

## Abstract

The BA thesis deals with the use of region in the works of two renowned Canadian authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro. For my analysis I have chosen Laurence's novel *The Diviners* (1974), the final work in her Manawaka sequence, and Alice Munro's first published collection of short stories, *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968). Laurence sets her Canadian novels primarily in Manawaka, a small prairie town based her own hometown. Munro, who is largely associated with Southern Ontario Gothic, takes us to several towns in southwestern Ontario. Since both authors have successfully been published outside of Canada I also discuss whether their works are distinctly Canadian in any way.

Contemporary Canadian studies recognize regionalism as one of the defining features of the country. In the introduction, I touch on the lack of uniform identity, experience and interests in a country as ethnically and geographically diverse as Canada. Although the first thing that comes to mind in relation to Canadian regions, is the division of the country into provinces and territories, it is not the only way to approach regionalism - the country could be divided into different regions if we were to focus on language or climate. Beverly Rasporich proposes the view that artists serve as "active creators of place," and their depictions of a region can be "mythic," "subjective" or "imaginary constructs filtered through a personal vision".

In Chapter 2, the thesis focuses on regionalism in Canadian literary context. It comments on how the different Canadian regions can affect the imagination of a writer, and contrasts formal regionalism, which regards geographical location as the primary influence on one's identity, with its more complex counterpart that takes into account other aspects. It also explains that not every text associated with a place is regionalist by default, and then provide a brief overview of regionalist writing in Canadian literature throughout its short history.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to Margaret Laurence and her novel *The Diviners*. I analyze the prairie town, Manawaka, as a moralized landscape that mirrors the values and social hierarchy of the town. I provide a short summary of how the Métis emerged as a distinct ethnic group, and some information about the Red River Rebellion, essential to understand some aspects of the *The Diviners*. In my analysis, I examine the Tonnerre family that portrays ongoing issues of this peoples in Canada, and draws attention to Eurocentric accounts of Canadian history. Chapter 4 focuses on Alice Munro and Southern Ontario Gothic, a subgenre similar to American Southern Gothic. The analysis of her stories "Walker Brothers Cowboy," "The Time of Death," "Sunday Afternoon," "Boys and Girls," and "The Peace of Utrecht" shows

how she weaves southern Ontario landscape into her narratives, and combines it with some traditional Gothic elements.

**Key words:** Canadian literature, Canadian regionalism, Canada, Alice Munro, Margaret Laurence, Southern Ontario Gothic