

Abstract

This bachelor thesis focuses on feminism in selected Canadian novels published in the 1960s and 1970s. The discussed novels are Marian Engel's *Bear*, Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. This thesis will concentrate on the feminist aspect of each work, and primarily on the rebellion against the patriarchal society - each of the protagonist rebels in a different way. Lou from *Bear* is using a feminine language to overpower men, as well as her sexual awaking and a rebirth into a new woman. Hagar's rebellion in *The Stone Angel* manages to subvert the male-dominated society, primarily thanks to her hidden femininity in the beginning, and also because of Laurence's usage of the first-person narrative in the present tense, which seemed to have been unusual in her time. Del from the *Lives of Girls and Women* subverted the society by choosing her own path, in the form of becoming a writer, as well as her breaking the taboos about women's sexuality by not only reading and talking about it but also by experimenting. The no-name narrator from *Surfacing* then again uses her language to take a feminine stance in society. Her rebellion is then also pictured by her quest for a better woman inside her.

The second main focus of this thesis will be on the typical features of Canadian literature present in the novels. These features are introduced in the second chapter and later discussed with the individual novels in their own chapters. Primarily, the aspect of Canadian nature and to that connected wilderness, survival, regionalism and its comparison with the cities will be discussed. Also, the notion of telling stories and the shared history will be analysed in the respective chapters.

Each of the novels was given their individual chapters to capture the rebellions and the Canadian features in depth. For the Canadian literature and its typical features, Faye Hammill's book *Canadian Literature* was used, as it seem to be one of the few books on

Canadian literature, which deals with the individual features in great detail. Books by Margaret Atwood, *Survival* and *Strange Things* were used to delineate those features more clearly. The feminist aspect is explained on a general theory provided by Deborah Cameron from her book *Feminism*. Other than these sources, essays and books on the respective novels are discussed to strengthen the argument of this thesis.

Key Words: feminism, Canadian literature, Marian Engel, Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, rebellion, nature