



## Interior Monologues In Margaret Laurence The Fire Dwellers

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### ABSTRACT:

Canadian writer Margaret Laurence's novel *The Fire-Dwellers* deal with the plethora of emotions through the inner and outer life, between ear and eye. The forward movement of the story pulling against the balance of the Tableau. The author explores the terrors of the 1960's counterculture, considered to be the most turbulent times in recent history. Stacey Mac Aindra has been portrayed as a struggle of the individual to cope with the fires of an step-up violent and insane dystopia world which fragments the self. Chapter One opens with the ladybird rhyme that runs through Stacey's head imitates the stream of Stacey's consciousness between inside and outside the world of thought, dialogue and action. Her fantasies are also often consciously initiated, but at times they bridge conscious and unconscious levels.

**Keywords:** Counterculture, shatter consciousness, stream of consciousness, gendered contradictions, cluster of memories

The numerous writings of Margaret Laurence were noted as she is one among the Canadians finest female authors. Through her novels the constructing definitions of women is explored. She dramatizes the ways in which a woman discovers her voice and how she uses it as a path to self-realization. Each of her novel expresses a fictional town setting as Manawaka which is called as a fictional town. Each of her Manawaka novels portrays as the growth of a woman's individual consciousness. The multi-faceted female psyche is highlighted in every novel of her at all possible angle to convey a sense of its complexity. The women character who struggles is not portrayed as power and privilege but for equality and self-determination.

There is a significant fact that the problem faced by a woman attempting to realize herself stems not just from the roles that the world expects her to play, but also from the way her consciousness has been shaped by that world. When she ultimately succeeds in discovering and reclaiming her voice, she also achieved growth. Whether it is Hagar Shipley, Rachel Cameron, Vanessa MacLeod, Stacey MacAindra or Morag Gunn, each of the heroines of the Manawaka novels undergoes a process whereby she becomes capable of identifying the stories and mythologies that have deceived her. They then proceed to construct their own stories about themselves in an attempt to understand and make sense of the flaws of their experiences within the patriarchal power structure.

The novel *The Fire-Dwellers* reveals the anxieties of a middle aged wife and a mother in search of meaning and communication amidst the constant alienation of essential absurdity. Stacey MacAindra, the protagonists of *The Fire-Dwellers*, lives in Vancouver with her four children and her husband, a struggling salesman. She is assaulted from all the sides by an urban environment that seems shockingly threatening and also by multiple demands of her life as a mother, friend and a wife. Though she faces much conflicts, she is indeed a strong doer and also an activator. In the weeks before her 40th birthday, she lives through a series of shocks that bring her an increased acceptance of herself and of the irreversible process of life.

Stacey's consciousness and unconsciousness memories, fantasies and dreams are the graph representation of their frequency. The complexity of the cyclic structure of the *The Fire-Dwellers*. Her thought process, emotions through every relation surrounded by her now and then lead to inner

monologues or interior monologues. She over thinks everything in her life. She thinks about her past memories of her life in a small prairie town in Manawaka. women are always protected about everything surrounded by them. " Protectiveness has often muffled the sound of doors closing against women" (Betty Friedan quotes).

The character of Stacey MacAindra unfolds literally and negatively progressing forwards and backwards simultaneously through many levels of time and the psyche. Thought, dialogue and action spring from her unconsciousness. Her fantasies are also consciously initiated but at times they bridge conscious and unconscious levels. Her memories and dreams on the other hand always tap the deeper unconscious levels of her psyche. Stacey loves her children so dearly that she often prays to the god to

Let them be okay, all their lives, all four of them'. "Let me die" , she says, "before they do".

Only not before they grow up, or what would happen to them ? " (67)

She does not care if Mac marries Delores Appleton or any other woman when, Stacey is no more. But she hates the idea of her children to be brought up by another woman.

The couple has communication gap. As their conversations is filled with mundane, prosaic words, hollow platitudes, and ludicrous misunderstandings, they do not result in real communication between the spouses. That irritates Stacey. She often complaints about Mac that he is always guarded her all the time but herself she is also like that. She often complaints about Mac's being quiet.

But what does she do when he is actually explaining things to her? Then she wonders : 'Did he explain? He did certain amount of yakking last night, and I was thinking all the time How it could be that Duncan keeps getting awful marks in arithmetic I'm always wanting him to talk, and when he does, I am absent. (35)

That is the irony she has in her life. She craves for a thing and when she gets it, she is somewhere far away. And then she doubts whether she had actually got it, she is not much clear about what she actually wants. She must get past the houses and make it to the water in order to be touched .It is critical to examine an implied division between public and private spheres as one of the central gender issues within modernity.

In the modern world where Stacey lives, men occupy the privileged public space while women are lowered to the private space of the home. Therefore, women must imagine other possibilities beyond this private/public dualism in order to recognize violence within collective practice turned myth. Women perhaps more specifically considered to be house-wives who are segregated from men and compressed within their homes. Stacey knows she existed in a world of inner and outer which can be said as inside and outside of her house and her body. She must get past the houses and make it to the water in order to be touched.

The bifurcated subjectivity is a possible survival strategy? In her mind Stacey Mac Aindra reaches into memory and finds music inside her body. By closing her eyes she performs herself as Stacey Cameron and double dances her divided consciousness. She dances alone in her house to Tommy Dorsey Boggie and realizes she dances to hope and hurt at the same time. She recognizes dancing and music as a space where she is not to label herself. She reflects that she is not Stacey Cameron for a long time, she will always be her because that's how [she] started out. But from now on, the dancing goes on only in the head. ( 276)

And so she recedes from view, seeking solace in the fact that "Temporarily[her family] are all more or less okay. (281)

Stacey's children remain fairly constant throughout the novel. This stability reflects the basic strength of Stacey's simultaneous feelings of love and protectiveness of her children and her frustrations at being confined in that role. In opposite to the constancy of her memories about her children, Stacey's cycle of memories of very recent events becomes most adamant at the crisis point in the novel, after Thor's first party Stacey's memories of her behavior at the party increasingly distort her actual behaviour: "It seems worse every time [ she thinks] of it". (114)

In the final group of memories, the external stimuli enter into the depths of Stacey's unconsciousness and surfacing periodically. The newspaper stories and photos of bomb shelters, Children scorched by napalm, murdered by their drug addict mothers or who starved to death through poverty. These memories coupled with media, replays of wars and riots which constantly invade on Stacey's

consciousness. That took on greater significance when considered in combination with Stacey's recall of more personal events such as her father's horrified remembrance of a young boy blown up but not killed in world war I or the men of Manawaka proudly marching through the streets of their deaths in World war II.

The escapists need that surface in both her memories and consciousness constructed fantasies were became less urgent as she begins her affair with Luke. Her choice of her family over escape with Luke is considered to be the cycle of fantasy is renewed. Her dreams tap deeply buried archetypal patterns and images. Stacey's dream follows this cyclic pattern of ruin but by taking it another step further in a productive, final, symbolic recombination.

The fantasy and memory are minimal when Stacey make her choice because the positive elements of her daily existence predominate. Katie and Stacey became equals over Jen's trauma with Tess's goldfish and Mac needs Stacey's strength because of buckles death. Stacey has no more need for escape because she is learning to cope. From this point, her memories and fantasies generally in peak and decline together. Her memories again rise sharply as she begins to reconstruct her family and marital relationships because of her guilty feelings about her secret affair just as her fantasies peak slightly because of her under lying desire to escape the responsibilities which was her basic mature dictates and she must accept. The images of fire and water dominates both her internal and external worlds, covering the past and the present and violating on the future. These more personal memories are dominant from the outset of the novel, but increase in frequency towards the end of the novel as Stacey becomes more secure and accepting of herself.

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