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**RECONSIDERING THE SELF IN MICHAEL
ONDAATJE'S *IN THE SKIN OF A LION***

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافَعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً (100)﴾

(سورة النساء)

Dedication

This research is fully dedicated to all immigrants whom forced to live and go through the pain of identity lost.

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My full gratitude due:

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To my beloved sister Nadia who she stands by me when I am weak and she brighten things when they look for me bleak.

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To all the people in my life whom touch my heart.

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Abstract

Before the real city could be seen it had to be imagined. the way rumours and tell-tales were a kind of charting.

It is the 1920s, and Patrick Lewis has arrived in the crowded, lively city of Toronto, leaving behind his Canadian wilderness home. Immersed in the lives of the people who surround him - the immigrants building the city, as well as those who dreamed it into being - Patrick begins to learn, from their stories, the history of the city itself. And he has his own adventures: searching for missing millionaire, tunnelling beneath Lake Ontario, falling in love.

In the Skin of a Lion is Michael Ondaatje's sparkling predecessor to his Booker Prize-winning *The English Patient*. Here we encounter Hana the Orphaned girl and Caravaggio the thief for the first time, as well as some other characters, all lovingly portrayed.

In the Skin of a Lion is a novel that challenges the boundary between history and myth. It is a stunning modern classic.

Introduction

In the Skin of A Lion novel is about putting on and peeling off masks; the shedding of a skin and translation or transformation of identity during the Post-colonial period. M. Ondaatje is a Sri Lankan immigrant himself who has immigrated in the age of eighteen to Canada after several years of education in England. He faced all psychological obstacles and emotional issues as an immigrant. He experienced living with double identity and went through its transformation very well. So his experience influenced his perspective of immigration when he wrote his novel *In the skin of a lion*. Michael Ondaatje depicted Canada as a new land which went through early time of construction. He also portrays various working class characters; native or immigrants who are living in such life of poverty and living a changeable life style in the search of the self-image, identity and money. Also, the novel reflects in a vivid picture the way those characters are trying to integrate in to the society in the big city of Toronto.

Chapter One

1.1 Michael Ondaatje's Life and Career

Michael Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka on 12 September 1943. . He has been living in Canada since 1962 after moving from England where he had lived between 1954-1962. Michael Ondaatje studied at the University of Toronto and Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and began teaching at York University in Toronto in 1971. His main publications are, a volume of memoir, entitled *Running in the Family*, in 1983. He also has number of collections of poetry such as *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left Handed Poems* (1981). For the latter he received the Canadian Governor General's Award in 1971; *The Cinnamon Peeler: Selected Poems* (1989); and *Handwriting: Poems* (1998).¹

He wrote the *Coming Through Slaughter* in 1976, it is his first work that is a fictional portrait of jazz musician Buddy Bolden. *The English Patient* (1992) that set in Italy at the end of the World War II. he was a joint winner of the Booker Prize for Fiction and was made into an Academy Award-winning film in 1996. *Anil's Ghost* (2000), was set in Sri Lanka, it tells the story of an anthropologist young female who is investigating war crimes for an international human rights group .²

Michael Ondaatje lives with his wife Linda Spalding in Toronto. He edits the literary journal *Brick* with her. *Divisadero*(2007) is his new novel. He is along with Margaret Atwood, one of Canada's most important contemporary writers and one of the country's biggest cultural exports.³

Partly, Ondaatje is best known today as a novelist due to the phenomenal success of his Booker prize winning *The English Patient* (1992) and the recent one *Anil's Ghost* (2000). However, he achieved critical acclaim as a poet with early collections like *Rat Jelly* (1980), *The Dainty* (1967) and his long poem *The Man with Seven Toes* (1969). Michael Ondaatje has returned recently to poetry with the publication of his long poem, *The Story* (2005).⁴

Aims to raise funds for the World Literacy Project in Canada, he set alongside water colour illustrations this beautiful book by the artist David Bolducan. Meditations on childhood, love and mythology, these poems reveal a preoccupation with language and rhythm that is pursued later in his typically economical, lyrical prose fiction. Ondaatje also produced a book of criticism - Leonard Cohen (1970) during this period, and the film *Sons of Captain Poetry* (1970) about concrete poet bpNichol; *Carry on Crime and Punishment* (1972); and *The Clinton Special* (1974). Ondaatje has also gathered a book of interviews with filmmaker Walter Murch (responsible for *The English Patient* among other things) entitled *The Conversations* (2002).⁵

Basically, Ondaatje is perhaps best understood as an artist who has drawn into question the very limits of such genre not as poet or novelist. In his playfully 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 respected. As its author has stated, the book is not 'interested in the real Billy the Kid'.⁶

Frequently referred to as a 'collage', the 'collected works' brings together, within a single, songs, episodic narrative, photographs, Prose, poetry, a play, interviews, as well as the white space of blank pages. The title of this text implies a 'complete' narrative of its hero. The events of the text are fragmented and ambiguous. The protagonists, Billy and Pat Garrett are the product of plural perspectives, also a combination of history and legend that ultimately favours uncertainty in place of the whole story.⁷

Ondaatje continues In his first novel *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976) to focus on folk heroes, creating a fictionalised biography of Charles 'Buddy' Bolden (1876-1931), a legendary jazz musician. He develops the formal experimentation of *The Collected Works* to produce a prose poem that is also a legend of the twentieth century artist'. AS Billy, Buddy exists outside 'official' history and the narrative clues that this is a 'life' only available to us through music, stories and rumours.⁸

Just as if to highlight the darken boundaries between real and fictional lives, Ondaatje himself shows up as a character within the text. Art and life, fiction and biography are not polar opposites in this text, but together constitutive categories.⁹

Ondaatje, In *Running in the Family* (1983) turns away from Canada and America in order to question his own life and family history through a return to Sri Lanka. The text has been written shortly after a visiting the country of his birth and once more, blends different genres in a fragmentary collage of images, poems and stories. If the bounding line between autobiography and fiction is shredded in *Coming through Slaughter*, then in *Running in the Family* it seems to have been erased completely. More recent works such as *Handwriting* (1998) and *Anil's Ghost* show Ondaatje dwelling increasingly on the landscape and history of his native country.¹⁰

During the early pieces like *The Collected Works* and *Coming Through Slaughter* points out to accusations that Ondaatje was an 'Americanised' artist and his writing since the late 1980s announces a growing preoccupation with the artist's 'roots' and the politics of race and migration (Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka before settling in Canada).¹¹

In the *Skin of a Lion* (1987) transposes the lives of those migrants and minorities that took part in the construction of Toronto in the early 1900s, but who have since been written out of the country's official history. In this beautiful, painful novel Ondaatje dwells on the work, the labour, the energy invested in Canada by those settlers who are imagined as outsiders. In the *Skin of a Lion* is a deep exploration of the migrant condition. It is a novel about the wearing and the removal of masks; the transformations, shedding of skin and translations of identity.¹²

Ondaatje's next novel, *The English Patient* (1992), takes up these themes and issues in an indirect manner. He has said that the novel utter and express '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: fragments of buildings, fragments of narratives and fragments of lives. In the time Ondaatje's early work was without doubt critically successful, *The English Patient* was a work that has also been translated into a successful film, so that brought the author true international fame. *The English Patient* also observes the tumultuous events at the end of Second World War from the 'margins'.¹³

The haunting is compelling a narrative spirals around one woman (Hana) and three men: Kip and the English patient of the title, Caravaggio (also the name of a key character in *In the Skin of the Lion*) and the mysterious, nameless protagonist is confined to an upstairs bedroom after receiving horrific burns in a plane crash. Physically, 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 associate journey between continental of African and the continent Europe.¹⁴

Anil's Ghost (2000), Ondaatje's much anticipated backlash to *The English Patient*, it returns us once more to the author's Sri Lankan homeland. Here the action shifts from European World War to South Asian civil war traumas and the horrors of post-colonial violence. The novel tells the story of Anil Tissera, an argumentative anthropologist who has trained in England and United States. She returns to Sri Lanka to investigate a series of politically motivated crimes on the Island. She paired up with another anthropologist, Sarath Diasena. Furthermore, the discovery of human remains in the Bandarawela caves was the reason to drive their quest for the truth and which haunts both the novel and its war-torn landscape. Ondaatje's latest novel proves his status as one of the world's leading storytellers.¹⁵

The Ondaatje's most recent novel is *Divisadero* (2007). It takes its name from a street in San Francisco, and it is concerned with the intersections between what otherwise appears divided narratives. In Ondaatje's words, 'it's a story where each half reflects the other'. One half focuses on Southern France and the other on a farm in California before World War I. But there is also internal division. ¹⁶

The first narrative explain the disintegration of an already delicate family comprising a father, his biological daughter (Anna), an adopted girl (Claire) and an orphaned boy (Coop). It is this story of division that resounds throughout the novel as Anna slowly finds out when she traces the life of writer Lucien Segura in Europe. Ondaatje's first novel in about seven years has received many praising Ondaatje's writing style and mixed of critical reception. But with some complaining about the contrived connections between the two parts as well. ¹⁷

1.2 Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial literature has been "affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day". In India's case, this includes drama, poetry, and novels which have been written both during and after the British Raj or "Reign," which recovered a formal conclusion with Indian Independence in August 1947. Although writing from India and other formerly colonized countries such as Nigeria, Jamaica, Pakistan, and Singapore has different features, postcolonial literature shares some important concerns and characteristics. ¹⁸

Postcolonial writers use detailed descriptions of originating people, practices and places to oppose or "resist" the stereotypes, inaccuracies, and generalizations which the colonizers circulated in a legal, educational, social and political texts and settings. Similarly, authors such as Arundhati Roy reworks European art-forms like the novel to reflect original modes of invention and creation. They change imported

colonial art-forms structure and themes to combine the style of indigenous modes of creative expression, such as dramatic performances and oral poetry.¹⁹

The field of postcolonial literature has been a very wide but argumentative one. It is controversial not only to the heart of a subject that it deals with, but also regarding the value of the term of postcolonial itself. So, to understand postcolonial literature and its contexts, one has to understand the background of that literature first, since it has been a bearing ground for debates and criticism.²⁰

Postcolonialism field has led to the emanation of the postcolonial theory which has a main goal to inspect the relation of the coloniser and the colonized, to explain the various ways that the colonizer had affected the colonized.²¹

Further, Postcolonialism is a reverse movement against colonialism which employs power on natives to abuse their wealth. However, many say that postcolonialism is about the cultural and social changes that take place after colonialism, especially after the issuance of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978. This progressing interest in postcolonialism was backed by the publication of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989), which diminished the use of such terms, as: Third World, Commonwealth... etc.²²

The society and culture of colonized countries before colonization help us understand more of the colonial mechanisms and the new culture and society of the post-colony. Thus, the term of postcolonial may also include colonized countries or minorities that belong to the First World countries. However, the term "Commonwealth literature" assumes that only literature written in English or belongs to the "Empire" has gotten an importance.²³

Moreover, in the modern world, Postcolonialism is the representation of race, culture,, ethnicity, and identity where many countries became independent. At the

same time, many critics refer to it as the: “culture and cultural products influenced by imperialism from the moment of colonization until today”.²⁴

Postcolonial concerns are about the clash of cultures. As the editors of *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* state in the introduction to their collection, postcolonialism addresses all characteristic of the colonial process from the beginning of colonial contact. So, one could say it begins with the cultural clash of colonization. Repression and resistance, hybridity and differences all are having their start here.²⁵

Postcolonial literature reflects the transformation and restructuring. The concept-of postenlightenment notion of modernity began to pass through into the literature. It is hard, but some considerations have helped in composing a definition of postcolonial writing. These writings of postcolonial era are the technical literacy processes which allow colonized people to maintain their difference and increase resistance. At the same time, European colonial master and culture make effort to develop similar strategy to challenge contemporary global situation and neo colonial processes of domination.²⁶

Notes

¹ Douglas Arbour, *Michael Ondaatje*. New York: Twayne, 1993.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Jewinski, Ed. *Michael Ondaatje: Express Yourself Beautifully*. Toronto: ECW, 1994.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Steven Totosy de Zepetnek. *Comparative Cultural Studies and Michael Ondaatje's Writing*. Purdue University Press, 2005. pp. 6

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Gale, Cengage Learning. A Study Guide for Michael Ondaatje's "The Cinnamon Peeler". Gale, Cengage Learning. p. 3.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Thesen, Sharon. "Michael Ondaatje". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Lehmann, Sonja. "Transnational Identities in Michael Ondaatje's Fiction." *Strangers, Migrants, Exiles: Negotiating Identity in Literature*. Ed. Frauke Reitemeier. Germany: Gottingen University Press, 2012. 281.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Maiorani, Arianna. "Michael Ondaatje(1943-)." *Multicultural Writers Since 1945: An Ato– Z Guide*. Eds. Alba della Fazia Amoia, Bettina Liebowitz Knapp. USA:- Greenwood Press, 2004. 395.

¹⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. New York: Routledge, 1989,p.2

¹⁹ Boehmer, Ellek. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005,p.73.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid*,p.74.

²² C.L. Innes. "The Politics of Rewriting". *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature*. Eds. Chew, Shirly, and David Richards. Oxford: Blackwell, 2010,p.64.

²³ Gikandi, Simon. "Poststructuralism and postcolonial discourse". *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004,p.31.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Kamada, Roy Osamu. *Postcolonial Romanticisms: Landscape and the Possibilities of Inheritance*. New York: Peter Lang, 2010,p.24.

²⁶ *ibid.*

Chapter Two

Reconsidering the Self in *In the Skin of a Lion*

2.1. Introduction of the new world

After the new world of North America (Canada and the United States of America) had been discovered, a flow of immigrants from other countries began to arrive. In general, the history of immigrants to North America extends back to thousands of years. The first group of immigrants were called the pilgrims. During this period of immigration (pilgrimage), the newcomers were not seeking for land or money rather than a place with religion freedom. Dramatically, immigrants' arrival increased through the period between 1845-1900 and continues on up to nowadays. The majority of the early immigrants were originally from Europe, particularly Irish, German and English. Continuously, the flow continued from east Europe including Poland and south Europe such as Macedonia. North America became the dreamland for those newcomers and others to establish themselves and their identity precisely after the industrial revolution began in these countries during the nineteenth century.³

Furthermore, as the industrial revolution that burst during the nineteenth century brought millions of immigrants to North America. The construction and innovation of the big cities during the 20s- 30s convinced dreamers and laborers to migrate to those cities, one of these cities was Canada. Those migrants were playing an important role in bringing up a unique Canadian Culture, they were facing great challenges, self-conflict and complexities. They were leading distinct social life that attracted the attention of many observers to be concerned with the newly-constructed society. One of the observers was Michael Ondaatje; a Canadian, originally Sri-Lankan novelist.

2.2. The Impact of the Discovery of the New World on Man's Identity

Some consider *In the skin of a lion* a messy novel with interweaving stories and shifting views. In addition, in the case of the characters, there were some of the characters that introduced are discarded, where some others make slanting appearance through the novel with no much explanation beside the main characters. For example, Cato is a minor character we never see through the novel except through the revival of Alice and through his letter to her. R. Harris; the commissioner of public works even though he is a major character but mostly stayed in the background by the writer. At the same time, Michael Ondaatje centralises his focus on identity transformation and life changing process of other main characters as Patrick Lewis who is a main character. Patrick Lewis the native Canadian who is working as a searcher and fall in love with two women. Also Clara is the mistress of a millionaire and fall in love with Patrick at the same time. Moreover, Alice the nun who failed of a bridge and rescued by Nicholas Temelecoff the Macedonian immigrant who also take over the little girl Hana the daughter of Alice after the death of her mother. And the last of the main character that his integration conveyed his share of the theme is Caravaggio the Italian painter. However, the Analysis will Therefore, this research will shed light on the characters' attempt to identify themselves within their new world in the new world as depicted in the analysed novel.

According to Anselm Strauss (1969), human identity undergoes through a continuous process of change which can be called a mode of transformation. One phase of this process is identity transformation; it is a continuous operation and a series of changes that take place in a definite manner in individual(s) life. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that an individual manages to control and reduce this process and builds strategies to reach a sense of personal progression, the identity transformations are an inherent part of life history or personal experiences (STRAUSS 1969, P.93).⁶

Generally, people are born isolated but progressively begin to integrate to greater society consist of marginalized and powerful groups. This process of integration of a person becomes a deciding factor of his/her identity or status in that society. Human beings can be included in or excluded from the society, or either accepted and involved or rejected and disconnected as it is presented in a vivid picture by the author in the *in the skin of a lion*.⁷ The novel describes the unchanged hardships and journeys that the characters go through to assimilate within the new world or establish a newly-formed identity.

According to Anselm Strauss (1969), Experiences and life complex make an individual gradually changes his/her self-definitions (STRAUSS 1969, P.93).⁶ Likewise, and even though the novel is looked at from the attitude of other characters, Patrick Lewis is considered the central character even though he is a native Canadian(though we are not given any hints of his European origin) he encounters challenges and many difficult experiences trying to find himself and place in a large city when he migrates from the countryside. He starts his journey by searching for an identity in the big society. Back to his childhood, Patrick?

Lewis lived in isolated life because of a taciturn father and the lack of the motherly influences. Patrick's isolated life and insularity displayed through a metaphor for his psychological and emotional boundaries inside him.⁸

There was a wall in him that no one reached. Not even Clara, through she assumed it had deformed him. A tiny stone swallowed years back that had grown with him and which he carried around because he could not shed it. his motive for hiding it had probably extinguished itself years earlier... Patrick and his small unimportant stone. it had entered him at the wrong time in his life. Then it had been a flint of terror. He could have easily turned aside at the age of seven or twenty, and just spat it out and kept on walking, and forgotten it by the next street corner. Ondaatje 71

Thus, these reasons have weakened Patrick Lewis's emotional and crippled his linguistic capability to make him live in a nut shell like life. When Patrick was in the Union Station, '*Patrick sat on the bench and watched the tides of movement.... He spoke out his name and it struggled up in a hollow echo and was lost in the high air of Union Station. No one turned. They were in the belly of a whale.*'

Further, Ondaatje presented very well Patrick as a lost soul who is a searcher on a constant journey, who is searching for his self – image and identity in the big society. Chapter three *In The Skin of a Lion*, the writer ironically called it “The searcher “in which Patrick is searching for the millionaire Ambrose Small whose I believe is a metaphor to the lost soul, identity and vocation of Patrick Lewis. He is always looking for somethings as Ondaatje stated in his novel “*He searched out things, he collected things*” Ondaatje 157. The chapter presents Patrick a lonely young man who is isolated from the world that surrounded him. He inherited from his father being an Abashed man; which means someone who feels humiliated, embarrassed, ashamed and disconnected from the world around him. Further, the word suggests that there is a bad horizon inside him beyond what he couldn’t hop. Something empty, so when he is not aligned with others-whether Clara, Alice or other People, Patrick hears the sound within a space that compromises between him and the community. That space “*a gap of love.*” Ondaatje 157 theorize his separation feeling inside him. By the same token *In the skin of a lion*, the main title can be considered as another metaphor for Patrick’s perpetual search of identity.

In addition, Patrick is like Enkidu; the uncivilized, unfeeling man in the epic of Gilgamesh; a young priestess called Shamhat seduced him sexually for constant days. So that experience transformed Enkidu to become humanized and socialized person. Similarly, due to the lack of feminine figure and influence in Patrick’s life can explain why he becomes uncommunicative and shy person when he grows up, “*He normally took months to approach someone, and at the slightest rejection he would never go back*” Ondaatje 62.

The engagement of Patrick to Clara and Alice Gull in which pulls Patrick a way from his solitude and helps him to integrate even though he was disappointed, frustrated activist looked for the change through terrorism. The primary feminine influence on Patrick’s life when he reached maturity is Clara. She is the first ever female that Patrick has a love relationship with. Clara does not make an effort to get Patrick out of the Nutshell that he lives in. In the contrary, Alice Gull succeeds. The two women’s relationship set Patrick back on the pathway to move in his life. Further, Alice’s death has turned over Patrick’s life radically. He becomes a family person and the legal guardian of her daughter Hana. Moreover, Patrick’s behaviour and attitude

proves the transformation of Patrick's life and emotions towards women. After being a without mother, deprived country boy; he transformed to a sensitive new guy and integrates to wider society including feminine. He is not a women pursuer or predator . Alice finds him and forms a respectful relationship with him. Patrick is like a prism in which the other characters can be seen through. *"And he himself was nothing but a Prism that refracts their lives "Ondaatje 157.*

In addition, the industrial revolution that arose during 1920 in Canada is not just a construction to the buildings in the big cities, it is also a reconstruction for human identity, mind and thoughts. Alice Gull is another important character in the *in the skin of a lion* novel. As others, she goes through major changing, complex and mind transformation in her life. She was a nun before she was swept off the Bloor street Bridge in Toronto. Her fall off the bridge is coincidently and unexpectedly seized by a Macedonian immigrant called Temelecoff. Alice's fall of the bridge can be considered as a metaphor to her life and identity transformation and it is a turning point experience in her life style and thoughts. Alice new identity that she presupposes is being an actress, she is a good friend of Clara, also she met Cato and have a daughter with him called Hana then she shares her live with Patrick even though she knows that he loves Clara, *"He has come across a love story. This is only a love story. He does not wish for a plot and all its consequences. Let me stay in this field with Alice Gull..."*³

Further, Alice's identity transformation takes another turn than Patrick's. The disappearance of Alice after been rescued by Temelcoff can be consider the milestone of Alice's identity change. She took advantage from the disappearance to shape a new political identity. Her mind formed a new brand of ideology which is the brand of Marxism; is the system of economic and political thought developed by Karl Marx. It is the body of doctrine, belief that guides an individual, group or social movement or class. ¹² So, Alice starts then to care for the disadvantages. Alice's brand of Marxist ideology may be limited and misguided in the contrary, she is contributory in socializing Patrick throughout her compassion and warmth concern for humanity. She has a strong influence on Patrick mind. He became an activist. He took the role of being the voice of the poor and the manual laborers of working class people when he stood up right and confronted Rowland Harris; the commis-

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sioner of public works in different occasions. Alice's last stage of life ends accidentally and tragically, she dies from dynamite bomb when she picks up the wrong bag..

Clara Dickens is the first love and feminine figure in Patrick's life whom she teaches him to talk and to open himself socially to the society. Clara herself also has a complex issue. She has an inner conflict and split personality between emotion and materialism since she is living submissively to her poverty life style. She is in the midst of feeling and money. Thus, she is among her love to Patrick and her link to Ambrose Small; the millionaire who represents "*bare-knuckled capitalism*". Clara is living with him for some time after his appearance at the same time she is having a life and love relationship with Patrick. She is persuading love with Patrick and money and power from Ambrose. She wins Patrick's heart since she is the first feminine figure in his life even though Patrick eventually does find her with Small hiding in the Depot Creek; his youth town. Nevertheless, Patrick's loyalty prevents him from exposing them or end his relationship with her for ever. Clara is not the last of On-da-atje's characters to fall psychologically or in the line of society's service.

Nicholas Temelcoff is another transcultural immigrant character of *In the Skin of a Lion* who also struggles to understand his contrasted identity and he stumbles psychologically and behaviorally to find his fitting place in the society. 12

Nicholas Temelcoff is a Macedonian immigrant who migrated to Canada because of the horrifying condition during the WW1; world war one. N.Temelcoff determined to contribute to the new society. Regardless of the dare-devil rigger; a protective structure around a construction site, a baker works in a bakery and despite of his representation to the dogged persistence, Nicholas Temelcoff realizes the low self-confidence because of the deficiency of language. Since his new society acquires people who have the linguistic skills which empower them to communicate, make sense, discuss and evaluate what it is being said.⁸ This experience brought him to become a ware of the danger of identity loss, so he determinately decides to go to school with the children although he was older and tries to learn the language while he is working as a bakery. Nicholas uses the language as a means of self-transformation trying to dissolve and settle in the new society.¹³

He still could hardly speak English and decided to go to school, working nights in another Macedonian bakery. If he did not learn the language, he would be lost. The school was free. The children in the class were ten years old and he was twenty-six. Ondaatje 46

Moreover, Nicholas Temelcoff exhibits their do well that never recognized. His amazing physical feat rescue of Alice Gull; the nun and his caring to her daughter Hana during Patrick serves five years in prison are the most recognized contribution of him to the novel.⁴ With Temelcoff, there is another character called David Caravaggio also emerged certain “*heroic*” qualities by his story. 10

David Caravaggio is an allusion to a well known Italian artist who lived between the year of 1571-1610. He was known for his indulgent life style beside his creative output. Real Caravaggio is one of the first who formulates and presents the shadows to his painting characters exactly like Ondaatje when he plays with them through his characters as Caravaggio. The real Caravaggio was famous for his conduct of playing on light and dark; darkness, as the situations that *In the skin of a lion* characters live in and the light as the lost identity that they are searching for within the physical violence and psychological complex living style that the colonialist enterprise and its legacy caused them.¹² Caravaggio, Ondaatje’s made character who transmuted his identity from being a fashioned, originaive and talented artist to be one of the worker on the bridge; in which considered the metaphor of transmutability of identity and society and then to a criminal fugitive thief who trains his escape in the dark. Caravaggio meets Patrick in the prison and recall his first robbery where he broke his ankle when he was trying to fetch a painting and hide in a mushroom factory.¹ His complexities in life intensifies when Caravaggio escapes after he painted himself the blue color of the roof to be able to hide and later the two (Patrick and Caravaggio) meet and become partners to attack the Waterworks.⁴ All characters in the skin of a lion kept persuading the light of self-image and trying to settle with new identity under the shed of colonialism to find themselves sinking in the darkness of a total self-loss.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the newly-established world in the postcolonial countries in general and the northern America in particular produced a highly tensioned atmosphere. This throws man in a social, cultural, psychological and political confusion. Man's migration to the new world devastated his authentic identity. Therefore, man needed to release itself from this confusion by reconsidering the self to establish an identity in the new societal environment.

Further, this search to reconsider the self takes various spiritual and material destinations. Money, authority, the emotional and psychological satisfaction are the target of man to restructure the self as depicted by the novelist. However, success (as the writer himself) and failure (as the characters of the novel) are possible ends for every individual in this strife of reconsideration within this newly formed world.

Notes

1. En.wikipedia.org
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