sought to eliminate social inequalities and the individualism of the farmers. It preached that the social ethics taught by Jesus should be present in business and agrarian labour. The movement brought social faith and concern with social justice among the Western farmers. Without any question, the movement made a good contribution to Western thought and Western society. It also helped to characterize the west as a region which gives birth to new social ideas. When talking about her political ideas, Margaret Laurence would often cite the Social Gospel as something important to her. For example, in a letter to the writer Hubert Evans she would write in 1982 : "The Social Gospel is what seems to matter to me more and more".[15] Another example is her critique of an article written by Barbara Amiel published by Maclean, criticizing social Marxist Bishops. In reply to the article Laurence asks : "Has she never heard of the Social Gospel ?"[16] As a Western Canadian, Laurence considered the social-change-oriented Christianity more important than any other kind of religion.

Besides affecting the thoughts and actions of the Western farmers, the Social Gospel through its urban roots also determined the emergence of a new class of intellectual and political leaders in the West. In the 1920s the Social Gospel was embraced by the agrarian movement called the UFA - United Farmers of Alberta. Henry Wise Wood, preacher of the Social Gospel and president of the UFA from 1916 to 1931, defended the idea of "group government" and social co-operation. According to him, farmers were especially exploited because their class was not organized. The solution would then be in

cooperative production and class organization. The UFA later developed into the Social Credit and the CCF. The Social Credit started as a populist mass movement and defended that credit be placed into the hands of the public in order to produce a new age without strong social conflict. It had some characteristics of millenarism with theories created by Major Douglas. Douglas, however, did not succeed in changing the financial system as he preached, and the Social Credit ended up as a conservative party defending a free market economy.

The CCF -- Co-operative Commonwealth Federation -- created under the orientation of Woodsworth was more radical than the Social Credit. The movement, or party, proposed legislation more favourable to labour than that found anywhere in the country and preached the eradication of capitalism. The party struggled for the establishment of a cooperative community and held that no government of the CCF would be at rest while capitalism was not eradicated from Canada[17] T.C. Douglas, another member of CCF, for whom Laurence confesses her admiration, maintained that in order to combat capitalism, farmers should organize themselves in cooperatives. The CCF had identification with European socialism in its anti-fascist struggle and supported international socialism. The successor organization of the CCF, the NDP (New Democratic Party) would become important for the maintenance of Canadian socialist ideas displaying a concern over the exploitation of Canadian natural resources by foreign countries, and therefore having a more nationalist than internationalist view. CCF, like other political movements in the Canadian West, would help to shape western Canada's distinctive place in Canadian History.

From the foregoing events, one can perceive that Margaret Laurence's prairie reveals a receptiveness to new ideas especially those relating to social egalitarianism and distribution of wealth. If Western Canada suffered exploitation and domination by Eastern Canada, it also developed a resistance to subordination. This tradition of protest against injustices, as I have stressed earlier, was inherited from the Metis.

Margaret Laurence's thinking and writing owe much to the social environment where she was born and educated. In her essay "Where the World Began" the author says:

> A strange place it was, that place where the world began. A place of incredible happenings, splendours and revelations, despairs like multitudinous pits of isolated hells. A place of shadow-spookiness, inhabited by the unknowable dead. A place of jubilation and mourning, horrible and beautiful. It was, in fact, a small prairie town.(HS , 237)

About her relation to this prairie town, Clara Thomas remarks that "the most readily identifiable western Canadian quality about Margaret Laurence is her early dedication to social reform and the continued, basic, social awareness that is part of the foundation of all her work." (16). Because of this, I consider important to point out some particularities of her biography.

In 1936 Neepawa was still going through the Depression and Margaret Laurence, only ten years old, had already lost her mother and father. She and her brother Robert were living with her aunt and stepmother Margaret Simpson Wemyss, a teacher, who would stimulate her to write. Laurence tells us that her second "Mum" had financial worries but "remained vitally interested in life and in books" (Dance 58). As a child, Laurence read quite indiscriminately, mainly adventure stories written by authors such as Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle, R.L.Stevenson and Kipling. About the latter, she would write some time later on more than one occasion, that although as a child she liked the adventure stories which helped her to open her imagination, later she would "reject the imperialism that characterizes much of Kipling's writing.[18] From a very young age she started writing scribbles and in 1939, at 13, her first story "Pillars of the Nation", written for Winnipeg Free Press Contest, won honourable mention. "Pillars of the Nation" was about the pioneers in Neepawa. It was in this story that the author invented the town of "Manawaka" which would be present in all her Canadian fiction.

Laurence was always aware of her Scottish background. In "Road from the Isles" she confesses:

> No one could ever tell me whether my family had been Lowlanders or Highlanders, because no one in the prairie town where I grew up seemed very certain exactly where that important dividing line came on the map of Scotland. I decided, therefore, that my people had come from the Highlands. In fact, they had not, but Highlanders seemed more interesting and more noble to me in every way. (Heart 159)

It did not take long for her to perceive that her pride in being Scottish was based only on fantasy, that she was really a prairie girl "no more Scots that a Siamese." She would research about the Highlanders and Highland Clearances and the tragic event of Culloden but was always aware that her real roots were in Canada. In " Where the World Began", she states: "My long-ago families came from Scotland and Ireland, but in a sense that no longer mattered to me. My true roots were here" (HS 244). It was the prairie town in the Canadian west which would shape and form her way of seeing the world and of writing. In fact, she was very critical of the "superiority" of Scottish people over others in Neepawa "The class system in my town was really bad (An awful lot of Scots were professional - lawyers, doctors and preachers - Ukrainians were farmers less educated.) "[19]

The author grew up observing the oddities of her world, the social snobbery and the false pride of some people. In 1940, Laurence began high school at Neepawa Collegiate where she was editor of the school newspaper. In High School she was taught Canadian History from the British point of view. The history of the people who had helped to construct the democratic characteristics of her land was distorted. In her Memoir, Dance on the Earth, the author writes.

> I studied the Manitoba School Act late 1800 without having the faintest idea of what it actually meant, namely that in my own native province some of my ancestors had been responsible

> directly or indirectly, for depriving the quite large French-speaking populace, both Whites and Metis, of their language rights, not only in provincially supported schools but also in the provincial legislature and the courts. I was unaware of how terrible this was. I expect my teachers were as unaware as I. History was taught from anglophone point of view, the view that presented Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, Big Bear and Poundmaker, as rebel villains. It was the Upper Canadian, white Protestant interpretation of our history and it was dreadfully distorted...When I think of what I learned of Canadian history, I feel cheated, not by my teachers but by the society in which I grew up.(76-7)

On another occasion she says that as a child she was taught very little of Canadian history, almost only "Acts of Parliament." This echoes Robert Kroetsch's affirmation that history in the prairies did not account for the world people lived in. Kroetsch , a prairie writer like Laurence, states that "the authorized history, the given definition of history was betraying [people] on those prairies."[20] According to Laurence, thanks to W.L. Morton's Manitoba : A History later she was able to learn about people who were considered "bad guys" because they did not accept MacDonald's politics. (Verduyn 245). She would also complain that Literature classes in her high school meant the study of British literature.

Laurence's high school years were also marked by the Second World War. In 1941 thousands of Canadian troops were sent to the war to defend the colony of Hong Kong. Many of them died . In August 1942, at Dieppe, once again many Canadians were killed by the Germans. Laurence had several friends who were sent to the battlefields and never returned to Canada. When she was in grade eleven, she recalls, "there were only two boys in [her] class . By grade twelve, there were none. They were all at war" (Dance 84). In her memoir, Laurence observes that the second World War would also register "one of the most shameful chapter of [Canadian] history" because of the bad treatment Canadian government gave to Japanese Canadians. Many of them suffered prejudice and persecution and were "forcibly removed from the west coast, most of them to camps in the interior of B.C." (Dance 81-2). She recalls that the Japanese Canadians had their property confiscated

by the Canadian central government and received no compensation after the war. The racial prejudice against the Japanese in the West would, in some ways, resemble the injustice suffered by the Indigenous and Metis. Not long before her death, Laurence would write to the Toronto Star : "I am proud to be a Canadian, but I am not proud of the way the Japanese-Canadians were treated in the Second World war... I am proud to be a Canadian but I am not proud of the way our native peoples have been treated during our country's history" (15 Feb 1985).

In 1944, at eighteen, Margaret Laurence, as she would confess later, was anxious to leave Neepawa, and get away from the prairies. Though she did leave the small town of Neepawa, she did not leave Manitoba and the West, for she went to Winnipeg in order to study at United College, an affiliate of the University of Manitoba. In her College years she would publish poetry and stories in the college paper "Vox". At the United College Laurence got involved in the college's tradition of social conscience which was associated with the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, later the United Church of Canada in which Laurence was brought up. Laurence says that "from such a tradition had come many of the early reformers in the prairies, founders of the Social Democratic Party, the CCF..." (Dance 91). It was in her college years that Laurence would then get involved with "the Old Winnipeg Left", a group dedicated to social reform.[21] The author tells us that in the college years, after classes, students would sit at the College coffee shop for long conversations. The favourite topics were politics and religion. Discussions would be about social justice, "ethical and moral attitudes to one's own society." In her memoir the author recalls: 'Most of us who were left wing, however, myself included, leaned towards the reformist outlooks of people like J.S Woodsworth and Tomy Douglas " (Dance 98).

Margaret Laurence graduated from United College in 1947, the same year she won a prize for poetry. After graduating, she got a job for a communist newspaper, The Westerner. Although not a communist, she would learn about communist people who "cared about the suffering of people everywhere." She would say later that "those old-time

Communists in the forties in Winnipeg were not proposing violent revolution. They were proclaiming a need for social justice in terms of our land, and I discovered that many of their views were close to mine" (Dance 107). When The Westerner closed, she worked for the Winnipeg Citizen, covering the labour beat and writing reviews. The paper was organized to be "the voice of the people" but went bankrupt in 1948.[22] Here she also had opportunity to learn more about labour movements and unions.

In 1947, Margaret Wemyss married Jack Laurence, a civil engineering student . When he graduated in 1949, they went to England. The next year they moved to Africa, where Jack got a job with the British Protectorate of Somaliland, now Somalia, building earth dams. In Somalia, Laurence worked in Hargesia as confidential secretary for the Chief Secretary of the Protectorate, who would help her to publish A Tree for Poverty in 1954. Margaret Laurence's first child , Jocelyn, was born in England in 1952, the year the Laurences moved to the Gold Coast (Ghana). In her conversation with Clara Thomas, Laurence declared that when she went to Africa she was "fascinated by that whole cultural milieu, and by the people" and she read what she could about African culture and history.[23] She did not write about Africa as a tourist but as someone really involved in Africa's life. She would observe that in spite of great differences, there were similarities between Africa and Canada because both countries were heavily dependent on Britain for political and cultural ideas. In a letter to Arthur Ravenscroft in May 1985 she says that she took to Africa "the sight of Canadian eyes which was a sight far different from the usual British middle-class colonial eyes."[24]

Revealing great interest in the Somali people and their oral literature, Laurence learned the Somali language and translated some of their poems and tales into English. These literary texts were published two years after she left Somalia, in a collection entitled A Tree for Poverty : Somali Poetry and Prose and was a tribute to Somalia and its oral tradition. Laurence's first African story, "The Drummer of all the World" was published while Laurence was still in Africa. There, she also started writing her first novel This Side

Jordan, which she finished in Vancouver and published in 1960. When Ghana achieved independence, Laurence left Africa with her two children Jocelyn and David -- the latter born in Ghana -- to return to Canada (Vancouver). She would refer to her seven years in Africa as "a seven years' love affair with a continent" saying that she learned much with that experience (Morley Long 21). On several occasions she states that, through learning about African life, she discovered a lot about Canada. Years later, in 1977, writing to Indirections she testifies:

> We were living in Ghana, for example, in the five years preceding their independence and I came from a country which had been a colony -- which still to some extent suffered from a colonialist mentality. It took a long time in our literature to write out of what we really knew, rather than to follow British and American models. I found in myself very strong feelings of anti-imperialism which I recognized to be there because I was a Canadian. I learned quite a bit about Africa while I was there, but I think I learned even more about myself and my relationship to my culture. (38)

In 1960, back in Canada, Laurence was still concerned and writing about Africa and colonization. Before the publication of This Side Jordan at the time of the Congo Crisis, she read Mannoni's The Psychology of Colonization, which would influence her writing. In 1962, when separated from her husband, she moved to England where, in the following year, she would publish more works based on Africa: The Prophet's Camel Bell (in the United States, New Wind in a Dry Land), a non-fictional narrative based on the diary she kept in Somalia, and the collection of short-stories The Tomorrow-Tamer . In 1964, Knopf (New York) published simultaneously The Tomorrow-Tamer , New Wind in a Dry Land , and The Stone Angel , her first Canadian work. A Jest of God, Laurence's second novel with a Canadian setting, came out in 1966. In the next year she would become Honourary Fellow of the United College in Winnipeg.

In England , at Elm Cottage, Buckinghamshire, the author found ideal conditions for writing. It was also in England that she had the opportunity to meet Nigerian writers like

Christopher Okigbo and Wole Soyinka. In her memoirs, she says that she "found it exciting that African writers were producing what [she] thought and [she] and many Canadian writers were producing: a truly non-colonial literature" (Dance 185). In 1968, Long Drums and Cannons, her pioneering study of the work of Nigerian writers, was published. The Fire-Dwellers and A Bird in the House came out in 1969 and 1970 respectively. In 1969/70 the author spent a year as a writer-in-Residence at the University of Toronto. She purchased a cottage on the Otonabee River near Peterborough and in 1973 she moved back permanently to Canada.

Although having lived and written much in England, with the exception of Jason's Quest (a children's book), Laurence wrote no books based on English people and culture. In 1967 she wrote to Al Purdy: "Then I come back to the thought that in some ways I seem to be committed to a lifelong concern about Africa and African writing, as well as Canadian, and this place is halfway between Africa and Canada."[25] English people and culture seemed to make little impression on her life. Many of her neighbours did not even know that she was a writer. Laurence would complain that Canadian literature was neither known nor valued in England. After leaving England she confessed to Clair Mowat:

> During the years I lived in England, I became more and more disillusioned about the British attitude towards Canada in every area. The literary world of England thinks of Canada as insufferably dull, although none of those people bother to inform themselves about us or our land ... I sound horribly prejudiced and I am. But with reason. The novel in England has deteriorated over the past 20 years.[26]

The year 1974 is marked by Laurence's publication of The Diviners . It is also the year she was writer-in-residence at Trent University in Peterborough. She lived, then, in the village of Lakefield, near Peterborough. The next year The Diviners was awarded the Governor's General Medal for Fiction. It was at this time that the author received D.Lit and LL.D.by some Canadian universities and started influencing and encouraging a new generation of writers. Moreover, her involvement in Canadian life (literary, social and

political) was becoming noticeable. The author was a founding member of the Writers Union of Canada with which she cooperated actively. When she realized, however, that the Writers Union was getting too dependent on government funding, she protested and resigned from the union. She was disgusted with the union's policy of accepting subsidy from Canada's Council, causing dependence upon government funding. She believed that receiving money from the government the writers were not free to criticize anything because "You can't lobby against the government that's paying you."[27]

After The Diviners, Laurence did not write any other adult fiction. She published, however, Heart of a Stranger, which is a collection of journalism, in 1976 and three books for children Six Darn Cows, The Olden Days Coat (both in 1979) and The Christmas Birthday Story in 1980. She spent a great part of her time giving talks, writing articles, supporting campaigns in favour of ecology and social justice. In a statement at Harbour Front in Toronto on May 7 1985, she said:

> I stand with all writers who care about the human condition, who feel ourselves to be part of all humanity, who desire justice for all persons. I stand with writers everywhere who believe... that hurting people is wrong, who despise racism and militarism and the demeanment and exploitation of women...

Her confessed admiration for the Nigerian Writer Chinua Achebe is connected with his concern for social justice. Laurence and Achebe exchanged letters and met each other. They called one another "brother-soul" and "sister-soul": "... we are soul-sister and brother... in our own areas, cultures, land and not out of our own people, speaking something very connected . If there is one writer out of my country that I feel related to, it is certainly Chinua Achebe."[28] In a letter in 1984, Laurence writes to Achebe that her long felt affinity with his writing was connected to the "sense of social justice, an outrage that has to be communicated in fiction through the dilemmas and tragedies of human individuals" (June 3, 1984). The social and spiritual themes present in Achebe's work

fascinated Laurence and she confessed that she learned a lot from him (Letter to Al Purdy, Feb., 16 1969).

Laurence was a member of PEN -- an international writer's organization that lobbied for the release of political prisoners. She also joined other groups and associations which advocated for causes she believed in. Her articles for newspapers and magazines, her speeches in ceremonies as well as her presence in street demonstrations and other activities may have taken her away from writing another novel. However, she remained a leader of Canadian writers and fought for better conditions for Canadian writing. She complained about a kind of "colonial mentality, a great many people felt that a book written by a Canadian couldn't possibly be good."[29] The Canadian subservient attitudes towards the United States and England had always bothered her. It seems that the Leftist politics of her Winnipeg times kept influencing her political thoughts. In 1974, for example, she had a "battle" with "Imperial Oil", an American-owned multinational company, which she believed was exploiting Canada's soil and damaging nature. She refused to advertise for the company and after the insistence of the company's representative, Richard Nielson, she answered on November 30 1974:

> I have not changed my mind, and indeed your letter makes me feel all the more certain that this script is not me, personally. If the series "A New Land", on Canadian settlers is to be funded by Imperial Oil, my personal feeling is that for me to write for such a series would be to give my tacit approval to that corporation's exploitation of our natural resources, and that I am unwilling to do. (Laurence's archives)

On several occasions she declared that Canada should be declared a nuclear free zone, with no testing of nuclear arms. She considered these nuclear races a threat to many generations and complained about politicians who could not understand the seriousness of the matter.[30] In March 1986 she would write to the Toronto Star :

> And are we Canadians, to refrain from addressing our government

> on the nuclear issue because this might make the Reagan's administration nervous and more trigger-happy than it already seems to be? I hold absolutely no brief for the soviet government but when I hear Reagan referring to all Russians as "evil Godless Communists" I want to weep or yell ... The Reagan regime's paranoia is frightening in its eagerness to increase military budgets whilst depriving the poor, the aged, the disadvantaged.

Further, referring to the same problem, she confesses to a friend : "I really wonder why people like Reagan can take control of our world ? "[31]

As we have seen in the first chapter of this work, the themes of colonialism, freedom, equality of rights, ecology, and exploitation are part of Laurence's concern. In her library, for example, besides many books about Louis Riel, the works of Fanon and Cesaire, one finds books about the Canadian Left, the "Old Left", the problem of the Canadian colonial situation and so on [32]. As she got older, her social activism seemed to increase and her belief in the necessity to struggle for justice seemed to be more evident. In March 1983, she wrote to her friend Don Bayley that she had always been "a kind of social activist." Then she added : "but I reckon as people get older they should get more radical, not less.[33]

On two occasions Margaret Laurence had to face controversies over the teaching of her books in high school (even grade thirteen). In 1976, Reverend Sam Buick of Peterborough's Dublin Pentecostal Church led a group who wanted The Diviners out of school for considering the book a testament to blasphemy, immorality, adultery and fornication. Buick created the "Citizens in Defense of Decency" and made a petition to ban The Diviners from the high school system, saying that no one could be moral and assign the book to students.[34] In 1985, besides The Diviners , A Jest of God and The Fire-Dwellers were attacked. This time Mrs. Helen Trotter led a group who wanted to remove these books from the school system.

On the first occasion, the author did not express any reaction, disbelieving that people would condemn the novel's sex scenes and overlook its larger part, which is very

moral. At the second time, extremely hurt and angry, she decided to break her silence. She wrote articles, did interviews on radio and on TV and took part in panels to express her view. She believed that The Diviners was a fiction with "a strong sense of the worth and value of the human individual, of caring relationships, of social injustices done to the poor and to such groups as the Metis" (159). Thus to hear that the book was immoral and that the aim of the writer was to "destroy the family" would affect her very much. A campaigner for social justice and world peace, she was very disappointed to see how some people perceived her books, the very opposite way she and many other people did. On more than one occasion, she expressed that the "book banners", worse than moralist, were racist, imperialist and prejudiced against the less favoured. People who considered the books obscene, Laurence believed, were intolerant to a language other than the correct aristocrat English. In a Newsletter which she sent to friends she affirmed:

> They can't understand that an old garbageman in a little town could be, indeed, a kind of Christ-like figure, a scapegoat for a town's self-righteous people, a man who knew the importance of the ancestors and tried to give Morag this sense of importance of the past ... (June 3 1985)

Laurence believed that the radical group of Protestants was probably shocked not by sex but by the social order which the book presented. For some people it would be degrading to think of a white woman of Scottish descent having sexual intercourse with and being impregnated by a non-white, non-British Canadian (Morley 159). Protestant groups, Laurence suspected, were preaching hatred and authoritarianism , and the suppression of the human life which her books celebrate. The author felt extremely injured by such attacks and said she did not know she would manage to withstand the attacks "were it not for support expressed in readers' letters and the support given [to her] by family, friends, and by so many people in [her] village"

(Dance 216) . For a time, Laurence even thought of answering these people in a novel, but later she decided she would not write a piece of fiction to get back at somebody. In fact, in letters to her friends she mentioned many times her unsuccessful attempt to write a new novel. One may guess that the attacks on her books may have restrained her creativity, as she wrote to Judith Jones in 1982: "I now see that the whole attack bit five years ago, on The Diviners , actually set me back about 4 years... It so hurt and then angered me that I was incapable of writing for at least four years." She confessed that the critics and readers of her books frightened her : "if one thinks of the critics, the reviewers, and even God bless them, the readers, one is paralyzed."[35] Several times she threw away the draft of what would be a new novel after The Diviners. Once she told her friend Ann Cameron that she had written 300 pages and had to throw the draft into the garbage (January 30 1985). However, even before finishing The Diviners , she referred to her "Black Celtic Second Sight" which told her that this would be her last novel.[36] Patricia Morley tells us that several friends of Margaret Laurence believed that the pain and stress caused by the attacks on her books not only refrained her creativity but also shortened her life.

In 1984 Margaret Laurence decided to give her new book the form of a memoir, a kind of autobiography which she entitled Dance on the Earth. She finished writing her first draft just before her sixtieth birthday, on July 1986. A month later she was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. With the help of Joan Johnston, who typed the second draft, Laurence corrected the manuscript which her daughter Jocelyn would edit and publish some time later.[37]

Margaret Laurence died on January 5, 1987, being acknowledged by friends and critics as a writer with a deep commitment to human life, a politicized view of the world. Bob Buchanam, who had taught her books in secondary school and fought against the "book banners", referred to her as "the champion of the less able and less accepted of society."[38]

This brief reference to some aspects of Margaret Laurence's biography will not explain the author's work. I believe, however, it helps to illuminate her attention to the

plight of the dispossessed and the disadvantaged people. Laurence's world was surrounded by particular facts, ideas and movements which favoured the outcome of a belief in resistance against domination. This resistance is perceived in all her writing. In the next chapter I would like to investigate the African writing and its connection with the theme of resistance against oppression and domination.

CHAPTER III

Imperialism and Resistance in Laurence's African Writing

The power of the Somali chiefs had been taken over by the British - -- infidels though they were, they were the Authority now. To revolt against an authority which you unconsciously believe to be in some way unassailable demands not only an act of will but also an act of the greatest faith

(Laurence, "The Poem and the Spear")

My sense of Social awareness, my feelings of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-authoritarianism, had begun, probably, in embryo form in my own childhood; they had been nurtured during my college years and immediately afterwards, in the North Winnipeg of the old Left; they had developed consistently through my African experience.

(Laurence, "Ivory Tower or Grassroots?")

We have examined some circumstances which helped Margaret Laurence to produce texts which invite us to reflect about colonialism. These texts also call into question dominant concepts reproduced by colonizing people. They propose resistance to imperialism, colonialism and domination and may then be considered "resistance literature"-- a term employed by many contemporary critics to identify a growing body of texts which resist totalizing (and colonizing) discourse.

Barbara Harlow, in her work Resistance Literature, referring to Amilcar Cabral, the leader of the Guinea-Bissau liberation movement, states that resistance literature is more powerful than a column of commandos (11). Resistance literature restores the historical personalities of oppressed people, providing "their return to history through the destruction of the imperialist domination to which they have been subjected" (30). It recognizes, as Fanon says, the necessity of recovering the history and the culture of the colonized which was distorted by the colonizer. The resistant writer, according to Fanon, "ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future as an invitation to action and a basis for hope" (Wretched 187). For Homi Bhabha, this literature does not merely recall but renews the past, "refiguring it as a continent 'in-between' space that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present" (Location 7).

Besides retrieving the forgotten history of oppressed people, Harlow further contends, a narrative of resistance challenges the master narrative by seeking different historical endings and destabilizing concepts and ideas fixed by imperial fiction. It employs principles of polyphony, inspired by Mikhail Bakhthin's notion of heteroglossia. The plurality of voices which resistant writers present in their texts decenters the fixed truth of the colonized. By replacing a hegemonic voice by new ones, by listening to new characters in history, resistant texts help to "change the order of the world, " as proposes Fanon. They invite the reader to hear the testimony of "those people who are objects of colonization and exclusion" (Spurr 193). Unlike the travel texts described by Mary Louise Pratt, in a text of resistance people who are seen are also listened to. In this sense, a

decolonizing text has an engagement with the past which permits other voices to retell the "true" History.

Furthermore, resistance novels require of the readers "a historical background and ideological awareness which certain schools of criticism had thought to have dispensed with" (Harlow 96). Creating an awareness of the connection between power and knowledge, narratives of resistance serve as a warning against the exploitation of knowledge by the interests of power to create a distorted history. Discourse, as an instrument of power can also be an instrument of resistance, because it can also undermine power.

For Homi Bhabha, resistance in colonial discourse is not necessarily an act of opposition but the effect of an ambivalence produced within the colonizer's discourse. Bhabha says that rather than negation, what we need is negotiation in order to resist dominant ideas (Location 25-26). He adds another alternative to Fanon's famous formulation "turn white or disappear" when he announces that there is a more ambivalent choice which is camouflage, mimicry, black skin/white masks.[39] Bhabha defines the colonial discourse "as an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences." Its predominant function is to create a space for subjected peoples through the production of knowledge to be used as a basis for the practice of domination. The colonial discourse, therefore, seeks to justify and authorize its strategy of occupation and invasion through the production of knowledge about the colonizer and the colonized; this knowledge is stereotyped and marked by Manichean concepts. The objective of colonial discourse "is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (*Location* 70). The authority of this discourse, however, is permeated by ambivalence; the perception of this ambivalence helps to deconstruct the discourse of the colonizer from within. Thus Bhabha's critical discourse does not seek to present an anti-colonial discourse as an opposition to the

colonial discourse; it seeks rather to recognize a process where the apparent authority and certainty of the colonial discourse are subverted, questioned, challenged and destabilized. In this way, resistance is not a symmetric opposition to the colonial presence, but a hybrid form which mimics the authority making it vulnerable and passive of being dismantled. The strategy of subversion is to inhabit the space of uncertainty of the colonial discourse. The resistant writer, then, can appropriate the strategies of the dominant authority in order to distort and deconstruct its truth. Moreover, the text of resistance reveals the ambiguity and uncertainty of the colonizing institutions. Critic David Spurr views resistance as a reappropriation of the dominant discourse. For him, the terms of the discourse are reappropriated and turned against their source in order to resist totalizing authority over objects of representation (189-189).

Thus resistance narratives are a challenge to the conventional narratives and beliefs as they struggle against the dominant cultural and ideological production. As Wole Soyinka says, resistance writing is "the conscious activity of recovering what has been hidden, lost, repressed, denigrated or simply denied by ourselves --- yes, by ourselves also --- but definitely by the conquerors of our people and their Eurocentric bias of thought and relationships" (114). One can say, then, that resistance literature stimulates issues of authority, domination, oppression, and social order by contesting some fixed "truths" established by Europeans over native people. I contend that this is what Margaret Laurence's works do.

The early works of Margaret Laurence have the Africa of the 1950's and 1960's as their setting. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Laurence spent seven years in Africa : the years 1950-52 in Somaliland and 1952-57 in the Gold Coast. The Africa Laurence lived in was both suffering under and emerging from colonialism.

Somaliland , the area now comprising Somalia and Djibouti, is located in the Horn of Africa and is the easternmost projection of the continent. It is difficult, in a short space, to trace the history of the Somali people because, like other African peoples, they were

much divided. In late nineteenth century Europe began the partition of Africa and with the opening of the Suez Canal several European countries wanted a part of Somalia, which would be strategic for their capitalist interests. So the French, the Italians and the British occupied a portion of the country in order to exploit it. As Donez Xiques states in her introduction to Laurence's A Tree for Poverty, "many of these Europeans, who also hoped to generate new markets for goods in the Horn of Africa, neither understood nor respected ancient Somali customs and values" (8). By 1880 Britain had established a protectorate over the North Coast opposite its base at Aden. In the North the leader Mohammed Ibn Abd Allah Hasan, to whom Laurence refers in The Prophet's Camel Bell and dedicates an essay ("The Poem and The Spear"), started a war against the British in 1899. The war of resistance finished only when Hasan died in 1920. In 1960 British and Italian Somaliland were united to form the independent Republic of Somalia.

The modern State of Ghana was named after the ancient Ghana empire that flourished until the 13th century in Western Sudan. In 1821 the United Kingdom took over control of the English trading company and started the Gold Coast settlement. In 1874 the British defeated the Ashanti -- the most powerful people in the history of Ghana -- and made the Gold Coast a crown colony. Protectorates over the Ashanti and Northern territories were established in 1901. After the Second World War, Kwame Nkrumah, a political leader and a university student (to whom Laurence refers to in This Side Jordan), led a movement of resistance against British domination. Many Africans were killed by the British, and Nkrumah was sent to prison. The British government, then, started discussing the possibility of self-government, and in 1954 a new constitution established an assembly formed only by elected people, eliminating the Europeans from ministerial positions. In 1957 full independence was granted to Gold Coast, and Nkrumah was elected the first president of the country. The recovery of the country's old name became a symbol of its political rebirth.

Margaret Laurence's African writing comprehends books based on Somaliland and Ghana and a book of criticism on Nigerian dramatists and novelists. Laurence's first novel, This Side Jordan, and her collection of short stories The Tomorrow-Tamer are set in Ghana. A Tree for Poverty consists of translations of Somali poems and tales, and The Prophet's Camel Bell, or New Wind in a Dry Land as it was called in the American edition, describes Laurence's two-year-experience in Somalia. Although The Prophet's Camel Bell is not her first published book, I believe it is a good point of departure because it is an auto-biographical work and reveals Laurence's concern with colonialism in Africa.

The Prophet's Camel Bell was published in 1963 and written ten years after Laurence left Somaliland. The book was based on the annotations Laurence had made in her diaries during her Somali experience. According to George Woodcock, the book is much more complex than the usual travel narrative because "while it is a narrative in which an inner journey and arrival at a personal destination run parallel... it is the journey of the author herself" and it is "much more than narrative of exploration" (in Verduyn 24). Although she went to Somaliland with her husband , who worked for the British "Colonial Service" and therefore could be seen as colonizer, in her work Laurence shows an awareness and understanding of the world of the "other", the Somali. Her antipathy to imperialism is visible throughout the book. She herself was coming from a British colony and was able to share some of the Somali feelings and write from their perspectives. Advised by publishers to cut the Somali folk-tales and the chapter on the British in Somaliland, Laurence answered : "I don't want to be malicious, but neither do I want to present all the British as paragons of sweetness and light".[40]

In the first chapter of the book, entitled "Innocent Voyages", Laurence tells us of her apprehension before arriving in Africa. From what she had heard and read, the country was an exotic place, a different world inhabited by exotic people :

Will there be elephants old as forests, white peacocks with crests

> of azure, jewel-eyed birds as gaudy as the painted birds in the tombs of pharaohs, apes like jesters, great cats dark and secretive as Bast, men who change into leopards at the flick of a claw ? (9)

The author's doubt and apprehension reveals that, as Mary Louise Pratt contends, travel writing produced "the rest of the World" for European readership as an abnormal world which needed the European presence. Laurence tells us that the "Colonial Office" provided them with a pamphlet with information about exotic things they would never encounter in Somaliland (12). Laurence was probably also instructed by other books written to form knowledge about the "distant land". She went to Africa like a travel writer carrying a notebook and a camera and a first-aid book (9). Fortunately, Laurence also carried with her a mind which rejected stereotypes about colonized African people. Thus her "travel writing" reveals, as Lidwein Kapteijns suggests, also a chronicle of "her own learning process about cross-cultural contact in a colonial situation" (10).

Laurence tells us that when she and her husband arrived at Port Said the first foreshadowing of colonialism she saw was "a Coca-Cola sign in Arabic" (15). The city was reported to them as "a city of thieves" (16). She reveals apprehension from what she hears, but she also shows self-criticism in her realization that, like every traveler, she may have preconceived ideas about the place and the people who inhabit it. Moreover, she denounces the sergeant who, acting like the imperialist writers mentioned by Pratt, does not consider the people who inhabit the land : "Nothing there but a bloody great chunk of desert", the sergeant had told the Laurences (21). When the colonizers do refer to the natives they classify them as inferior who need the presence of a superior people. Laurence disapproves of the assumed superiority of British people over Africans and condemns the creation of a "small replica of England" in Africa (32). She tells us that among Africans she did not like to be called "mensahib" and treated as superior to the African people. At the same time she rejects the colonizers' attitudes towards Africans, she is aware of her white heritage and of her role as colonizer in Africa, as we will see later. Laurence wants

to keep distance from colonial wives who like to complain about African life, judge African people and their ways. She could not agree with the distance which English women put "between themselves and the Somali, whom they tended to regard either patronizingly or with outright scorn" (32). Differently from them, Laurence makes an effort to diminsh the distance between her world and the African people's world. She censures the British belief that Africans are less intelligent, "of an inferior mentality because they did not speak English as well as the English did" (52). In fact, the British repressive attitudes towards other people aroused her anger and indignation :

> I believed that the overwhelming majority of Englishmen in colonies could properly be classified as imperialists, and my feeling about imperialism was very simple -- I was against it. I had been born in a country which once was a colony, a country which many people believed still to be suffering from colonial outlook, and like many Canadians I took umbrage swiftly at a certain type of English who felt they had a divinely bestowed superiority over the lesser breeds without law. (25)

Here, as in her essay "Ivory Tower or Grassroots?", Laurence emphasizes that the colonial situation of Canada stimulated her disgust of imperialism.

Though occupying the position of the colonizer in some circumstances, English Canada shares with Somaliland the experience of British colonization. In this sense, Laurence's sympathy and support for colonized peoples are appropriate. As Margaret Atwood says, Canadians, unlike Americans, have few problems in living with other colonized people because they share postcolonial characteristics (Second 379). In Laurence's The Prophet's Camel Bell, the hatred of imperialism is manifested through her condemnation of the British who invade the African World promoting the destruction of African culture and denying whatever does not belong to European civilization. The next-to-last chapter of the book is, in fact, entitled "The Imperialists". The author shows, not without irony, how some imperialists remained alienated from the world in which they

dwelt. In the following passage, she describes the celebration of the English monarch's birthday:

> Out of the tin trunks and mothballs came the dress uniforms, brass-buttoned up to the chin. Out came the ladies' broad- brimmed hats, the flowered chiffon frocks in shades of forget- me not or muted primrose--nothing ostentatious, purchased at Harrod's on the last leave and cherished like health. Medals and shoes were polished as never before, and in a score of bungalows the steward boys brandished charcoal irons like battle-shields as the chosen garments were pressed and put in readiness. The great occasion was at hand, the English monarch's official birthday celebrated in the outposts of empire with pomp and with tumult, with durbars and with flags. (224)

After this description, Laurence affirms : "I found the sahib-type English so detestable that I always imagined that if I ever wrote a book about Somaliland, it would give me tremendous joy to deliver a withering blast of invective in their direction" (226). The author realizes that these people want to control the Africans, who have no resistance to offer against their authority. She is also aware that the imperialist English were forced to seek mastery in a place where their lack of confidence would not be revealed. She adds that to this group of imperialists "belonged the sahib who referred to Somalis as 'black bastards' except when he facetiously called them "our black brethren" (227). She hears many stories of English who treated Africans very badly like the mensahib "who one morning at the Hargesia Club gave the steward a tongue-lashing that would have credit to a termagant of Hogarth's day, because he had placed a salt shaker on the table instead of a salt cellar" (227).

At the same time that she condemns the narrow-minded imperialists the author reveals a comprehension of those whom she could know as individuals. One realizes that she moves from condemnation to a desire to comprehend or give a historical perspective even to those who have abhorrent colonial attitudes:

> Every last one of these people purported to hate Africa, and yet they

> clung to an exile that was infinitely preferable to its alternative nonentity in England. I have never in my life felt such antipathy towards people anywhere as I felt towards those pompous or whining sahibs and mensahibs, and yet I do not feel the same anger now. Their distortions have been presented in detail enough, both fictionally and journalistically, in almost every tale of colonial life. As I see it, whatever incurable illness they may have had, they are archaic now and at least in the countries where they no longer have power they ought to be permitted to pass into history without much further commentary. (228)

Margaret Laurence acknowledges that it was Octave Mannoni's The Psychology of Colonization which awakened her to the problems of colonialism. According to her, every "European who has ever lived in Africa cannot fail to see something of himself" in Mannoni's study of the psychology of colonization (249). Mannoni's work was originally published in France in 1950, and its English translation was published in 1956. The critics' diverse suggestions reveal the difficulty to precise when Laurence read Mannoni. As seen in the previous chapter, she may have read Mannoni at the beginning of 1960, or even before.[41] The exact date, however, matters little. What is important to observe is that Laurence's work was influenced by Mannoni's theory. Mannoni's provided Laurence with "a shock of recognition one sometimes feels when another words have a specific meaning in terms of one's own experience (in Verduyn 244).

As we have already seen, Mannoni uses Shakespeare's play The Tempest to explain the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. His central argument is that the colonized (Caliban) has a dependency complex which makes him dependent on the colonizer (Prospero). This argument by Mannoni has been challenged mainly by Fanon and Cesaire. Laurence, who probably read Fanon later, admits Mannoni's ideas as important for her understanding of the colonial world. In The Prophet's Camel Bell , she quotes a paragraph from Mannoni's work which contains the famous statement : "What the colonial in common with Prospero lacks, is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected." And she completes that English colonizers seek a facile superiority in colonialism. It is in the colonies that they can enjoy their assumed

superiority over other people (250). Speaking about her book before its publication, Laurence states :

> It is certainly not a propaganda book in any way, but if it attempts to show anything, it is that the communication between peoples of different cultures is not a simple matter and that good will is not enough --there must ultimately be some kind of inner consent, the acceptance of other people as they are ... and the growing realization that neither side, as it were has the right to impose its idea on the other.[42]

Thus for Laurence, Mannoni's book served to confirm her anti-imperialist thoughts which she carried with her from Western Canada. These anti-colonial attitudes were strengthened by her reading of other works, some written by Africans. Besides her readings, her own experience in Africa has an important role in molding her as a writer who questions domination of one people over another. On many occasions The Prophet's Camel Bell reveals Laurence's anti-colonialist feelings and repugnance of British imperialism. In the Chapter "The Imperialists" the author presents among other imperialists, a major, nicknamed Baron, who called Laurence "bloody colonial". Laurence states : "I told him there was only one thing worse than calling a Canadian an American, and that was to call one a colonial" (230).

However, even detesting colonialism and regarding the attitudes of British colonialists with repugnance, Laurence cannot help feeling in the role of the colonizer in Africa. Although Canadians are different from the English, as her African servant recognizes, Laurence is a white non-African and the wife of an engineer who works for the British Colonial Service. Against her wish she had African servants who wanted to treat her as "Memsahibs", and she had privileges which only colonizers had. Therefore, even being friendly to Africans, Laurence did not belong to their world and recognizes that she was cast into an imperialist role similar to that of the British:

> This was something of an irony for me, to have started out in righteous

> disapproval of the empire-builders, and to have been forced at last to recognize that I, too, had been of that company. For we all had been imperialists, in a sense, but the empire we unknowingly sought was that of Prester John, a mythical kingdom and a private world. (251)

Thus, wholly against her will, Laurence performed the role of the colonizing master. However, it is important to note that this role helped her to review the effects of colonialism. It provided Laurence with arguments against colonialism which will appear in her writings. Considering herself a colonized in Canada and playing the colonizer in Africa was significant to her. Laurence could have, as M.F.Salat says, "a better perspective on the nature and effects of the colonial encounter than she would have otherwise had" (32). This imperial experience was then a blessing for her and for her writings.

Recognizing that she was among imperialist people, Laurence reinforces her awareness of the necessity to "respect the world of others". Moreover, she reveals that she not only respects their world but also wants to get involved in their culture and their lives by listening to their voices. Believing, like Mary Louise Pratt, that before judging the colonized it is necessary to listen to them, Laurence condemns those who just see them from a distance and make judgments in order to control their territory. She never claims that she knows the Somali , she never assumes that she understands them. She wants to listen to them but never to change them. By listening to and exalting African peoples through their tales, poetry and life experience, the author helps to recover a voice which had been forgotten. In this way she clearly rejects the superiority and the universality of European literature. When the colonized can speak, the voice of the margin can be heard and the centre can be deconstructed.

As manifested in The Prophet's Camel Bell, Laurence finds out that "love was one of the great subjects of Somali poetry, the other being war" (101). She acknowledges, however, that her knowledge of Somali life was too limited for her to express ideas about Somali culture. The chapter entitled "A Teller of Tales" is dedicated to Hersi, the "small

punily muscled" Somali story-teller, orator and poet (169). The author evidences her great interest in listening to Hersi and learning what she could from him : "Each day in camp, Hersi taught Somali to me for an hour, and when the lesson was over, we sat in the brushwood hut and chatted" (171). Laurence tells us that it took a long time for Hersi to trust her enough to tell her any tales but when he really trusted her he came to the "brushwood hut" every afternoon and told the stories in English with an admixture of Somali and Arab (176). Arabetto, whose real name was Ahmed, also sang many songs and told Arabic stories to Laurence.

Knowing that many English people, even those who lived in Somaliland, had no idea that the Somali had ever written a poem, Laurence attempts to translate Somali poetry and stories into English. These folk tales and poetry are also a requisite for Laurence's adherence to non-imperialist culture. One has to be aware that by translating Somali literature the author also serves the Europeans who read in English. One could argue, for example, that she is appropriating their oral literature for the colonizer's profit. I counter argue, however, that the author is not only appropriating Somali literature for her benefits but also stimulating the Somali memory by giving values to their past and culture. For example, it was Hersi who chose the tales he should tell, not Laurence. In addition, Laurence was not the only one to listen to his tales for when the Somali knew that Hersi would tell stories to Laurence, "they drifted to the hut quietly ... and listened " (176). So, there was always a good Somali audience. This may also serve as a means to awaken the people to the importance of their culture. Besides, it would also prevent Somali literature from being lost not only for the British but for the Somalis too.

The importance Laurence gives to the oral tradition of non-European people calls into question the belief that English literature is the only relevant literature to be studied by Canadian people. This strategy will be employed in Laurence's further works, especially in The Diviners, where the writer Morag shows great interest in Jules Tonnerre's legends and in Pique's songs about the Metis. Throughout all of Laurence's

fiction, one also perceives the endeavour of the colonized to take the language of the colonizer and use it from the perspective of the oppressed. By giving importance to the oral literature of the Somali, Laurence hoped other Somali would start recording their tales and poems.

In the chapter entitled "A Tree for Poverty" Laurence tells us that "Somali are a nation of poets" and that in their poetry and stories "one finds sensitivity, intelligence, earthy humour, and a delight in lovely clothes and lovely women" (211). In this chapter she also recounts how her collection of Somali Poetry and Prose, published under the same title, was achieved.

A Tree for Poverty, the result of Margaret Laurence's investigation of oral Somali tradition and literature, was published in 1954. This was Laurence's first published book and the first English translation of Somali Literature. Laurence took the title from the lines of a Somali poem (gabei): "On the plain Ban-Aul there is a tree/ For poverty to shelter under". Poetry and folk-tales are available to both the poor and the rich, and therefore Somali literature is "a tree for poverty to shelter under." Laurence states that the book is a "product of many people's work" and on the acknowledgments page, among others, she mentions the linguist Andrzejewski, the Somali poet Musa Galaal, and the Somali tellers of tales Hersi and Ahmed. In the preface to the 1970 edition the author informs us that the 1954 edition was published by the, then, Somaliland protectorate, in pre-independence days (19). In her introduction to the book, Laurence asserts that the aim of the work is to record "poems which otherwise will be lost in fifty years" (25). She provides information about the role of literature in Somali culture, emphasizing that the Somali are "natural poets and storytellers" (23). Then she expounds on the existence of different forms of poetry explaining that she has included mainly *belwo* and *gabei* in her collection. She describes *belwo* as a "short lyric love-poem" (26) and the *gabei* as longer, generally serious, narrative poems considered the highest literary form in the culture (32). The author recognizes that she could not keep the pure Somali style and the richness of Somali

literature because "a great deal is lost in translation" (26). She acknowledges their history which is different from hers and admits the existence of barriers of race, class and other elements which cause difficulties of translation. Besides, she warns the readers that the collection of poems is not representative because she translated the easier ones. Laurence, thus , cultivates the "habit of humility " which, Chinua Achebe suggests, Western critics should have when referring to African literature (6). However, she believed that what she translated conveyed some sense and notion of Somali life. According to linguist Andrzejewski, "in spite of the language barrier she developed such empathy with the Somalis that even though her translations are sometimes not very close to the original she conveyed their spirit and atmosphere with a high degree of accuracy" (quoted by Xiques 12). One could argue that Laurence's admiration, approbation and respect for Somali literature are points which help her translations to keep the original spirit. In addition, she acknowledges that voices other than Western ones must be heard and, in this way, she challenges the presupposition that there is "great literature" only in the Western world. Though a Westerner herself, she undermines the colonialist idea that Africa "was the haunt of savages, a country of savages, a country riddled with superstitions and fanaticism, destined for contempt, weighed down by the curse of God...(Fanon 1961: 170). When one reads the author's notes about the poems and tales she translates one realizes, as Donez Xiques suggests, that she had not only English readers in mind but also Somali (10). Her notes provide information about the history and circumstances in which the literary pieces were created. In this way Laurence helps to recover the memory of the people by avowing that they do have a history. Laurence shows the connection of literature with the people's land, their past and their particular history. She informs us, for instance, that the poem "The Bond Between Kings" was composed by a Sultan Wiil Waal in the 16th century and it "must be one of the oldest poems in Somali ". In the collection, the author also includes five stories about Wiil Waal which elucidate the qualities of this legendary hero. After the poem "To a Friend Going On A Journey" by Mohamed Abdullah Hassan, she provides

information about the author saying that he was "the best poet in Somaliland for many generations" (54). Mohammed Hassan, also called Sayid by his followers and "The Mad Mullah" by the British, led a revolt against the British at the beginning of this century. Laurence refers to the same poet in The Prophet's Camel Bell and, in a very sympathetic way, in her essay "The Poem and the Spear " published in Heart of a Stranger. She says that she wrote the essay not only to tell the Sayid's story "but also to understand the plight of a tribal people faced with imperialist opponents who do not possess superior values, but who have greater material resources and more efficient weapons of killing" (HS 37). The author's preoccupation in not dehistoricizing or dessocializing Somali literature helps to enrich Laurence's work. It also reveals Laurence's awareness that the Somali are not a people void of history. At the time of the publication of A Tree for Poverty, Laurence was probably writing about Ghana. The story "A Drummer of All the World", which would be later published in the collection The Tomorrow-Tamer, for example, came out in 1956, and in 1960 she published her first novel, This Side Jordan.

Margaret Laurence began writing This Side Jordan in Ghana and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, completed it in Vancouver, where it was published in 1960. Laurence's first novel is set in Ghana in the 1950s just before its independence. Patricia Morley says that the novel "has been praised by African reviewers for giving a highly informed insight into Africa today" and for illuminating Africa's problems and tensions "in a striking and memorable way" (in Verduyn 17). Through a third person narrator, the book gives alternate viewpoints of British and Africans in Ghana. The novel presents two communities, one Ghanaian and one British, and two protagonists, the Ghanaian history schoolteacher Nathaniel Amegbe and the Englishman Johnnie Kestoe, an accountant for an English-centred firm in Accra. There are also many instances of interior monologues of the African protagonist which help to inform the reader about the African world. As a history teacher, Nathaniel has the opportunity to recover and glorify the African past. Despite the fact that the novel was written before Laurence's reading of Mannoni, it portrays the

problem of colonialism and the damages it causes not only to Africans but also to the British. One sees, for example the colonial European as someone who, in order to mask her or his inferiority, requires the homage and submission of the "dependent" ones. The novel also reveals instances of African resistance to this discourse.

Johnnie Kestoe, the British protagonist, is introduced at the very beginning of the book as a man "who didn't like Africans" but who danced the highlife with an African girl (1). Johnnie represents the colonizer who considers himself in the position to judge and control native people for his own interest. In Africa he feels he can fulfill all his sexual desires, which would be bridled in England. When he sees the African "bush-girl" whom Whiskey had brought to be his "small wife", Johnnie touches her. When she rejects him, he hits her on the face (135). On another occasion, Johnnie encounters a young northern African girl at a night club and, again, reveals his desire to possess the African female body as his own territory : "He drew the girl close to him and twisted her body against his own" (230). Even disliking Africans, Johnnie believed that he had the right to explore and exploit the exotic sexuality of the African girl who, he discovers later, was a virgin. To him the girl was no more than "an animal, a creature hardly sentient, a thing" (230). Like a virgin land to be exploited, the girl was under a "voluminous green cloth" which he would uncover for his own gain and advantage. Johnnie inspects and appraises the girl as an unfamiliar territory to be explored. The narrator says: "She was a continent and he the invader, wanting both to possess and destroy" (231). Laurence is transferring here the man/woman, seducer/seduced, rapist/victim encounter to the European/non-European relationship visible in canonical works like John Donne's "Elegy XIX: Going to Bed". [43] Showing his desire of "possession and destruction", Johnnie expresses his desire to rape not only one human being but the entire continent of Africa. Many critics affirm that Laurence's comparison of a woman with the African continent is too facile and reveals lack of subtlety.[44] Perhaps the author does really employ too common a metaphor; however, it is very comprehensible that as a young writer with very clear anti-imperialist ideas she

wanted to criticize the historical view of the female body as a virgin land to be penetrated and exploited. She was so enthusiastic about proclaiming her anti-imperialism that she sometimes used very clear symbols to express her faith.

Another instance which could be criticized as overly didactic is Laurence's reference to the practice of cliterodectomy. In the novel she explains that among Africans, at puberty, women have to go through clitoridectomy, which sometimes is done with acacia thorns and causes wounds and infection. One could argue that this elucidation could be omitted for being both too technical and too political, but Laurence could not portray Ghana of pre-independence days without referring to the real situation of African women. For, besides suffering the burden of British colonialism, African women also suffered the burden of men's imperialism. The young northern girl, Emerald, for example, was a commodity not only to Kestoe, but also to the Africans who delivered her to him. Nathaniel, the African protagonist, realizes that she "was a human sacrifice. And he allowed it" (227). Moreover, being sold into prostitution, she reminds us of her ancestors who were sold into slavery.

Nathaniel Amegbe's story is, according to Johnnie Kestoe, just like that of other Africans. A victim of British imperialism, he lives in between two worlds: the village where his cultural roots are and the city of Accra, where he feels in exile. If he had stayed in the forest he would be "happier and not happier" (167). Colonialism made him lose his sense of direction and made him a strange in his own land : "The city of strangers is your city, and the God of conquerors is your God, and a strange speech is in your mouth, and you have no home " (167). The colonized, by acquiring the oppressor's language and costumes, participates in two worlds which are in conflict with each other, making him feel displaced and alienated, as if in exile in his own land.

Through Nathaniel, then, one can hear the voice of the colonized and experience the ambiguity of the situation. One can learn through him that Africa had a culture, an empire, festivals, fairs, richness and happiness which disappeared when the colonizers came. But

one can also learn about the suffering and humiliation of African people caused by the years of exploitation.

Conquest, subjugation, domination, dislocation, suffering is what the European brought to Africa. That is the reason why Nathaniel cannot trust any of them. When he hears Johnnie saying that "bloody Africans are all the same", he knows that Johnnie repeats what all Englishmen think. He refuses to push Johnnie's car because he is not "a servant, not a slave to be summoned " (151). When Johnnie's wife, Miranda, asks him about African culture, he does not believe her good intentions. She may be praising African culture just in mockery. So he is always on the alert because he is never sure what the colonizers will bring next. Nathaniel represents the colonized described by Fanon, who is always tense, "confronted by a world ruled by the settler" (Wretched 41). "Nathaniel" is not his African name, it was given to him by missionaries who christianized him: "And after they had given him a different name, they began to give him a different soul" (242). Feeling no longer himself makes him insecure in everything. Nathaniel is presented as a colonized who is displaced, dislocated and even depersonalized. His increasing anger towards the situation is visible. When his wife rejects well intentioned Miranda Kestoe's gesture of concern, he feels happy, for the white woman "could feel humiliation and anguish like himself" (263). The novel reveals clearly that a colonized man is injected with complexes, trepidation, fear, insecurity and anxiety and a strong desire to change the oppressed condition. Nathaniel's interior monologues reveal both moments of vacillation and anger and moments of dream of freedom. His ambivalence is revealed even more clearly when he, a defender of African rights, has attitudes which harm the Africans not the British. For example, he accepts gifts from African schoolboys in return for recommending them for employment in the British textile firm (206). On another occasion he allows Emerald, the African virgin girl, to be exploited by Johnnie, his enemy. On both occasions, he looks back upon the facts with distress, questioning himself about the violation of human essence.

In his apprehensiveness and insecurity Nathaniel asks himself what Victor Edusei would do in his place.

Victor Edusei, a Ghanaian journalist who studied in Europe (therefore, a "been-to"), is not as idealist as Nathaniel. He does not believe that everything will be all right after independence. He claims that being under European power for too long has made Africans so unprepared for freedom that oppression will not end just after independence because of African "slave mentality". He believes that real freedom may come later in a hundred years or so, when people "will learn differently" (118). Other African characters in the novel help to present the African perspective without stereotype. They are minor characters like Victor's uneducated village girl-friend, Nathaniel's wife, Aya, the Highlife boy, Lamptey and Jacob Mensa, the owner of the "Futura Academy". These characters seem to make parallels to minor British characters - in a symmetry which is reproved by some critics of Laurence.[45]

Throughout the novel, one can also recognize the binary distinction between "civilized" and "barbarian", a concept developed by Edward Said mainly in Orientalism . According to him, Europeans need to divide the world into West and East, or into colonizer and colonized, into civilized and savages in order to exhibit and maintain Western power. This polarization allows the reader to perceive a world divided not only by racial difference but also by economic disparity. Europeans contend that they are needed in Africa in order to keep the savages in their own place. The British always see themselves on the good side and put the Africans on the other extreme : what is good and nice belongs to their world, what is bad and ugly belongs to the "inferior" world where Africans live. As in Said's analysis, in This Side Jordan the division between the Africans and the British is strategic. When the narrator describes the part of the city where Nathaniel lives she says:

> The street was a tangle of people. Women in mammy-cloths of every

> colour, women straight as royal palms, balanced effortlessly the wide brass headpans. A girl breadseller carried on her head a screened box full of loaves and cakes...And everywhere, there were children, goats and chickens. Vivid, noisy, chaotic, the life of the street flowed on ...
> Nathaniel was part of them, and yet apart. He did not any longer live as these slum-dwellers lived, and yet he lived among them ...(45)

In the other "compartment" of the city, in a nice bungalow, lived the British Johnnie Kestoe, who "poured himself a beer and wondered who would live here next" (214). The comfortable house with good furniture and fine decoration helps Johnnie to display power over the Africans. The description of two contrasting worlds, Nathaniel's and Johnnie Kestoe's, invites the reader to see the colonial world from Fanon's perspective : "a world cut in two inhabited by two different species." This Side Jordan presents a world very much like Fanon's description : "the zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers" (Wretched 30). Johnnie believes that having an African colleague would diminish his superiority over the Africans. He only accepts the idea when he sees that otherwise he would lose his job.

Johnnie Kestoe provides the opportunity for Laurence to depict the attitudes of the British towards the Africans. Johnnie judges himself a superior who knows "his natives" because to him all of them are the same. To Johnnie, Africans do not exist as individuals but are generalized as inferior people with no intelligence, no sense of order and no honesty. He does not accept the Africans' explanation for their behaviour because, as a colonizer, he has no need of explanation: everything in the colony is equally simple. As Johnnie says to his wife, Miranda, "they're all the same" (215). Laurence reveals herself very critical of the imperialist idea of homogenizing colonized people. In her article "The Very Best Intentions", for example, she substantiates this sentiment: "because I lived in Ghana for five years, I am often asked what Ghanaian are like. I am always tempted to reply that it depends upon which Ghanaian you mean" (HS 25). The attitudes of the British imperialists in This Side Jordan , however, are different from Laurence's : they believe that they have authority to classify colonized people.

Laurence's portrait of Johnnie Kestoe and his hatred of Africa and the Africans is convincing. What does not seem very convincing in the novel is Johnnie's past in a London slum. It seems that Laurence finds it necessary to provide Johnnie with an unhappy past which can justify his despotic attitudes towards Africans. Johnnie's father Dennis Kestoe was a lavatory cleaner Irishman who lost his job for a Jamaican. The fact that Johnnie himself had fought against a black Jamaican boy (5) could provide an explanation for his hatred of African people, a hatred which is softened later when he reveals he can sympathize with the suffering of an African girl whom he has deflowered : "he sobbed as he had not done for nearly twenty years" (234).

Besides Johnnie Kestoe, the novel presents other Europeans who meet at the "Club", described as the "last sanctuary of whitemen" (140). When they talk about Africans they always classify them as inferior , "all bush" (140). In their conversation one can also hear someone saying : "-- If they let the blacks in , I'll resign my membership" (140). James Thayer and Bedford Cunningham work for the same textile company for which Kestoe works. James is the manager of the firm and is against the policy of Africanization because, according to him, "trustworthy, efficient men who can handle an administrative type of job -- they just don't exist" (91). To him, Africans are children, a view he has been cultivating for thirty years since he came to Ghana and sees no reason to change. His attitude echoes Fanon's comment on a European who taught that a white man addressing a Negro should behave exactly like an adult with a child (Black 31). To the British, if Africans take administrative jobs there will be "ruin in a month -- corruption -- laziness -- sheer ignorance" (92). One realizes, however, that James's view is a consequence of his fear of losing his position in Africa. He always defends the idea of keeping the British in Africa in order to avoid catastrophic results : "if we weren't here to maintain order", he says, "they'd be at each others' throats in five minutes" (142). His attitude towards the natives is exactly like the attitude described by Achebe, who stated that to the colonialist mind "it was always of the utmost importance to be able to say : *I*

Know my natives, a claim which implied two things at once: (a) that the native was really quite simple and (b) that understanding him and controlling him went hand in hand (5). To most of the British in This Side Jordan Africans are simple to be understood and can be easily controlled without challenging European "superiority".

Major Bedford Cunningham reinforces this view. He complains that Africans never "know what to do unless somebody tells" them (137) . To him Africans will always be ignorant without any ability to take European jobs. Less educated than other Englishmen, Bedford is aware that he will be the first to leave Africa. This situation makes him increasingly nervous and much afraid of losing his job in Ghana : he knows that in England he cannot get anything. Helen, his wife, also has a very colonialist mind. She is very afraid of Africa, but she does not want to go "home". To her, Africa is "vicious, evil and malicious", but she is conscious that in England they would not do half as well (122). Her worries about African life, her neurotic fear for the health of her children and her anxiety about her husband's job make her an exiled in Ghana. Helen's arrogance towards Africa is similar to that of James' wife Cora, who still refers to England as "home" although living in Africa for more than thirty years. Her colonialist mind makes her transplant a piece of England to her house : "Big faded English roses were profusely printed on the chintz curtains, and the walls were faded rose, hung with innumerable little watercolours of Windsor Castle, the Lake Country, a Kentish oasthouse " (126). She proudly states that Africa will never enter her house. Her refusal to let the African culture and environment penetrate her domain is very typical of the colonialist mind. She claims that her hard experience in the country gives her reasons to both hate and fear Africa. Yet she does not want to leave the colony, where her husband still has a profitable job which would be impossible at "home". All the imperialists have reasons to hate educated African people, for they do not accept subordination and domination. The Europeans' longing for those days when "an African did what he was told" (92), suggests, again, the colonial concept

criticized by Achebe who says that to the colonialist mind the educated native is worse than his bush brothers. Educated Africans do not accept servility to Europeans (5-6).

Cameron Sheppard is a colonizer who will keep exploiting Africa even after independence. He recognizes the inevitability of independence but knows how to take profit of the nation in new ways. He treats Africans with indifference but for his own advantage he accepts Africanization (169). Cameron has a colonial mind which permits him to see Africa as a colony even if it acquires official independence. Like the educated African Victor Edusei, he knows that real independence comes after a long labour. The perception of this reality and his desire to exploit Africa in new ways make him stay in Ghana.

Miranda, Johnnie Kestoe's wife, is the only European in the novel who does not have a colonialist mind. Somewhat naively, she wants to learn about Africa and African culture by reading and listening to Africans. Her attitudes mitigate the anti-African view of her husband and other British in Ghana. Miranda suggests to her husband that he should undertake a project to include Africans in his work (133), and it is Johnnie's acceptance of her idea that allows him to stay in Africa. Unlike other English people in Africa, Miranda acknowledges her lack of understanding of the African world (153). She is also afraid of classifying Africans because she is aware of their individualities. Her modesty and her desire to comprehend Africa without any preconceived ideas remind us of Laurence herself. Like Laurence, Miranda has anti-colonialist ideas but sees herself in the role of the colonizer. Moreover, one cannot ignore the significance of her name : she is Prospero's daughter who, like in Morag's work in The Diviners, rejects Prospero's colonial attitudes. Miranda seems to pose between the imperialists and the Africans who fight against imperialism.

There are several strategies which educated Africans, like Victor Edusei and Nathaniel, use to contest British "superiority". The most evident ones are the refusal to accept European "superiority" and the recovery of their past through memory. Africans

want to assure themselves that African people do not belong to an inferior race. Then by remembering the past, they become conscious of their strength as a people. When Johnnie arrogantly affirms that "this much-vaunted culture never existed ", Nathaniel says that the missions tried to destroy African culture and adds : "and I can assure you, Mr. Kestoe, that we in West Africa had a civilization in the past. Great civilizations. Ghana was a great civilization. I don't suppose you have heard of Ghana. Europeans do not know much about Africa (43). Through his reflections, Nathaniel becomes aware of colonialism's distortion of his past. Like Fanon, he knows that "Colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country", but that it also turns to the past of the oppressed people devaluating its history (Wretched 169). By convincing the colonized that they lived in the darkness, the colonizers want to induce that colonialism is a salvation for the natives. Nathaniel knows that the British want him to forget the history of oppression : "You whitemen. You Europeans. You Englishmen ... You would like us to forget, wouldn't you? ... But we do not forget ... " (209). Teaching African history, Nathaniel can ratify the greatness of African past and thus provide a base for the future of African people.

As the owner of the school where Nathaniel works, Jacob Abraham says that Africans must remember "the greatness of the past" and prepare themselves for a future of freedom (61/62). He recalls the coming of the slavers, the soldiers and the missionaries who talked of the Creator as a whiteman. White hypocrisy took gold from Africa and brought them the Lamb, took timber and brought "the light of Holiness " (211). Nathaniel's reflection on the past reveals the author's awareness that missionaries helped to distort the African past.: "And the whitemen tried to steal our soul. They tried to steal the Great Golden Stool, wherein lay the soul of Asante. But we were as fire then. It was enough. We said NO " (211).

In moments of uncertainty it is memory which stimulates the search for coherence

and for an identity which makes the oppressed resist domination. This makes Nathaniel recognize that the "superiority "of Europe over Africa is a discursive construction of those in power. Only by remembering the European invasion into African liberty can he become powerful enough to declare openly that he detests oppression : "Damn you, Whiteman ...I spit on you , I piss on you. Whiteman ". (222). Nathaniel feels strong enough to abrogate the existing belief in the superiority of the English people. It is only after repealing English domination that he can become optimistic again : "Nathaniel felt hope flowing back to him..." (273).

A different strategy of resistance is illustrated by Victor Edusei, who very intelligently insults the imperialists by mocking at them. He shows that he is able to reappropriate the discourse of the colonizer in order to show its ambivalence. In this way he can challenge colonial authority. For instance, when Johnnie asks Victor if he is threatening him , he answers in an ironic way : "No, no -- I am much too timid for that. I know my place " (40). Victor realizes the ambivalence which lies in the stereotype about Africans and recognizes that by mimicking the British affirmation, he can disturb the colonial discourse. In this way he mimics the discourse of white men who say that Blacks should know their place. His attitude illustrates Homi Bhabha's view that "the effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing" (Location 85).

This Side Jordan ends with much optimism. Nathaniel has made up his mind to stay in the city and work for "Futura Academy " where he is needed. He reveals himself full of hope for his newly born son , Joshua. Soon Joshua will enjoy "Free-dom" with the coming independence : "He glanced at his son, and the name kept beating through his mind like all the drums of Ghana --Joshua, Joshua, Joshua ... Cross the Jordan, Joshua " (282). Joshua would be a leader in the promised land of Free Ghana. Nathaniel's son , like Nun's son, the Biblical figure , should cross the Jordan and together with his people savor life in a free land. The novel ends well for the English protagonist, Johnnie, too. Johnnie is given the opportunity to participate in the future development of Ghana. His daughter, whom he

names Mary, is born in the same hospital as Joshua, and Johnnie has hope in her. It seems that his view of African people has changed since he cried for the suffering of the African girl.

The novel's ending has been criticized as too facile. Critics also have found fault in too much parallelism between the African and British worlds throughout the novel. Clara Thomas, for example, says that there is an insistence on symmetry and balance in plot and character (50). Thomas also thinks that Laurence's picture of the English is too negative (52). Laurence herself tells us in her memoir that when her mother read the manuscript she thought that the author had "put the heart and the soul into a portrayal of the African characters and had, unconsciously or deliberately, made stereotypes of the whites" (Dance 117). I believe that, being this her first novel, Laurence wanted to emphasize the damage and distortion which colonialism causes to the colonized and that the good portrait of Africa is an attempt to contradict many other works written by Europeans which depicted the African as savage, evil and less intelligent than the whites. In giving long monologues to Africans and not to the British characters, Laurence just challenges those narratives in which the voice of the colonized was not heard.

Years later, in the article "Gadgetry or Growing : Form and Voice in the Novel", making her own critical comments on her first novel, Margaret Laurence admits that the novel contains "too much of Nathaniel's inner monologues" (Sorfleet 55). In "Ten Years' Sentences" the author also confesses that the first version of This Side Jordan pictures the British as even more undesirable than in the published version. Laurence explains that when she wrote the novel she was full of faith and that "this was the prevailing spirit, not only of *myself*, but of Africa at that time".[46]

Even if the future which the novel presents is too optimistic and too hopeful, we must admit that the characters are very convincing in spite of the author's sympathies for the Africans and her intense aversion of British imperialism in Africa. The Kenyan critic Micere Githae-Mugo asserts that Laurence's "interpretation of the African setting is that of

an empathetic participator and she gets closer to genuine African personality than any other western writer has done to date" (quoted in Sparrow, 92-93). As a Canadian, and therefore a colonized, she was able to show solidarity to those who suffered the problem of colonialism. In some moments in the novel, in fact, some characters speak as if they were Canadians. As critic Salat remarks, when Nathaniel affirms that "there must be pride and roots" (22), "he voices Laurence's own similar conviction and crystallizes Laurence's own strong belief that only in this way can Canada aspire to acquire the ability to confidently assert its identity " (39). Laurence herself connects the theme of the novel with her Canadian background:

> In writing This Side Jordan , set in Ghana, it had become finally clear to me why I had chosen the theme of an independence which was both political and inner. I was from a land that had been a colony , a land which in some ways was still colonial. My people's standards of correctness and validity and excellence were still at that time largely derived from external and imposed values. ("Ivory" 257)

The theme of freedom and what blocks freedom, like that of colonialism, constant in Laurence's works, comes from her Canadian roots. This theme will be explored further in another book set in Ghana : The Tomorrow-Tamer.

The Tomorrow-Tamer was first published as a collection in 1960, though the first story had been published separately in 1956. In this collection of short-stories one can again perceive Laurence's attention to African people: in many stories she indicts the blindness of European racism, the confrontation of different cultures and the damage caused by British imperialism in Africa. Like This Side Jordan , The Tomorrow-Tamer offers us a chance to reflect on the work of Christian missionaries as a support of imperialism. By opposing the Akan religion as pagan, as something belonging to darkness and barbarism, European missionaries help the colonizer convince the natives that colonialism has come to enlighten their dark life. In many stories we can see Laurence's

pronouncement against the condemnation of African religion and culture by European missionaries.

In the first story, entitled "The Drummer of All the World", for example, the narrator Matthew is the son of a missionary who goes to West Africa to bring salvation to the people. Matthew wants to be against everything his father preaches. He begins the story in this way: "My father thought he was bringing salvation to Africa. I, on the other hand, no longer know what salvation is. I am not sure that it lies in the future. And I know now that it is not to be found in the past " (1). Having no consideration for his father's work, he wants to live the African experience : "When I was with Kwabena, the world of the mission and Band of Jesus did not exist for me. However powerfully my father preached, he could not stop the drums playing in the evenings" (7). Matthew is against his father's concept that the soul should be saved with disregard for African culture. Thus, instead of learning about Jesus, the boy learns about African gods and fetishes:

> I got Kwaku to tell me any of their invocations which he understood, or the proverbs and parables which they drummed forth ...
> I learned some of the other names of Nyame - the Shining One, Giver of Rain, Giver of Sun. Once for a whole year I called God by the name of Nyame in my silent prayers. (10)

The narrator, very much like Miranda in This Side Jordan and Laurence herself, is very conscious of the constraint brought by European imperialism to Africa : "We were conquerors in Africa , we Europeans. Some despised her ... But all of us sought to force our will upon her" (18).

After a period of absence from Africa, he comes back to see changes brought about by political independence. His African friend Kwabena, now an adult, is very critical of the still existing English imperialism. When Matthew tries to convince him that the Africans are not slaves of the English anymore, Kwabena says : "If they own us or our country what is the difference ?" (11). The narrator feels that Kwabena has changed and

his hatred of the English has increased. Matthew, however, will not forget what he learned from Kwabena in his childhood.

Matthew condemns the colonialist ideas of his father. However, not being an African, he has idealized local culture and blinded himself to the country's deficiencies. He does not realize that admiration is not enough to help the colonized. The African Kwabena gives him another view : Africa cannot be a piece of museum, it has sufferings which need be eliminated, it needs changes too. Matthew then recognizes his mistake : "its enchantment had touched me , its suffering -- never " (18). He accepts Kwabena's view which is the African view. Matthew is aware that as an outsider he cannot speak for the Africans : "I do not any longer know what Salvation is. 1 only know that one man cannot find it for another man and one land cannot bring it to another" (18). It has been very clear since his childhood that through religion his father could not bring salvation to Africa. Now Matthew also knows that he himself cannot do it just by admiring African culture. Even an anti-imperialist European cannot be the same as an African. Like Laurence herself, Matthew is very aware of the problem of representation. Both are anti-imperialist but both recognize that they may be wrong in their assumptions about the colonized world although they listen to the colonized people.

Another story of the collection which presents a non-imperialist European is "The Rain-Child". The narrator of the story, Violet Nedden, is a teacher of English Literature and composition to African girls. She has been in Africa for more than twenty years and recognizes that she went there "hoping to find a place [her] light could shine forth " (121). In her garden she grows no English flower, but African ones and pronounces against people who condemn things they do not understand (119). The teacher is critical of the imposition of a British culture on the native Africans : "How absurd Wordsworth seemed here then. I spoke instead of Akan poetry and read them the drum prelude *Anyaneanyane* in their own tongue as well as the translation " (107).

Among her students are Ayesha, Kwale and Ruth. The latter was born in England where her doctor father was in training. She has lost contact with African culture and language and is culturally white in a black skin. She despises African culture, shows no interest in learning anything from her colleagues and wants to see Africa as an outsider, shown by an English boy, David (124). Although her father was humiliated by Europeans, Ruth despises Africa and admires what belongs to the English world. Miss Violet Nedden's concern for Africa and her attempt to change Ruth's colonial mind remind us very easily of Fanon's statement about the issue of ideological positioning : "Many members of the mass of colonialists reveal themselves to be much, much nearer to the national struggle than certain sons of the nation "(Black Skin 116).

Ruth, the African girl who is not interested in listening to her African sisters, finally learns from David, whom she considers her friend , that she cannot be of his company: "I know you're not the ordinary kind of African. You're almost - almost like a -- like us" (129). Although speaking English as a British, and having acquired English culture, she is a "not quite", she lacks something because she is an African, she is black. So the English boy cannot treat Ruth as his equal. She will always be inferior to English people. The story offers us a reflection about the "almost same but not white" concept which, as Homi Bhabha points out, is a form of colonial discourse to keep the colonized as different, as inferior (Nation 89). In "The Rain Child" Laurence does not explore the polarity colonized/colonizer; she foregrounds, instead, the alienation and displacement which colonialism brings forth, causing Africans to feel strangers and exiled in their own land. Ruth, for example, learns to admire English culture and despise the Africans. But the English do not accept her as an equal and the Africans reject her for the disdainful way of looking at the African world. Even Ruth's teacher, whose open mind allows her to love the Africans, feels dislocated in Africa and knows she will feel a stranger in England.

Like "The Rain Child", "The Merchant of Heaven" has a European narrator. Like Matthew and Violet Nedden in the previous stories, Mr.Will Kettridge reveals sympathy

for the Africans and condemns British assumed superiority over them. Kettridge, an English architect, has been in Africa for a long time and has learned to respect African culture and religion. This is not what happens to the American missionary, brother Lemon. Brother Lemon comes to Africa as an evangelist for a mission called "Angel of Philadelphia". He has spent six years of prayers and preparation "to save thousands of souls" (52) . Brother Lemon is very well-equipped with medicine, clothes and didactic materials, believing that he is well prepared to make his mission a success. He may be well intentioned but he is too narrow-minded to accept a world different from his. He fails to perceive the specific needs of the Africans. Instead of changing his mind after perceiving African poverty and the priority of material needs, he persists in his project of saving souls. The narrator says : "Suddenly I saw Brother Lemon as a kind of soul-purifier, sucking in the septic souls and spewing them back one hundred per cent pure" (53).

Danso, an African painter who was baptized by many of the Western churches disputing power in his village, knows that all of them wanted to impose their "truths" on him. So he does not believe in any missionary. He only wants to take advantage of Lemon's presence in Africa by selling him his paintings. An educated colonized, he sometimes plays the devil's advocate and teases the American minister. When the minister condemns Akan religion as inferior to Christianity, Danso says : "Didn't you know we had a fine religion here before ever a whiteman came ? "(63). But for Brother Lemon African religion is just idolatry and paganism and must be eradicated. To the missionary, everything which is not according to Christian religion leads to damnation. So he condemns the use of carved wooden figures and thinks that the Africans have to accept his golden candlesticks and "gates of pearl "(69). In his obsession for saving souls he thinks that the Africans profit in forgetting all their culture and their past. The minister is blind to the suffering of Africans and believes that "life on earth doesn't matter" (67). Danso satirically comments : "At least he's a step further than the slavers. They didn't admit we had souls" (74). Through Danso,

Laurence has one remember the brutality of slavery over African people who were considered irrational animals.

Danso likes to laugh at the minister's rigorous care for his mission. One could say that here the power structure is reversed : Danso reminds us of someone who dances and is happy while Lemon reminds us of sourness, disappointment and unattractiveness. Danso takes a position from which he can mock and even defy the colonizer. When Danso presents his picture of the Nazarene to Brother Lemon, the minister does not buy it because it is a picture of Jesus according to African view. The narrator tells us that "Danso had not portrayed any emaciated mauve-veined ever sorrowful Jesus. This man had the body of a fisherman or a carpenter. He was well built. He had strong wrists and arms. His eyes were capable of laughter" (75-76). Brother Lemon rejects that Jesus and goes away. Danso, at last says ironically : "We will invent new colours, man ... But for this we may need a little time " (76). An educated colonized, he is very aware that his mission, or rather, countermission was to dismantle the colonizer's discourse by subverting and appropriating the Christian minister's discourse. Through his paintings he reveals how ineffective the doctrine of the colonizer has been. The narrator tells us that Brother Lemon returns whence he had come and "somewhere, perhaps, he is still preaching, heaven and hell pouring from his apocalyptic eyes" (77).

"The Merchant of Heaven "[47] hinges, thus, on the connection between religion and imperialism. Through the story, Laurence criticizes the imperialist-minded ministers like Lemon, for whom only a Jesus with a European colour could be the Saviour and only a white Christian could understand what heaven means. Such critical views also surface in Laurence's other writings. In her memoir, for example, she regards as important the religions, like the Akan, which have female gods: "Some of those very religions that early Christian missionaries believed so evil had and still have the concept of a god unseen and above all other gods, a god both male and female ..."(15). Furthermore, the attitudes of Laurence's missionaries, like Brother Lemon, are similar to those of the writers presented

by Said in Orientalism. Representing colonialist interests, they see evil and darkness in everything which is not according to their beliefs. This also brings to mind Fanon's concept that the colonizers do everything to convince the colonized that the pre-colonial world was only evil and darkness.

Danso, however, is conscious of his ability to disrupt the authority of the minister. His reminiscence of the past, his mocking and mimicry serve to resist an imperial religion which privileges white European Christians. Danso is a good example of what Bhabha calls mimicry and mockery of authority.[48] By representing the Western religious figures according to his view, he undermines the authority of colonial-minded Brother Lemon. As the self-assurance of the Western missionary becomes ambiguous and uncertain for the reader, the story gains power as a text of resistance to colonialism.

The Colonial theme in connection with religion is also palpable in the stories "The Pure Diamond Man " and "A Fetish for Love ". In both stories Christian missions work in the service of colonization and help to maintain the psychological and political subjugation of the colonized. One begins to sense that Laurence's characters in these stories can be somewhat categorized into types, illustrating different degrees of power and powerlessness. On one extreme one sees the European colonizer who sees the Africans as people who must be subjugated and controlled, then one has the European who perceives the inconvenience of British colonialism and means to work against it, followed by the Africans who resist colonialism by reversing the Colonialist discourse. Then there are the other Africans who feel powerless to present any resistance to imperialism, and finally there are those Africans who work for European colonialism.

In "The Pure Diamond Man ", Reverend Timothy Quarshie of San Sebastian Mission is a European colonizer of the first type. He condemns any African belief and burns any kind of amulet or wooden figure he finds (199). Tetteh, the African character, educated at San Sebastian Mission and for all practical purposes, a convert, does not believe in anything the Christian missionaries preach. He plays a trick on the British who

have pre-conceived ideas about Africa, like Hardacre who gets disappointed when he fails to find in Africa the dancers, festivals of the dead, medicine men, and other expected customs. The Englishman wants Africa as described by Western travelers, with typical music and ancient rites, things which the Mission had destroyed (187). Tetteh then takes advantage of Hardacre's needs : for money he arranges to represent African culture by performing ancient rituals which Hardacre believes to be real. Like Danso, Tetteh mocks at the European concept about Africa.

Through "A Fetish for Love" Laurence again accuses the mission of changing African life. The African Sunday, together with his wife, works as a servant for an English family. When the English lady asks Sunday the meaning of his name, he explains that his African name was Kwesi but he had worked for "some burning missionaries, to whom African names meant darkness and damnation, so [he] had placatingly changed [his] name for the job's sake" (164). To avoid the "world of darkness", Africans should relinquish not only their behaviour and culture but also their names. Laurence's text suggests that colonialism depersonalizes the individual in such a way that her/his name has significance only for the colonizer who assumes that he/she has the authority to give new names to the conquered. The act of naming is, in fact , a prerogative of those who are in power.

A critique of egocentrism is also the theme of the story "A Gourdful of Glory" when an African character protests against names given by the Mission to African people (226). Mammy Ama, an old "petty trader", does not like the European invasion and resents Adua, her daughter, to be called Marcella. In fact, her refusal to have her daughter named by white people leads Mammy Ama to decline to be patronized by the English in several ways. When the nameless white woman comes to mock at her enthusiasm about independence, Mammy Ama refuses to sell the white woman a gourd even knowing she would receive far more than Africans would pay. "You go somewhere. You no come heah. I no need for your money " (242). When she realizes that independence does not mean "Free-dom" as she expected, she transforms its meaning. "Free-dom", for her, has two

syllables and two meanings before and after independence. The latter means freedom to lie to the white woman, the freedom Africans have to say what they want to without being insulted. The coming of independence in Ghana, in fact, has many interpretations among the Africans and Europeans who live in the colony. The story "The Perfume Sea" illustrates the different impact it has had on the lives of the colonizer.

The story presents Mr. Archipelago and Doree, a white couple who live in a small town in Africa. They have a hairdressing salon and live apart from both English and African society. Before independence they work for Europeans who, like Mrs. Webley-Pryce, consider "a blessing for the European women to have someone in a tiny station like this who can do hair" (27). The story suggests that even being in the country for a long time, Europeans consider themselves visitors.

The theme of colonialism is very evident in the story. Mr. Archipelago is an Italian and is very proud of having been born in Genoa, the birthplace of Chistopher Columbus. He compares himself with Columbus : "He was once in West Africa, you know, a young seaman, at one of the old slave-castles not far from here" (37). Like Columbus, Mr. Archipelago wanted to make profit in Africa. When independence comes and the Europeans begin "to depart one by one as their posts were filled by Africans", Mr. Archipelago loses all his customers. He then decides to change the name of the shop from :

Archipelago
English-Style Barber
European Ladies' Hairdresser (30)

to

Archipelago & Doree
Barbershop
All-Beauty Salon
African Ladies A Specialty (42)

The new customers of the couple will be the African elite like Mr. Tachie's daughter, Mercy, who wants to look like a "city girl" (44). With the new hair looking like the pictures she had seen in "Drum magazine", Mercy feels proud because she is no longer a bush girl. Through this "act of Mercy" Archipelago and Doree start working for African people. As Arun Mukherjee points out, "they have found a new role in the life of this newly independent country: to help the African bourgeoisie slavishly imitate the values of its former colonial masters" (25). The story really exposes a division between rich and poor Africans. Mercy, for example, the daughter of Mr. Archipelago's landlord, can afford red high-heel shoes, expensive clothes and other things. The proud African girl is a contrast to the poor women in the town who "walked tiredly, their headtrays heavy, their bare feet pressing the warm dust into ripples and dunes..." (21).

The new bourgeoisie does nothing to improve the lives of poor people after independence. Imitating the Europeans, they simply occupy the colonizer's posts. With the help of the former colonizer, the bourgeoisie's role in the new society is to repeat the actions of the colonizer. It is about this problem that Fanon warns us in The Wretched of the Earth : "The National bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of former European settlement... It considers that the dignity of the country and its own welfare require that it should occupy all those posts" (122). Mr. Archipelago and Doree represent the Western civilization which transmits its European style to an African elite which is far from the common African people. The story is thus very political and invites us to reflect on the nature of colonialism in the eve of and after independence. Avoiding to discuss questions of colonialism which the story suggests is to miss one important aspect of the story. Thus one can understand professor Arun Mukherjee's disappointment when Canadian students evaded discussing the problem of colonialism in their essays about Laurence's story and preferred to analyze how "believable" or "likeable" the characters in the story were (24-26). References to the history of colonialism, like Mr. Archipelago's allusion to Columbus, are frequent in Laurence's stories.

"The Tomorrow-Tamer", the title-piece of the collection, tells about the penetration of the European world into an African village and the natives' attempt to resist this penetration. When the white men arrived, followed by lorries and other supplies in order to build a bridge, the men of Awurasu stood by mutely with expressionless faces. The penetration reminds us of an invasion or even a rape : "With a swoosh and a rattle, the strangers drove off towards the river, scattering goats and chickens and children from path and filling the staring villagers' nostrils with dust" (86). In fact, there were actual rapes as Kofi's father suggests : "And these madmen who go about our village -- how many girls are pregnant by them already ?" (96). The narrator's sympathy for the villages is perceptible when he tells us how the invaders despise African culture and past. We are told, for example, that when people see the silver colour on the bridge, they like it because it reminds them of real silver. The British Superintendent, however, presumes they like it because of the monetary value of silver. Then he suggests that the Africans might cut the bridges into pieces. The narrator says : "But the villagers were not primarily concerned with monetary value. The bridge was being covered with silver, like the thin-beaten silver leaf on a great queen's chair. Silver was the colour of queen mothers, the moon's daughters, the king-makers" (100). Thus the silver colour makes the villagers ask about the meaning of the bridge itself and ask themselves about the kind of spirit which dwelt in the bridge. Unlike the narrator and Laurence herself, the Europeans in the story do not understand anything about the Ashanti silver stool and immediately interpret the Africans' questions as concerned with money. On many occasions the story presents the contrast between European capitalist conduct and the African religious world. The sudden change Europeans bring to the village causes anxiety, trepidation and despair in the old villagers.

In order to fight against the invasion, the oppressed Africans feel the necessity to recover their strength by connecting themselves with their ancestors : "Can they order us about like slaves ? We have men who have not forgotten their grandfathers were warriors" Kofi's father says (86). The evocation of the past, anthropologist Michael Fisher says when

referring to ethnicity, helps the construction of an ethnic identity (197). By evoking their ancestors and their ancient rites, Africans assure themselves that their people are not dead. This dialogue with the ancestors generates new perspectives for their future as they see the "new world" from a religious perspective.

The bridge, which dramatically changes the lives of the people and at the beginning is seen as a disrespect to the god river, gets a new meaning with Kofi's death . When the young Kofi falls into the river, the villagers see it as a sacrifice to the gods. Thus they appropriate the meaning of the bridge for their purpose. Kofi's death mitigates the offense to the African gods and the bridge works as a metaphorical "bridge", as the moderator between ancient gods and the new world. By describing the feelings of the villagers and their reaction to the outsiders, Laurence clearly sympathizes with the Africans who have their lives displaced by Europeans. The colonizers do not want to know anything about the native people's lives and cultures, but just to impose "civilization ".

With the exception of "Voices of Adamo", which was clearly written in response to Mannoni's theory, all the stories of the collection The Tomorrow-Tamer are very political and suggest discussions about colonialism. As Clara Thomas states, all the stories reveal Laurence's knowledge of and respect for African history and legend (47). It is not surprising then that African writers have confirmed that Laurence's African characters are convincing. On several occasions, The Tomorrow-Tamer, like other Laurence's works, has been compared with Chinua Achebe's work. Craig Tapping, for example, states that The Tomorrow-Tamer reminds him of Achebe and explains: "A Canadian writer of Anglo-Scots background has so completely lost herself in a richly sensual, but utterly alien, culture that her narrative bears little if any trace of her own provenance" (in Gunnars 77) Other critics, like Clara Thomas and the Indian Professor Om Juneja, also affirm that Laurence's text authenticity is comparable to Achebe's work.[49] According to Susan Beckman, both Achebe and Laurence present the British Empire as an alienating force which causes the loss of language and the loss of connection with the past (132).

The Tomorrow-Tamer is the last of Laurence's fiction based on Africa. By 1962 Laurence was determined to stop writing about Africa and turned to writing about Canadian characters in specific places in Canada. In "Ten Years' Sentences" she regards her African writings as " not entirely hopeful books" because they were written by an outsider (143). Laurence's acknowledgment of her inability to represent the Africans reveals, like on other occasions, her important awareness of the difficulty to represent oppressed people. However, she confesses that her African books cannot be read "as separate entities from [her] Canadian books" (Tree 7). Laurence believes that both Africa and Canada are dependent on Britain for political and cultural reasons and have experienced the "been-to" phenomenon. If one has been to the "mother country", one has superior knowledge. In this way it is not totally inadequate for her to speak from the African perspective.

Laurence's African work offers a perspective of resistance to imperialism. The resistance is presented in every situation where there is a colonial condition. One sees, for instance, the recovering of the colonized's past, or an engagement with the past, as a strategy which makes the colonized feel strong toward oppression. Through her characters Margaret Laurence practices what Fanon advises intellectuals to do and what Barbara Harlow describes as literature of resistance. In Laurence's texts, one also sees the undermining of the colonizing discourse described by Said with the help of the mimicry and mockery proposed by Homi Bhabha. The oppressed people have voices which help them tell their stories and their view of the world. Laurence's writing contains, then, resistance to a totalizing discourse produced by those in power. The texts resist the imposition of values by presenting a counter-discourse through which the perspective of the colonized is presented. The resistant texts in some way suggest how the oppressed colonized start constructing their own place, by reappropriating the distorted world. This characteristic is also perceived in Laurence's Canadian writing where one sees a

resistance to a distorted historical record and a rejection of Anglo-Scots domination in Canada.

After publishing two novels based on Canada, however, Laurence publishes her book of criticism on Nigerian literature : Long Drums and Cannons : Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists 1952-1966 .

In this book Laurence reinforces not only her admiration and respect for Africa and its culture but also her anti-imperialist ideas. She affirms that the essays on Nigerian writers "are an attempt to show that Nigerian prose writing in English has now reached a point where it must be recognized as a significant part of world literature " (10). One can realize the author's antipathy to imperialism in her insistence on the necessity of the artist's engagement with social problems. She also praises the literature which connects people with their own roots. In her preface to the book she contends that "Africa was interpreted and misinterpreted by outsiders for long enough. Now its own writers are engaged in reassessing their past in rediscovering their inheritances ..."(9). Laurence contends that the identity of a people who suffered colonialism "will only be regained slowly and painfully, through such men as Achebe himself " (116). Her respect for African thought together with her awareness of her outsider condition when writing about Africa, is praised by Achebe. As I have shown in the second chapter of this work, the Nigerian writer acknowledges that Laurence strives to view Africa from an authentic African perspective (12).

Throughout Long Drums and Cannons Laurence has shown the role of the past in the new generations of writers. In the Epilogue she affirms that in Nigerian literature one finds a "strong desire to reassess the historical past, revalue the life of the village and the traditional forms of society, to rediscover roots which were severed " (200). Laurence believes, as Patricia Morley points out, that "part of the psychological damage inflicted by imperial rulers is the disconnection with the past and with one's roots" (Sorfleet 82). The themes that she praises in African writers -- like rootlessness, dispossession, colonialism and resistance -- become part of her own writing about Africa and about Canada. In her

essays and letters, Laurence refers many times to her experience in Africa as analogous to her experience in Canada. Coming from a country which was a British colony, she associates African feelings with her own (in Indirection 38). In "A Place to Stand On ", written in 1970, she confesses that she likes African contemporary writers because, by re-creating their people's past in literary works, they re-create "a feeling of value from which they were separated by two or three generations of colonialism and missioning" (Heart 2). She confesses that by researching on Nigerian writers she realized how her own writing had "followed the same pattern" .

Laurence's transition from the African setting and subjects to the Canadian is not, therefore, an act of rupture in her ideas and beliefs. However, as she complains to Arthur Ravenscroft, only very few people, like Achebe, see the connection which really exists between her African writing and her Canadian writing.[50] In conversation with Clara Thomas, Laurence ratifies that she does not regard her "African books as separated entities form [her] Canadian books."[51] Moreover, Africa provided Laurence with self-knowledge and reinforced the anti-imperialist ideas which were born with her in the Canadian West. Patricia Morley's explanation is very appropriate : "Manitoba prepared Laurence for her encounter with Africa; Africa brought that earlier experience to political and psychological maturity, and provided a pattern of metaphor to express it. Laurence has come full circle" (Sorfleet 89). This psychological and political maturity will be revealed in her Canadian writing.

Laurence's Canadian writing offers the readers the same anti-imperialist theme. Tensions between racial groups, between the rich and the poor, between colonizer and colonized prevail in the "Manawaka cycle ". Besides, in the Canadian writing, a further concern with gender will place women in the group of oppressed people. In Laurence's writing independence of women is very related to the kind of independence Africans and other oppressed people look for. Laurence's connection of feminism with other movements against oppression reminds us of Judith Fetterley's Resisting Reader, an early feminist

strategy of interpretation. Laurence's texts, in some ways, do what Fetterley proposes: as resistant texts they question values and assumptions of the system and suggest change in the relations between dominant and oppressed groups (xx). Thus oppression and the search for independence, as opposition against the exclusion of less favoured people from History continue to be a central thematic thread of Laurence's writing. In this way, Laurence's writing continues to be deeply political in its attention to the plight of dispossessed people.

CHAPTER IV

DISMANTLING THE CENTRE : IMPERIALISM AND RESISTANCE IN LAURENCE'S CANADIAN WRITING

Also we have a lot to learn from them [the Indians] , and if we are able to do this, we may get a truer sense of the land -- we may get accepted by the land. In a sense they are our ancestors, we have to understand them a hell of a lot better than we do right now.

(Laurence, Interview to H. W. New)

The problems of our world will not go away if we ignore them.

(Laurence, "My Final Hour")

With the publication of The Diviners in 1974, Margaret Laurence completed the series of Manawaka novels which began with The Stone Angel in 1964. The town of Manawaka was inspired by Laurence's own prairie home-town, as she explains in her essay "A Place to Stand On":

> The name Manawaka is an invented one, but it had been in my mind since I was about seventeen or eighteen, when I first began to think about writing something set in a prairie town. Manawaka is not my hometown of Neepawa -- it has elements of Neepawa especially in some of the descriptions of places, such as the cemetery on the hill or the Wachakwa valley ... Manawaka is not so much any one of prairie town as an amalgam of many prairie towns.(HS 3)

The five works which form the Manawaka cycle can be read as one work not only because they are set on the same prairie town, but also because they increasingly develop one theme: the problem of colonialism in a Western town in Canada. The protagonists of Laurence's Canadian writing are all women, born in the Canadian prairie. These protagonists lead the reader to perceive the particularities of a small conservative English Canadian town, characterized by a hierarchy which grants privileges to some of its inhabitants and causes deprivation to others. Manawaka is marked by imperialism in the relationship between Anglo-Scots settlers and the colonized Metis or even non-British settlers. Imperialism is perceived also in several forms of gender and class oppression, when people have their lives reduced to a lower status because they are women or because they are poor. Hierarchy is based on race, class and gender. More than in the African writings, one can see an intersection of postcolonial with the feminist perspective. It is this system which Laurence criticizes in her own hometown, Neepawa. The characters are not stereotyped, but the English-Scots are presented as colonizers who assume their "superiority" over the other inhabitants of the town. The theme of imperialism and colonialism receives an increasing attention from the first to the last work. As Peter Easingwood suggests, "a subject which was of increasing concern to Laurence [is] the history of the Metis and the memory of their cultural dispossession in favour of a new generation of English-speaking settlers of Protestant background (in Nicholson 123). Although the voices of the colonized are more fully heard in The Diviners , they are not absent from Laurence's previous Canadian writing. The attention to the plight of the Metis

is developed throughout the Manawaka cycle. In this chapter I propose to read the Manawaka cycle as a unity and to examine how the author presents both colonialism and resistance to it in the Manawaka community which can be taken as a microcosm of Canada.

The social structure of the town presents us three major groups of characters. On the top of the hierarchy are the Anglo-Scot settlers, who are prosperous, proud, hard-working and foster the myth of the "self-made man". They are intolerant of people who belong to "other groups" and will never reach their status. To this hegemonic group belong for example Jason Currie and Vanessa's grandparents (Connor and MacLeod) who want to perpetrate their respectability in Manawaka. Outside this respectable group of settlers, occupying an inferior position, are the Ukrainians such as the Kaslik family, and poor Anglo-Scot descendants like Christie Logan and the Winkler family. Finally there are the Metis such as the Tonnerre family, who live in the valley on the outskirts of the town and are completely outside Manawaka's social order.

Moreover, the town of Manawaka has an ethnocentric society which privileges the white Anglo-Scots and marginalizes the Native and the Metis. In Laurence's work one can perceive a preoccupation in recuperating these silenced voices in order to present an unofficial view of a Canadian prairie town. The works stimulate readers to revise and rethink history, perceiving the need of recovering lost memories. The author self-consciously opposes a unified view of history which disregards the importance of people with indigenous blood in Canadian history by somewhat recovering their history of deprivation and oppression. Laurence confesses that the sad history of the Canadian Indians and Metis disturbed her : "The whole tragic areas of Canadian history which encompasses the struggles, against great odds, of the prairie Indian and Metis peoples in the 1800's is one which has long concerned and troubled me" (HS, 227). She is conscious that the Eurocentric history of Canada does not acknowledge the presence of Indian and Metis in Canada. In Laurence's texts the Indians and Metis are present and are listened to.

Their marginal condition, their state of poverty, abandonment and distress in a society regulated by white people are regarded in the Manawaka cycle.

In The Stone Angel, for example, the narrator Hagar recalls her childhood and the time she used to walk in the Manawaka's cemetery. She tells us that "in summer the cemetery was rich and thick as syrup with the funeral parlour perfume of the planted peonies, dark crimson and wallpaper pink, the pompous blossoms hanging leadenly..." (4). This was the rich part of the cemetery which belonged to the colonizer, who adorned it with imported flowers. On the margin, however, was the undesirable world, the one that belonged to the colonized natives:

> But sometimes through the hot rush of disrespectful wind that shook the scrub oak and the coarse couchgrass encroaching upon the dutifully cared-for habitations of the dead, the scent of the cowslips would rise momentarily. They were tough-rooted, these wild and gaudy flowers, and although they were held back at the cemetery's edge, torn out by loving relatives determined to keep the plots clear and clearly civilized, for a second or two a person walking there could catch the faint, musky dust-tinged smell of things that grew untended and had grown always, before the portly peonies and the angels with rigid wings, when the prairie bluffs were walked only by Cree with enigmatic faces and greasy hair.(5)

Like the wild flowers, the Metis were kept on the margin of the ordered white society.

The elite of Manawaka belong to the civilized world, which is afraid of being contaminated by the substandard people with indigenous blood. Therefore people in Manawaka do not tolerate the Metis presence in their "respectful" world. Hagar's father, for example, does not like his son to go "gallivanting around the country with a half-breed" (20). Repeating her father's prejudice, Hagar herself believes that the Metis are not good company to a white person:

> Once when I was out picking saskatoons near the trestle bridge. I saw him [her son] with the Tonnerre boys. They were French halfbreeds, the son of Jules, who'd once been Matt's friend, and I wouldn't have trusted any of them as far as I could spit. They all

> lived in a swarm in a shack somewhere -- John always said their house was passably clean, but I gravely doubted it. (127)

Hers is the discourse of a White Canadian who considers herself superior to the people who have indigenous blood. In this way the precarious conditions of the Metis is bound to persist in Manawaka. Scotch Canadians want to see them poor, desolate, dirty and hopeless in order to justify the English-Scots colonization.

In The Fire-Dwellers, through the narrator and protagonist Stacey Cameron's monologues, exterior observation and contact with other people, we not only learn about her oppressed housewife's life but we also find some references to colonialism in Canada. Stacey invokes her childhood by Diamond Lake, fifty miles North of Manawaka, "where the spruce trees had themselves intensely still, dark and immutable as old Indian gods, holding up the star-heavy sky " (71). Later she recalls listening to the voice of the loons, "witch birds out there in the night lake, or voices of the dead shamans, mourning the departed Indian gods..." (158). The mysterious voice of the loons reminds Stacey that the Indian gods have disappeared. But when she goes back to the lake eight years later, the loons have disappeared too : "When people came in numbers, the loons went away, always" (159-60). The loons, like people with indigenous blood in Canada, want to escape "civilization" in order to avoid oppression and humiliation. The situation of the loons, considered lunatic birds, can be associated with that of the Métis, who had to leave their land with the coming of Eastern white Canadians. But white civilization is everywhere and "there isn't any place that far north, that far anywhere". Thus the Metis stay on the margin of civilization (160). They are, like the loons, discriminated by the civilized world. As Stacey's younger sister reflects in A Jest of God , : "people say *loon* meaning mad. Crazy as loon " (174). Both the bird and the people are considered second-rate and degraded, having their space invaded by white colonizers.

Stacey's lover Luke Ventury, a writer of SF stories, tells Stacey about a region, North of Vancouver, up the Skeena River, where there is an Indian village. The desolate state of the Indians is similar to the Metis in the Manawaka region:

> ... Indian village, a bunch of rundown huts and everything dusty, even the kids and the dogs covered with dust like they were all hundreds of years old which maybe they are and dying which they almost certainly are. And they look at you with these dark slanted eyes they've got, all the people there. They come out and look at you with a sort of inchoate hatred and who could be surprised at it? Because lots of people visit the place every summer, for maybe half an hour. The attraction is the totem poles. And there they are -- high, thin, beaked, bleached in the sun, cracking and splintering, the totems of the dead. And of the living dead. (208)

Victims of the white invasion, the natives feel less and less able to face life. Besides this state of abandonment, the Indians feel they have become objects of curiosity and observation of white Canadians. The "civilized " regard the "heathen savages" as having an inferior mind. However, as colonizers, white Canadians feel the right to visit the Indians whenever they want to satisfy their curiosity. When the Indians realize that the visitors are there just to extract self-satisfaction , they hate the invaders. Luke, then, says to Stacey that if he were one of the Indians he would also hate people like him coming from outside. Like the African Kwabena in "The Drummer of all the World", the native Canadians hate to be regarded as tokens of an exotic world. Condemned to silence, with a lost language, they are not listened to but only commented on. This is exactly what Mary Louise Pratt condemns when she refers to colonial travel writing : colonized people are seen but not listened to.

Stacey lives in Vancouver but was born in Manawaka. Her comprehension of the forsaken condition in which the Indians live in North of Vancouver leads her to perceive the state in which the Metis live. She recognizes that they were once the lords of the prairie and now live completely abandoned and estranged in their own lands. In Vancouver Stacey

meets Valentine, a member of the Tonnere family, whom she had known in her hometown Manawaka. In her interior monologues Stacey thinks:

> The Tonnerre family shack surrounded by discarded tin cans and old car parts and extending in a series of lean-tos, at the foot of the hill in Manawaka, originally built a long time ago by old Jules Tonnerre, who was a boy then, when he stopped off and stayed in the Wachakwa Valley on his way back from the last uprising of his people, on his way back from Batoche and Fish Creek, from the last and failed attempt to save themselves and their land, the last hopeless hope which was finished the year Riel was hanged in Regina. After that, the "*Bois Brûlés*", the French Indians, those lords, would be known as half-breeds and would live the way the Tonnerres lived, in ramshacledom, belonging nowhere. (240)

Stacey is very conscious of the damage white people have caused to the Metis. Born in a middle-class Manawaka family and encouraged to think badly of them, only as an adult does Stacey learn that they were victims of a distorted history. When she was a child in the racist Manawaka she knew the Metis only as "those Tonnerre", for in Manawaka the children of British Canadian families were taught to see the Metis as inferior people who deserved only scorn.

Vanessa McLeod, the narrator and protagonist of A Bird in the House , went to school with the Metis girl Piquette Tonnerre. Piquette is Valentine's sister and the daughter of Lazarus and granddaughter of Jules, who fought with Riel. Through Piquette, Vanessa awakens to the problems of the colonized Metis. She also becomes aware of the importance of the people in the history of her place. In the story significantly entitled "The Loons", Vanessa ponders about the Metis girl Piquette Tonnerre's gloomy state : "Piquettte might have been the only one, after all, who had heard the crying of the loons" (120). Through Vanessa, Laurence denounces the depressed situation of the Metis in Manawaka :

> Just below Manawaka, where the Wachakwa River ran brown and noisy over the pebbles, the scrub oak and grey-green willow and chokecherry bushes grew in a dense thicket. In a clearing at the centre of the thicket stood the Tonnerre family's shack. The basis of this dwelling was a small square cabin made of poplar poles and chinked with mud, which had been

> built by Jules Tonnerre some fifty years before, when he came back from Batoche with a bullet in his thigh, the year that Riel was hung and the voices of the Metis entered their long silence... As the Tonnerres had increased, their settlement had been added to, until the clearing at the foot of the town hill was a chaos of lean-tos, wooden packing cases, warped lumber, discarded car tires, ramshackle chicken coops, tangled strands of barbed wire and rusty tin cans .(108)

The deteriorated state of the Indians and Metis is a great contrast to the glorious past. Before the invasion of the White Canadians, the Metis' livelihood was centred on the buffalo hunt. As we have seen in the second chapter, when referring to the history of the Canadian West, the Metis had a fine organization and supplied the traders with dried meat and pemmican. With the settlement of white men in the area and the end of the buffalo, they became not only desolate but also hungry. Riel's death aggravated the desolation of the Metis, ending their hope of recovering land and of leading their own lives. The Indians and Metis had to live on the edge of the cities, poor, abandoned, and suffering prejudice. Belonging nowhere, with a lost language, they also lose perspective for the future. As Vanessa says :

> The Tonnerres were French halfbreed, and among themselves they spoke a patois that was neither Cree nor French... They did not belong among the Cree of the Galloping Mountain reservation, further north, and they did not belong among the Scots-Irish and Ukrainians of Manawaka, either. They were as my Grandmother McLeod would have put it neither flesh, fowl, nor good salt herring .(108-9)

The text calls the reader's attention to the injustice which was thrust upon the Metis. They inherited all the Indians' problems, but unlike their cousins they did not receive land rights. As Patricia Morley says, "faced with overt discrimination they were forced to abandon the name of Metis, politically, they were nonexistent. They inherited all the Indian problems, and their tragedy `climaxed and epitomized the whole struggle of red man, or brown, against white'" (Long Journey 140).

In A Bird in the House, Vanessa, like Stacey in The Fire-Dwellers, remembers that at school she was indifferent to her Metis classmate. With a different demeanour and health problems, Piquette was a humiliating presence at school : "she existed for me only as a vaguely embarrassing presence, with hoarse voice and her clumsy limping walk and her grimy cotton dresses that were always miles too long." (109). Vanessa was neither friendly nor unfriendly towards Piquette: as a middle-class girl, she ignored the presence of the Metis girl. A child of Scotch and Irish origins, Vanessa lived among people who either ignored or reproached the presence of the halfbreed in their regular life. When her father, a doctor, wants to take the Metis girl with his family to Diamond Lake for summer vacation, grandmother MacLeod reacts: "Ewen, if that half-breed youngster comes along to Diamond Lake, I'm not going" (110). Grandmother MacLeod shares the intolerance white Canadians have against non-white people. Growing among this influence, Vanessa could not have any interest in getting acquainted with Piquette. However, when she realizes that Piquette is a descendent of the Indians about whom she has read in books, she changes her attitude. The Metis girl then becomes an object of curiosity and observation:

> Unlikely as it may seem, I had only just realized that the Tonnerre family, whom I had always heard called half-breeds, were actually Indians, or as near as made no difference. My acquaintance with Indians was not extensive. I did not remember ever having seen a real Indian, and my new awareness that Piquette sprang from the people of Big Bear and Poundmaker, of Tecumseh, of the Iroquois who had eaten Father Brebeuf's heart -- all this gave her an instant attraction in my eyes. I was a devoted reader of Pauline Johnson at this age, and sometimes would orate aloud and in an exalted voice, *West Wind, blow from your prairie nest; Blow from the mountains, blow from west*.(112)

The adult Vanessa recalls her disappointment when Piquette did not fulfill her romantic expectations. Piquette is not like the "true" indigenous she read in the books. Here Vanessa reminds us of the Englishman Hardacre in "The Pure Diamond Man", who gets frustrated when he visits Africa and realizes it is not the same country which the books had told him

about. The colonizer tend to regard the colonized as generally exotic people and when the reality comes out differently, the colonizer gets impatient and even angry. The lack of harmony and unison of the indigenous world is not understood by Vanessa who constructs a mythical reality of the colonized world. This fact is visible in any colonial situation. As Said remarks, "general grandeur and passion inspired a transcendent sense of things and little patience for actual reality" (1979: 102). The deplorable state of the Metis has made them far from the heroes described in the books.

At school Piquette has failed several grades not only because of illness but also because of disinterest. Later we learn that she married an Englishman, and when the marriage went sour, took to drinking and despondency. Like her sister Valentine in The-Fire-Dwellers, she surrendered to desolation after trying unsuccessfully to get along in white society. She died along with her children when the shack in which she lived caught fire. In the Diviners, her brother Jules Tonnerre, who becomes a folk singer, will lament Piquette's pitiful life and her death : "My sister's man/ Fire and snow---/ He ate her heart/ Then he made her go" (454). Piquette's attempt to break out of the segregation imposed on her by white society falters and she has no reason to live.

The protagonist of The Diviners, Morag Gunn, while still at school, observes the neglected state of the Metis : "Also, one of the Tonnerre girls, halfbreed from the valley, is worse dressed; she is at school she looks the worst because her dresses are long-gawky and dirty, and she has a limpwalk" (77). Later we are told about the Tonnerre place on the outskirt of Manawaka :

> The Tonnerre place, right beside the Wachakwa River down there, is a square cabin made out of poplar poles chinked with mud. Also some other shanties, sheds and lean-tos, tacked onto the cabin and made out of old boards and pieces of flattened tin cans and tarpaper. Lots of old car parts and chicken wire and worn-out car tires living around, stuff like that. (83)

The Tonnerre place confounds itself with the garbage which surrounds it, with things considered undesirable and thus discarded by the British Canadians. Here, like in the previous work, the author invites the reader to reflect on the unhappy condition in which the Metis live in Manawaka. They are not part of the city, they cannot share the privilege the colonizers have. At school Morag does not learn anything about the Tonnerre's and, by extension, about the Metis history. However, as a poor white herself, she can get close to a Metis boy, Skinner who, like Piquette and Valentine is Lazarus' child. Not belonging to "the elect" in Manawaka , Morag reveals sympathy towards Skinner who is discriminated at school (78). She observes that Skinner is taller than other boys in the class because he is older than other students. Like his sisters he feels dislocated and is not interested in school : "Sometimes Skinner goes off with his dad, old Lazarus Tonnerre, and disappears for weeks, setting traplines way up at Galloping Mountain, some say " (79). People in Manawaka do not listen to the Metis but they feel the right to comment on them and classify them as inferior people : "The Tonnerres (there are an awful lot of them) are called *those breeds*, meaning halfbreeds. They are part Indian, part French from away back. They are mysterious. People in Manawaka talk about them but don't talk to them" (79) . Later we learn that Skinner is not the real name of Morag's Metis classmate. His name is Jules Tonnerre but he is nicknamed Skinner, meaning all skin and bone --- malnutrition and distress of the Tonnerre family. As Jules himself affirms his nickname may also suggest that he is good at skinning "any damn thing, rabbit, muskrat, even deer " (84).

Jules is the most important character of the Tonnerre family. He is not only observed, but, through Morag's friendship he will also be listened to. Unlike his sister in the previous works, Jules in The Diviners has a friend in whom he trusts and to whom he speaks out. Thus, more than others, he represents the Tonnerre family and the Metis people who are alienated in a white society. In order to be more assiduous at school, Skinner leaves the valley and goes to live in town with the lawyer Simon Pearl and his wife. Many people in Manawaka say "it is foolhardy of the Pearls, who need not expect any gratitude

from a halfbreed " (141). British Canadians consider the Metis just half-breed, or "not quite " fit for an ethnocentric society which considers them as subaltern to the white race. When the teacher Miss McMutrie leads the class to sing "The Maple Leaf Forever", Skinner, who significantly has the best voice in the class, refuses to sing. "He comes from nowhere. He isn't anybody" (80). The song celebrates the Scots, Irish and English as Canadians. It takes no account of Canadians with indigenous blood. Skinner's silence , then, is a refusal to sing in the oppressor's voice. Significantly, later he becomes a singer and the father to Pique who will also use the voice to protest against the Metis conditions and to glorify the memory of her indigenous ancestors.

Rejection, alienation, deprivation of their rights are part of the Metis world. The precarious conditions in which they live confront the arrogant position of the British Canadians in Manawaka. The "civilized" world is opposed to the world of the Metis. The colonized live abandoned on the periphery while the colonizers live in comfortable brick houses with neat gardens. This is a clear foil to the poor shacks where the Metis live. Hagar, in The Stone Angel , tells us about the big brick house, "the second brick house to be built in Manawaka "(6). Vanessa recalls the sumptuous brick house, known to the rest of the town where she grew up, and comments about the garden : "On the lawn a few wild blue violets dared to grow, despite frequent beheadings from the clanking guillotine lawn mower, and mauve-flowered Creeping Charley insinuated deceptively weak-looking tendrils up to the very edges of the flower beds where helmeted snapdragon stood in precision" (11-12) . Similarly to the cemetery scene, the divergence between the wild and cultivated flowers is akin to the confrontation between the native people and the white settlers in Manawaka. The race, like the flower, considered inferior is condemned either to extermination or to a low-grade life.

The forsaken state of the Metis is also visible through their lost language. They can speak neither French nor Cree, and their English, as Vanessa points out in A Bird in the House, "is broken and full of obscenities" (108). The first thing they learn in the

colonizer's language is how to deplore the desolate situation in which they live. From their lost language the Metis keep also fragments and curses. English, however , will be for a long time a foreign and colonizing language. As Barbara Godard says, "English is the language of colonialism, and marginalizes other ethnic groups" (1990: 53). . Those who cannot master the colonizer's language, like the Tonnerres, cannot participate in the "respectable" society. Jules Tonnerre, even after a long time among English-speaking Canadians, feels uncomfortable in speaking English which is not *his* language::

> The lost language, forever lurking somewhere inside the ventricles of the hearts of those who had lost them. Jules, with two languages lost , retaining only broken fragments of both French and Cree , and yet speaking English as though forever it must be a foreign tongue to him. (264)

Jules has to suppress his emotion and desires by speaking in a foreign language. He is conscious that in adopting the English language he is in some ways assuming the colonizer's culture, as Fanon asserts in Black Skin ,White Masks (17). However, speaking a language which is different from the "correct" English, Jules's voice is a cry or a noise in the Anglo-Scot order of Manawaka. His struggle for signification through fragments, curses, and an incorrect English contributes to undermine logocentrism in the town.

Pique, Morag and Jules's daughter, also makes an unsuccessful effort to retain the lost language. She memorizes a poem written by Louis Riel which she takes from a book . She says : "I only know how to make the sounds. I don't know what they mean " (263). A similar situation is experienced by Morag's foster father who is of Scottish origin, but is poor and lives in turmoil. Christie feels that Gaelic, the language of his ancestors is forever lost (74). The lost language reinforces the displacement of the colonized , living in the periphery, in a world of disorder, where they always feel strangers. As Morag ponders, the Tonnerre's father was "a stranger in the place where he lived his whole life" (361/2). The mastery of language means the preservation of power and superiority over others and those who cannot master the English language are pushed to the margins of the

town. From the margin they speak and contra/dict the supposed harmony of Manawaka. In The Diviners, broken language, curses, and dialects are listened to and help to violate the hierarchy of an Anglo-Scot "ordered" society. Dialects, foreign words, incorrect English denounce the disorder of Manawaka hidden by the monoglossia of those who are in power.

In Laurence's Manawaka "order" means the white man's view of the world. The world of order belongs to those who are in power : it is an order which privileges one people and grieves others. Hagar, in The Stone Angel, tells us that as a child living in an organized world, she had been anxious "to be neat and orderly, imagining life had been created only to celebrate tidiness " (5) . Hagar recalls how her father taught her discipline, order, and perseverance. She did not like the advice, but years later she was saying the same to her sons (13) . Hagar's father , Jason , does not permit Hagar to live with people who do not belong to his rank. When Hagar manifests her desire to go to South Wachakwa, he refuses her request and says : "You think I'd let you go to the kind of dances they have there, and let all the farm boys paw you ? " (44) . Then he completes his reason : "You know nothing ... Men have terrible thoughts" (44) . The Anglo-Scots-Irish live in a world of order, cleanliness with an upright morality. According to Grandmother MacLeod, in A Bird in the House, the MacLeods never tell lies. She wants her granddaughter Vanessa to preserve the importance of the family in Manawaka . Thus she cannot bear slang , but likes the language of order, because, she says, "God loves order " (49) . Vanessa, however, aware that the Metis live in a much poorer state than her family, concludes that "whatever God might love in this world, it was certainly not order " (61) . If God loved order, the Metis would have the same privileges the Anglo-Scots Canadians have. Unlike Hagar and Rachel , Vanessa manages to break away from the concepts and prejudices which were passed on her by her grandmother.

Throughout The Diviners the division between the two worlds is clear. Morag notices that the compartment where the colonizers live is opulent:

> ... big yellow brick houses or wooden houses painted really nice. Lawns all neat and cut , and sprinklers, sprinkling, swirling around and making water rainbows. Flowers with pink and purple petunias, and red snapdragons like velvet, really rich velvet, and orange lilies with freckles on the throats. The blinds are pulled down over the front windows of the houses, to keep out the heat. Cream-coloured blinds, all fringed with lace and tassels. (46)

The social order of Manawaka grants the colonizers with privileges which are never available to the Metis. The latter reside in a shack which "has been put together with old planks, tarpaper , the lids of wooden crates, some shingles and flattened pieces of tin" (151). There is no garden and around the shack "lie old tires, a roll of chickenwire, the chassis of a rusted car, and an assortment of discarded farm machinery" (151). To the Scots-English of Manawaka, the poor side of the town is the "equivalent of the Other Side of the Tracks" (36). Rachel in A Jest of God tells us that, as a Scots girl, she lives in the "good part of the town", which is different from "the other side of the tracks, where the shacks are and where the weeds are let grow knee-high not dutifully mown ... "(17) . Thus one sees that Manawaka shares characteristics with Accra in This Side Jordan, where the city has two compartments : the ordered civilized one with nice gardens, and the unpleasant one where weeds grow. Rachel lets us know that the two parts are like "oil and water " (17). The town resembles Fanon's colonial world which is divided in two compartments with no conciliation possible because there is a great economic gap between them. The town belonging to the colonized, as Fanon argues, is "a place of evil fame" inhabited by hungry people, lacking cleanliness and organization (WE , 30) . In Manawaka, the colonized Metis are joined by other dispossessed people. As Morag in The Diviners recalls , they are "those who had not and never would do any good . Drunks . People perpetually on relief " (37). Significantly, they live closer to the centre than the Tonnerre family. In this sense, maybe one could say that the town has more than two compartments. There is the place where the privileged English-Scots live, the centre; a place where the

poor white live, Hill Street; and a place for the Metis , the valley - which belongs to the lower part of the town and is farther from the centre.

One can perceive that Manawaka is marked by racial and economic differences. Like in Fanon's analysis, while the colonizer's world boasts of its wealth and luxuries, the part of the colonized is bleak. This big difference in the way of living of the two compartments can never conceal the economic inequalities (WE 31). The economic inferiority of the Metis in Manawaka helps the British to keep them under control . The Scots-British judge, comments on, and decides the colonized people's lives. In A Bird in the House one realizes that it is Doctor McLeod who decides whether Piquette can be cured of TB or not (109-10). The decision over the Metis' lives is always followed by commentary, observation , judgment.

The Metis are considered unclean, less intelligent, lazy and immoral and ungrateful. Jules Tonnerre leaves the valley for downtown and stays with Simon Pearl and his wife in order to go to school more frequently. "Everybody in Manawaka knows about this, and many say it is foolhardy of the Pearls, who need not expect any gratitude from a halfbreed" (141). People who have wealth and "good" ancestry feel they have to judge others. As Laurie Lindberg affirms in her analysis of Laurence's Manawaka novels, "the arbiters of Manawaka society are those happy families which can boast of both their weighty contributions to the town's coffers and their Anglo-Scots ancestors" (28). Like Miklos, the owner of the "Parthenon Cafe" in Manawaka, many people believe that "the word Tonnerre spells only one thing, Trouble" (150). The Lawyer Simon Pearl decides that Jules Tonnerre is not intelligent enough to study law. In this way he feels the right to determine Jules's future, as Jules tells Morag:

> Well, it was this way . I got some fancy notion I'd like to be a lawyer, see, on account of if you've always been screwed by people it seemed a good idea to do some of the damage yourself for a change. Right ? So I

> asked old Simon how a guy would get to be a lawyer. He didn't actually laugh out loud, but he kinda covered his mouth with his hand to hide the smile. Then he tells me it's a fine thing to get an education, but a person like me do well to set their sights a bit lower, and he will ask at the BA Garage to take me on as an apprentice mechanic after Grade eleven. (149)

The dominant Scots-Canadians elaborate a discourse on the Metis in order to keep ruling their lives. The colonizers believe that the "truth" about the natives is plain: they are inferior and must be controlled. Simon's argument reflects the British-Canadian discourse on the inferiority of the native or half-breed, also considered a half-man, a subhuman being who needs to be controlled by white English-speaking people. Assuming that he has authority to say that Skinner has no potential to become a lawyer, Simon just reveals his fear of having a Metis as his equal. Thus his discourse on the inferiority of the Metis is a strategy to maintain the colonial situation. An uneducated Metis would be more easily submitted to the white man's interest. At school Morag hears Miss McMurtrie comment on Jules Tonnerre: "oh, Skinner's bad enough but at least he's away from school half the time and not much missed by me I can tell you " (71). For the dominant class it is good to keep the Metis away from society so they cannot challenge the power of the oppressor. This explains why Simon Pearl does not want Jules to be a lawyer. It also explains Jules' desire to "do some of the damage yourself" as cited above.

According to Simon's wish, Jules Tonnerre gives up the idea of becoming a lawyer. However, rather than working in a factory, Jules becomes a folk-singer to have the freedom to sing his songs. He preferred to move around the world like a wild flower: "like a dandelion seed carried by wind" (293) . In this way he is able to criticize the society that despises him and his people.

Professor Herbert Zirker from the University of Trier (Germany) suggests that Jules Tonnerre can be read as a picaresque character. As Lazarus's son, he is a "Lazarillo" free to censure and scold the unjust world.[52] However, in spite of this relative freedom, Jules' subjugation to white society does not end with his decision to be a singer. White

society keeps dictating Jules' behaviour even when he is a folk singer. It is the white Canadian audience that decides what kind of songs Jules will sing and what kind of dress he will wear : he has to play according to the white preconceptions of a red man, as he tells Morag:

> "I don't dress like this when I'm singing ", he says.
> "I wish to Christ I could, but no go. You should see me. One-man circus. Satin shirt with a lotta beadwork, and sometimes a phoney doeskin jacket with fringes and a lotta plastic porcupine quills in patterns. That's what they like....
> Oh, it's not so bad . It's a load of shit, but don't worry much as long as they let me do the singing .... (287)

In order to earn enough money to keep living the Metis have to subject to the white men's request. One perceives the author's indictment of the colonizers who desire to exploit people with indigenous blood. After promoting the Metis dislike for life, the colonizers choose what kind of life the "halfbreeds" will have. In Manawaka the Metis have their destination decided by the white rulers, even after death . When Lazarus, the father of the Tonnerre family dies, the white "rulers" of Manawaka decide that he cannot be buried in the Manawaka cemetery. Jules says: "I wanted to bury him in the valley, beside the shack, but I couldn't. Not allowed. No, no, they said, you can't just bury bodies anywhere. But they wouldn't let him be buried in the town graveyard, neither" (289). Both the Protestants and the Catholics justify their rejection of Lazarus's body for religious motives. This attitude illustrates Abdul JanMohamed's affirmation that colonialist discourse transforms racial difference into "moral and even metaphysical difference" (89). Jules, however , does not accept any justification. He knows that the colonial mind of Manawaka can never accept a halfbreed as their equal: "Yeah, well I guess I know why they really wouldn't have him, neither. His halfbreed bones spoiling their cemetery" (289). Considered biologically and intellectually inferior to the white race by a British system of knowledge, the Metis are refused burial in their own land. This system rules not only the present but also the future

and the past of the colonized. The colonizers decide what to say, what to write, what to teach about the Metis.

Working for the *Manawaka Banner* , the town newspaper, Morag is sent to make a report on the death of Jules's sister Piquette Tonnerre and her children. Wanting to tell something about their history, Morag mentions that Piquette's grandfather fought with Louis Riel in the Metis revolt against British-Canadian central government in 1885. Lacklan, the owner of the newspaper, however, allows her to publish only the news about the burning of the shack and the number of dead people. He deletes everything related to the history of the Metis under the excuse that people in Manawaka would not like to read about it. Obliterating the past of the Tonnerre family, Lacklan acts according to the colonizers' wish in Manawaka. They do not want to see any relevance in the Metis' past : only Scots-English Canadians have the right to be proud of their origin. The Metis' past is thought to consist of savagery and darkness, and their fight for justice is considered a barbarity which does not deserve to be mentioned. Lacklan's attitude confirms Tony Wilden's theory that Canadian history suffered many distortions and tends to delete rebellions against British domination (155). These "lapses of memory" are convenient : they help the colonizers to affirm that Canada has always been a harmonious country, with oppressed groups happy to be colonized.

In Manawaka, the Scots-English who rule the town like to make a distinction between Scots-British and the "others", especially the Metis. Before going to war in order to fight "for the King and Country ", Jules Tonnerre has to wear a kilt in a parade. He knows this is ridiculous but has to do because the "Cameron Highlanders got so many Manawaka boys" (154). Thus Jules is humiliated in order to respect the Scots pride.

Hagar's father in The Stone Angel is another example of Scottish pride. Hagar starts her narrative in this way : "ABOVE THE TOWN , on the Hill brow , the stone angel used to stand ... my mother's angel that my father brought in pride to mark her bones and proclaim his dynasty" (3). Then she tells us that her father, Jason Curie, brought the statue

"from Italy at a terrible expense ". The angel was "pure white marble" and had been carved by descendants of Bernini. It was not the only angel in Manawaka cemetery, "but was the first, the largest, and certainly the costliest " (3). Jason Curie, as a Scotchman, did not want a simple statue produced in Canada. To his colonial mind, everything coming from Europe meant superiority. Thus he wanted something to impress the people of "an uncouth land". He also planted flowers non-native of the region to distinguish from the wild flowers which are equivalent of native people. In this way, the Scots Jason reveals his pretension to power over other people. He likes to tell about his past, his hard beginning before becoming successful in Canada. He has left Scotland at seventeen and worked hard in Manawaka. In spirit, however, he still lives in Scotland and instructs his children to live according to Scottish values. Although the Scots were also dispossessed by the English, he does not mention the fact to the children. He creates a fantasy to justify his position as "superior". Hagar recollects:

> It seemed to me, from his tales, the Highlanders must be the most fortunate of all men on earth, spending their days in flailing about them with claymores, and their nights in eightsome reels. They lived in castles, too, every man jack of them, and all were gentlemen. How bitterly I regretted that he'd left and sired us here, the bald-headed prairie stretching out west of us with nothing to speak of .... (15)

Later, in her memories, the ninety-year-old Hagar will recognize that she has adopted the discursive superiority of the Scottish heritage. She condemns her father's imperialism, his pride, lack of emotion, the importance he gives to good appearance, but she acts like her father in many instances. For example, she teaches her son the importance of her past, of the Scottish heritage of the family ; she does not like her son to be in the company of the Tonnerre boys (17-18). To Hagar, being Scots-Canadian means being superior to other and, therefore, it is a mortification for a Scottish woman to serve other races (114).

In A Jest of God , Rachel Cameron, as a Scottish descendent, was educated to have prejudice against other people. Her parents believed that the Scots were superior to the other people who inhabited Manawaka. Even the Ukrainians, considered good farmers, did not belong to the world of the "elect". Rachel remembers how she was trained to shun non-Scots people : "Mother used to say, 'Don't play with those Galician youngsters'" (69). The Galicians live in the bad side of the town and the Scottish want to maintain them there. According to Scottish belief, Galicians would never become equal to Scots even being well educated and speaking good English. May Cameron, Rachel's mother, has preached that the Camerons are better than the Kazlik. Rachel was also taught discipline and repression of emotion in order to live according to her Scots heritage. Thus she could not act like the Galicians.

Because they are Europeans, Galicians do not suffer the same oppression as the Metis suffer in Canada. However, not being English-Scots, they do not have connection with the "mother-country" and belong to an inferior social class. As John Porter, in his study of the class mobility and migration in Canada points out, there is a relationship between the ethnic composition and the class structure of Canada. He explains that, as a charter group, the British had better opportunities than other settlers, especially Eastern Europeans (57-59). Manawaka, like all of Canada, reveals the British dominance in terms of influence and prestige, supported by economic superiority. Like Rachel, Vanessa MacLeod (of Scots-Irish origin) is taught to be proud of her superior lineage. Vanessa questions the Manichean morality of her grandmother who repeats to her : "I was a MacInnes before I got married. The MacInnes is a very ancient clan, the lairds of Morven and the constables of kinlochaline (49) . The Grandmother gives Vanessa "a plaid-bound volume entitled *The Class and Tartans of Scotland.* The book could teach Vanessa about her ancestors and the motto of the family : "Be then a wall of brass. Learn to suffer" (50). Grandmother MacLeod was born in Ontario and has never been to Scotland but wants to perpetuate the old belief that the Scots were more important than other people. Her memory

of the past would not imply any negative aspect if she treated other Canadians as equal. However, she retells the past in order to emphasize the family's superiority over others in Manawaka. In this sense, her memory, contrary to that of the oppressed people, serves to maintain Scots privilege over other Canadians.

Like Hagar, Rachel, Stacey and Vanessa, Morag Gunn is of Scottish origin. However, she is an orphan who feels she has come from nowhere and lives among the dispossessed people. At five years old she goes to live with her step parents Christie and Prin Logan, who live in the poor side of the city. Laurence here complicates her own earlier models : ethnicity is somewhat deconstructed by the economic conditions. Thus Morag, because she is poor, shares the social alienation of the Metis people. Although she learns from Christie Logan the motto and the war cry of the clan so that she can be proud of her heritage, unlike the other protagonists, Morag is not encouraged to use her ancestry as a means of feeling superior to others. Unlike Hagar, for example, the sense of being Scottish does not bestow on Morag a sense of superiority and disdain. By teaching her ethnic pride and introducing her to Scots history, poetry and music, Christie wants her to feel equal to the rich rulers of the town. Moreover, Christie wants her to fight against the "superiority" of the English who have oppressed the Scots and who "were bloody liars then as now" (73). According to Christie's version, the English claimed that the Ossian songs "were not the real songs" just to delete the glorious Scots song-maker. Christie likes to oppose the English to the Scots. For him Wordsworth's poem is much inferior to the Ossian poem which he shows to Morag. He says that the "Daffodils" (a poem associated with English imperialism) was written by a "pansy man" (72). Aware of historical power struggles, Christie contrasts even the Lowlanders to Highlanders Scots. As Flora Alexander remarks, "by contrast with Lowlander or English, the Highlander is frequently seen as the loser -- the adherent to lost causes". Laurence, however, chooses "a positive conception of the Highlander" (85). Morag is told by Christie that the Highlanders suffered subjugation and oppression but overcame the difficulties.

Although Hagar in The Stone Angel has also been taught that she is a Highlander, she is not made aware of the fact that the Highlanders were victim of English colonization. Christie always emphasizes to Morag that Highlanders suffered the burden of colonization by the English. He tells her the tales of the Highland hero Piper Gunn and the trouble the Highlanders suffered at "clearance" time. Through Christie, Morag learns about the "battle of the moors", when the English government extended its control over the Highlands of Scotland. She learns that the English defeated the Scots at Culloden by breaking up the clans and destroying the leadership of the clan chiefs. Explaining to Morag the meaning of the motto of the Logans, "The Ridge of Tears", Christie makes her aware of the suffering of their people :

> A sad cry for the cry, it is, for the sadness of my people. A cry heard at Culloden, in the black days of the battle, when the clans stood together for the last time and the clans were broken by the Sassenach cannons and the damned bloody rifles of the redcoat swine. They mowed the clans down in cold blood, my dear, and it must have been enough to tear the heart and unhinge the mind of the strongest coldest man alive, for our folk were poor bloody crofters, and were not wanting to fight the wars of the chieftains at all. (57)

Thus Christie speaks to Morag from the colonized point of view. His lament over the destructive aggression of the English colonizer against indefensive Scots is similar to Nathaniel's complaint in This Side Jordan . As in the African writing, here one perceives Laurence's revisionism, her concern in recuperating the history of oppressed people. In her introduction to the essay. "Road from the Isles", Margaret Laurence refers to the Highland Clearances and affirms that she could understand the Scots clan system "through a certain amount of knowledge of the tribal system in Africa" (HS, 158). So, we can see the author detects a connection between the history of Scots, Metis and Africans who had their system of life destroyed by English colonialism.

What Christie tells Morag is based on the history of Prince Charlie's defeat by the English at Culloden in 1745. Christie's first tale of Piper Gunn is also loosely based on the history of the Clearance. The Duchess Elizabeth, the proprietress of the greater part of the Sutherlandshire, decided to remove the population of the shire in order to raise sheep. Many Scottish farmers, driven from the Highland where they lived and worked, came to Canada between 1811 and 1815. To Christie, the Duchess is the "Bitch Duchess":

> Then, in those days, a darkness fell over all the lands and the crofts of Sutherland. The Bitch-Duchess was living there then, and it was she who cast a darkness over the land, and sowed the darkness and reaped gold., for her heart was cold as the gold coins and she loved no creature alive but only gold. And her tacksmen rode through the countryside, setting fire to the crofts and turning out the people from their homes which they had lived in since the beginning of all time. And it was old men and old women with thin shanks and men in their prime and women with the child inside them and a great scattering of small children, like, and all of them was driven from the lands of their fathers and onto the wild rocks of the shore, then ,to fish if they could and pry the shellfish off the rocks there for food.
> Well, now the Bitch-Duchess walked her castle, there, walked and walked...
> *All the lands of Sutherland will be raising the sheep* , says the she-devil, *for they'll pay better than folk.* (58-59)

Through this tale, Christie foregrounds the issue of dispossession of a group of people by another with sheer profit as a goal. Further he tells Morag that this tale is the tale of her ancestor, Piper Gunn. Besides playing pipe very well, Piper Gunn was a great leader who encouraged the homeless on the rock to board a ship and come to Canada. Referring to the historical fact (the "Clearance") which inspired Christie's tale , Laurence states :

> This must surely be one of the most painful episodes in European history, the tale of how the Gaelic-speaking people of Northern Scotland were driven from the lands they had worked for centuries, treated as sub-human by the English-speaking bailiffs who burned their dwellings, and ignored by landowners who preferred the lights of Edinburgh or London. (H , 160-61)

Christie wants Morag to have a sense of her past, of her ancestors. By telling her that they surmounted difficulties, he gives her the sense of vitally and strength she needs to

overcome the difficulties she faces as a poor child. In another tale her foster father tells her, for example, that Colin Gunn had been his mate in the war. Both "worked the big gun together". Then he tells her that Colin Gunn saved his life, dragging him into the dugouts after an explosion (102-03). In his second tale of Piper Gunn, Christie tells how the ship from Scotland landed on the wrong place and how Piper Gunn, together with his wife, Morag, led the people to the final destination in the West. In a letter to Bud Watson Margaret Laurence affirms : "I based the tales of Christie Logan, about Piper Gunn on actual history... the arrival of the first of the Selkirk settlers in 1815, when they indeed were landed mistakenly at Churchill ... The leader was in real life Young MacDonald."[53] In Laurence's fiction the Scots-Canadian Christie wants to give Morag a glorious personal history. He names the historical leader "Gunn" and his wife "Morag". He constructs the story of her father's heroism in war expecting her to be proud of her past.

Christie is conscious of his (and Morag's) oppressed condition and wants to create a heritage for Morag: a past which can be the base for a future. That is why he tells her of the glorious deeds and the suffering of the Scots. However he is unable to connect the suffering of Highlanders with the suffering of the Metis in Canada. His third tale of Piper Gunn is about the history of the Riel rebellion. Already in his previous tale he mentions to Morag that Piper Gunn slew Indians and Metis not because they were bad but because they "were just there" (97). When he tells the events of 1885, when the Metis were defeated by the Scots-English, he emphasizes the great deeds of the Scots and reinforces his rancour against the English. But he also reveals a colonizing mind when he does not acknowledge that the Metis rebellion has had a just cause : they were expelled from their lands like the Highlanders. While he describes Piper Gunn as a tall man, to him, the Metis leader Riel was "a short little man" (144). By describing the Metis leader as physically inferior, Christie reveals that he shares some of the prejudice the Scots of Manawaka have against the Metis. He also contradicts Jules Tonnerre's version, to whom Riel was very tall (162). Even revealing this subtle prejudice, however, Christie never mentions the Metis as

bad or immoral. Nor does he have any problem with the Tonnerre family, representative of the Metis in his days. Even telling about the battle against the Metis he speaks against the English. He tells that Riel and his men killed one or two English, "but the Sutherlands didn't trust the goddamn English, them bloody Sassenachs from Down East, no more than what they trusted the halfbreeds" (144). He also reveals a kind of indignation against Eastern Canadians when he mentions that Gunn and his sons regained control of the fort but "the army down East got the credit " (45-46).

Christie's anger against Eastern Canadians is an anger of colonized against colonizer. As many critics state, the Canadian West has been a colony of Central Canada.[54] This indignation against Eastern Canadians and against the English does not make him revise the Scots hostility against the Metis. It is Morag's observation of his tales that helps him to perceive that the cause of Riel's rebellion was similar to the dispossession of Christie's and her ancestors in Scotland. When Christie finishes praising Piper Gunn, she says : "I like, though, Riel, I mean ". Then she adds: "The book in History said he was nuts, but he didn't seem so nuts to me. The Metis were losing land -- it was taken from them. All he wanted was for them to have their rights. The government hanged him for that " (146). Morag, like Margaret Laurence herself, associates the suffering of the Metis with that of the Highlanders. Both are conscious that the plight of the Metis was even worse: they had no escape. Clara Thomas, Laurence's close friend, tells us that once, referring to the battle of Batoche, Margaret Laurence said "they destroyed us" as if she were a Metis. Thomas remarks that "she agonized, and her distress was very real ". Thomas adds that Laurence expressed "similar intensity about the destruction of the clans at Culloden" (1992: 94). Through Morag's assertion about the appropriate rebellion of the Metis, Christie is offered an opportunity to connect the oppression his ancestor suffered with that of the Metis. Later he ponders : "Maybe the story didn't go quite like I said". It seems that Christie only intends to stress the importance of Morag's ancestors. Even living in a poor economic condition he is a Scotsman who never admits to be inferior to the English. When Morag

tells him that she is going to marry an Englishman, Christie replies: "... too bad he is English and not Scots ha ha ha " (222). The text presents Christie as a clown always associated with the marginalized people. He is Scottish but poor, white but not "orderly" and "neat" as the society of Manawaka is supposed to be. He works with trash which the "nice people" refuse. He is a clown who has social awareness and criticizes the hypocrisy of the society which wants to hide the "rotten stuff" of the town. (45).

Christie is a garbage collector who feels that the social structure of Manawaka is unjust. So, besides learning about her Scots ancestry, at a very young age Morag learns that she belongs to a lower class. When she goes to the Nuisance Grounds, a place in Manawaka where Christie collects garbage, she suffers humiliation with Christie. The children whom she knows from school yell and sing:

"Christie Logan's the Scavenger Man-
Gets his food from the garbage can!"

Then she hears someone saying: "I got a better one. Hey, wait, listen! Listen , Ross!

Mo-rag! Mo-rag
Gets her clothes from an ol' flour bag!". (46)

Christie is thought of as a "muck" by the privileged class of Manawaka. He says to Morag : "Well, I am muck, but so are they ... When I carry their refuse, I'm carrying off part of them, do you see ? " (47). Morag learns to see the world as unjust and to be critical of it. She also learns a language of rebellion which she would develop later with Jules Tonnerre. In this way she is privileged in relation to the other protagonists: Unlike Hagar, Rachel, Stacey and Vanessa, Morag sees the oppressed world from the inside. Her surroundings are not a world of order and opulence: on the contrary , she lives in a world characterized by disorder and lack of comfort.

> Christie Logan's house was halfway up the hill, and looked much the same as the other dwellings there. A square two-storey wooden box, once painted brown but when I knew it, no distinguishable colour, the paint having yielded long ago to the weather, blistering summers and bone-chilling blizzard winters ... The yard a junk heap, where a few carrots and petunias fought a losing battle against chickweed, lamb's quarters, creeping charlie , dandelions, couchgrass, old car axles, a decrepit black buggy with one wheel missing, pieces of iron and battered saucepans which might come in useful someday but never did, a broken babycarriage and two ruined armchairs with the springs hanging out and the upholstery torn and mildewed. (37)

One realizes that Morag's environment offers her an opportunity to be critical of a world which gives different privileges to different people. Living in a house which "smells like pee or something", Morag knows that she lives in a poorer condition than her classmates live. At school she perceives that her colleagues are much better dressed than she. While other girls have nice short dresses, she wears a long one that Prin sewed "out of a wrap around which Prin is now too stout to wear" (39). At home Morag imagines how "Vanessa and Mavis and like them" live (43). She is sure that they have better food than she. Then, revealing that she has learnt to curse with Christie, she says : "The hell with them. Screw them all. They are stupid buggers" (44).

In Manawaka, the church helps the colonizer to establish and keep power. Hagar, of The Stone Angel , grew up attending the Presbyterian service. The new Presbyterian church of Manawaka was built when she was eight years old. It was the time when she was permitted to go to church instead of Sunday School. Hagar recalls that the Reverend Douglas MacCulloch used to call the names of the people who gave money to the church. When her father hears his name he turns to Hagar and says : 'I and Luke McVitie must've given the most, as he called our names the first '" (16). Through the Church Jason Currie can keep his pride. Hagar does not believe that her father is a God-fearing man, because he is so proud that he fears nobody. Jason judges that the minister is a fool but keeps going to church every Sunday (44). Rachel's mother is intolerant of people who do not belong to her race or social position, but is an assiduous church-goer. Rachel knows that going to

church is just a social occasion for her mother. "She loves coming to church because she sees everyone, and in spring the new hats are like a forest of tulips" (47). The church thus functions for Rachel's mother as a means of being noticed among the high society of Manawaka. Rachel realizes that the church will never work to change the social order. The Reverend never says anything which can shock Rachel's mother or any of the Manawaka's bourgeoisie. If he said something against the order of the world, Ms. Cameron would not like it (47).

In Manawaka's dominant society, God is presented as a reflection of the authoritarian elite which rejects people who are ethnically and economically "inferior." Morag's experiences make her declare that she does not like God, only Jesus (87). A poor girl, she goes to Sunday school where Mrs. McKee, the minister's wife, is her teacher. Enjoying poetry, Morag writes a poem about baby Jesus which she shows to the teacher. The poem seems to be nice but the teacher arbitrarily makes some corrections, without encouraging Morag's creativity. The teacher does not show either love for Morag or taste for poetry, she has only obeisance for hierarchic values. Rejecting Morag's poem, Mrs. McKee later announces to the class that she is going to read a poem: "A talented poem written by one of our members, class ". When Morag expects it is her poem the teacher is talking about, Ms. Mckee says : "It is by the English poet, Hilaire Belloc " (91). The teacher does not even mention Morag's poem and this fact mortifies Morag.

Morag certifies that her religion teacher is evil in principle and practice when she gives preference to rich children in her class. Even having a good voice and loving to sing, Morag is turned down by the teacher : the minister's wife chooses Vanessa MacLeod to sing a Solo at Christmas service (91-92). Vanessa is a doctor's daughter and is considered more important than the poor Morag. Morag learns to perceive the falsehood of people who go to Sunday services regularly. The constant church-goers do not greet her because she is poor : "When church is over, and they're all filing out chattering, the Camerons and MacLeods and Duncans and Gateses and McVitie and Helperns and them,

no one will say Good Morning to Morag and Prin... Might soil their precious mouths" (121-22). Morag understands that her world is not "the world of the elect" because she does not belong to those who consider themselves the owners of Manawaka. Then she decides not to go to church anymore. Christie does not care if Morag goes to church or not. He never goes, "although a believer" (88) . Through Christie, with Christie and like Christie, Morag learns that the church works in favour of those people who are in power. In Manawaka's church the impoverished people have no significance.

In this sense, the Canadian town resembles the colonial world analyzed by Fanon. To Fanon the Church in the colonies is the church of the colonizers. The church does not teach God's ways, but the ways "of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few are chosen" (32) . Indeed, as Peter Burroughts affirms , the established church in Canada was destined to act as a conservative force to keep the people's loyalty to central government (112). The Church helps to maintain the order and traditions of the empire. When Lazarus Tonnerre dies, religious authorities deny him burial saying he was not a good church goer. They use the church to keep their racial difference : a Metis could not be buried among the elect Anglo-Scots. The church reassures the people's pride as founders of British Canada and therefore, as Carl Berger affirms, "God's chosen people" (Thomas, "Planted..." 9). Like in the African writing, in the Manawaka cycle one can perceive that Laurence explores the connection of the church with colonialism. When the church sustains the colonizer's assumption of moral superiority over the colonized, it nourishes the colonial situation. The way the church is presented in Manawaka just confirms that Manawaka, a microcosm of Canada, is very colonial.

The awareness of the colonial condition of the town develops progressively through the several Manawaka protagonists. In The Stone Angel , Hagar Currie Shipley, very proud of her Scots "superiority " over other people, at the end of her life, in the hospital, helps an oriental girl (300-01). Just before dying she also recognizes the nonsense

of living in Canada and trying to be a Scot. But Hagar does nothing to change the discursive superiority of Anglo- Scots against the dispossessed in Manawaka. Similarly, Rachel Cameron of A Jest of God inherits a colonial mentality. But even doing nothing to reverse the situation and sometimes repeating her mother's discriminating ideas, she reveals that she does not agree with her mother's conception of the world (70). Stacey in The Fire-Dwellers, being married and somewhat colonized by gender, is more conscious than her sister Rachel. Stacey reveals feeling guilty for the dispossessed situation of the Metis. Piquette's presence is a reproach to her of the sins of her ancestors : "The debts are inherited and how could the damage ever be undone or forgiven? " (241). Stacey is conscious of the Metis suffering and recognizes her ancestors' guilt. She feels she can do nothing, and the situation goes on the same. In A Bird in the House , the smart Vanessa, opposing her grandparents' authoritative behaviour, soon realizes that her ancestors were not so great as they preached. She regards the Metis first with curiosity and later with sympathy, but belonging to the bourgeoisie of Manawaka, she does nothing to reduce their grief. The last work of the Manawaka cycle, however, has a protagonist who fights for decolonization. The protagonist Morag in The Diviners challenges the codes and beliefs of Manawaka bourgeois people and resists the exclusion of the dispossessed Metis from Canadian history. Unlike the other protagonists, Morag represents a rebellious woman, an artist who makes resistance to colonialism.

Morag gradually learns how to resist an unjust world as she recognizes that she does not have the same privileges some people in Manawaka do. It is through her own wretched life that Morag starts the observation of social injustices and ethnic discrimination. Brought up by a garbage collector and a feeble-minded and sluggish fat woman, who are mocked by the dominant society, she belongs to the dispossessed . She learns the language of rage against the social system. In her desolate state she learns that "nice people" do not want to have anything to do with the "Nuisance Grounds", with the sad side of the town (45). In the name of respectability, people hide the dirt of the town,

even undesired children (167). The town's "unofficial cemetery" helps the bourgeoisie to keep their hypocrisy (168). They just worry about nice appearance disregarding any social problem. The aristocrats want to ignore that there is obscenity in their world, that downcast people like the Logans and the Tonnerres need be treated as their equal. It is through her foster parents's poverty that Morag connects her life with the Metis Jules Tonnerre. Feeling inferior to other girls in class who, unlike her, wear nice clothes, Morag sits in the back row of the classroom. When she feels embarrassed at a question by Miss McMurtrie she receives the contempt of the class and the sympathy of Skinner Tonnerre "who also sits in the back row out of choice" (78). Both Morag and Tonnerre are substandard in relation to the class and then understand each other. This mutual understanding will be developed throughout The Diviners. As the inequality of rights in Manawaka is increasingly confirmed, the resistance to injustice is manifested.

It is through Morag that Christie meets Jules Tonnerre. It is through her that Christie is led to revise the defeat of the Metis. Through Morag, too, Jules perceives that Christie, a scavenger, living on the margin of society, is a victim of the system too. And Jules shows sympathy : "He's worth a damn sight more than a lawyer -- all those guys do is screw things up " (148). Christie is a resistant poor white who reads his environment with a critical mind. Morag, after listening to Christie's tales of the Scottish ancestors and their suffering before coming to Canada, listens to a greater victim of injustice : the Metis Jules Tonnerre. For the first time a white character really listens to the Metis voice. Morag learns more about the present state of their life and their past. Visiting the Tonnerre place, she realizes how disconsolate Jules' father, Lazarus, lives : "Once he must have been a very large man, taller than Jules, and broader, but now he looks a bit shrunken, his belly fat and loose, but his ribs bending in upon themselves " (155). Lazarus is thirty-nine years old but looks twice his age because of his miserable life. Having lost his style of life and his wife, he also loses his yearning for life. He gets drunk, is sent to jail and sometimes gets mad at everything. Jules tells Morag that "this town never done anything for him" or for any

of the Metis who sometimes face starving conditions (156). As a halfbreed, Lazarus, like all the Tonnerre family, feels deprived of the right to maintain his dignity in a white society. Morag knows that, like Christie, the Tonnerres belong to the victimized groups of Manawaka. She learns, too, that the state of the Metis is even worse: they have no place in white society and they cannot see any hope of changing the situation. With Morag, the reader concludes that one can associate but never equate the plight of the poor Scots with that of the Metis. The latter face a bleaker and more miserable life. Morag's interest in learning about and getting involved in the lives of the dispossessed is part of her resistance to the "order" of Manawaka. By giving attention to critics of the social structure in her town, she reveals her desire to participate in the deconstruction of the codes presented by the dominant society.

Listening to Jules Tonnerre's tales, Morag learns about Rider Tonnerre, Jules' ancestor who fought for the Metis rights in the Canadian West. Jules tells Morag what he has heard from Lazarus and recognizes that not everything is exactly as he says. He wants to tell about his past and his ancestors'. The tales about his grandfather, also named Jules Tonnerre, who fought with Louis Riel, reveal that official history betrayed his people. The young Jules presents the Metis version of history in order to challenge the books (written by white Canadians) which said Riel was insane. His description of Louis Riel also contradicts Christie's version. Jules tells Morag that Louis Riel was a prophet and after the Metis took the fort the Canadian central government "sent about ten thousand soldiers, with cannon and like that " (162).

Jules's narrative of the Metis combat against English imperialism reminds us of Nathaniel's reminiscence in This Side Jordan (210-11). The British Canadian fight against the Metis is also similar to the English fight against the Scots told by Christie. Both in the Canadian and in the African narrative one sees the confront of the technologically superior weapons of the colonizer against the weaker arms of the colonized. When Jules tells about

the second battle of the Canadian government against the Metis, his rage against the colonizer's superiority of weapons is clearer:

> What happens is that the government from Down East sends in this fucking huge army, see ? Not just with rifles, hell no. They've got the works. Cannon, even aching guns probably, if they were invented in those days. So the Metis are trying the old ambush, like buffalo hunt. Well, Jules is dug in really fine, there covered up in a pit with poplar branches.... (163)

Laurence has always worried about the colonized having to face superior technology in the form of destructive weapons, as we see in her article "The Poem and the Spear " (HS 37-76). Patricia Morley notes that, in fact, the Canadian government used high technology weapons against the Metis : "The first Machine gun ever devised, an American invention, was operated in Saskatchewan by Lieut. Arthur Howard of New Haven, Connecticut, who used the Metis uprising as test-ground for his weapon " (1991: 180). In his tale Jules denounces the superiority of the Canadian weapons against the Metis.

Jules' allusion to the buffalo hunt suggests that the Metis were good buffalo hunters. As mentioned in Chapter II, their marvelous organization of buffalo hunt provided the white settlers with meat. The Metis system of life, which the Canadian government was destroying, was in fact symbolized by the buffalo.[55] With the end of the buffalo, the Metis began to face hunger and despair. The White Canadians saw the people with indigenous blood as an inconvenience for their profitable projects. Thus the Canadian government did not care about the Metis petition to have their land : the agriculture of white settlers would be more profitable. Through Jules' memory, Morag and the reader learn about the injustices suffered by the Metis. Laurence's text contains what Barbara Harlow considers essential to the narratives of resistance, "the demand they make on the reader in their historical referencing and the burden of historical knowledge such referencing enjoins " (80). The reader, as Morag herself, is invited to rethink the history of the oppressed people.

Facing a powerful enemy, the Metis were defeated at the Battle of Batoche. Louis Riel was hanged and those who were not killed had to escape to other lands or submit to a marginalized life. Jules Tonnerre, grandfather of Morag's friend Jules gets a bullet in his thigh but survives and ends up living where the Tonnerre family lives, around Manawaka. It is interesting that Jules tells that among the Eastern Canadians who went to defeat the Metis there were many Scotchmen (160). This version, in a way, contradicts Christie's opposition of Scots to Eastern Canadians. One understands that Christie's aim is to speak against the central government without speaking against people of Scot origin. He seems to suggest that Scottish history has affinity with the Metis in opposition to Eastern (central) Canada. In spite of such discrepancies, what is relevant to Morag is that her contact with oppressed people makes her aware of different versions of history. Listening to Jules Tonnerre she learns about the Metis past and understands that the official history was biased, praising only the Anglo-Scots people. As she gets older she increasingly adopts the Metis perspective of the world.

The Diviners increasingly presents the Metis world from the inside. Through Morag, we can listen to Jules Tonnerre's voice and learn about the imperial arrogance of the white people who rule the world of the dispossessed. Morag is able to feel the Metis' rage against their despairing condition of life. When she observes that Lazarus at thirty-nine looks very old and downcast, she feels revolted. "Yet she feels his man-energy burning out towards her, all the same, so strongly that for a second it almost draws her in" (155). She acknowledges the Metis' right to hate white people and, as a white, she recognizes that she can be hated, because in a way she belongs to the ranks of the oppressor. When Jules tells about the Metis suffering, Morag listens and comprehends that she has no right to say anything (289). She is aware that for a White Canadian there is nothing more to be said, because there is "some kind of pain which cannot be touched by her " (296). Morag knows she is different, she is conscious that being sympathetic to the

Metis is not the same as being a Metis. So at this moment she just listens to the oppressed people ; she cannot speak for them.

Like Laurence herself, Morag wants to fight against the exclusion of the Metis voice in Canada. Morag's attitudes remind us of the narrator of The Prophet's Camel Bell who, speaking against imperialism, felt in some ways involved in it. Laurence always reveals to be very conscious that representing oppressed people may be dangerous. Like Morag , her attitude towards colonialism is ambivalent because Canada itself has not been only colonized but also the colonizer of indigenous people. Morag and Laurence know that and thus "ambiguity is everywhere" (427). Morag's spiritual advisor and company, Catharine Parr Traill, somewhat reminds her of this ambivalent condition which many Canadians share: "Catharine Parr Traill, mid-1800s, botanist, drawing and naming wildflowers, writing a guide for settlers with one hand, whilst rearing a brace of young and working like a galley slave with the other" (197). Although Morag's condition is much less colonizing than Traill's, both share the feeling of ambivalence. Morag is privileged because she is aware of her condition of colonizer even favouring the colonized. Her ambivalent feeling is, of course, greater than Traill's because Morag experiences the colonized world with more intensity : she lives among the dispossessed. So, Morag lives in between, here and there, a condition which allows her to fight against the unjust system of Manawaka. She is able to pose questions of solidarity to the Metis in order to transform the established order which depreciates their lives and history. The writer Morag exchanges with her Metis friend experiences which fortify the revision and the reconstruction of Canadian society. Her interest in Jules Tonnerre's past is not only the result of curiosity but of a wish to recover lost or discarded voices in Canadian history. Both Morag as a writer works together with Jules who is a singer. Both are artists involved in disrupting the monoglossia of Canadian society .

Through Jules' voice Morag learns how discouraged is the life of Metis in Canada. The system does not allow the Metis to succeed in a society ruled by Anglo-Scots. The

Tonnerre family lives in grief and despair and seems to have no escape. Lazarus dies alone after struggling to feed his children. Yet the town ignored him (288-89). Piquette survives TB, but is exploited by her English husband and dies with the children when the shack catches fire (173-74); Valentine, the other sister, refuses to go to hospital and dies in the street (363); Paul disappears when working as a tourist guide for Americans (364). Besides the young Jacques, who returns to Galloping Mountain, only Jules survives to sing and tell the Metis misery until his death of throat cancer. Because of his disease, his voice which symbolizes his freedom to sing and tells his people's stories is silenced. His disease can be read then as the symbol of the silence imposed to all Metis in Canada. Thus one can say that Jules' imposed silence is a cry which only people like Morag can hear.

Morag's attention to the Metis cry reflects Laurence's interest in decentering the Anglo-Scottish view of Canada. As Laurie Lindberg claims, "through the relationship of Morag and Jules, Laurence moves the Metis experience to centre stage of the Manawaka scene" (30). Reproaching Manawaka's unfair social system, of which she is also a victim, Morag yearns to leave Manawaka as soon as she can. Her experience with Christie, Prin and Jules Tonnerre has awakened her to the problem of exploitation of some people over others. However, even out of Manawaka, Morag will experience authoritarianism and domination, an experience which reinforces her resistance to the imperialist vision of Canada and awakens in her the need to rediscover and repatriate what was suppressed in her and in other oppressed people.

A college student in Winnipeg, Morag meets the English professor Brooke Skelton to whom she gets married. Brooke wants to delete Morag's past in order to have her only for him (278). Brooke has a colonial mind inherited from his father who has supported the British right to be in India "in that way, house and servants ... ". Brooke just says "Hush, love. You don't know. You just don't know" (235). When Morag writes a story about a colonizer who wants to create a replica of his country in the colony, Brooke replies: "Quite frankly, it seems a little implausible to me, Morag" (209). With his colonizing mind,

Brooke prevents Morag from speaking anything other than the language of the elite, opposing the underground speech of Christie and Jules. When Morag complains about her boring life, just being a teacher's wife, Brooke answers: "It is the human condition. There is nothing anyone can do about it " (246). Brooke's answer is typical of an English Literature teacher who wants to avoid the discussion of injustice, slavery, colonialism and talk only about the universal "human condition". His aristocratic way of living and thinking cannot accept anything different from his world. Thus he discourages and frustrates her creativity. As an English teacher, he feels he has the right to decide a Canadian woman's destiny in the same way that England had the right to decide about the colonies. Brooke wants to possess and govern Morag in all aspects of her life : "You're mine. My woman. I'll be with you and protect you always" (241). Like Johnnie Kestoe in This Side Jordan, Brooke sees a colonized female as a continent to be both possessed and destroyed. For him, the inferiority of people with indigenous blood is unquestionable. When he sees Jules Tonnerre drinking in his house, he says that he "thought it was supposed to be illegal to give liquor to Indians" (290). Realizing that her life was sterile with Brooke, Morag abandons him saying no to what felt like an imperialist domination. This experience makes part of the process which empowers Morag to fight against practices of domination and oppression.

Morag confirms her option for the marginal world in which Jules Tonnerre lives. With Jules, she experiences a life of freedom where she does not have to ask permission to have a child (301). From her relationship with Jules, Morag gives birth to a child, Pique Tonnerre. Now, besides Jules, Morag has Pique to allow her to listen to the voice of the halfbreeds. Morag becomes more engaged in the halfbreed experience and can write her texts from a minority perspective. She can write the tales and songs she hears from Jules. Pique learns her ancestors' stories and songs, which she will sing later. These pieces of oral literature glorify the Metis' deeds. They form the Metis counter-discourse which reveals a new reality free from the colonial blot. Jules and, later, Pique dismantle the

European discourse which negates Metis culture. By including these songs and tales in her writing, Morag (and Laurence) challenges the dominant concept of literature and invites the reader to reflect on the system of domination and oppression. It is through her friend Ella that Morag awakens to the fact that "English literature is not the only literature" (203). She realizes that she herself can produce a different literature which resists the British dominant view of the world. Morag's attention to the past which was discarded when living with Brooke leads her to visit Scotland. There she only assures herself that her past is not in Europe but in the Canadian prairie where she was born (415). Rejecting the Scottish legacy, she tells Pique stories about Christie Logan, who is a Canadian, not Piper Gunn, the Scots colonizer who comes to Canada. As a resistant writer, she knows that stories are never innocent and can thus provide the reader with a perspective to see the world.

Morag's resisting mind makes her reject Brooke's patronizing suggestions about her first book. Without Brooke's knowledge, she publishes "Spear of Innocence" which , if nothing else, suggests "a bewildering diversity of views" (282). Morag wants to listen to other voices which she can disseminate through her writing. Like Margaret Laurence, Morag the writer believes that the artist has social responsibility "to speak out against injustices" and to feel the reality of others".[56] When Morag writes to Ella about her second novel , "Prospero's Child", she tells her friend about her "presumption" to put The Tempest into "some different and contemporary framework and relevance" (353). Earlier when she disagrees with Brooke's students, Morag has revealed to be a reader who contests some "truths" in Literature. Now she understands that Shakespeare's The Tempest privileges the colonizer Prospero and therefore is not relevant to her day-to-day living. Before a resisting writer, Morag reveals to be a resisting reader who, as Judith Fetterly proposes, gives an old text new direction (xix). As a critical reader she is able to re-write canonical texts, re-vising the old concepts long accepted as truth. As a writer, Morag wants to deconstruct the false Miranda, who obeys the colonizer Prospero, and create a new Miranda who

shares Caliban's, not Ferdinand's world. Morag writes to Ella : "[The novel] is called *Prospero's Child*, she being the young woman who marries His Excellency, the Governor of some island in some ocean very far south, and who virtually worships him and then who has to go to the opposite extreme and reject nearly everything about him ..." (353). Morag's Miranda has to go the opposite extreme of her father Prospero. Thus, while Prospero considers Caliban his property to be enslaved and exploited, Morag's Miranda takes Caliban's side and fights against exploitation and colonialism. In this sense, if Morag/Laurence as an English Canadian writer "privileges Miranda over Caliban", as Chantal Zabus affirms, she does not privilege the Eurocentric vision of history. Her Miranda is a rewriting of Shakespeare's Miranda and subverts the British male text for post-colonial purpose (35-50). In a way Miranda can be read as Morag herself, who rejects Brooke Skelton's colonizing view and joins Jules Tonnerre, whose view of the world is similar to hers. Morag's allegiance to Jules (Caliban) gives us also the possibility to see her as a Caliban. As Lisa Laframboise asserts, Morag plays both Miranda and Caliban (41-42). This is, again, a revelation of her ambiguity. When she rejects the dictatorship of Brooke she reveals what she has hidden before: her "black Celt" character (246) . She curses against the imperialist Brooke and refers to her "darkness, that comes on sometimes" (278). She alludes to the apartment where she lives in Toronto as "a desert island or perhaps a cave", and her hair looks a mess (275-76). Later we learn that she is "Morag Dhu. Black Morag" (400). These are some manifestations of her Calibanic characteristics. Moreover her attitudes against imperialism, her rage against the traditional power and authority in Canada enable one to associate her attitudes with Caliban's.

After "Prospero's Child" Morag writes a collection of stories, "Presences", and three novels: "Jonah", "Shadows of Heaven", and the last one which we can presume is entitled The Diviners. She listens to the tales of people forgotten by official history, researches everything in connection with the past and rewrites history. She has learnt from Christie and from Jules Tonnerre that official history ignores those who do not belong to

the ruling class. Morag knows, then, that the native people are disregarded as part of Canadian history and wants to revert the situation. The Diviners offers the reader an opportunity to know more about the plight of the Metis. Through stories, ballads and other songs one can listen to the voices of people often silenced by writers and historians. As Linda Hutcheon contends, in the Introduction to her study of mulitcultural fiction in Canada,

> Canada is not a new country : it is old in both physical and cultural terms; it has been lived in by our native peoples for longer than it has been colonized. Yet our Euro-centric concepts of history more often than not fail to note this fact and thus condemn to silence the past of the land and its people. (Solitudes 8)

Laurence, like Morag, knows that a fiction-writer has social responsibility and can work against injustices. Through fiction she can recover the memory of oppressed people. Morag confesses that she likes "the thought of history and fiction interweaving" (444). She is aware that her fiction can rewrite history. This is also Laurence's attitude towards fiction. The author's posture echoes Fanon's declaration that "the colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as invitation to action and a basis for hope" (Wretcehd 187). Morag, like Laurence, understands that the knowledge of one's history is an instrument for developing self-consciousness, which is indispensable to the struggle for a better future. By listening to the Metis voice, the novelist is helping to "transform spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors" as Fanon wants.

The Diviners, and thus one can say, the Manawaka cycle, ends with some hope for other generations of Metis. Their life goes on like the river that keeps flowing. They still have a long way to really become privileged in Manawaka's and Canada's stage, but they are fighting. Laurence does not present an easy and unfaithful solution. Through Morag there is an approximation of Scots and Metis. The union of the family is symbolized by the hunting knife which belonged to the Tonnerres and a plaid pin which belonged to the

Scotch settlers. The history of the two icons starts in The Stone Angel when the Scots boy, John Shipley, Hagar's son, trades the plaid pin for Lazarus Tonnerre's knife. It was an unfair trade to Lazarus: he took the plaid pin believing it was worth a lot of money. Jules tells, however, that Lazarus could not sell it because "people would've thought he'd stolen it" (456). In The Diviners the knife goes back to Jules Tonnerre and the Scotch plaid pin to Morag. And it was a "fair trade" to both. Later Pique inherits Jules' knife, together with his songs, in the same way she will inherit Morag's plaid pin, representative of her Scottish heritage. Thus Pique, a combination of Scots and Metis race, inherits both Scots and Metis values. However, this is far from the end of the sad plight of the Metis. Although some critics see this as a resolution for the conflict between the colonizer and the colonized, I argue that this is not what the book suggests. For, having a small percentage of indigenous blood, Pique will not be treated equally. Like any colonized, she feels displaced, alienated and divided between two worlds, not belonging to any, as she says to Morag : "I am part Indian ... I don't want to be split. I want to be together. But I'm not. I don't know where I belong" (373). She will be discriminated for not being "quite white". Susan Warwick puts it very well :

> While is tempting to see Pique as a symbolic representation of the blending of cultures in Canadian society, such a view is dangerously reductive of her character and experience. Throughout her life, she has suffered much conflict and abuse, and felt a sense of cultural disparity. Given her feelings of being split, torn between two parents and their traditions, Pique cannot be interpreted as simply an embodiment of the fusing of different cultures to form a new unified identity ....(61)

The prejudicial and racist Canadian society does not want to know whether she is the child of a Scotch woman and a Metis. They just discriminate her because she is not of pure British-Scots origin. Early at school, Pique is called "dirty halfbreed" by her classmates. One of the mates who offends Pique is the son of a School Board member, therefore one belonging to the "correct" people (445-46) . Morag recognizes that society has not changed

and the racist outlook still prevails in her country: "The old patterns, the one from both Morag's and Jules childhood's, the old patterns even in Pique's own life" (446). Then Morag concludes that the school in England was better than in Canada because there Pique would be accepted as normal among other colonized students, "Pakistani and African and West Indian kids" (446).

Later, traveling with her guitar in a small Western town Pique is victim of discrimination by some "middle-aged guys, pretty jowly and obviously the local businessmen or something" (119) . Pique concludes that they offended her because she "was walking in *their* town" (62; my emphasis). She reports to the police only to realize that they are against her too. On another occasion, hitchhiking, she is again the victim of prejudice. More than anything else the anger of people against Pique scares her : "They think they're sweet reasonableness, and it's *you* that's in the wrong, just by being and not being like them, or looking like them or wanting their kind of life. It's the anger you can feel..." (252). Eschewing discrimination, Pique ends up going to live with her Metis uncle, who has a small farm at Galloping Mountain (462). There she can take care of the parentless Tonnerre children. Going to the Galloping Mountain to work with Metis people, Pique withdraws from white society.

As a very honest writer, Laurence rejects a romantic fusion of the Metis and the white worlds. Having probably read Fanon, Laurence knows that to be accepted by white society the marginalized people need first to unite themselves to struggle against oppression. (Wretched 37). It is what Jacques does with his people through the meetings he attends at Winnipeg (463) and it is what Pique does by working with Metis children. But even if there is no conciliation between the world of the colonized and that of the colonizer, there is always a possibility of affecting the social order. The consciousness of the unjust condition in which the colonized live makes them fight to transform the world by contamination. As a Metis Canadian, Pique recognizes that she needs to fight against discrimination. With Morag and Jules she detects the injustices the Metis suffered in the

past. She also recounts her people's history in order to dismantle the European vision of history. She knows, like her mother, that this is a way of struggling for a better future. Pique can sing that "the valley and the mountain hold [her] name", and reveals her pride to be a Metis (465). At Galloping Mountain, she learns more about Metis culture. She probably teaches the children both the stories and songs learnt from her father Jules Tonnerre and what she knows from the "civilized" world. This hybridity, as Bhabha contends in the Introduction to The Location of Culture, is important for the historical transformation of minorities (2-4). Valuing what was marginalized, like her mother, Pique can participate in the process of decolonization. By propagating a new understanding of the Metis reality, she also instigates confrontations to injustices. As Judith Fetterly wrote in 1981 -- and most feminist and post-colonial critics endorse "consciousness is power" (xix). Being aware of the injustice of the present and of their history demonstrated throughout the novel, the Metis can face a future.

The Diviners suggests that the battle against discrimination is not an easy one, it is a long and painful labor. It gives, however, reason for the colonized people to live. When people know that they have a history to be rewritten, they gain new motivation in their lives. The book denounces the injustices which the Metis suffered along Canadian history. In an interview with Louis Wilson, Margaret Laurence declares:

> Sometimes we have to define things like Justice , even by the lack of it. This comes very much in my novel The Diviners where I talk about the plight of the Metis people. A great and deep injustice has been done to those people and I am trying to point out that it is not something we can say is the fault of God or Fate : it is our human fault... Part of my faith is very definitely a sense of the necessity to try to work for a greater social justice.[57]

Inviting the reader to listen to the voice of the dispossessed who the ruling class considers inferior, Laurence's work is very political. It subverts the order established by colonizing literature. In Susan Warwick's words, the book is "not a political tract, but it is deeply

political in its attention to the plight of the dispossessed, the disadvantaged and the environment" (12). I believe that the concern for social justice cannot be ignored in Laurence's last novel as in all her Canadian writing.

The Diviners is the culmination of Laurence's treatment of the colonial theme. One sees an evolution of the female protagonists from Hagar to Morag. The protagonist of The Stone Angel is totally unable to perceive that the Metis are victims of injustice. More than Hagar, Rachel, Stacey and Vanessa feel sympathy for the oppressed and discriminated people in Manawaka, but their milieu does not allow them to change anything. In The Diviners, Morag, educated among the dispossessed, learns to see the world from a marginalized perspective. Not only does she speak in favour of the dispossessed but she also listens to the Metis voice. It is through her that we also listen to the Metis voice, silenced by many writers.

Morag, a writer like Laurence, uses her writing to dismantle the imperial mind. Unlike in the previous works, here one perceives not only denunciation of imperialism but resistance to imperialist domination. The strategies of resistance seem to be always connected with the recovering of memory and history in order to construct the identity of the colonized. Laurence is very conscious that re-vising the past helps to reshape the future.

Disapproval of imperialism, resistance, defiance of the codes established by the ruling class in Manawaka -- all this is fully developed in the Manawaka cycle which, as I have shown, can be read as one work. This reading facilitates the understanding of the social problem in a Canadian town like Manawaka. All protagonists are women who live in conflict, but only Morag in the last novel observes the town from the perspective of the poor and dispossessed. Having been raised by a garbage collector and later abandoning her husband to have a daughter by a Metis, Morag devotes her life to deconstructing the system presented since the first novel. By reading the Manawaka cycle as a unity one can perceive the development of the female protagonist's awareness of the unjust world.

Moreover, as David Blewett argues, an analysis of Manawaka cycle as a whole makes us able to comprehend better Margaret Laurence's vision of the world (Verduyn 176).

CONCLUSION

Margaret Laurence's whole writing reveals an undeniable concern for social inequalities and injustices. It is impossible to ignore Laurence's concern with the dispossessed both in Canada and in Africa, and by extension in the whole world. Like Vanessa in A Bird in the House (which the author considers her only semi-autobiographical work), Laurence refuses to endorse the traditional history which glorifies only Anglo-Scots and Irish Canadians. She does not want to exalt the colonizer's point of view which devaluates non-Europeans. Even being a Scots-Canadian, Laurence rejects those ideological discourses that assign Anglo-Scots the top ranks in a hierarchical society. This is significant for all Laurence's work : like Vanessa, Laurence does not accept the world view transmitted to her by her colonizing ancestors. One can say that both Vanessa and Laurence occupy an ambiguous position, but the latter is more radical in her defense of the oppressed people.

The Canadian prairie, which is considered by many critics as a colony of Eastern Canada, formed Laurence's anti-imperialist ideas. Brought up and educated in that region, Laurence started getting involved in left-wing movements when a student in Winnipeg. Her job as a journalist and her travel to Africa provided her with a vision of the injustice thrust upon some human beings. Aware of the disgrace caused by colonialism and refusing the colonizer's view, Laurence was able to connect Africa's colonialism with the Canadian situation. The African experience, then, confirmed Laurence's convictions against colonialism and any kind of exploitation. This political concern is revealed through the

author's involvement in social causes and mainly in her writings. Of course, Laurence's works are not any political treatise; they are works of art and therefore important for their aesthetic value, but can be read from a political perspective. Her works can be considered decolonizing texts in the sense that they denounce the damage of colonialism with all its implications.

Although the term "post-colonial" may be controversial, especially when referring to a White Canadian text, theories of post-colonialism provide a critical instrument for reading Canadian texts. For much of its history Canada has been in different ways a colony and consequently English-Canada has a culture which has been shaded by the imperial force of Anglocentric culture. Thus to be Canadian, even being white Anglo-Saxon, means to be colonized or, as Barbara Godard says, "is to inhabit a colonial space from which one perceives discourse as a form of power and desire" (Moss 46). A Canadian writer can perceive the world from the colonized perspective. As Kenneth James Hughes informs us , "an early nineteenth-century diary about experiences in Canada draws on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and the writer, a British officer, quite literally sees himself as an imperial Prospero with divine right to superiority over the despised French-Canadian Calibans" (Verduyn 104). A Post-colonial writer, on the contrary, is one who strives to subvert these imperial concepts and values and to exalt the Canadian Caliban. In this way, the colonial state caused by the dominance of British and also American culture in English Canada brings about diverse perceptions and resistance against colonialism. One feels that there is a freedom, or a decolonization to be fought for. Margaret Laurence, for example, repudiates the British concept of heroism while drawing our attention to the state of the Metis-Caliban caused by imperialism.

In this sense theories of decolonization or post-colonial theories may be helpful to read Canadian texts which, like Laurence's, are written from the oppressed perspective. Although not a unified field, such theories provide us with useful strategies for perceiving textual resistance. Such is the case, as we have seen in Chapter I, of the works of O.

Mannoni and mainly of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, and Homi Bhabha.

Often conflicting, such works may nevertheless be said to complement each other in their effort to dismantle hegemonic assumptions. Mannoni's study of colonialism was Laurence's first contact with theories about a colonial situation and helps to examine Laurence's works. However, more than by Mannoni's theory, my analysis of Margaret Laurence's works has been greatly supported by Fanon's concepts. His analysis of the economic exploitation and psychological degradation imposed by imperial powers on the colonized and his invitation to fight for freedom are exemplified in Laurence's works. The recovering of the oppressed people's memory in order to rebuild the culture of the colonized and project a future is evident in Laurence's work. Both Africans and Métis need to recuperate their history which was distorted by the colonizers. Said's concepts of the implications of the production of knowledge with the will to govern and control others have also been relevant to my analysis of Laurence's works. The discursive practice of the British colonizers guarantees their superiority on the colonized both in Africa and in Canada; Pratt's theory of the observation, classification and codification of the colonized by the colonizers who see but do not listen also helps to read Laurence's work. Furthermore Bhabha's deconstruction of the polarity between the colonized and colonizer and his notions of "ambivalence", "hybridity" and "negotiation" for the understanding of colonialism and achieving decolonization are also demonstrated in Laurence's writings.

Laurence's concern with the "world of others" makes her confess that Mannoni's theory was important to her writing. However, even before reading Mannoni, she was writing against colonialism. It seems to be safe to say that Mannoni was a reading Laurence was looking for, to confirm her belief that colonialism brings no benefit to people. These ideas are clearly present in some of Laurence's African writing when she was perhaps too enthusiastic about the "psychology of colonization." In some stories of The Tomorrow-Tamer, as for example in "The Voices of Adamo", the author is criticized for

being too didactic in her reproduction of Mannoni's theory. However, there are characters in her African writing who are angry and very opposing to colonialism, never dependent. They reveal to be acting according to Fanon's ideas of decolonization. Thus one may say that Laurence is contradictory by revealing Fanon's influence and yet accepting Mannoni's theories. As a Canadian she may be in a "both/and" condition and may be contra/dictory. Important to note, however, is that Mannoni's ideas are essential for Laurence's perception of the world of the colonized. Fanon's theory illuminates the reading of Laurence's texts.

The rejection of an imposed imperial culture, the denial of being ruled in the colonized land are perceptible in Laurence's writing. Moreover, Laurence's concern with recovering memory in order to retell the past and revive the colonized culture reflects Fanon's theory. In this sense, Laurence is following Fanon's declaration that the colonized writer who wants to write against colonization has to dig the past of the oppressed people. In both her African and Canadian writing one sees Laurence's concern in recovering the oppressed history by listening to the voice of those people who were silenced by traditional fiction. The repressed history of colonized people is retrieved in a way that they can assert their dignity as human beings. Personal memories excite the remembrance of a collective past which usually serves as critique of the received official history. In this sense, memory which is a constant concern in Laurence's writing, by recovering the oppressed voice, becomes very helpful in the process of decolonization. Moreover, Laurence's works suggest that the struggle for independence is a continuous process perceptible in the running waters of the rivers of her first (This Side Jordan) and last novel (The Diviners) of the Manawaka cycle.

The truth about the colonized people divulged by imperialist texts is questioned and reworked in Laurence's writing. Said's concept of a discursive formation (connecting power with knowledge) to keep the subaltern always inferior helps to read Laurence's texts when they denounce the British discourse on Africans, Indigenous Canadians or other non-British people. A resistance to domination emerges from the subjugated situation of

the colonized. In Laurence's texts, resistance to imperialism, the desire to displace the traditional and imperial discourse is perceived in several forms. They undermine the privilege of some races over others by valuing the cultures of African people, by retelling African stories and listening to the Africans' views of the world. By listening to the oppressed voice, Laurence does what Mary Louise Pratt advises writers to do : before writing about people who are seen, people should listen to them. In this way, the author provides us with a re-vision and a re-thinking of the ideological practices, drawing our attention to questions of multiple voices not usually heard in a colonized country. If it is impossible to say that the author presents a solution for the problem which she denounces, her texts help to deconstruct the authority of the "Western" texts which give a univocal or monologic interpretation of history and representation in colonial or post-colonial countries. Instead of a monologue one sees dialectical texts which accept contra/dictions and ambivalence as part of the inheritance of colonialism. One cannot ignore in Laurence's texts a constant interrogation of the "universal" truth which exposes as normal the "superiority" of one people over another. In this sense, her works serve to destabilize imperial formation presenting a counter-discourse of post-colonialism, listening to unheard voices.

It is clear that Laurence's works are not homogeneous in their connection with post-colonial theories. Sometimes they are radical in condemning colonialism, sometimes they reveal ambivalence showing that the link between colonizer and colonized has both good and bad consequences. This reminds us of Memmi's statement that the bond between colonizer and colonized can have its good side too (89). Laurence's texts do not deny this doubleness, and they are themselves ambivalent. Even with this ambivalence and sometimes working within the dominant environment, they are resisting texts which undermine the traditional discourse. Strategies of resistance are not unified in Laurence's work either.

Mimicry, which for Fanon is the result of colonial indoctrination, is proposed by Bhabha , as we have mentioned before, as a strategy to interrogate the European vision of the World. Mimicry reveals the relationship between colonizer and colonized and tries to destabilize it. It emerges as "the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" and is constructed around an ambivalence. Mimicry is the sign of "double articulation" : it discloses the ambivalence of colonial discourse, disrupting its authority. In this way it is a colonizing strategy appropriated by the colonized to dismantle colonialism. By showing the "almost quite but not the same" condition of the colonial world, the colonized can expose the insecurity of the colonial world. It is the discourse of the colonized "other" penetrating in the "superior" world of the colonizer. In this sense, the ambivalence and uncertainty of the colonizer's authority are revealed.

Laurence's writings are ambivalent texts which lie "here and there" in the post-colonial context. As an English-speaking Canadian, Margaret Laurence reveals to be aware of the strong cultural presence of the empire in Canada, both in the past and in the present. Laurence is also aware of the uncomfortable situation in which she lives. She knows that as a white Canadian she occupies an ambivalent position: the experience of colonialism in Canada is not the same as it is , for example, in the West Indies, or Africa or India. Moreover, Canada is a colonized but in some circumstances also a colonizing country, and Laurence's works reveal this dilemma. Laurence always starts with a character and lets her/him speak as she/he goes through different experiences. There is no stereotype in the representations of the characters. She condemns British colonization and imperialism but does not present all English colonizers as stances of evil and all colonized as examples of correctness.

In The Prophet's Camel Bell the author confesses that condemning imperialism and at the same time being part of it sounded like an irony to her: a white Canadian in Africa and condemning imperialism. As a Canadian, she can speak from a colonized perspective which is different from the African perspective. In many other instances her texts suggest

that a white Canadian cannot see the problem of colonization from the same view the Black Africans or indigenous Canadians see. The author's recognition of this ambivalent position is useful for her fight against decolonization: she knows that she cannot represent the colonized but must speak from a position which can support their challenge to central domination. Thus there is ambivalence (and contra/diction) in both her African and Canadian writing. It seems to be true that in the Canadian writing the characters are even less stereotyped and more ambivalent than in the African writing. A middle-class Irish-Scots Canadian like Vanessa, for example, is able to criticize the colonizing attitudes of her grandparents. Vanessa does nothing to change the plight of the Metis but is able to draw our attention to the injustice they suffer. Christie Logan, a Scots man, reveals hatred against the English colonizer who distorted the oppressed history of the Scots, but is not able to realize what they did to the Metis. Both Vanessa and Christie are Scots-Canadian who live in ambivalent position. They have at the same time colonizing attitudes but condemn colonialism. Even being ambivalent they help the reader to re-think Canadian history and realize that the Canadian system offers both privileges to some groups and compulsion to others. Thus the ambiguity of these characters does not prevent them from fighting against colonialism. Morag, more educated than Christie and more oppressed than Vanessa, can make connections between different kinds of oppression. She does act to revert the colonial situation of her town and country. However, like Vanessa and Christie, she is not of indigenous blood and acknowledges her ambiguous situation. Very conscious of her position, Morag helps to transform spectators and victims into actors who can foresee a better and freer life. Like her character Morag, Laurence is conscious that her texts may not solve the problems but can disrupt a hegemonic and univocal discourse. Thus a white Canadian has not the same perspective as a Canadian with indigenous blood but can speak against colonialism and posit questions of solidarity to Africans and Metis who, at a deeper level, suffer colonialism. Here one remembers Fanon's statement in A Dying Colonialism that settlers also fight against colonialism and exploitation of native

people. The "in between" condition of settlers is sometimes strategic to help the native colonized (140). In some way the ambivalence in Laurence's writing helps to construct the resistance to imperialism. As Stephen Slemon says, literary resistance is necessarily in a place of ambivalence and ambiguity: between two worlds. Ambivalence, Slemon sustains, is the condition of white Literatures produced in countries like Australia, New Zealand and Canada (in Adam and Tiffin 30-41). One realizes that Laurence's texts question colonial authority and invite the reader to listen to forgotten or silenced voices, but at the same time they are not a "pure" condemnation of everything related to the British empire both in Africa and in Canada. By inviting the reader to listen to other voices which have been silenced in many fictions , Laurence subverts the monologic discourse of the colonizer.

In both her African and Canadian writing, the oppressed are listened to so that the reader has the opportunity to see another reality, different from the traditional one. There is a multiplicity of voices which permits to dismantle a belief in a unified truth. In both her African and Canadian writing one sees that, besides a denunciation of imperialism, the books offer strategies to dismantle imperialism. In her African writing one realizes an increasing multiplicity of voices which emerge from a colonial world. Although there is not a clear strategy of resistance, the colonized seek in their memory and in their dialogues a way to escape domination. In the Canadian writing the Metis, from a disturbing presence in the first book, take an important position in The Diviners. Therefore there is an increasing concern for the Metis and though at the end the problem of the discrimination they suffer is not solved, there is a hope which allows them to believe in projecting a future.

As Laurence herself asserted, her Canadian writing is a continuation of her African writing. She does not regard her African books "as separate entities from [her] Canadian books" (TFP 7). According to Laurence, both the African countries and Canada are ex-colonial nations which need to struggle to maintain their own culture in the face of

"overwhelming cultural imperialism." It was in Africa that she could learn more about her own country and reflect about the damages of colonialism. As in Africa, she realizes that in her country there was a devaluation of the local culture in order to privilege the metropolitan. What was produced in the colonies or ex-colonies was always evaluated under the light of the original British ("mother") country. It is against this colonial condition which Laurence speaks in all her writing.

More important than revealing the "in between" condition of a Canadian post-colonial writer, Laurence's writing displays the author's concern about exploitation , social injustice, and unequal opportunities in colonial countries. As she confesses to Ian Drabek in 1982, she is "concerned about social injustices and man's inhumanity to man, wherever it appears".[58] Thus, by writing either about Africa or about Canada she saw the opportunity to present counter-voices which challenge the traditional voices of the imperial and "universal" knowledge. In this sense her writing manifests the author's reproach to colonialism and any kind of injustice. As a Brazilian, and therefore a colonized reader, I could not avoid reading Laurence's works from the colonized perspective: as Silvia Söderlind contends, "a writing in the margin ... demands a reading in the margin" (234).

NOTES

Chapter I

[1]Rae Murphy, The Essentials of Canadian History: Canada since 1867 : The Post-Confederate Nation. (N. Jersey : Essentials, 1993), p. III

[2] . The Canadian Pocket Encyclopedia 34-35.

[3].In a letter to Margaret Laurence in July 1984. Laurence's archives. Scott Library. York University.

[4] Diana Brydon suggests that Canada should be described as 'invader settler' colony to remind readers that the indigenous people's land was taken be European through invasion.

Chapter II

[5]."Margaret Laurence to Adele Wiseman on May 17 1981. Laurence's Archives, Scott Library, York University.

[6].Margaret Laurence "The Canadian Conference for Irish Studies. Trent University March 18 1981.

[7].In her essay "Where the World Began" Laurence emphasizes the importance of her origin in the Canadian West in her all life, in Heart of a Stranger :Toronto : Seal Books, 1980.

[8].See Howard Adams "Causes of the 1885 Struggle" in Melnyk, George op.cit. p.78.

[9].Quoted by Donald Swainson in "Canada Annexes the West Colonial Status Confirmed" in Melnink. George ed; Riel to Reform : A History of Protest in Western Canada . Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1992.p.72.

[10].See for example Imperial Eyes pp. 60-61.

[11].Letter to Al Purdy June 12 1974. Margaret Laurence's Archives.

[12].Margaret Laurence in a Letter to Angelika Maeser Link in 1982 wrote: "One Has social responsibility as well - if this is political, which in some way it for me it is connected to the Old CCF in the provinces ... Theories of such people as J. S. Woodsworth and Tommy Douglas". In Margaret Laurence Archives, Scott Library, York University.

[13].See The Canadian Pocket Encyclopedia p.53.

[14]."Quoted by Richard Allen in "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt" in Ever, op. cit. p.139.

[15] Laurence's Archives.

[16] MacLean May 2 1983.

[17].See Desmond Morton's Breve Historia do Canada p.192.

[18].Indirections vol.2. no.2 Winter 1977. See also "Books that Mattered to me" in Verduyn, 240/1.

[19].Margaret Laurence in Border Crossing vol.5 No 4. Winnipeg Man. Fall 1986.

[20].Cited by Susan Rudy Dorscht in "Decolonizing Canadian writing". Essays on Canadian Writing no.54 Winter 1994 p.126.

[21].See Patricia Morley, Margaret Laurence : The long Journey Home Montreal: McGill-Queen, 1991,20.

[22].See the film Margaret Laurence : The First Lady of Manawaka . Toronto : NFB, 1978.

[23].Margaret Laurence : Conversation with Clara Thomas . Videorecording, Toronto: ECW, 1985.

[24].Laurence Archives, Scott Library at York University.

[25].Margaret Laurence's Archives. Scott Library, York University.

[26].Letter to Calir Mowat dated May 26 1984. Margaret Laurence's Archives.

[27].The Globe and Mail . Feb. 4. 1984.

[28].Letter to Arthur Ravenscroft. May 4 1985.

[29].Margaret Laurence, Interview with Gibson, in Gibson, G.Eleven Canadian Novelists. Toronto: Anansi, 1983.

[30].See for example a letter to the Globe and Mail May 24 1983 or "Forward to Canada and the Nuclear Arms Race", ed. Ernie Regehr (Toronto : Lorimer, 1983).

[31].Letter to Ken Dyba Nov. 3 1983. Laurence's Archives.

[32].I refer to the library at Catherine Parr Trail College at Trent University.

[33].Letter to Don Bayley March 18 1983.

[34].Peterborough Examiner . Weekend Magazine, August 28 2976. Peterborough.
[35].Letter to George Woodcock March 26, 1981. Laurence's Archives.
[36].For example, see letter to Al Purdy, August 1970.
[37].Jocelyn Laurence in the Preface to Dance on the Earth .
[38].Peterborough Examiner January 6, 1987.

Chapter III

[39].See for example Bhabha's article "Remembering Fanon" in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory : A Reader . Cambridge : Cambridge UP. 1994 pp 112-123.
[40].Margaret Laurence to Kingsley Wing, July 23 1962. Laurence Archives.
[41].Laurence herself affirms that she read Mannoni's book when she had just completed the first draft of This Side Jordan , Laurence, Indirection . vol 2, no 2. (Win ter. 1977), p.42.
[42].Letter to C.J.Martin on May 12 1962.
[43] Critic Helen Car shows how John Donne's poem relates women to a colony, something to be explored and
exploited by men. (in Barker, Europe and its Others vol 2 (48-50).
[44].See for example Jane Leney's "Prospero and Caliban in Laurence's African Fiction, in The Work of Margaret Laurence. Toronto : JCF, 1980, p.69.
[45]See for example Jane Leney's article "Prospero and Caliban in Laurence's
African Fiction" in Sorfleet J. R. ed. The Work of Margaret Laurence. Toronto : JCF, 1880.
[46].Laurence , Canadian Literature no. 41(1969).
[47]. As Fiona Sparrow informs us the title is based on Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice . (Sparrow, 149).
[48].See for example "Signs taken for wonders : Questions of ambivalence and authority under a tree outside Dehli, May 1817" in Bhabha, Homi, The Location of Culture op. cit. p. 115.
[49].See Clara Thomas's analysis of IT in The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence and Juneja's "Prospero and Caliban's Free State : Margaret Laurence's African Short Stories "in Dhawan, ed. Commonwealth Fiction New Delhi : CP, 1988.
[50].Letter to A Ravenscroft, May, 4 1985.

Chapter IV

[51]."Margaret Laurence in Conversation with Clara Thomas" Video-recording. Toronto : ECW Press, 1985.
[52].Lecture at York University on January 27 1995.
[53]. Margaret Laurence's Archives, Scott Library.
[54].See for example Robert Kroetsch's "On Being an Alberts Writer" Mandel E. and Taras, D.eds. A Passion for Identity : An Introduction to Canadian Studies Toronto : Methuen , 1987, p.339.
[55].Rae Murphy, The Essentials of Canadian History op. cit. p. 12.
[56].See Laurence's "My Final Hour" in Verduyn, Christl, 250-262.
[57] The Whig Standard Kingston October 15, 1979.

Conclusion

[58] Laurence's Archives. Scott Library.

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____. "A Place to Stand On". Heart of a Stranger 1 - 7.

____. "Sayonara, Agamenon." Heart of a Stranger. 8 - 23.

____. "The Very Best Intentions" Heart of a Stranger 24 - 36.

___. "The Poem and the Spear" Heart of a Stranger 37 - 76.

___. "The Epic Love of Elmii Bonderii" Heart of a Stranger 77 - 87.

___. "Captain Pilot Shawkat and Kipling's Ghost" Heart of a Stranger. 115 - 139.

___. "The Wild Blue Yonder. Heart of a Stranger 140 - 149.

___."Put out One or Two More Flags" Heart of a Stranger. 150 - 157.

___. "Road from the Isles" Heart of a Stranger 158 - 172.

___. "Down East" Heart of a Stranger 173 - 180.

___. "Inside the Idiot Box" Heart of a Stranger 181 - 189.

___. "I Am a Taxi" Heart of a Stranger 190 - 197.

___. "Living Dangerously... by Mail" Heart of a Stranger 198 - 206.

___. "The Shack" Heart of a Stranger 207 - 212.

___. "Upon a Midnight Clear" Heart of a Stranger 213 - 221.

___. "Open Letter to the Mother of Joe Bass" Heart of a Stranger 222 - 226.

___. "Man of Our People" Heart of a Stranger 227 - 236.

___. "Where the World Began" Heart of a Stranger 237 - 244.

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____. "Gadgetry or Growing : Form and Voice in The Novel." Sorfleet, 54 - 62.

____." Ivory Tower or Grassroots? : The Novelist as Socio-Political Being." Daymond, Douglas and Leslie Monkman, 251 - 259

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