

LAURENCE AND THE USE OF MEMORY

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IN MARGARET LAURENCE'S Canadian novels, *The Stone Angel*, *A Jest of God*, *A Bird in the House*,¹ *The Fire-Dwellers*, and, most recently, *The Diviners*, perhaps her most important technique involves the use of time, and in particular her use of subjective time as memory. Hagar, Rachel, Vanessa, Stacey, and Morag each are deeply defined by their Manawaka pasts, and they plunge frequently into these pasts; their memories, particularly those of Hagar, Vanessa and Morag, become as important as their presents. Significantly, *The Diviners* opens with the sentence, "The river flowed both ways," the river obviously being the river of time. There is not, then, for Laurence, simply a forward movement of time, but a backward flow as well, into subjective time² and into memory. Like Ford, she believes that to get a vivid impression of any fictional character, "you could not begin at his beginning and work chronologically to the end. You must first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past."³

In the first of her Canadian novels, *The Stone Angel*, which is, interestingly enough, paralleled most closely by her last, *The Diviners*, in its emphasis on prolonged memory-segments, the reader participates as actively with Hagar in her fictional past level as he does in her fictional present level. Since the memory process is so crucial in the development of this novel, then, its misuse is the most serious artistic flaw in the work. Consider what Mendilow says of following a character's mental processes: "flashes of the past jerk in and out of his present consciousness, telescoping, coalescing, disintegrating, breaking out of sequence, starting off chains of unpredictable and sometimes untraceable associations."⁴ Memory, then, does not follow a temporal "logical" sequence, as common sense accustoms us to expect; rather memory must be seen as a form of disorder, as a violation of objective, serial order.⁵ *The Stone Angel*, obviously, does not use this principle of disorder and distortion of events in memory, a principle basic to the stream-of-consciousness writers. In fact, Hagar's recollections on the second narrative level could be set apart from the present-tense sections of the novel and become a most coherent and chronologically-developed story on its own. Although Hagar speaks of "the junkyard of my memory," it is a junkyard in which all the

discarded memories are organized in a linear sequence, from Hagar remembering herself at age six to her memory of her last trip to the Manawaka cemetery with Marvin and Doris. Surely this is a highly artificial and contrived use of memory, which follows no sequence of time, especially over interruptions and passages of time in the present. That details or events in the present should almost always cause Hagar's reminiscences seems to indicate that Hagar had no preconceived plan to tell her story chronologically; Laurence herself admits that she is "not at all sure that flashbacks ought to be in chronological order, as I placed them in order to make it easier to follow Hagar's life."⁶

It is unlikely, then, that Clara Thomas is correct when she says that "any questions about a forced tidiness of form are hushed as Hagar takes shape and authority; this is the way she would remember, forcing order on her own mind as she had tried always to force her own order on all those around her."⁷ What Thomas does not account for here is the fact that Laurence also uses associative memory. If Hagar could have forced "order on her own mind," her memories could not have been triggered continually by some sight, sound or thought in the present, for these "trigger mechanisms", to use Edel's phrase, do not evoke memories in a neat chronological progression, but shuffle them out of sequence. Like Proust's Marcel, Hagar is led into the past by a sensory guide in the present:

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, . . . the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection.⁸

Thus, as the crumb of madeleine with tea and the phrase from Vinteuil's sonata evoke memories for Marcel, so are the memories of past activities for Hagar evoked by similar activities or objects in the present. As she drinks her tea (which, unlike Marcel's, "tastes like hemlock"), the "sense of being alone in a strange place, the nurse's unseeing stare, the receding heat of the day — all bring to mind the time I was first in a hospital, when Marvin was born." The waiting in the doctor's office reminds her of the "many years I waited at the Shipley place"; her moving to the seashore reminds her of the other move she made, away from Manawaka; the children playing house make her remember "some other children, once, playing at house, but in a somewhat different manner". Although George Robertson, who prefers "to have the jumps, when they come, to be abrupt, disconnected," may be right when he accuses the transitions between the narrative levels of lacking "deftness," and of making the reader "too much aware of them when they do occur,"⁹ these trigger mechanisms do operate according to the principles of associative memory.

Laurence, however, does not rely exclusively on the long excursions into Hagar's

memory on the second narrative level to reveal Hagar's past, and it is when she incorporates brief flashes of memory into the first narrative level that the process seems most natural, most true to the principles of associative memory. Thus the colour of her lilac dress reminds Hagar of "the lilacs that used to grow beside the grey front porch of the Shipley place," and the brief paragraph-long description is an especially arresting one, precisely because it does not fit into the order of the second narrative level, which has left the reader with Hagar Currie, not Hagar Shipley. Similarly effective is the mention a few pages later of Bram, whom the reader has not yet met, but whose name consequently is implanted in the mind at an early point in the book. The best use of such anticipatory hints, however, concerns John. Hagar first mentions his name in the first chapter, and Laurence feels no need to explain more than this: "John's eyes were grey, and even near the last they looked the same to me as the boy's, still that hidden eagerness as though he half believed, against all reason and knowledge, that something splendid would suddenly occur." His name slides easily into Hagar's consciousness several times before his birth, eighty pages later, occurs in the second narrative level, and the cause of his death remains tantalizingly mysterious until very late in the novel. Hagar tells the woman in the nursing home that she had two sons, one of whom "was killed — in the last war"; but although she admits to the reader that this is not true, she does not elaborate, and the reader must wait until her scene with Lees before he understands, finally, what *is* true, and what Hagar really means when she tells Lees, "I had a son, and lost him." The impact of her revelation is greatly heightened by the anticipations.

Excellent as the purely associational jumps into the past are, however, in *The Stone Angel* Laurence has committed herself to the use of a sustained second narrative level, and it is unfortunate that she realized only in retrospect that the flashbacks might have been more effective if not in chronological order.

Yet in *The Diviners* Laurence returns to this basic structure. Although she does make use of some of the technical and typographical devices she developed in *The Fire Dwellers*, it is the form of *The Stone Angel*, with its two parallel plot lines and two Hagars, that *The Diviners* uses most as its model. There is an even clearer separation of the two narrative levels, and the reader spends even more time with the younger Morag than he does with the younger Hagar. And, perhaps most significantly in terms of this study, both novels have their second narrative levels move ahead chronologically. The obvious question is, does it work for *The Diviners* where it failed in *The Stone Angel*?

What must be considered first in proposing an answer is whether or not Laurence uses associative memory, the "trigger mechanisms," with Morag. The answer seems clearly to be yes. Granted, the causal connections are much more subtle than they are in *The Stone Angel*, and there are occasional instances where there are apparently none at all; but in most cases, Morag's "memorybank

movies," as she calls them, unwind on a definite cue from their director. Seeing a picture of Brooke in the paper begins the series of film-flashbacks about her life where she met him. Thinking of lost languages leads her to — and quickly past — reflections on Dan McRaith, Christie, and Jules; it is only when she thinks of Brooke and his forgotten language that she stops, and the second narrative level resumes, conveniently where it had left off, with her life in the midst of her marriage to Brooke. Later, her reflections on her "need to make pilgrimages" and her "quest for islands" leads immediately into a memorybank movie called "Scepter'd Isle"; the title makes the thought-connection obvious, and the following memory segments quite plainly are explanations of the older Morag's reflections. Finally, her last series of memories is preceded, on page 336, with her observation that "the Canada geese were flying south"; the second of the subsequent memory segments ends with the same sentence-paragraph.¹⁰

On this basis alone, then, it is possible to conclude that Laurence was not particularly serious in her statement about reconsidering her chronological arrangement of Hagar's memories, for in *The Diviners* she falls prey to the same inconsistencies concerning the memory process; again she tries unsuccessfully to reconcile associative and chronological memory. However, before accusing Laurence of not having learned her lesson, there are two other points to consider: first, the actual form of these flashbacks, and, second, Morag's profession — a writer.

Morag's earliest memories are contained in photographs, and she presents these to the reader chronologically, which is only to be expected; "Order," after all, "flowed in Morag's veins, despise it though she might," so it is reasonable for her to arrange her photographs in sequence, causing them thus to become chronological, associative stimuli. The same is true of the four early photographs of Pique, which Morag has arranged, chronologically of course, in an album, and each of which introduces a memory bank movie; since this set of memories has already been under way for five "reels", the use of photographs is gratuitous to legitimize chronology, but makes an interesting parallel with the childhood snapshots of Morag. The use of photographs, however, is not a sustained technique, and may at best represent frozen frames in Morag's longer mental movies.¹¹ It is the convenient arrangement of these reels in Morag's consciousness that seems to be contradicted by her own admission that they are "*sneakily* unfolding inside her head" (my emphasis).

This rather dreadful mixed metaphor might, however, provide the reader with a clue as to the real role of these memorybank movies. A film cannot be "unfolded", but paper can, and Morag is, after all, a writer, a "wordsmith", whose novel unfolds for her even as Laurence's unfolds for the reader. And Laurence gives us strong hints throughout *The Diviners* that the novel on which Morag is working is actually a verbal transcription of the movies she is playing. Thus, the

movies actually become chapters in Morag's novel. She even speaks of her writing inspirations in cinematic terms: "Last night, sleepless until three A.M., long and stupendously vivid scenes unfolded. Too tired to get up and write them down, she still couldn't shut the projector off for the night". One of the mysterious "key words" she has jotted down is "Jerusalem," which turns out to be part of Morag's subsequent memorybank movie; elsewhere Morag tells Pique, "I don't know if I'll want it [the novel-in-progress] published when it's finished." Indications are strong, then, that Morag is actually writing an autobiographical novel. The final words of the novel, after Morag's movies have caught up with her fictional present, reinforce such a view: "Morag returned to the house, to write the remaining private and fictional words, and to set down her title." That the close of Laurence's novel should parallel so closely the conclusion of Morag's is hardly coincidental.

If Morag's novel, then, is really her memorybank movie sequence, a stronger case can be made for the chronological arrangement. Morag, is, in effect, writing down the movie sequences simultaneous to the reader's reading of them, and that she, as a competent novelist, should be organizing her material, chronologically as it happens, is certainly not unusual. The associative stimulus becomes the point at which Morag last left off her novel and to which she returns with intentions to resume writing. Laurence never explicitly tells us that Morag is translating her film images into words, but the clues are there. Frequently, immediately after a prolonged movie sequence, the next reference that occurs is to a sustained period of Morag's writing. After the memory series culminating in Christie's death, Morag speaks of words "rushing out in a spate so that her hand could not keep up with them". More often, the return to Morag's present is preceded by such phrases as "work over for the day. . . ."

THUS, IF THE READER is aware that what he is actually reading, in Morag's memorybank movies, is her novel, the chronological arrangement seems much less contrived, and indeed necessary. Laurence has preserved the technique of *The Stone Angel* and legitimized it. For the most part, however, she has dispensed with those brief and out-of-sequence flashes of memory that worked so superbly with Hagar. There are occasional references to Dan McRaith before the reader actually meets him, but they have none of the subtlety or effectiveness of Hagar's brief references to Bram and John, perhaps because, when the reader at last meets him, Dan is a disappointment as a character and is certainly less significant in Morag's life than Bram and John were in Morag's.

A Jest of God, which is free from the rigorous demands of two distinct narrative levels, handles the memory process much more naturally, although there is a

sense of manipulation of Rachel's recollections, simply to give the necessary exposition. On the whole, however, it is well-integrated with her present state of mind and her thoughts, and although her memories are not entirely associational, they at least avoid the restricting chronology with which Hagar is faced. The most effective use of memory in *A Jest of God*, however, concerns those recurring memories, usually very brief, that involve some painful experience. "Such moments," Rachel says, remembering the young couple on the hill, "are the ones that live forever. . . . I wish I could forget that day, and those kids, but I can't." Frequently, the memories are ones of events in which the reader participated earlier in the fictional present; it is a technique Laurence uses excellently in the flashbacks in *The Fire-Dwellers*. For Rachel, perhaps the most painful of such memories is the Tabernacle scene: "I remember everything, every detail, and will never be able to forget however hard I try. It will come back again and again, and I will have to endure it, over and over." She recalls it as she talks to her mother, and to Calla, and she is "back there in that indefensible moment, trapped in my own alien voice, and the eyes all around have swollen to giants' eyes. How will I ever be able to forget?" The memory of her making love with Nick is likewise characterized by a mocking painfulness, by a sense of the absurd: "I can see myself now, the frenetic haste, like a person in some early film, everything speeded-up comically." The memory is very similar to Stacey's mocking flashback in *The Fire-Dwellers* of her hurried loving of Luke: "Stacey, touching him too urgently — now, now, no time to waste, I haven't got all day."

Stacey, of course, is frequently struck by such unpleasant recollections of her recent behaviour. As she watches Katie dance, she relives her own dance scene, seeing herself as a grotesque; she torments herself with memories of her behaviour with Thor; she cringes from Ian's shrill "Can't you just leave me alone?" because it recalls Mac's words. Her memories of her more distant past, outside the fictional time covered by the novel, have in common with Hagar's the trigger mechanisms which integrate the flashbacks into the fictional present. Mac's bitter words, "You do, eh? You really think you do?" suddenly provoke a flashback of her father, locked in the mortuary, saying the same words to her mother. The almost-automatic love-making with Mac recalls the magic of their early years together. Luke's mention of horoscopes creates a flashback of her job with Janus Uranus. The trip to the morgue inspires a memory of Cameron's Funeral Home. And the name of Vernon Winkler, as "the recollection filters blurredly back," gives rise to a flashback of Stacey in Manawaka watching a fight. Although the trigger mechanisms in Stacey's fictional present might be accused of the same obviousness that Robertson believed was a problem in *The Stone Angel*, they are generally handled much more deftly, and Godfrey's criticism of *The Stone Angel's* transitions, that "a good deal of space is wasted,"¹³ would certainly not apply to the sharp and sudden jumps in *The Fire-Dwellers*.

The use of memory in *A Bird in the House* is, although the basis of the book, less interesting than that of the other novels. The entire novel is memory, recalled by the forty-year-old Vanessa, whom the reader meets only at the end. As in *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners*, the memories are recounted chronologically,¹⁴ and although the reader can accept this disciplining of memory into a linear order because it is recounted deliberately and without interruption, in the past tense, by the mature Vanessa, he cannot feel the same excitement he feels at one of Stacey's sudden flashbacks. The memories become memoirs, recapturing not the visions of childhood but the reflections of the writing adult. Even when sudden associative memories strike the young Vanessa, such as the memory of driving in the car with her grandfather, they are so elaborately prefaced that their effect is dulled.

If, however, memory is examined according to Mendilow's concept of it, where "the event in the past at the time of its occurrence is not as it is recalled later," where "the reaction, not the action, is important," and where "something has changed — the perceiver,"¹⁵ *A Bird in the House* becomes a more interesting study of memory. That the recollected event differs from the actual is readily apparent in both *The Fire-Dwellers* and *A Jest of God*, where the reader can see for himself how Stacey and Rachel distort in memory significant events, usually painful ones; however, it is only in *A Bird in the House* (and to a lesser extent, *The Diviners* and *The Stone Angel*) that the entire novel is devoted to a reevaluation of the past, by a character attempting to understand herself in time present. It may be this search for integration of self that leads Kent Thompson to such praise for the technique of *A Bird in the House*, in which he says Laurence has avoided the "usual dangers of this method" and "accomplished the virtues. . . . In the same period of time different things occur in the life of Vanessa. She does not recognize their significance. However, the narrator — by looking at different patterns in that same sequence of time — does."¹⁶ Although the novel really never gives a precise sense of the adult narrator against whom the younger Vanessa is played, there is a use of the double perspective, or the "double focus," which interested such much earlier writers as Sterne, Richardson, and Defoe.¹⁷

Richardson's comments on the "two characters" that the author has to support are relevant here; the author, he says, "has to consider how his hero felt at the time of the events to be related, and how it is natural he should feel them at the time he is relating them."¹⁸ Furthermore,

Much more lively and affecting . . . must be the style of those who write in the height of a *present* distress; the mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty . . . ; *than* the dry, narrative, unanimated style of a person relating difficulties and danger surmounted, can be . . . the relater perfectly at ease; and if himself, unmoved by his own story, not likely greatly to affect the reader.¹⁹

It is easy to place the Vanessa who narrates *A Bird in the House* in the latter

category, relating events "when curiosity is extinguished" and "passion cooled."²⁰ Thomas, however, appreciates the novel for just this distance between the character who experiences and the character who narrates "from a platform of adult awareness. . . Hagar and Rachel were characters embroiled in intensity and requiring intense response; Vanessa, the narrator, provides a calmly consistent viewpoint."²¹ Even if one does not dispute the "calmly consistent viewpoint" of the narrator, as Laurence herself does,²² it is debatable whether the sacrifice of the more immediate perceptions of the experiencing Vanessa is worth the restrained style of the adult. The distance between the two characters is too great for the reader to accept Vanessa's credibility as a child, or to participate in the life which she herself looks back on with relative uninvolvedness.

There is another problem involved in working with the two characters, a problem Mendilow notes in *Moll Flanders*, where "two characters are superimposed one upon the other, and the impression of the one who acts is coloured and distorted by the interpretation of the one who narrates."²³ In order to retain Vanessa's childhood perceptions while at the same time presenting an adult evaluation of a situation, Laurence is forced to overuse both the eavesdropping device and the listening-but-not-understanding device, both of which allow the child Vanessa to remain "only partially knowing" while the older Vanessa can use her as a medium for presenting an incident. The young Vanessa, then, frequently must say, "I could not really comprehend these things"; "her face became startled, and something else which I could not fathom"; "at the time I felt only bewilderment." The strain between the two Vanessas becomes one of the greatest problems in the novel, and it often requires an unwilling suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader to accept both the understanding of the child and also the detailed and more objective recall of the older Vanessa, whom the reader never actually gets to meet and evaluate for himself.

The two Hagar in *The Stone Angel* present much more of a challenge to the reader, for he is continually evaluating not only the younger Hagar, but also the older Hagar who remembers her; thus the narrating Hagar is of greater interest precisely because she is not, as is the older Vanessa, a fully self-aware and objective character. And, having realized that the old Hagar is anything but infallible, the reader becomes increasingly interested in seeing how she restructures and reevaluates her past life. Evidence of a change in Hagar's attitudes is easy to find, and, like Vanessa, she frequently uses the "now-then" distinction to show an increased understanding over the years, but her understanding is often, and significantly, a movement from a definite assessment to one of doubt. Seeing her father with Lottie Dreiser's mother, she "felt no pity for her nor for him. I scorned them both. . . Yet now, remembering their faces, I'd be hard put to say which one of them had been the crueler." Elsewhere, she says of Dan that he "cultivated illness as some people cultivate rare plants. Or so I thought then." And, "it

seemed to me then that Matt was almost apologetic, as though he felt he ought to tell me he didn't blame me for her dying, when in his heart he really did. Maybe he didn't feel that way at all — how can a person tell?" Remembering her life with Bram, she recalls, "It was so clear to me then who was in the wrong. Now I'm no longer certain"; "I have to laugh now, although I was livid then." This greater understanding of her earlier self, and her final acceptance of the necessity of needing other people — shown, for example, in the juxtaposing of her earlier refusal to "cry in front of strangers, whatever it cost me" with her present discovery that with the man at the beach she is "not sorry I've talked to him, not sorry at all, and that's remarkable" — is made possible by the two-character technique.

The Diviners of course also uses this method, presenting the reader with two Morags, but there is less reader interest in the older Morag than there is in the older Hagar. The older Morag, unsure as she may be as to the best way to handle situations, particularly with Pique, is nevertheless a self-aware character, and probably more secure in her identity than are any of Laurence's heroines. The reader thus is rarely able to see more than Morag herself does, and the woman that is introduced at the first of the book is not significantly different from the woman at the end — which is not the case with Hagar. Morag grows and learns, particularly in her relationship with Christie, throughout the second narrative level, but does not move toward a significant character development on the first level; she has, in a way, like the narrating Vanessa, already "arrived" when the novel begins. She has new experiences, of course — some with new friends (Royland, the Smiths) and some with characters the reader encounters in her memories (Pique, Jules) — but she does not change significantly because of them. Nor can the reader see her change because of what she learns from her memories.

This latter condition is true because Morag not only understands herself, she understands the memory process. She realizes her "invented memories," as she calls them, are unreliable as documentaries of fact, that they are "maybe true and maybe not". "A popular misconception," she says, "is that we can't change the past — everyone is constantly changing their own past, recalling it, revising it. What really happened? A meaningless question." Reflecting on a childhood memory, she seems even to be addressing herself to Vanessa's problem: "I can't trust it [her first clear memory] completely, either, partly because I recognize anomalies in it, ways of expressing the remembering, ways which aren't those of a five-year-old, as though I were older in that memory (and the words bigger) than in some subsequent ones. . . ." Morag's consciousness, then, of her editing, and of her "refilming" her memorybank movies, makes her aware of her own unreliability as a projectionist. The reader cannot be involved in this editing, this revaluation of her past, as he is in Hagar's, for Morag is aware that there

can be no totally factual version of "what really happened." Hagar attempts to give the facts, with retrospective footnotes; Morag assures the reader that the footnotes would have changed the facts. They are equally valid ways of dealing fictionally with the memory process.

In terms of the two-character technique, however, its use in *The Stone Angel* is much more significant and successful than it is in either *A Bird in the House* or *The Diviners*, for there is more dialogue between the two Hagars, and between them and the reader, than is possible with the two Morags or the two Vanessas. Compared to the dynamic Hagar — who changes most, not on the second narrative level, but on the first — Vanessa in particular is a static narrator. As for Morag, it is interesting that the reader takes leave of her, as well, where he had first met her: watching the river that flows both ways and looking "ahead into the past, and back into the future, until the silence".

It is what Morag does best. It is also, of course, what Margaret Laurence does best. She has launched her novels like boats on the river of time, her characters in them swept backwards and forwards in their search for a mainland that will give them, at last, an unclouded view of their little island of Manawaka.

NOTES

- ¹ *A Bird in the House* has been considered as other than a novel, albeit as more than a collection of short stories; Thompson may be closest to an accurate classification when he calls it a "whole-book," in which "some stories re-examine the same chronological period as other stories, but examine them with a new focus and a different pattern of events." For the purposes of this paper, however, it will be considered a novel.
- ² The distinction between objective, conceptual or linear time, and subjective, perceptual or psychological time has frequently been made, and can be applied readily to Laurence's characters, who each are strongly influenced by their internal time-clocks. Memory is only one aspect, albeit the major one, of subjective time.
- ³ Ford Madox Ford, quoted by Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 191.
- ⁴ Mendilow, A. A., *Time and the Novel*, 221.
- ⁵ Remembered events, however, do follow each other in a causal relationship; there is an orderly progression of B follows A, C follows B, etc. The point is, as Meyerhoff explains, "that this peculiar order of the inner life appears as, or must be judged as, a form of disorder when it is compared with objective temporal sequence" (*Time in Literature*, 23).
- ⁶ Laurence, "Ten Years' Sentences," *Canadian Literature* 41, 14.
- ⁷ Thomas, Clara, *Margaret Laurence*, 38.
- ⁸ Proust, Marcel, *Swann's Way, part one*, Vol. 1 of *Remembrance of Things Past*, 61.
- ⁹ Robertson, George, "An Artist's Progress," *Canadian Literature* 21, 54.
- ¹⁰ The second sentence, to be consistent, is in the present tense, and uses "are", not "were"; this serves only, however, to emphasize the similar situations on the two narrative levels, on two temporal levels.

- ¹¹ It might be noted here that her memorybank movies are in the present tense, while her real present is narrated in the past. The exact reverse is true with Hagar. The reason for Morag's memories to be told in the present is implicit in their movie format; there is an unaging presentness in both movies and memories, and the film medium lends itself, for this reason, readily to flashback. It is no contradiction, incidentally (as will be discussed later), for Morag to say her movie-memories have "been refilmed, a scene deleted here, another added there" (D, 23), for this does not affect their quality of immediacy.
- ¹² An interesting parallel might be drawn here with the artistic satisfaction of Woolf's Lily Briscoe in *To The Lighthouse*, who ends the novel by finishing the painting she had been working on throughout: "With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision" (p. 310).
- ¹³ Godfrey, Dave, "For Bonfires," *Tamarack Review XXXIII*, 92-4.
- ¹⁴ Individual stories, however, move ahead in time beyond the fictional present of the next story, but the general movement of Vanessa's memory is chronological rather than associative, both within the separate stories and in the novel as a whole.
- ¹⁵ Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, 219.
- ¹⁶ Thompson, "Margaret Laurence: *A Bird in the House*," *The Fiddlehead LXXXIV*, 109.
- ¹⁷ Mendilow includes an interesting discussion of these authors and the double focus, in a section called "The Time Locus of the Pseudo-Author," pp. 89-96.
- ¹⁸ Richardson, quoted by Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, 90-1.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Thomas, *Margaret Laurence*, 55-6.
- ²² Speaking of her grandfather, she says, "I think I honestly kept on disliking him until I got all the way through those stories, . . . when I realized not only that I didn't dislike him anymore, but that there were things about him that I greatly admired." (quoted by Wigmore, "Margaret Laurence," 52).
- ²³ Mendilow, *Time and the Novel*, 91.

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