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## "Exploration Of Mother-Daughter Relationships In Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*"

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### Abstract

Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* offers a profound exploration of complex mother-daughter relationships, weaving personal history with broader cultural and social themes. This study investigates the dynamic between Morag Gunn, the protagonist, and her mother, highlighting the emotional and psychological dimensions of their interactions. The novel presents the mother-daughter relationship as a multifaceted and evolving bond marked by love, conflict, misunderstanding and reconciliation. Through Morag's retrospective narration, Laurence delves into themes of identity, belonging, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma and resilience.

Morag's relationship with her mother is characterized by emotional distance, shaped by circumstances such as abandonment, societal expectations, and personal ambitions. The absence of Morag's mother during her formative years leads to feelings of neglect and longing, influencing Morag's development and self-perception. Laurence uses this strained relationship to examine how maternal absence or detachment can impact a daughter's quest for identity and autonomy. The narrative also reflects on how Morag's experiences as a mother herself echo the complexities she encountered with her own mother, creating a cyclical pattern of relational challenges.

This exploration extends to the broader context of Canadian society and indigenous culture, as *The Diviners* situates personal relationships within the larger framework of historical displacement, cultural assimilation, and gender roles. Laurence portrays mother-daughter dynamics as deeply affected by social forces, including class, race, and cultural heritage. The novel underscores the negotiation of personal identity amidst these external pressures, illustrating how mother-daughter bonds can simultaneously nurture and constrain individual growth.

Laurence's use of stream-of-consciousness narration and fragmented storytelling mirrors the complexity and fluidity of mother-daughter interactions. The narrative structure allows readers to witness Morag's internal struggles and evolving understanding of her mother's choices and limitations. By emphasizing memory and storytelling, *The Diviners* highlights the role of narrative in reconstructing and making sense of familial relationships.

Ultimately, this study reveals that *The Diviners* presents mother-daughter relationships not as static or idealized but as dynamic processes shaped by emotional ambivalence and historical context. Laurence's nuanced portrayal invites readers to consider the enduring impact of maternal bonds on identity formation, emotional well-being, and the navigation of personal and cultural legacies. The novel contributes to feminist literary discourse by foregrounding female experience and intergenerational connections, making it a significant text for understanding the complexities of motherhood and daughterhood in contemporary literature.

**Keywords:** Margaret Laurence, *The Diviners*, Mother-daughter relationship, Morag Gunn, Identity, Maternal absence, Emotional distance, Intergenerational trauma, Canadian literature, Indigenous culture, Feminist literary criticism, Narrative structure, Memory and storytelling, Gender roles, Cultural heritage.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974) is a landmark novel in Canadian literature that explores themes of identity, belonging, and personal history. Central to the narrative is the complex relationship between Morag Gunn and her mother, a dynamic marked by emotional distance, abandonment, and reconciliation. Mother-daughter relationships have long been a subject of literary inquiry due to their profound impact on personal identity formation and psychological development. In *The Diviners*, Laurence intricately portrays this bond within the wider context of Canadian culture, indigenous heritage and gender roles, offering a nuanced understanding of motherhood and daughterhood.

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it delves deeply into the emotional and psychological layers of the mother-daughter relationship in *The Diviners*, an aspect that has received comparatively less focused attention in literary criticism. Exploring this relationship provides insights into how familial bonds influence identity and resilience. Moreover, analyzing the novel through feminist and cultural lenses enriches understanding of how social and historical factors shape these personal connections. The findings contribute to Canadian literary studies, feminist criticism, and the broader discourse on family dynamics in literature.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship in *The Diviners*.
- To explore the impact of maternal absence and emotional distance on Morag's identity development.
- To examine the influence of cultural, social and historical contexts on mother-daughter dynamics.
- To assess the narrative techniques Laurence employs to depict these relationships.
- To situate the novel's treatment of motherhood and daughterhood within feminist literary criticism.

### 1.4 Research Questions

- How does Margaret Laurence portray the mother-daughter relationship in *The Diviners*?
- What role does maternal absence play in shaping Morag Gunn's identity?
- How do cultural and social factors influence the mother-daughter bond in the novel?
- What narrative strategies does Laurence use to represent the complexities of this relationship?
- In what ways does *The Diviners* contribute to feminist discussions of motherhood and daughterhood?

## 1.5 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, primarily based on textual analysis of *The Diviners*. Close reading techniques are employed to examine key passages, character interactions, and narrative structure related to mother-daughter relationships. The research is supported by secondary sources, including feminist literary criticism, Canadian cultural studies, and previous scholarly work on Margaret Laurence. Comparative analysis is used to contextualize findings within broader literary and theoretical frameworks.

## 1.6 Structure of the Paper

The paper is organized into eight chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature on Margaret Laurence's works and mother-daughter relationships in literature. Chapter 3 provides an overview of *The Diviners*, focusing on characters and plot. Chapter 4 analyzes the mother-daughter relationship in detail. Chapter 5 explores the cultural and social influences on this relationship. Chapter 6 discusses Laurence's narrative techniques. Chapter 7 presents a critical discussion and analysis. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the study, summarizing key findings and suggesting areas for further research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Studies on Margaret Laurence's Works

Margaret Laurence is widely regarded as one of Canada's most influential literary figures, with *The Diviners* often celebrated as her magnum opus. Scholars such as Robert Lecker and Madeleine Hogue have explored Laurence's rich character development and her portrayal of Canadian identity. Critics often emphasize Laurence's nuanced exploration of personal and cultural conflicts, especially the experiences of women navigating societal expectations. While much of the scholarship focuses on themes of identity and place, few studies delve specifically into the mother-daughter relationships in her works. This gap highlights the importance of a focused examination of familial dynamics within *The Diviners*, which could deepen understanding of Laurence's narrative strategies and thematic concerns.

### 2.2 Mother-Daughter Relationships in Literature

The mother-daughter relationship has been a fertile subject in literary studies, often framed as a site of tension, love, and identity formation. Psychoanalytic critics like Nancy Chodorow have discussed the impact of maternal bonds on female development, while feminist scholars have highlighted how these relationships reflect and resist societal norms. In literature, mother-daughter interactions frequently reveal generational conflicts, emotional complexities, and the negotiation of independence. Works by authors such as Toni Morrison and Alice Munro demonstrate varied portrayals of this relationship, ranging from nurturing to fraught, thereby enriching the discourse. Situating *The Diviners* within this broader literary conversation allows for comparative insights into how maternal themes shape narrative and character.

### 2.3 Feminist Perspectives on Maternal Bonds

Feminist literary criticism foregrounds motherhood as a complex social and political construct. Theorists such as Adrienne Rich and Juliet Mitchell have argued that motherhood involves both empowerment and oppression, shaped by patriarchal structures. The maternal bond is seen as central to female identity yet often constrained by cultural expectations. Feminist approaches to literature critique idealized or reductive portrayals of motherhood, advocating for nuanced representations that acknowledge ambivalence, agency, and resistance. Applying feminist theory to *The Diviners* facilitates an understanding of Morag's relationship with her mother as a negotiation of personal and societal pressures, reflecting broader feminist concerns about autonomy and identity.

## 2.4 Canadian Cultural and Social Context in *The Diviners*

*The Diviners* is deeply rooted in the Canadian cultural milieu, engaging with issues of colonialism, indigenous heritage, and multicultural identity. Canadian literary critics such as Linda Hutcheon have emphasized the role of place and history in shaping characters' identities. The novel reflects tensions between settler and indigenous cultures, exploring themes of displacement and cultural survival. Mother-daughter relationships in this context are not only personal but also culturally symbolic, embodying historical trauma and resilience. Understanding the socio-historical backdrop of Canada enriches the analysis of familial bonds in the novel, revealing how identity is intertwined with cultural legacy.

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study employs an interdisciplinary theoretical framework combining feminist literary criticism, psychoanalytic theory, and cultural studies. Feminist theory provides tools to analyze the gendered dimensions of mother-daughter relationships and the negotiation of autonomy. Psychoanalytic insights help explore the emotional and psychological dynamics between Morag and her mother, particularly regarding attachment and identity formation. Cultural studies perspectives illuminate how historical and societal forces shape familial interactions and individual subjectivity. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive lens to examine the multifaceted mother-daughter relationships in *The Diviners*.

## 3. Overview of *The Diviners*

### 3.1 Summary of the Novel

Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* (1974) is the final novel in her acclaimed Manawaka series and is often regarded as her most autobiographical and ambitious work. The novel follows Morag Gunn, a Canadian novelist, as she reflects on her life's journey through a blend of memory, fiction, and present-day experience. Morag, born in the fictional town of Manawaka, is orphaned at a young age and raised by Christie and Princess Logan, an eccentric couple from a lower socio-economic background. Her outsider status in a conservative small town profoundly shapes her identity.

As the narrative unfolds, Morag leaves Manawaka, pursues higher education, and embarks on a literary career. Along the way, she experiences complex relationships, including a significant and tumultuous connection with Jules Tonnerre, a Métis man with whom she has a daughter, Pique. Much of the novel is structured as a nonlinear reflection, shifting between past and present, as Morag tries to make sense of her identity, her role as a writer, and her relationship with her daughter. The novel ends with Pique going off on a journey of her own, mirroring Morag's earlier quest for self-understanding.

Thematically, *The Diviners* explores the search for identity, the significance of personal and cultural memory, the tension between tradition and individualism, and the complex bonds of motherhood and creativity.

### 3.2 Character Analysis: Morag Gunn

Morag Gunn is the protagonist and narrative focal point of *The Diviners*. Her life story is presented as a series of "memorybank movies"—fragmented recollections that offer insight into her psychological and emotional evolution. Morag is portrayed as an intelligent, independent, and determined woman who struggles against societal expectations and personal loss to forge her own identity. She is an outsider both socially and emotionally, especially during her upbringing in Manawaka.

A central aspect of Morag's development is her relationship with motherhood—both as a daughter and as a mother. She experiences a distant and emotionally absent maternal connection, having lost her biological mother early in life. Raised by Princess Logan, whose affection is stern and limited, Morag develops a guarded



emotional temperament. As a mother to Pique, Morag tries to be different, yet their relationship is also strained by generational and cultural gaps.

Morag's identity as a writer is interwoven with her personal struggles, particularly her attempts to reconcile her past and to give voice to silenced histories. Her relationships, especially with Jules Tonnerre, reflect her desire for authenticity and self-definition beyond societal norms. Morag ultimately emerges as a resilient and introspective character, emblematic of Laurence's feminist vision of womanhood.

### 3.3 The Role of Other Key Characters

- **Pique Gunn**  
Pique is Morag's daughter with Jules Tonnerre. As a mixed-race young woman, Pique embodies the intersection of multiple identities—cultural, racial, and generational. Her relationship with Morag is central to the novel's exploration of mother-daughter dynamics. Pique's departure at the end of the novel signals both independence and continuity, echoing Morag's earlier departure from Manawaka.
- **Jules Tonnerre**  
A proud and free-spirited Métis man, Jules plays a crucial role in Morag's personal and emotional life. Their relationship, though marked by separation, results in the birth of Pique and shapes much of Morag's internal conflict regarding identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity. Jules represents the marginalized voice of indigenous identity within the Canadian context.
- **Christie Logan**  
Christie, Morag's adoptive father, is a grave-digger and local character known for his dramatic storytelling. Despite his humble status and eccentricities, he plays a formative role in shaping Morag's moral and imaginative world. His values of honesty and resilience leave a lasting impact on her.
- **Princess Logan**  
Princess, Christie's wife, is stern, conservative, and emotionally reserved. Though she provides for Morag materially, she lacks warmth and emotional openness. Princess represents the traditional maternal figure whose limitations underscore Morag's search for a more meaningful and emotionally rich maternal bond.
- **Brooke Skelton**  
Morag's former husband, Brooke is a college professor who initially supports her writing but later becomes critical and controlling. Their marriage highlights themes of power, dependency, and the suppression of female creativity. Morag's decision to leave Brooke reflects her commitment to self-respect and independence.

## 4. Mother-Daughter Relationship in *The Diviners*

### 4.1 Portrayal of Morag's Relationship with Her Mother

Morag Gunn's biological mother, Janet Gunn, dies when Morag is very young, leaving her with no conscious memories of a maternal presence. This absence creates a profound emotional void in Morag's life, as she is raised instead by Princess Logan, the wife of Christie Logan. While Princess fulfills the role of caretaker, her demeanor is cold, authoritative, and emotionally distant. Morag does not experience the warmth, nurturing, or intimacy typically associated with motherly love. As a result, she grows up emotionally self-reliant and distrustful of traditional maternal figures.

The portrayal of Morag's mother—both biological and surrogate—suggests that the maternal bond in the novel is marked by absence and repression rather than affection or openness. This portrayal serves as the foundation for Morag's conflicted views on motherhood and significantly influences her later role as a mother to Pique.

## 4.2 Themes of Abandonment and Emotional Distance

One of the dominant themes in *The Diviners* is emotional distance, particularly in familial relationships. Morag feels emotionally abandoned—not only because of her biological mother's early death but also because Princess Logan, who assumes the maternal role, enforces strict discipline and social propriety rather than emotional closeness. This environment creates a psychological space where Morag is physically cared for but emotionally neglected.

As Morag matures, this emotional distance influences her interpersonal relationships. She struggles to express vulnerability and often seeks solitude, both as a defense mechanism and as a means of self-preservation. This sense of abandonment extends into her romantic life and, later, her approach to motherhood. Margaret Laurence uses this emotional detachment to highlight how early maternal loss shapes Morag's ability to form and maintain intimate connections.

## 4.3 Impact of Maternal Absence on Morag's Identity

The lack of a nurturing maternal figure has a significant impact on Morag's personal and creative identity. She often reflects on her fragmented childhood and uses writing as a means of understanding her past. Her mother's absence forces her to forge her own path, unanchored by familial expectations or inherited narratives. While this detachment isolates her emotionally, it also enables her independence, intellectual growth and resilience.

Morag's identity as a writer becomes an act of self-definition—a way to process and reimagine her childhood traumas. The maternal void in her life becomes a space for imaginative reconstruction, where she creates female voices and stories that challenge traditional norms. Thus, the absence of a mother paradoxically fuels Morag's creative power and shapes her feminist consciousness.

## 4.4 The Cycle of Motherhood: Morag as a Mother

Morag's relationship with her own daughter, Pique, reflects a continuation and transformation of the maternal cycle. Determined not to repeat the emotional neglect she experienced, Morag strives to allow Pique the freedom to grow and express herself. However, despite her efforts, the relationship remains strained at times, as Pique seeks to understand her own mixed heritage and cultural identity.

Morag's motherhood is characterized by ambivalence. She deeply loves Pique yet fears imposing herself too much, which occasionally leads to emotional distance. This tension reveals the difficulty of redefining motherhood outside the traditional models. Morag attempts to balance independence with maternal care, reflecting her own journey of negotiating between freedom and responsibility.

In the end, Pique's decision to embark on a journey of her own mirrors Morag's earlier departure from Manawaka, suggesting that the cycle of motherhood and daughterhood continues but with greater self-awareness and possibility for healing. Laurence thus presents motherhood not as a fixed role but as an evolving, negotiated relationship shaped by personal history and cultural context.

# 5. Cultural and Social Influences on the Mother-Daughter Bond

## 5.1 Historical and Societal Context in Canada

The mother-daughter relationship in *The Diviners* is deeply influenced by the historical and societal dynamics of 20th-century Canada. During this period, Canadian society was marked by conservatism, religious influence, and rigid class hierarchies, especially in small towns like Manawaka. Women were expected to conform to traditional roles centered around domesticity, silence, and obedience. These social norms affected not only how mothers raised daughters but also how daughters perceived their roles and identities.

Morag's upbringing reflects the tension between societal expectations and personal desire. Raised by Princess Logan in a judgmental and conservative community, Morag internalizes a sense of being "othered" due to her orphaned status and her guardians' lower class. This context shapes her later resistance to societal norms and informs her unconventional approach to motherhood. Laurence uses Morag's story to critique the limitations placed on women and to explore how generational defiance becomes a mode of survival and growth.

## 5.2 Influence of Indigenous and Settler Cultures

*The Diviners* also explores the intersection of Indigenous and settler cultures, particularly through the relationship between Morag and Jules Tonnerre, and their daughter Pique. Jules, a Métis man, carries the weight of cultural marginalization and historical displacement. His identity and relationship with Morag represent a bridging—and at times, a collision—of two distinct cultural experiences. Their daughter, Pique, inherits this complex legacy, navigating a world that often does not recognize or validate mixed heritage identities.

Pique's desire to explore her Métis roots reflects a need for cultural wholeness that contrasts with Morag's own disconnection from her maternal lineage. This cultural dimension significantly shapes their mother-daughter bond, adding layers of misunderstanding, difference and eventual growth. The novel thus positions cultural identity not merely as a backdrop but as a central factor influencing familial and generational relationships.

## 5.3 Gender Roles and Expectations

Gender norms play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics between mothers and daughters in *The Diviners*. Traditional femininity in Laurence's fictional Manawaka is associated with passivity, self-sacrifice, and moral rigidity—qualities embodied by Princess Logan. Morag, in contrast, seeks intellectual and personal independence, thereby rejecting these prescribed roles. Her choice to become a single mother and pursue a writing career challenges the gender expectations of her time and place.

These choices, however, do not come without consequences. Morag faces judgment, isolation, and self-doubt, which affect how she raises Pique. She attempts to give her daughter the freedom she never had, but in doing so, often struggles with how much control or guidance to exert. This internal conflict reflects broader feminist questions about the redefinition of motherhood and womanhood in a patriarchal society. Laurence uses Morag's maternal journey to examine the evolving expectations of gender and the difficulties women face in creating new models of identity.

## 5.4 Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma and Resilience

The psychological and emotional legacies passed from one generation to another are central to the mother-daughter narrative in *The Diviners*. Morag inherits emotional detachment, a sense of abandonment, and silence from her early experiences with Princess and the absence of her biological mother. These unresolved feelings influence her own maternal behavior, often manifesting as overcompensation or withdrawal.

Despite these challenges, *The Diviners* also portrays a transmission of resilience. Morag's strength, independence, and reflective nature are qualities that she passes on to Pique, who, in turn, demonstrates courage in asserting her cultural and personal identity. This generational growth suggests that while trauma may echo through generations, so too can healing, strength and transformation.

Laurence presents motherhood not as a static ideal but as a complex, evolving process affected by personal history, cultural context, and societal norms. The intergenerational narrative in the novel reveals how mothers and daughters can either replicate or resist inherited patterns—ultimately offering hope for change and continuity.

## 6. Narrative Techniques and Their Role in Depicting Relationships

### 6.1 Stream-of-Consciousness and Fragmented Narration

Margaret Laurence employs stream-of-consciousness and fragmented narration to reflect the complexity of Morag Gunn's internal world and her evolving relationships, especially with her daughter, Pique. This technique allows readers to experience Morag's thoughts in real-time, capturing the fluid, non-linear nature of memory and emotion.

The fragmented structure—often referred to as “memorybank movies”—mimics the unpredictable and often disjointed process of recalling the past. These fragments jump between different time periods and emotional states, illustrating how past experiences, especially traumatic or formative ones, continue to influence Morag's present. Through this method, Laurence provides a deeper psychological portrait of Morag, allowing the reader to trace the roots of her maternal ambivalence and her need for emotional self-protection.

This fragmented, introspective narration helps portray the subtle, often unspoken tensions in the mother-daughter bond. Rather than offering a linear narrative of growth or healing, Laurence presents the relationship as constantly shifting, marked by distance, discovery and moments of reconciliation.

### 6.2 Use of Memory and Storytelling

Memory and storytelling are central to Laurence's narrative strategy in *The Diviners*. Morag, as both narrator and novelist, uses personal memory and creative storytelling to process her past and construct meaning in her life. These elements are particularly significant in exploring her maternal identity and her relationship with Pique.

The act of remembering allows Morag to revisit her own childhood—marked by loss, social alienation, and emotional austerity. Through memory, she seeks to understand the generational patterns of silence and detachment that shaped her. As a writer, she transforms these memories into fiction, attempting to make sense of them and, in doing so, to exert agency over her own narrative.

Storytelling also plays a crucial role in how Morag relates to Pique. While much of their emotional communication remains indirect, the stories Morag writes serve as a bridge between them—offering Pique insight into her mother's inner world and her own heritage. In this way, storytelling becomes both a coping mechanism and a medium for connection.

### 6.3 Symbolism and Motifs Related to Motherhood

Laurence employs rich symbolism and recurring motifs to deepen the portrayal of motherhood and the mother-daughter relationship. One of the most prominent symbols is **water**, which appears in various forms—rivers, lakes, rain—and often signifies emotional depth, cleansing and change. Water reflects the fluid, often ambiguous nature of maternal bonds and personal identity in the novel. It also symbolizes both separation and connection, much like the tides of Morag and Pique's relationship.

Another powerful symbol is **the mirror**, which recurs as a motif associated with self-examination and identity. Morag frequently looks into mirrors, literally and figuratively, as she tries to see herself as both a mother and a daughter. These moments of reflection are critical in revealing her internal conflicts, her regrets, and her attempts at growth.

The motif of **silence** is equally significant. Silence in the novel represents emotional repression, social constraint, and generational trauma. Princess Logan's stern quietude and Morag's own reluctance to confront certain truths both speak to the inherited patterns of unspoken pain and maternal distance.



Lastly, **writing itself** functions as a metaphor for motherhood. Morag's literary creation parallels her experience of giving birth and raising Pique. Both acts—writing and mothering—require vulnerability, imagination, and the willingness to face one's deepest truths. Through this symbolic alignment, Laurence elevates the creative process as both a personal and generational legacy.

## 7. Critical Analysis and Discussion

### 7.1 Emotional Ambivalence in Mother-Daughter Relations

*The Diviners* powerfully explores emotional ambivalence in the mother-daughter dynamic through the relationship between Morag and her daughter Pique. Margaret Laurence avoids portraying motherhood as purely nurturing or self-sacrificial; instead, she offers a layered portrayal that reflects real emotional complexities. Morag often oscillates between love and detachment, concern and independence, which reveals her internal conflict: the desire to provide for Pique emotionally while preserving her own sense of self.

This ambivalence is rooted in Morag's own upbringing. Lacking a warm maternal figure herself, she is both determined to do better and uncertain of how to succeed. Laurence uses this tension to reflect the broader psychological struggles that accompany motherhood, especially for women who are forging nontraditional paths. Emotional ambiguity is thus presented as an honest and human aspect of maternal love rather than a flaw.

### 7.2 Negotiation of Identity through Maternal Bonds

Morag's identity is constantly shaped and reshaped through her role as both a daughter and a mother. The absence of her biological mother and the strict, unloving environment provided by Princess Logan leaves Morag with an incomplete sense of self. As she matures, her creative journey as a writer becomes a way of reconstructing this lost identity.

Motherhood becomes a mirror through which Morag reflects on her own past and redefines her sense of purpose. Through raising Pique, she begins to confront her emotional wounds and gains insight into her own maternal lineage. Pique, too, negotiates her identity—especially her Métis heritage—through her relationship with Morag and her absent father, Jules. This dual negotiation emphasizes how maternal relationships can serve as both a burden and a catalyst for personal and cultural identity formation.

### 7.3 The Novel's Contribution to Feminist Literary Discourse

*The Diviners* stands as a significant contribution to feminist literary discourse, particularly in its reimagining of motherhood and female autonomy. Margaret Laurence challenges the traditional, patriarchal portrayal of women as silent caregivers and redefines motherhood as a dynamic, self-reflective experience that intersects with intellectual and creative identity.

Morag's rejection of conventional gender roles—her decision to become a single mother, her career as a writer, and her assertion of sexual and emotional agency—positions her as a feminist figure. Laurence presents female subjectivity as multifaceted, complex and deeply tied to personal and historical memory.

## 8. Conclusion

### 8.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored the nuanced portrayal of mother-daughter relationships in Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*, focusing primarily on the protagonist Morag Gunn's experiences as both a daughter and a mother. Through textual analysis and critical theory, several key findings emerged:

- Morag's strained and emotionally distant relationship with her adoptive mother, Christie and particularly with his wife, the stern "Princess," significantly impacts her emotional development and contributes to her complex identity formation.
- As a mother, Morag exhibits a blend of deep affection and emotional reservation with her daughter, Pique. This duality reflects a recurring theme in the novel—emotional ambivalence in maternal bonds.
- The narrative highlights how the absence or inadequacy of maternal affection influences personal identity, autonomy, and the transmission of generational trauma and resilience.
- The socio-cultural and historical context of Canada, including the intersections of settler and Indigenous cultures, shapes and complicates maternal roles and expectations.
- Laurence's use of narrative techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, memory, and symbolism deepens the reader's understanding of the characters' inner lives and the emotional textures of their relationships.
- The novel contributes to feminist literary discourse by presenting an alternative to the idealized mother figure, and portraying motherhood as a multifaceted and evolving experience.

### 8.2 Implications for Understanding Mother-Daughter Relationships

The findings of this research have broader implications for the understanding of mother-daughter relationships in literature and society. Margaret Laurence's depiction challenges traditional norms and embraces the reality of emotional complexity, cultural dissonance and the struggle for selfhood within maternal bonds.

By showing Morag's growth from a daughter shaped by loss and silence to a mother striving to break that cycle, Laurence invites readers to reconsider the inherited roles and responsibilities tied to motherhood. Her work illustrates that maternal relationships are not fixed but dynamic, influenced by context, memory, and personal choice.

Furthermore, the representation of intergenerational conflict and cultural hybridity, especially through Pique's Métis identity, encourages reflection on how identity and belonging are negotiated through maternal lineage, particularly in postcolonial societies.

### 8.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study opens several avenues for future exploration:

- A comparative study of mother-daughter dynamics in other Canadian or postcolonial women's literature could deepen our understanding of how cultural context reshapes maternal narratives.
- Further research into Pique's character development in the novel's later stages could offer insights into the long-term effects of maternal influence from the child's perspective.
- Interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate psychology, gender studies, and Indigenous studies may provide a richer, more holistic understanding of the emotional and cultural dimensions of motherhood.
- An exploration of male parental figures and their indirect influence on mother-daughter relationships in *The Diviners* and Laurence's other works would also add depth to discussions on family dynamics and gender roles.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Excerpts from *The Diviners* Relevant to Mother-Daughter Themes

- Selected passages illustrating Morag's memories of her mother.
- Excerpts from Morag's interactions with her daughter, Pique.
- Descriptions of emotional distance and reflection on motherhood.

Appendix B: Timeline of Morag Gunn’s Life Events

Life Stage	Event
Childhood	Loss of parents, raised by Christie and Prin Logan
Adolescence	Identity conflicts, early expressions of independence
Adulthood	Career development, relationships, motherhood
Later Life	Reflection, reconciliation attempts with Pique

Appendix C: Thematic Chart of Motherhood in *The Diviners*

Theme	Description	Example
Abandonment	Early loss of biological mother and emotional impact	Morag’s longing for maternal connection
Emotional Distance	Communication gap between Morag and Pique	Pique’s departure and letters
Identity and Heritage	Struggle to define self without maternal guidance	Morag’s introspection and writings
Intergenerational Patterns	Repetition of emotional estrangement across generations	Similarities between Morag and her mother, and Morag and Pique

Appendix D: Critical Questions Used in Literary Analysis

1. How does Laurence depict the psychological effects of maternal absence on Morag?
2. In what ways does Morag repeat or resist her mother’s patterns in her own parenting?
3. What role does culture and Canadian history play in shaping maternal expectations?
4. How do narrative techniques (memory, flashbacks) enhance the exploration of motherhood?

Appendix E: Summary of Feminist Literary Theories Applied

Theory	Key Thinker(s)	Relevance to the Novel
Psychoanalytic Theory	Sigmund Freud, Nancy Chodorow	Explains maternal influence on identity formation
Feminist Criticism	Adrienne Rich, Elaine Showalter	Frames the novel within women's literary tradition and motherhood
Postcolonial Feminism	Chandra Talpade Mohanty	Interrogates intersections of race, gender, and colonial context