



Diasporic Diversions In Michael Ondaatjes's Anil's Ghost And The English Patient

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Abstract

One of Canada's most well-known living authors, Michael Ondaatje has won numerous literary honours including the Governor General's Award and the Giller Prize. This article seeks to portray a comparative study of diasporic diversion through Michael Ondaatje's fictional characters. It looks at the character Anil Tissara, who was born in Sri Lanka but travelled abroad to pursue higher education on a scholarship, as a result of the immigration of an individual for the academic purpose she went abroad once her dreams come true one must return to their homeland which resulted in academic diversion. There, she runs into a number of issues, includes cultural diversion, professional diversion and also it concentrates on inequality and quest for identity. The character of Almasy, who lost his identity in a plane crash, particularly in a desert, is used by the author to deftly illustrate the identical diversion and geographical diversion through the immigrant identity in *The English Patient*. Diasporic Literature emphasises emotion in addition to focusing on estrangement, displacement, homelessness, dislocation, and scattering. Hana, a young Canadian nurse caring for her English patient at the time the European War ended, does an unbelievable job of portraying it in her story; Michael Ondaatje depicted the professional diversion through the character Hana in the novel *The English Patient*.

Key Words: Diasporic Diversion, *The English Patient*, Anil's Ghost.

INTRODUCTION

Diaspora traditionally refers to "the movement of the Jewish people away from their own country to live and work in other countries" (Hornby, 421). Diaspora refers not only to physical displacements but also to a sensibility in which nostalgia, alienation and sometimes cynical celebration are deeply engrossed. The physical and mental anomalism of diasporic life is what Homi K. Bhabha described as the condition of being "unhomed" (Bhabha,9)

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“Diaspora” (from the Greek word for “scattering”) refers to the dispersion of the people from their homeland. A simple definition of Diaspora literature, then, would be works that are written by authors who live outside their native land. Diaspora literature may also be defined by its contents, regardless of where it was written. For example, the story of Joseph (Gen 37-50) is often called a “diaspora story” because although its final form was written within the land of Israel, it describes how Joseph learns to survive outside his homeland. (Bible Odyssey.org)

In the modern era, especially in the globalised world, the word "diversion" can be employed as a cover term. The Cambridge Dictionary defined the term diversion as follows, the fact of something being sent somewhere different from where it was originally intended to go: According to Oxford Learners Dictionary the term diversion is defined as the act of changing the direction that somebody /something is following, or what something is used for. Michael Ondaatje clearly depicts the term diasporic diversion in the novel *Anil's Ghost* and *The English Patient* as one who leaves their home country and moves in search of employment may experience both residential and professional diversion. During times of internal emergency and war, people may move from one location to another in an effort to protect themselves from the political unrest that is occurring. This is known as diaspora. The above mentioned diasporic diversions were pictured in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and *The English Patient*. This article aims to portray the diasporic diversion of Michael Ondaatje's works through the perspectives of his characters, Anil Tissara, Almasy, Hana, and Katherine, who each represent different facets of diasporic diversion. One of two possible ways for a person to be relocated is either violently or voluntarily. It is contingent upon the circumstances and the attitudes of the people. The new diaspora, in contrast to the old one, was motivated by a desire for financial and social advancement on a personal level. M.L. Raina makes a pertinent observation in the following words: Dislocation can occur as a physical movement from home into alien territory forced by war and persecution. Displacement and exile have enjoyed a special privilege in banishment from the community, expulsion from the home country, lost in the Diaspora- such tropes have formed a constant axle of poetry and novels for centuries. (In fact, Lukacs regards the novel as an expression of the transcendental homelessness). Though Dante, Conrad and many others have dwelt on this state, it is only now that homelessness and dislocation have acquired a vast scale and magnitude. These facts are transforming the tone, essence and the political message of dislocation (Singh, 18) (*Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*-418). Anil Tissara is a young Sri Lankan lady who moved away from her home country to pursue higher education, particularly in the Europe and the United States. In the interim, she was trained as a forensic pathologist. Together with an international human rights organisation, she has since returned to her native country amid the brutal civil war due to the innumerable killings associated with it. Despite the fact that Anil had recently returned to her native country as a pathologist, the only way for the locals to recognise her was as a swimmer. She no longer identifies herself as a pathologist or a swimmer. Additionally, she was heavily impacted by western culture and gradually lost sight of their native customs and culture. It is unmistakably stated that the main character was uprooted from her native land and placed in a foreign environment. Anil makes an effort to strike a balance between Eastern and Western cultures.

A young Canadian nurse named Hana, who is deeply engaged in gardening and lived in an Italian villa in 1945, is introduced in the first chapter of *The English Patient*. Because the end of the European War saw the Germans withdrawing up the Italian countryside, those who lived in Italy had a phobia of war. Because of the European war, those who lived in villas did not believe that their lives were secure. People decided to leave their hometowns and move to other locations as a result of the warfare's impact on their sense of insecurity. Rightfully, translocation has been identified. People from the villa were relocated from unsafe areas to safer ones as a result of the European war. Michael

Ondaatje depicted the cultural diversion and professional diversion through character Anil Tissara who went abroad for higher studies as an immigrant and she has been living between two cultures as a result the Western Culture over her native culture at the end she has gradually westernized, Ondaatje delineates the cultural diversion as well as academic diversion through the character Anil Tissara from the novel *Anil's Ghost*.

The young Canadian nurse is caring for her patient without knowing anything about him because she is constantly focused on her duties. The entire body had scorched and turned black and because even the slightest tap causes him anguish, she discovered him amid the ruins of an aeroplane crash. He was initially treated for his injuries by a Bedouin tribe before going to a British camp. Another important figure Caravaggio, a member of British Intelligence North Africa, arrived at the villa with bandaged hands. German police apprehended him for robbing a woman in her room of a camera. He was tortured and had his thumbs chopped off because of this. We can see the people's inhumane behaviour here. Diaspora theory emphasises not only human movement, homelessness, alienation, hybridity, identity, exile, expatriate, dispersal, and scattering, but also human emotion and psyche. Through her constant attention to her patient, Hana's character purposefully exposes the professional diversion because often the camp has been changed and each and every one of the patients has shifted from one location to another along with the Canadian nurse Hana in the amidst of war, Ondaatje portrays geographical diversion as well as professional diversion that is caused through diaspora via Hana.

The English Patient's main character is named Almasy, but the English patient doesn't learn this until chapter IX. Almasy is an expert in the desert and carries a copy of Herodotus' book with him. Herodotus is looking for ancient cities and surveying barren desert territory. Together with Almasy, Geoffrey Clifton also teamed up with his wife Katherine. Rich man Clifton possessed a plane that was great for surveying the desert. As soon as it was shattered, Almasy fell in love with Katherine. When the Second World War started, they had intended to leave, so Almasy closed their tent and waited for the Clifton. While Katherine was suffering from serious injuries, Clifton chose to kill three people in a plane crash. Clifton afterwards went dead. . Because Almasy work for the Germans while Clifton and Katherine secretly cooperated for British Intelligence it is depicted in Ondaatje's *The English Patient* as a result administrative diversion is pictured through the above mentioned characters that were worked for various countries to strengthen their administrative power.

Even though the phrase "multiculturalism," particularly in Canada, was coined in 1960, "Cultural Pluralism" was not included. The term "multiculturalism" has its origins in Canada, but in the current context, it is used globally. The Columbia Encyclopaedia defines multiculturalism as, "a term describing the agreement, coexistence and negotiations of many cultures in a locality without any one culture dominating the nations". Cambridge English Dictionary defined multiculturalism as "The way of life, especially the general custom and beliefs of a particular group of people of a particular time".

The above definition of multiculturalism makes it abundantly evident that it unites the harmony of opinion and expresses an individual's character and perspective via their actions. Additionally, it implies that those who left their own country for an alien area must live in peace with others, particularly as a matter of policy. Columbia Encyclopaedia agrees with the idea of multiculturalism because India is a real country that is surrounded by different cultures, traditions, and customs, none of which are dominant over others. Ondaatje's characters have been lived a harmonious life even they have united in one place with various purposes but they lived amicably but

they came from different nationalities with various historical background. These characters were immigrants who were united in one place with different nationalities and they have experienced the cultural diversion, geographical diversion and professional diversion depicted in Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*.

Anil Tissara's intercultural experiences in the UK and the USA are projected in the cultural diversion. She was given the chance to study pathology on a scholarship, particularly in Western nations where she wasn't treated fairly. She perceived herself as belonging to a separate white class. Despite her flaws, she was heavily affected by Western adherence. She has lost her original Sri Lankan identity because she was so heavily influenced by and absorbed in Western norms. When she was in a Western country, she was regarded as an outsider. Colonization has been shown to produce representations of the trauma or alienation. Multiculturalism always gives off a soft indigenous atmosphere. Anil had to deal with a painful experience in the USA and the UK. Because she is not white, she cannot mix with them. All of these occurrences suggest that they despise her out of intolerance. Ondaatje exhibit academic diversion and cultural diversion through the character Anil who went abroad for higher studies where she has encountered with two cultures that resulted in cultural diversion.

Like Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* and Kiran Desai's second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, is regarded as a diasporic novel that adequately addresses cultural diversion, geographical diversion, psychological diversion, racial diversion, economic diversion etc. The East and the West, specifically India and the USA, are central to this novel. Biju was forced to immigrate to the USA to live a prestigious and rich life in order to escape poverty, but he was not treated equally there just because he is not white. They do not receive the same courtesy in an alien land because of cultural differences. Despite being moved abroad to live an affluent and prestigious life, his anguish just gets worse. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* beautifully depicts cultural, economical and professional diversion with the West through the character Biju. In Michael Ondaatje *Anil's Ghost*, the idea that Kiran Desai attributed to her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is reflected.

Michael Ondaatje has created different characters with various nationalities along with multiple cultures in one place. One who leave from their homeland to an alien territory, they have to overcome some hurdles in order to fulfil their dreams. Once their dreams come true they can return to their homeland, because they went abroad as an immigrant not as a settler so the immigrants must face cultural diversion, racial diversion, inequality, multiculturalism, homelessness, longs for identity as well as their homeland too. In Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and *The English Patient* characters depicted the cultural diversion, professional diversion and geographical diversion. When they have met one another they exchange their culture and their customs with others which portrayed through the character Almásy, Geoffrey Clifton and Katherine in *The English Patient* who were experienced the above mentioned diversion as an immigrant as well as an expatriate in an alien territory, where as in *Anil's Ghost* the major character Anil Tissara experienced the academic diversion when she went abroad for scholarly portrayed as dislocation. As a result, these two novels of Michael Ondaatje depicted various diversion that were occurred through diaspora, as well as he has focused on academic diversion, cultural diversion, professional diversion, geographical diversion from different characters united with various background.

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