

**CULTURAL AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN MICHAEL
ONDATJEE'S *ANIL'S GHOST***

A project work submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of
Master of Arts in English Literature

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project work entitled, “**Cultural and identity crisis in Michael Ondaatje’s Anil’s Ghost** ,” submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **Master of Arts in English Literature** is a record of original research work done by **M.POWNIKA (Reg. No. B8T15955)** during the period (June 2018 - April 2020) of his study in Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam under my supervision and guidance and the project has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or similar title to any candidate of any University.

Signature of the Guide

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(Rev. Fr. ISSAC PJ

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work entitled, “**Cultural and identity crisis in Michael Ondaatje Anil’s Ghost,**” submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of **Master of Arts in English Literature** is a record of original research work done by me during the period (June 2018 – April 2020) under the supervision and guidance of **Miss. M. BARVEEN FATHIMA**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam and that it has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or similar title to any candidate of any University.

Signature of the Candidate

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the way in which the interdependence of the representation and perception of reality is exemplified and questioned in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil Ghost* (2000).

As we enter this work of resistance literature by way of an omniscient narrator, we enter not just the geographical space and culture history of Sri Lanka, but find ourselves taking part in the daily struggle of the people to survive, to identify and do justice to the many dead in the conflict between ethnic groups and the government.

This fragmentation of the narrative structure – casting doubt on the conflicting relationships established between the characters' present and the past, between Western and Eastern values in relation to the concept of truth, the search for lost identity and love – highlights still further the interchangeability of representations and perceptions of reality.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Title	Page No.
I	Introduction	7
II	Elements of Anil's Ghost	14
III	Cutural and identity crisis	19
IV	Conculsion	30
	Works Cited	34

Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

Canadian literature means a back ground of multiple lingual cultures *Canadian English, Canadian French, Canadian Gaelic. The Geographical and Historical* aspect influence many writes. The famous *Indigenous literature* as started to being in Canada itself. However, Canadian gives less important to language acknowledge such as Canadian Gaelic. However in recent decades in Canada have been highly immigrants from other countries. Since **1980's** Canada's ethnic and cultural diversity has been openly reflected in this literature. Many prominent writers give much important to minority, identity, and cultural differences. Canadian literature and its history were beyond our imagination. The first editor of University of Columbia is George Wood Cock. The university of Librarians *Inglis Bell and Neal Harlow* to have critical discussion on Canadian writing. It was in *Autumn* 1959 first issues of Canadian Literature was published while people predicated that this wood question the existence of a national literature and journal will succeed only after several issues. Nevertheless, wood cock most personal style his international range of contacts. And his previous experience asserts success of journal. The birth of innumerable and skilful writers emerged by the time of *1960's and 1970's*. Which include "*Margaret at wood, Margaret Lawrence, Mordecai Richer*" Who had critical discussion of Canadian Writing *Donald Slephens* who is a specialist Canadian's study and worked as assistant editor of wood cock in the beginning of 1957 until 1977. It was wood cock effect and his commitment with high seriousness that brought a tremendous development and academic interest in the Canadian studies. After accomplishing seventy three issues he retired 1977.

After the retirement of wood cock UBC invited W.H New as the new editor of the journal. W.H.New had been worked as assistant editor at Canadian literature since 1965 and a respected voice in literary criticism. He is the one who has and expertise vision and reputation to assure the continued success of the journal and promoted new development in Canadian literatures. He adapted new techniques that resolve the associate editors. *Eva Marie Kroller and Laurie Ricou*, he planned special issue on the areas they were under represent in Canadian Literature. As a result of this many

writings including *Asian Canadians Writing* and *Caribbean Canadian Writing* and other minority literature emerged 1986, W.H New has been elected as a fellow of Royal society of Canada 1986. In the year 1995 he stepped down after seventy-two issues and eighteen years as editor W.H.New has been named by the governors as on order Canada by 2007.

The Canadian novel takes an altogether W.H.New turn in the 1960's with the appearance of women novelists like Margaret Atwood and Margaret Laurence who tend to write more as women. Since 1900, Canadian novels have tended towards stricter realism, but have remained predominantly regional and many writers have been women. Some critics found the major development in nineteenth century Canadian fiction in the romance, a form that typically glorifies the deeds and personalities of the past. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, however the dominant pattern in Canadian fiction was the depiction and celebration of the wilderness – a depiction that denied and personalities the new society's increasingly urban face. As Atwood says, "*women cannot be ignored in Canadian Literature. You can't ignore them*" (salat 62)

Atwood is a writer worth reading because she is complex enough to sustain varied interpretative approaches which can elucidate, but not finally delimit the free-play of the work of the *poet, novelist, short story writer and critic*. (Davidson and Cathy 14) *Margaret Eleanor Peggy Atwood is a novelist, poet, critic and a pioneer of Canadian women writer*. She is noted for her feministic ideas and mythological themes. Atwood's work has been regarded as a barometer of feminist thought. She is acclaimed for her talent for portraying both personal and worldly problems of universal concern. Atwood was born in *Ottawa to Carl Atwood and Margaret Dorothy Killam* on 9 November 18, 1939 at the *Ottawa General Hospital*, Canada. In 1959, she graduated from the *Leaside High school* with English award, a university-entrance scholarship, and an award for good citizens. Having won the *Woodrow Wilson Fellowship*, she became a graduate student at *Radcliffe College*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, for where she received her master degree in Arts in 1962. She has held

a variety of academic posts and has been writer-in-residence at numerous Canadian and American universities.

Margaret Eleanor Atwood was born on November 18, 1939 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. She is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, inventor, teacher, and environmental activist. She was notable works *Surfacing* (1972), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Cat's Eye* (1988), *Alias Grace* (2000), *The Blind Assassin* (2000), *Oryx and Crake* (2003), and *the Tent* (2006).

Alice Ann Munro was born on July 1931 at *Wingham, Ontario*, Canada. She is notable awards *Governor General's award* (1968, 1978, and, 1986), *Giller prize* (1998, 2004), *Man Booker International Prize* (2009), *Nobel Prize in Literature* (2013).

Jean Margaret Laurence CC was born on 18 July 1927 at *Neepawa, Canada*. He was a Canadian novelist and short story writers. Margaret Laurence notable works *The Stone Angle* and *Diviners*. His literary movement **Can Lit and Feminism**. He died on January 5, 1987 at *Lake field, Ontario, Canada*.

Stephen Leacock was born on 30 December 1869 *Swanmore, Hampshire, England*. He was educated upperCanada college. Stephen famous work *Sunshine sketches of a Little Town* and *Adventures with the idle Rich*. His *Achiement Lome Prience Medal*, *Fellow of the Royal society of Canada*. He was died on 28 March 1944 at *Toronto, Ontario, Canada*.

Michael Ondaatje was born in *Sri Lankan* on 12 September, 1943. He migrated to *England* in 1954, and in 1962 moved to *Canada* where he was lived ever since. He was educated at the *University of Toronto* and *Queen's university in Kingston, Ontario*, and began teaching at *York University in Toronto* in 1971. He promulgate a volume of memoir, *Running in the Family*, in 1983. His compilation of poetry consist of *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left Handed poems* (1981), which won the *Canadian Governor General's Award in 1971: The Cinnamon Peeler: Selected poems* (1981) and *Handwriting: poems* (1998).

Ondaatje's first novel, *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), is a fiction portraiture of jazz musician *Buddy Bolden*. *The English Patient* (1992), set in Italy at the Second World War, was joint winner of the *Booker Prize* for fiction and was contrived in to an Academy Award winning film in 1996. Michael Ondaatje lives in Toronto with his wife, Linda Spalding, with whom he edits the literary journal *Brick*. His contempt novels include **Divisadero (2007)**, **The Cat's Table (2011)** and **Warlight (2018)**. Ondaatje is, along with Margaret Atwood, one of Canada's most important contemporary writers and one of the counter's biggest cultural exports. First, he achieved significant recognition as a poet with early collection like **The Dainty Monesters(1967)**, **Rate Jelly(1980)** and his long poem, **The Man with Seven Toes(1969)**. More recently he was refunded to poetry with the publication of long poem, **The story (2005)**. Set in conjunction with water-color illustration by artist David Bolduca, this beautiful book aims to hoist funds for the world literacy project in Canada. Though meditations on childhood, love and mythology, these poems divulge obsession with language and rhythm that is accompanied later in his consistently economical, lyrical prose fiction. During this epoch, Ondaatje also produced a book of criticism – **Leonard Cohen (1970)** – and the films **Sons of Captain Poetry (1970)** about tangible poet Barrie Phillip Nichol, **Carr on Crime and Punishment (1972)** and **The Clinton Special (1974)**. Ondaatje has also complied a book of interviews with filmmaker Walter Murch (responsible for **The English Patient** among other things) entitled **The Conversations (2002)**.eventually, Ondaatje is conceivably preeminent understood not as poet on novelist, but as an artist who has drained in to question the very confines of such genres. In his humorously titled **The Collected Works of Billy the kid (1981)** we are treated to some of the formal exuberance and experimentation for which Ondaatje is critically treasured. As its author has affirmed, the book is not 'interested in the real Billy the Kid; often attributed to as a 'collage', the 'collected works' brings together, within a single, episodic narrative, songs, photographs, poetry, prose, interviews, a play, as well as the writer space of blank pages. Where the title of this text implies a 'complete' narrative of its hero, the events of the texts are ambiguous and fragmented. Its protagonists, Billy and Pat Garrett, are the product of plural perspective, an amalgamation of history and prodigy that ultimately favours

vagueness in place of the whole story. In his first novel, **Coming Through Slaughter (1976)**, Ondaatje continues his centre of attention on folk heroes, creating a fictionalized biography of Charles ‘Buddy’ Bolden (1876-1931), a renowned jazz musician. Here, Ondaatje thrives the formal experimentation of The collection Works to produce a prose poem that is also ‘*a parable of the twentieth century artist*’. Like Billy, buddy endures outside ‘official’ history and the narrative hints that this is a ‘life’ only available to us through music, stories and rumpus. As if to emphasize the blurred boundaries between real and fiction lives, Ondaatje himself makes an appearance as a character with text. Life and art, biography and fiction are not polar opposites in this text, but respectively constitutive leagues.

In Running in the Family (1983), Ondaatje turns away from American and Canada in order to investigate his own life and family history through a return to Sri Lanka. Drafted shortly after a visiting the country of his birth, the text, once more integrates different genres in a fragmentary collage of photographs, poem stories. If the boundary between autobiography and fiction is unravelled in **Coming Through Slaughter, Then In Running in the Family** it materialized to have been obliterated entirely. More recent work such as Handwriting (1998) and Anil’s Ghost see Ondaatje domicile increasing on the history and landscape of his native country. While early pieces like The Collected Works and Coming Through Slaughter led to accusations that Ondaatje as an ‘Americanized’ artist, his writing since the late 1980s reveals a growing preoccupation with the artist’s ‘roots’ and the politics of race and migration (Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka before setting in Canada).

In **The Skin of Lion (1987)** fictionalizes the lives of those migrants and minorities that engaged in the construction of Toronto in the early 1900s, but who have since been written out of the country’s official history. In this fascinating novel, Ondaatje bides on the work, labour, and energy endowed in Canada by those settlers who are anticipated as outsiders. In the *skin of a lion* is a philosophical investigation of the migrant stipulation. It is a novel about the wearing and the removal of masks. The shedding of skin, the transformations and translations of identity.

His next novel, *The English Patient* (1992), takes up these themes and issues in a more subtle, indirect manner. Ondaatje has said that the novel articulates ‘*All people born in one place who live in another place [and who] have lost their source*’. In the place of origins and sources, we are offered fragments of narratives, fragment of buildings, fragments of lives. While Ondaatje’s early work was without suspicion critically successful, it was **The English Patient**, a work that has also been translated into a successful film, that brought the author true international frame. Set in a villa in northern Florence, **The English Patient** observes the tumultuous events at the end of Second World War from the ‘Margins’. The haunting, harrowing yet compelling narrative spirals around one woman (Hana) and three men, Caravaggio (also the name of a key character in *The Skin of the Lion*), Kip and the English patient of the title. The mysterious, nameless protagonist is confined to an upstairs bedroom after receiving horrific burns in a plane crash. Physically immobile, it is through his restless, drifting memory that the story of the victim’s past emerges through a series of teasing fragments that takes us on an intimate journey between continental Europe and the African continent.

Anil’s Ghost (2000), Ondaatje’s much anticipated follow-up to ***The English Patient***, returns us once more to the author’s Sri Lankan homeland. Here the backdrop shifts from European World War to South Asian Civil War and the horrors and traumas of post-colonial violence. The novel tells the story of Anil Tissera, a forensic anthropologist who has trained in the United States and in England. Anil returns to Sri Lanka to investigate a series of politically motivated murders on the island. Paired up with anthropologist, Sarath Diyasena, it is the discovery of human remains in the Bandarawela caves that drives their quest for the truth and which haunts both the novel and its war-torn landscape. The novel confirms his status as one of the world’s leading storytellers.

Ondaatje’s next novel, ***Divisadero*** (2007), takes its name from a street in *San Francisco*, and is concerned with the crossing between what otherwise seem divided narratives. In the words of Ondaatje, it’s a story where each half reflects the other. One half focuses on a farm in *California*, the other on *Southern France* before the

outbreak of *World War I*. But there is also internal division. The first narrative describes the disintegration of an already fragile family embrace a father, his biological daughter {Anna}, an adopted girl {Claire} and an orphaned boy {Coop}. It is this story of division that reaches throughout the novel as Anna slowly discovers when she traces the life of writer Lucien Segura in Europe. Ondaatje's first novel in seven years, it received a mixed critical reception, with many praising Ondaatje's writing style, but with some charging about the contrived connections between the two parts.

CHAPTER II

Elements of Anil's Ghost

The titular protagonist of **Anil's Ghost**, Anil is a Sri Lankan woman who left her native country for study in Britain to become a forensic pathologist in the United Kingdom and then eventually the United States on a scholarship. She returns to Sri Lanka in the midst of its merciless civil war with her newly learned skills as part of a Human Rights Investigation by the United Nation along with a group of people. During her investigation, she finds a strange, unidentified skeleton of a recently murdered man in an ancient burial ground which is also a government protected zone. Believing the murdered to be politically motivated. It leads her to attempt to advocate and bring justice to all the nameless victims of the civil war currently taking place in Sri Lanka.

"Anil's Ghost" follows the life of Anil Tissera, a native Sri Lankan who left to study in Britain and then the United State on a scholarship.

This story revolves around Anil Tissera who is a brilliant, young woman. The story opens up in early march as Anil arrives in Sri Lankan after 15- year absence abroad. After having outside the country, she finally returns to her homeland. Her visit comes as a result of the increasing number of deaths in Sri Lankan from all the warring sides in the 1980's civil war. In that journey her companion is an archaeologist Sarath, who helps her in the expedition. On their expedition, Anil notices that the bones of a certain skeleton do not seem to be 6th century like the rest which leads her to conclude that the skeleton must be a recent death. Unsure where Sarath's political allegiance lies, Anil is sceptical of his help, but agrees to do it anyway.

Along their journey to identify the skeleton, nicknamed Sailor, Anil becomes increasingly sceptical of Sarath on her quest to find the truth. She begins to question his motives and sees his comments as a hint for to censor herself since their discovery would implicate the Sri Lankan government in the death of Sailor. In their enquiry they meet Gamini, an emergency doctor. Gamini is brother of Sarath. She finds out that Gamini has an involvement in the political dynamics of the country. He tells them about the quotidian

atrocities faced by the people in the face of the war. Later, Anil and Sarath set out to identify him with the help of Sarath, former teacher Palipana, hoping to have him confirm their suspicions. Palipana suggests that having a reconstruction of the face done so that others might identify him. Given the nature of the security on the site where the body was found, the evidence points to the government being involved in the man's death. Though Anil remains suspicious of Sarath, she accepts his help and takes Palipana's advice, connecting with the sculptor-cum-drunkard Ananda in the small village Galapitigama. They agree to do so and head on to a small village named Galapitigama.

There Anil and Sarath meet Gamini, an emergency doctor. She discovers that he is intricately involved in the counter's affair and daily struggles to save the lives of numerous victims. Gamini helps them with a fellow Sri Lankan whose hands have been nailed to a rod, and tells them about the various atrocities faced as a result of the civil war. Later Anil and Sarath meet advice of Palipana, hoping that he will be able to reconstruct the face of the sailor for them. Ananda does eventually produce the likeness, though the toll of that effort drives him after some days, despite Anil's impatience attempts suicide, only to be rescued by an intuitive and quick thinking Anil. Anil and Sarath eventually are able to identify the sailor in the small village.

Sarath and Anil finally identify the sailor as Ruwan Kumura, a former toddy tapper turned mineworker. He was accused of being a rebel sympathizer and taken away. When Sarath disappears, Anil goes to Colombo. As Anil prepares a report to present to the authorities, claiming the skeleton as a recent death, and therefore evidence of state or state-sponsored terrorism, the skeleton of the sailor disappears. Frustrated, she goes on with her presentation, using another skeleton, but is upset when Sarath arrives after a lengthy and mysterious absence to ridicule her claims with the skeleton she has. Angry and betrayed, on her way out Anil is frequently stopped and inspected, and her belongings and research seized, such that by the time she leaves the building she is left with nothing. Outside, she meets Sarath, who surprises her with the body of the sailor that he has placed in a van. Sarath instructs Anil to prepare a fake report for the government and to leave the country the next morning on a plane that he arranged. Relieved, Anil does so in the hope that the evidence will be sufficient. Sarath's actions, however, have severe consequences, leading

ultimately to his death. The novel ends with Ananda returning to the sacred duty of painting the eyes on a reconstructed the eyes of a Buddha statue.

Character

- Anil Tissera
- Sarath Diyasena
- Palipana
- Ananda
- Gamini
- Salior

Anil Tissera

She is a young Sri Lankan woman who has been absent from her homeland for 15-years for study in Britain become a forensic pathologist in the United Kingdom and then eventually the United States on a scholarship and at the time of the novel, she is 33 years old. She returns to Sri Lanka with an international human rights organization in order to research various murders that are connected to the civil war. Anil starts her works alongside a local official Sarath. Together they are determined to discover the identity of Sailor, a murder victim's skeleton. Throughout the novel, there are various references to Anil's life in America as well as in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka she had been a prodigal swimmer but left to pursue an education in the west. Anil is an Orphan, as both her parents passed away in car crash several years earlier. During her stay in America, she became involved in a relationship as she tries to cope with the destruction in Sri Lanka.

Sarath Diyasena

He is a local official who works with Anil to investigate the string of murders in Sri Lanka. His character often seems distant and tortured due to his personal history. His wife died and the narrative later confirms that she committed suicide. Additionally, his political affiliations are ambiguous throughout a majority of the novel and it is unclear if he is a friend or foe to Anil's investigation. During their investigation, Sarath seeks

guidance from a former teacher, Palipana. By the conclusion of the novel, Sarath can be seen as a martyr. He places his own safety in jeopardy to assure Anil's investigation and so his loyalty to justice and morality are validated.

Palipana

He is an epigraphist and a former teacher to Sarath. Palipana lives much like a hermit in what appear to be ruins near Anuradhapura, an ancient capital of Sir Lanka, with his niece. Though he is now blind he had once been Sarath's most challenging instructor. Anil and Sarath seek guidance from him with their investigation and he instructs them to find a sculptor/painter to recreate Sailor's face. The conclusion of the novel is Palipana.

Ananda

He was once a sculptor and painter who partook in a traditional ceremony of painting eyes on statues to give them life. However he is now a drunk, due to the disappearance of his wife, Sirissa, amidst the other atrocities of the war. He is hired by Anil and Sarath to recreate Sailor's face. Ananda often clashes with Anil but helps her nonetheless to give the anonymous victim a face he gives it a peaceful face because that is the peace he wishes for his disappeared wife. Shortly after the face's completion, he slashes his throat in a suicidal attempt, only to be rescued by Anil's and Sarath's efforts.

Gamini

He is also known as "The Mouse", is Sarath's younger brother. He is an efficient doctor, who since a young age has been living in Sarath's shadow. He helps Anil and Sarath care for a man named Gunesena who they found brutally wounded on a road. Gamini had been in love with Sarath's wife and attended to her when she was rushed to the hospital during her suicide. He was there with her when she died. After being left by

his own wife he spends the vast majority of his time in the Emergency Services department of the hospital, even sleeping there. He is also addicted to speed.

Sailor

“Sailor” is the nickname Anil and Sarath give to the deceased man they find in the burial ground. Throughout the novel, strange things happen to people around Sailor, and Anil believes there is something more to the dead man.

Climax

As Anil prepares a report to present to the authorities, claiming the skeleton as a recent death, and therefore evidence of state or state-sponsored terrorism, the skeleton of Skeleton of Sailor disappears. Frustrated, she goes on with her presentation, using another skeleton, but is upset when Sarath arrives after a lengthy and mysterious absence to ridicule her efforts and claim that she cannot back up her claims with the skeleton she has. Angry and betrayed, on her way out Anil is frequently stopped and inspected, on her belongings and research seized, such that by the time she leaves the building she is left with nothing. Outside, she meets Sarath, who surprise her with the body of Sailor that he has placed in a van. Sarath instructs Anil to prepare a fake report for the government and then leave the country the next morning on a plane that he arranged. Relieved, Anil does so in the hope that the evidence will be sufficient. Sarath’s actions, however, have severe consequences, leading ultimately to his death. The novel ends with Ananda sculpting the eyes of a Buddha statue.

CHAPTER-III

Cultural and identity crisis in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*

Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost*, provides an examination of identity reflective of the cultural clashes that are an inevitable consequence of such an interweaving of nationalities, histories, and border divisions. In his discussion in *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha states that.

“the very concepts of homogenous national cultures are in a profound process of redefinition there is overwhelming evidence of a more transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities” (5).

Bhabha's work mirrors the cultural diaspora that is a result of the contemporary move towards Internationalism. His reference to 'imagined communities' echoes the title of Benedict Anderson's influential book of the same name, and opens up the possibility of 'nation' and 'nationalism' as being constructed modes of identification.

Ondaatje explores the notion of nationality as just such a construct and examines the roles played by syncretism and hybridity through the discourse of *Anil's Ghost*. This is a novel that moves beyond interpretation as a post-colonial literature of 'resistance' to challenge traditional perceptions of 'Self' and 'Other,' incorporating and transgressing boundaries in a way that invites interrogation from a transnational perspective. As long ago as 1916, the American intellectual Randolph Bourne wrote a piece entitled 'Trans-National America.' In it Bourne urges his readers to reject the 'melting pot' metaphor, which he says will result in a culture that is 'washed out into a tasteless, colorless fluid of uniformity' (1736), he envisages instead a world in which a variety of cultures co-exist, "inextricably mingled, yet not homogeneous. They merge but they do not fuse" (1737). This approach is very similar to the concept of multiculturalism in Canada defies a scription to any one national culture, thus rendering it applicable in the context of Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, in respect of the influence of acculturation on Ondaatje's construction of identity.

The central character of the novel, Anil Tissera, is a female forensic pathologist, who is born in Sri Lanka and educated in the West, she returns to the country for the first time in fifteen years to investigate 'unknown extrajudicial executions' (18) on behalf of the United Nations that are working with a local archaeologist Sarath Diyasena. Their discovery of a recently interred skeleton in an ancient burial ground points to a government killing, a fact that places them both in danger, but despite this Anil is determined to identify the skeleton she has nicknamed 'Sailor.' Closer examination of Ondaatje's construction of Anil Tissera raises a number of points, such as she is Westernized. She has an adopted masculine name, which we learn she bought for herself from her brother; she is a scientist and spokesperson for the United Nations which is a combination of factors which render her the antithesis of Gayatri Spivak's 'subaltern woman'. From a post-colonial perspective, hers is a voice that not only breaks the silence previously imposed by an Imperialist discourse, but also speaks for those silenced by the neo-colonialist ideology that Ondaatje exposes in his examination of the war in Sri Lanka. The language of trans-nationalism, which Ondaatje speaks through Anil, incorporates the contradictions and paradoxes that are displayed in human and cultural diversity.

However, neither a postmodern, nor a postcolonial perspective or indeed the point of intersection between, is sufficient to encompass the multivalent integration of ideologies and cultures that form the fluid whole that is Anil Tissera. Hers is, more accurately, a transnational perspective. She does indeed cross and re-cross many ideological boundaries, but she does so as a migrant returning to her once colonial homeland. This is not to say that Anil is empty of any national identity at all, but rather that her multiculturalism demonstrates the possibility of a fundamental parity between various nationalist discourses, ascribing multi valency to each of the cultures she encounters. The examination of Ondaatje's work from a transnational approach uncovers some of the clashes that occur between national cultures and the ambivalence inherent in a multicultural identity such as that of Anil's.

The character of Anil Tissera occupies a 'Dis-located' position, in terms of her name, her nationality and her family in problematizing notions of individual identity, Ondaatje explores the concept of 'Self' as something constructed, and yet whole

and realizable. In other words, Ondaatje reveals Anil's transnational nature as being a continually changing mixture of a variety of cultures, which incorporates, encompasses and contains various fragments in one unified being. He examines anxieties about the way in which we construct our own personal identity in terms of name, language and culture. Robert Kroetsch describes the problem of identity as

“not so much that of knowing one’s identity as it is that of how to relate that newly evolving identity to its inherited or ‘given’ names. And the first technique might be simply to hold those names in suspension, to let the identity speak itself out of a willed namelessness” (Anil’s Ghost 51).

For Ondaatje, it appears that it is possible, indeed necessary, to move beyond fixed expressions of identification in order to perceive of identity in terms of a process of construction. Frank Schulze-Engler speaks of “a veritable maze of globalized spaces in-between, not between the ‘West’ and ‘the rest’, however, but between innumerable intertwined histories that at one stage or another have all been caught up in modernity and yet have produced a unique reality of their own” (Changing 13). Ondaatje focuses in his work on the complications that arise from just such a multicultural reality, exposing the gaps, but also providing structures of contact and exchange that confront the interwoven nature of an increasingly syncretized and hybridized global community. His voice is one of those involved in re-defining the boundaries, speaking from beyond preconceptions of the other and writing back to the West, and reconfiguring the ‘postcolonial’ perspective into one of ‘transnationalism’.

Anil’s Ghost provides a forum for the expression of a range of cultural identities one in which the postcolonial voice does not simply speak from the margins, but is represented as an integrated component of a transnational identity.

Kroetsch suggests that “it is possible that the old obsessive notion of identity, of ego, is itself a spent fiction” (Unhiding 63), and for Ondaatje this does indeed appear to be so. He calls into question the possibility of a definitive view of identity or identification, and denies the fixity of identity that is inscribed in the neo-colonial action of naming. As Stuart Hall points out, “identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point but an ambivalent point”(16). For Ondaatje identity either personal or

public, individual or national is always provisional and shifting his work continually crosses and re-crosses the boundaries between real and fictional identification.

The characters of *Anil's Ghost* are often placed between these lines of demarcation in liminal zones of namelessness and placelessness, becoming situated paradoxically by their position as dislocated. Clearly, names and namelessness are central to Ondaatje's problematizing of identity: he points out in the acknowledgements section of his semi-autobiographical work, *Running in the Family*, that the use of names "may give an air of authenticity" (206). In other words, names are capable of providing verification; they have the power to distinguish, substantiate and confirm, and above all they confer identity and establish identification. To be named, therefore, is to belong, to be located: Rocio Davis comments that "not to know and belong to a family or have a role in history is to be denied the very basis of identity" (267). Ondaatje confronts this denial of the Victoria Cook, "Exploring Transnational Identities in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*" foundations of identity when he examines the plight of 'the disappeared' through the text of *Anil's Ghost*. Anil feels that by attempting to establish the identity of the skeleton 'Sailor' and find the family to whom he belongs, she will be locating all those who Sailor represents: "who was this skeleton? This representative of all those lost voices. To give him a name would name the rest" (56). In this sense to be nameless is, indeed, to be without an identity, a 'lost voice' that must be 'called' back into existence. 'Sailor' is representative of all who cannot name themselves and who replay on others to locate them, or call them into being. Some of the implications of naming in relation to identity are foregrounded in Anil's defiant act of self-naming. Anil was not the name given to her by her parents, but one that she acquired for herself from her brother: She had been given two entirely inappropriate names and very early began to desire "Anil which was her brother's unused second name. She had tried to buy it from him when she was twelve years old, offering to support him in all family arguments. He would not commit himself to the trade though he knew she wanted the name more than anything else. Finally the siblings worked out a trade between them. After that she allowed no other first names on her passports or school reports or application forms. Later when she recalled her childhood, it was the hunger of not having that name and the joy of getting it that she remembered most. Everything about the name pleased her, its slim, stripped-

down quality, its feminine air, even though it was considered a male name. Twenty years later she felt the same about it. She'd hunted down the desired name like a specific lover she had seen and wanted, tempted by nothing else along the way. (67-68)

For Ondaatje, names and identities are not fixed entities, but cultural and ideological constructions. Through choosing a new name for herself, Anil takes on a new identity; she becomes a 'stranger' to her past 'self' to the person she was before she became 'Anil'. We are not told the name she was known by for the first twelve years of her life. In fact, prior to becoming Anil, she remains un-identified; missing a name, she is akin to the nameless skeleton Sailor. In acquiring her name Anil ruptures the boundary between Self and Other. She does not merely take on a new mask or disguise, but is recreated, defining herself through the trade with her brother. It is significant that Anil does not choose a name at random; rather she desires one that she already has a relationship with, one that belongs both to her brother and to the grandfather she has never known. Anil's gesture is not only one that asserts her independence, but it is also a liberating and self-creating action that affirms her identification with her ancestry, and assimilates her origins into her new persona. Furthermore, it demonstrates a syncreticity and hybridity that is involved in the construction of identity, and is revealed through a transnational examination of this exploration of naming. From a transnational perspective Ondaatje constructs Anil's personal identity as one that defines the individual in terms of a state of self-hood; thus the private persona stands as a figurative representation of nation, and as such individual identity is subject to the effects of transnationalism.

In the struggle to gain her chosen identity, Anil trades that which she possesses, confirming that there is a price in the liberation from 'other' into self-hood. However, this deal is negotiated and agreed by both parties; her brother gains "one hundred saved rupees, a pen set he had been eyeing for some time, a tin of fifty Gold Leaf cigarettes she had found, and a sexual favor he had demanded in the last hours of the impasse" (68). It is clear from this quotation that this exploration of identity through the acquisition of a name has other complex elements of transgression; for example, there are indications of incest, and the challenging of constructions of gender. Anil, after all, 'was considered a male name' (68) and perhaps reflects a 'masculine' side to her identity that is revealed further in her choice of a career as a forensic scientist, one that is also seen as

predominantly masculine. Anne McClintock suggests that in imperial terms naming is a 'male prerogative'(26), and that in colonial discourse "the world is feminized and spatially spread for male exploration to explorers called unknown lands 'virgin' territory" (23-24): she points out that by "naming 'new' lands, male imperials mark them as their own" (29). As such, Ondaatje blurs the boundaries of gender in his construction of the character of Anil Tissera; by naming herself, she claims the territory of her identity, her own state of self-hood, in what can be construed as not only a neo-colonial, but also a gendered, masculine, action.

Anil abjures the position of Spivak's gendered subaltern through her rejection of an imposed cultural identity and the traditional role of the colonial female. Instead she claims a syncreticgen Victoria Cook, "Exploring Transnational Identities in Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*" construction that assumes both male and female traits, and is transnational in nature, in that her individual state includes characteristics from areas that are traditionally constructed as either masculine or feminine. Thus, the concept of Anil's gendered self is one that is multiple, contradictory and fragmented in nature: in the novel, Anil makes it a point to "distinguish female and male traits as clearly as possible" (137) in her work; she loves 'being one of the boys' (147) and yet also appreciates that being a woman makes her "better at dealing with calamity in professional work than men" (137). In terms of gender, Ondaatje bestows on Anil "the peculiar freedoms of ambiguity rather than the fixity of one identity" (McClintock 174). This is reflected in the fact that, in the business deal to secure the purchase of her name, Anil's behavior is predominantly stereotypically masculine, and yet part of the price she pays is a 'sexual favor' that her brother demands.

This act of prostitution on Anil's part serves to underline her subordinate female status prior to gaining her name, but it also reveals an ancient form of feminist resistance to patriarchal control: by bartering her sexual services for profit (her desired name), Anil gains a measure of economic power and independence. Ondaatje posits here the possibility of an incestuous relationship between brother and sister, one which may be usefully examined from the perspective of transnationalism. In order to do this, it is necessary to first consider the relationship between nation and gender. McClintock points out that the etymology of the word 'nation' reveals it as stemming from national: to be

born, and that discussion regarding nations frequently centers on the semantic field of the familial and the domestic. She describes how we often refer to our 'homeland' and speak of nations in terms of 'motherlands' or 'fatherlands', we say that foreigners 'adopt' a new country and in Britain matters to do with immigration are dealt with by the 'Home Office' (357). Paul Gilroy also discusses how 'gender differences' are "extremely important in nation-building"; in fact he says, "it can be a nation only if the correct version of gender hierarchy has been established" (127). Anil can be seen to have adopted both male and female traits and, therefore, in her construction of a transnational identity, to incorporate the possibilities of both 'motherland' and 'fatherland' and their colonial offspring. Taking the trope of nation as familial and gendered one step further; Gilroy examines the relationship between 'diaspora' and masculinism and points out that there is a "close etymological relationship between the word diaspora and the word sperm" (126).

However, he also states that the alternative 'family term' for diaspora is the word 'spore' which allows for an 'asexual' method of reproduction, and he confirms that "diaspora can be used to conjure up both" (127). In the gendered 'family' of nation, then, the reproductive possibilities of diaspora may be seen to inseminate nation with nation to produce a hybridized cultural identity; or to reproduce asexually, through a process of fission from the originating culture, which results in the syncretism that is an essential part of transnationalism. The incestuous act between Anil and her brother may therefore be seen in the light of the conception of a new transnational identity, one that is not prohibited from inter-relationship by any barrier or taboo. Further, Gayle Rubin argues that according to the work of Levi-Strauss, the prohibition of incest ensures that sisters, daughters and mothers must be given in marriage, and thus creates a

'Wide network of relations' (173), a group of people who are connected together by a 'kinship Structure' (174): moreover as a result, "the incest taboo and the results of its application constitute the origin of culture, and is a prerequisite of culture" (176). Therefore she concludes that in order to succeed, "the feminist program must include a task even more onerous than the extermination of men; it must attempt to get rid of culture and substitute some entirely new phenomena on the face of the earth" (176). As Rubin concedes herself, it is neither probable nor feasible that there will be an eradication

of culture (or indeed of either men or women). However, Ondaatje demonstrates the possibility of if not removing at least transcending or breaching the divisions and boundaries between cultures. He does this by establishing the notion of identity as a process that involves continual cultural syncretism and hybridity, and by substituting the outmoded idea of a fixed cultural identity with the emerging concept of one that is truly transnational. The cultural anthropologist, David Schneider, in his book *American Kinship*, argues that in American culture, any sexual act outside of the husband-wife relationship is defined as “morally, and in some cases, legally, wrong”; he states that “between blood relatives such an act is “incest and Victoria Cook, “Exploring Transnational Identities in Ondaatje’s *Anil’s Ghost*” prohibited” (38). Although this argument relates specifically to ‘Western’ American, culture, it is applicable here in that Anil’s transnational identity incorporates her complicity with the West. By making an incestuous act a prerequisite for the purchase of Anil’s name, Ondaatje indicates that the origination of her transnationalism is the breaking of a taboo; to become transnational involves the transgression of the boundaries that differentiate between us and them, insider and outsider, national and international.

Ramon Gutierrez suggests that to have American nationality one must either be “born into the nation (the order of nature)” or enter it “through a legal process (the order of law) and become citizens through a process we call ‘naturalisation’ he confirms that “nature and law thus create citizens”(255). Ondaatje demonstrates that a transnational identity, such as that of Anil Tissera’s, is not created through either ‘nature’ or “law but comes into being outside of the accepted order that is required for belonging to a single nationality. In order to gain transnational” citizenship Anil moves beyond the traditional modes of national identification. As a ‘Trans-national’ then, Anil provides a figurative representation of the feminized nature of the land as an object of desire, the ‘earth mother’; and in taking possession of a male name she also subsumes something of the patriarchal role: “she’d hunted down the desired name like a specific lover she had seen and wanted, tempted by nothing else along the way” (68). In his book of poetry, *Handwriting*, Ondaatje describes “the way someone’s name holds terraces of character, contains all of our adventures together” (55). Anil’s name, her demand to define herself within and through that name, to name herself, reflects this poetic representation; viewed

from a transnational notion of syncretism, her name ‘holds’ her character. In this context it is significant that Anil has a fascination with names: her favorite rock star is “The Artist Formerly Known As?” (37), a celebrity who replaced his name with a symbol; and her questioning of her lover, Cullis, reveals that his middle name is Biggles, “as in Biggles Flies East and Biggles Wets His Bed?” (37). These two book titles, one genuine and one obviously fictitious, may be seen as indicative of some of Cullis’s characteristics; the true title, *Biggles Flies East*, alludes to Cullis’s involvement with Anil, while the invented one not only connotes him as being false and untruthful in nature, but also evokes a sense of childishness and insecurity.

Here Ondaatje’s problematizing of identity through naming takes on a playful irony in terms of a postcolonial, or more particularly a transnational perspective. “Anil had courted foreignness” (54) both literally and figuratively in her affair with Cullis Biggles Wright, named (as Anil points out) after the central protagonist ‘Biggles’ from the series of books by Captain W.E. Johns these are boys adventure stories which were very popular in the early part of the twentieth century.

Cullis's namesake ‘Biggles’ is a stereotypical representation of an English pilot and hero who fights for his country in the First World War. Anil’s association with Cullis therefore represents her ambivalent relationship with the West, in that she conducts a relationship with him and appreciates some of his qualities, but at the same time she refuses to be controlled or contained by him. Ironically it is Anil who constructs her own identity in the rejection of her original name and the appropriation of her new one. Cullis, on the other hand, accepts the identity given to him by his parents, he is named Biggles as his “dad grew up on his books” (37). Ondaatje’s reversal of the roles of colonizer and colonized is one that demonstrates the way in which power and control are no longer necessarily negotiated in line with traditional hierarchies and systems of authority. Anil and Cullis can be seen, therefore, to form a transnational relationship, which bears further analysis in that it spans the cultural delineation between East and West. Ondaatje empowers Anil through a transnational identity that encompasses both Western order and Eastern disorder; her Western proclivity towards naming and appropriation, and Eastern passion and impulsiveness leave her free to plunder Cullis both physically and emotionally. Cullis’s lack of freedom is implied in the ‘carefulness’ and worry that he

wears as protective "clothing which Anil attempts to 'strip off' and 'unbuckle'(263-64). The car in which he sits and his marriage, stand as metaphors for the constraints imposed on Cullis by a fixed cultural identity, boundaries that Anil's transnationalism has no difficulty in transgressing. In the self-construction of her identity, Anil is complicit, then, in allowing herself to be 'colonized' by Western culture. However, in exploring the effect of acculturation on individual identity, Ondaatje exposes some of the dichotomies between Eastern and West Victoria Cook, cultures in the conflicts that Anil experiences. Anil's brief, unsuccessful marriage to a Sri Lankan whilst studying in England is a significant episode in this context. Her husband is a controlling and jealous character: "at first this presented itself as sexual jealousy, then she saw it as an attempt to limit her research and studies. It was the first handcuff of marriage, and it almost buried her" (144). Anil's treatment of her marriage "as something illicit that deeply embarrassed her" (144) is paralleled in her subjugation of her Eastern cultural identity in favor of the West. However,

Ondaatje highlights acculturation as being an evolutionary process, rather than a product, in Anil's subsequent return to Sri Lanka. It is notable that Anil's husband remains nameless throughout the narrative and after the marriage is over Anil "would never say his name out loud" (144).

By refusing to name her husband, Anil erases him from the cartography of her life in an action reminiscent of the imperial map-makers that Ondaatje refers to in his mimetic reproduction of the National Atlas of Sri Lanka (39). The 'extract' from the Atlas concludes "There are pages of isobars and altitudes. There are no city name? There are no river names. No depiction of human life" (40-41). Here Ondaatje exposes the map as an usurpative imperialist tool, which may name "a territory into existence while simultaneously making the native population invisible" (Renger 112): the suggestion being that naming, like mapping, is an act of "cognitive appropriation that has never been innocent" (Jacobs 4). The effacement of her husband contrasts strongly with Anil's desire to name the skeleton of the Sri Lankan victim that she calls 'Sailor.' Thus in the action of naming, in Anil's emulation of imperial methods of control, Ondaatje demonstrates the construction of an individual's transnational identity as being one of transgression, process, and fluidity.

In conclusion, through his novel *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje problematizes notions of either individual or national identity as being fixed and immutable, adopting instead a perspective that considers such boundaries as both flexible and permeable. It is possible to conclude that Ondaatje offers a tri-phasic model of the process of acculturation, as examined through the construction of Anil Tissera's personal and cultural identity. Anil is initially dependent upon the cultural and individual identity given to her by her parents; however, she moves into an independent phase signaled by her desire for another name and her adoption of a different culture. Finally, Anil moves into the third phase of interdependency, when she returns to Sri Lanka developing a multicultural perspective that is transnational rather than global or universal in its construction.

CHAPTER-IV

Conclusion

Ondaatje location allows him to investigate the divergence and contradiction of the sort of identity that includes a colonial past and post-colonial present. Multifaceted cultural milieu creative writer are the problematic of geographical boundaries, horrors of wars, ethnic anxieties and its subsequent results of emotional violence causing painful traumas of love and compassion declaring the futility of wars and geographical barriers as love has no religion, no ethnicity, and no nationality but it only recognizes one value that is humanity. *Anil's Ghost* provides an enquiry into identity reflective of the cultural clashes that are inevitable consequence of such an interweaving of nationalities, histories and border divisions. *Anil's Ghost* is set amidst Sri Lanka's civil conflict, focused on a period in the mid 80s and early 90s when the government was combating both Tamil separatists and Sinhalese insurgents. Ondaatje is quick to point out that the novel is not only about his native Sri Lanka. It is a harrowing, tough and lush narrative driven by the search for truth. It is about all cultures that try to obliterate or bury that truth. Here Ondaatje has dealt with the two cultures of Sri Lanka undergoing in a vast fire of separatist groups and anticipated resistance from government to keep the Sri Lankan geography intact to form a united and integrated national identity. The chaotic political scenario in Sri Lanka and civil war indicated that 'national identity' within its geographical boundaries was in danger and could be challenged as it was divided in 'North' and 'South' where one can experience the 'trans-nationality' within Sri Lanka, where two culture were fighting for the supremacy. People like 'sailor' were deprived of their nationality and culture and were imposed to go unnamed, unidentifiable where whims of government repressed common people and protest of anti-government insurgent led to develop anti-nationalist discourse and identity fragmenting an unified national identity that is Sri Lanka.

Michael Ondaatje could be said to exemplify the type of transnational identity that provides the focus for this paper. Born to Dutch parents, in what was then Ceylon and is now Sri Lanka, his family ancestry has been described as a polyglot mixture of Dutch, English, Sinhalese, and Tamil his paternal grandfather was a wealthy tea planter in

Kegalle. At the age of ten, Ondaatje was sent to a public school, Dulwich College in London and at nineteen followed his older brother, Christopher, to Canada, where he took citizenship, went to university, married, and began his writing career. As a product of this somewhat 'colonial' background, Ondaatje's position enables him to explore, in depth, the conflicts and contradictions of the type of identity that incorporates a colonial past and a post-colonial present. Complex cultural backgrounds such as that of Ondaatje may be seen frequently to instigate a literature of dislocation and displacement.

In relation of the fragmentation of the narrative structure, we have seen that, even if "Anil's ghost is a fragmented collation of narratives and as it many stands of story slowly overlay one another, all its central characters become equally important, but their narratives can reach no clear conclusion" (barbour 187), this 'fragmented collation of narratives' and the inconclusiveness of the main characters are in the end mimesis itself-already defined as 'creative imitation' of reality, producing "significant totalities from scattered happenings" (compagnon131). In other words, the collection of narrative in the text expresses Ondaatje's cosmovision. As Georg (Lukacs) says, "every poetic structure is deeply determined, exactly in the compositional criteria which inspire it, by a certain way of conceiving the world" (77). Consequently, if the writer "needs to see the world in its mobile contradictoriness, to select as protagonist a human being in whose destiny the contraries cross each other" (Lukacs78), we perceive how much Anil has her destiny crossed by perceptions which are opposed to her own - not only by Sarath and Gamini, but also by other characters, in Sri Lanka and in the Western world. Thus, another of Lukacs's considerations is exemplified: "the more a conception of the world is deep, differentiated, nourished by concrete experiences the more plurisurfaced its compositive expression can become" (77-78). For, in order to express the human needs of his characters .The great writer must observe life with an understanding that is neither limited to the description of its exterior surface nor limited to putting in relief social phenomena: he must catch the intimate relationship between social necessity and surface happenings, building a plot which should be a poetic synthesis of this relationship, its concentrated expression. (Lukacs90). This poetic synthesis which a plot must offer, this intimate relationship between social necessity and surface events - so well expressed in

the discussions about reality and truth among the three main characters - is what Ondaatje's novel manages to build, in the final analysis. Therefore, if the confrontation of Anil's Sarath's and Gamini's epistemic worlds exemplifies the permeability and interdependence of the philosophical concepts of correspondence and coherence in relation to the modalities of representation and perception of reality, we as critics have only to agree that these hypotheses allow us to broaden our analyses and interpretations of literary discourse. As LuizCosta claims, in 'Realism and literature', in the same way as dream may have as subject matter happenings of the day before or lost in the farthest away childhood, thus also literary discourse may have as scene a near or distant, an extraverbal or verbal, a cultural or literary reality. We characterize realistic expression as that in which the features of a near, extraverbal and cultural reality prevail. (1974: 43) Still within this broad perspective - the second objective of our research - we are reminded of some of Walter's considerations, so relevant for their inclusiveness to the hypotheses raised in our theoretical minds in relation to the conception and perception of reality: Criticism seeks the tenor of truth (Wahrheitsgehalt) in a work of art; commentary, its factual tenor (Sachgehalt). The relation between them determines that fundamental law of literary writing according to which the more significant the tenor of truth of a work is, the more unapparently and intimately will it be tied to its factual tenor. If, in consequence, the works that reveal themselves to be more lasting are precisely those whose truth is deeply embedded in its factual tenor, then the data of the real in the work present themselves, in the course of this time span, all the more clearly to the eyes of the beholder the more they become extinguished in the world. As Benjamin proceeds, further on, for the poet, as well as for the public of his time, it is not exactly the existence, but, in truth, the meaning of the data of the real in the work which will always remain hidden. However, since the eternal of the work only stands out on the foundation of these data, all contemporary criticism, even if it is of the highest quality, comprises more the truth in movement than the truth in repose, more the temporal performance than the eternal being(1922). As contemporary critics, we could conclude that the perception of the different realities which are highlighted in Ondaatje's novel have "their tenor of truth" embedded in its "factual tenor", that is, in a truth in movement, within the temporal action of the novel as a chronicle of a country in which terror, fear and death prevail. The

truth in repose, the eternal in the work, which stands out only on the foundation of these data, can only be suggested, within the confines of this paper, as a consideration of issues that go beyond any frontiers created by man - identity, fraternity and love for one's native country.

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