CHAPTER III
THE REFLECTION OF MULTICULTURALISM IN MICHAEL ONDAAJTE’S NOVELS: COMING THROUGH SLAUGHTER, IN THE SKIN OF A LION AND THE ENGLISH PATIENT

3.1.1 Introduction:
The multiculturalism and minority rights have got a wider scope of discussion today on the agenda of all countries. It is a demand of all marginalized communities to understand the deeper meaning of the multiculturalism and they are striving for equal status and justice. Women are also marginal and they are also demanding equal rights and justice. Multiculturalism is a significant theme in the postcolonial era. Immigration is seen on a large scale in the beginning of 20th century, especially from the third world countries to the western countries. Because of globalization, people have started to cross the border of their country. It has resulted into various cultural identities of the people. In fact, the concept multiculturalism is an appreciation, acceptance and promotion of multiple cultures.
Avinash Jodha writes in his book Poetics of Exile about the multicultural relation of the writer as follows:

The expatriate writers, through their physical and multiple dislocation/relocations experience the cross-cultural influences, are transformed by them as they transform the cultures and spaces they step in and step through. (Jodha, 65)

The works of Michael Ondaatje reflect the theme of multiculturalism. His writing is shaped with the multicultural society of Canada. He shows eastern and western clashes in his novels.
This chapter discusses on multiculturalism which is reflected in Michael Ondaatje’s novels Coming Through Slaughter, In the Skin of a Lion and The English Patient.

3.1.2. Multiculturalism in Coming Through Slaughter
Michael Ondaatje is a diasporic writer. His novels deal with different aspects of diaspora. The present study focuses on the concept of multiculturalism and transnationalism which
are the features of diaspora. It is necessary to study the brief summary of all the novels of Michael Ondaatje to understand the concepts multiculturalism and transnationalism.

Ondaatje’s novel *Coming Through Slaughter* focuses on a fictionalized biography of Charles ‘Buddy’ Bolden (1876-1931), a legendary African American jazz musician in America. The novel was first published in the year 1976. Michael Ondaatje portrays Buddy Bolden, an African-American Jazz musician who developed ragtime music known as Jazz. The story covers the last months of Bolden’s insanity. Buddy Bolden was an extrovert person and portrayed against a photographer Bellocq who was an introvert person and he expressed his own irritated desires in his erotic photographs. Both these characters actual lives are portrayed, but the story of the novel goes apart from the facts in order to explore the novel’s main subject i.e. multiculturalism and transnationalism. Bolden also exists outside official history like Billy and Ondaatje’s narrative hints that he lives only through music, stories and rumours. Ondaatje himself makes an appearance as a character within the text to focus the blurred boundaries between real and fictional lives. In *Coming Through Slaughter* life and art, biography and fiction are not opposites but mutually constitutive categories.

In *Coming through Slaughter*, Ondaatje tries to capture the thought process of Bolden and tries to comprehend his actions by creating the setting of New Orleans at the time of Jazz. Buddy Bolden is one of the famous jazz musicians in the district of New Orleans. He is African and American Jazz musician. He belongs to marginalized section of the society. After his disappearance from New Orleans, the story is narrated through the perspective of other characters. Webb is a close friend of Buddy Bolden. He is a detective police and he investigates Bolden’s disappearance on personal level. Buddy Bolden lived in a multicultural society of New Orleans. He expresses his thoughts through the music. He lives all his life away from New Orleans.

Ondaatje portrays the true picture of prostitutes of New Orleans in his novel. These prostitutes are from pre-puberty to old age. Buddy Bolden lives with these prostitutes and later he marries one of the prostitutes, Nora, later abandons her and keeps an affair with another woman. Ondaatje has portrayed pimps, whores, musicians, photographer, barber etc in his novel. All these people belongs to marginal section of the society.
E.J. Bellocq, a famous photographer, is a friend of Buddy Bolden. He is an African American photographer. He lives in New Orleans. He has no interest in the music of Bolden. Bolden convinces the prostitutes to post for the introvert, Bellocq. Bellocq commits suicide by setting fire around himself after the disappearance of his friend Buddy Bolden. After many years Bolden returns to New Orleans and is in an insane situation.

The novel depicts the worst situation of New Orleans at the beginning of the 20th century. It focuses on the black-white racial conflict and the conditions of minority people. The novelist portrays sufferings of all these people. Buddy keeps relationships with different women but he truly loves Nora. He breaks the boundaries of love and sacrifices his wife and children to get Robin. He reveals his love life in his performance at Liberty Iberville where his last performance takes place.

Ondaatje’s novel depicts various aspects of multiculturalism in his novels Coming Through Slaughter, In the Skin of a Lion and The English Patient. The aspects of multiculturalism are marginalization, cultural clashes, multicultural relationships and violence, suffering and humiliation. These aspects of multiculturalism are discussed as follows:

3.1.3 The Theme of Marginalization:

Michael Ondaatje’s novel Coming Through Slaughter depicts the marginal people of the society. He tries to give the rights and equality to the marginal people of the community. The Oxford English Dictionary defines marginalization, “Marginalization is a treatment of person, group or concept as insignificant or peripheral.” (www.oxforddictionary.com). Marginality means treatment of people belonging to different section of the society. The people who are living outside of the mainstream society are called marginal. The African in America, Negroes, Dalits, Black slaves, minorities and females are treated as insignificant or peripheral in the society. The marginalized people are seen all over the world. Marginalized literature is totally based on suffering, humiliation, exploitation, pains and agonies.

At the beginning of the novel, Ondaatje tells that many people are deprived from the history of the country. He says that the people who are living at the left of the canal are
out of the recorded history. The people who have actually contributed for the development of the country are omitted.

The novelist portrays two marginal figures Buddy Bolden, an African American Jazz musician and E.J. Bellocq, photographer in this novel. The histories of these characters are not depicted in the official history of the country. These two characters belong to the marginalized section of the society. The characters like Buddy Bolden, Bolden’s friend Webb, Frank Lewis and Brock Mumford, Bolden’s wife Nora Bass, and an image of Ondaatje himself – to write about the life of a mythical jazz figure, one that seamlessly incorporates historical testimony and imaginative prose in a genre that raises questions about the status and authority of conventional biographical narratives. All these characters come from different background. The protagonist Buddy Bolden is a real-life, early 20th century New Orleans cornet player. At the beginning of the novel Bolden is a normal, if hard drinking and gossiping, barber by day and jazz musician by night. Bolden is a hard drinker and barber. The drinking man is represented here from the marginal section and barber by profession also shows his marginalization. The history of the marginalized people is always destroyed or neglected. Michael Ondaatje deliberately portrayed these people in his novel. Tom Anderson lived in between Rampart and Franklin. Ondaatje writes,

   Each year he published a Blue Book which listed every whore in New Orleans. This was the guide to the sporting district, listing alphabetically the white and then the black girls, from Martha Alice at 1200 Customhouse to Louisa Walter at 210 North Basin, and then the octoroons. (9)

The novelist portrayed the marginal characters of the society in the novel. As he writes,

   By the end of Nineteenth century, the Storyville district of New Orleans had some 2000 prostitutes, 70 professional gamblers, and 30 piano players. (3)

The Blue Book records the history of the marginal community whose history is not written in the official history of the country. Michael Ondaatje portrays all the marginal people of the society in this novel. Buddy Bolden is a musician and hard drinker and the prostitutes of the New Orleans is also portrayed in the novel. E. J. Bellocq, a
photographer, is also a marginal figure of the society. The novel was set in the black community of New Orleans.

Bolden is a good husband, father and an infamous man of the town. He is, however, also committed to exploring change, to resisting the probable, and resents his wife, Nora Bass, for her certain answers. And he is frightened of death, a subject he returns to often in *The Cricket*, a scandal sheet he edits and publishes. He is totally involved in his music and in his work. Ondaatje says that he was one of the best and the loudest jazzman of his time and he is never professional in brain.

The racial and colour discrimination is prevalent in Western country. Buddy Bolden is an African American Jazz musician. While talking about Buddy Islam writes:

> Buddy Bolden is the first black Jazz musician and depicted in an Afro-America’s music history. As a black musician Buddy has contributed for the development of ragtime music in the beginning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

(Islam,46)

Buddy Bolden’s friend Frank Lewis tells that he is away from the publicity. He says:

> Then you should never have heard him at all. He was never recorded. He stayed away while others moved into wax history, electronic history, those who said later that Bolden broke the path. (37)

Ondaatje portrayed Afro-American country of New Orleans. The condition of these people at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century is very worst. They turned to various professions like robbery, prostitution etc. Buddy turned towards music for earning money. But he was not professional, so he did it only because of his interest. But he is deliberately omitted in the African and American history. Ondaatje tries to project the true identity of Buddy Bolden. He published scandal sheet *The cricket* in which writes the information given by the spiders. He says:

> The Cricket studied broken marriages, gossip about jazzmen, and a servant’s memoirs told everyone that a certain politician spent twenty minutes each morning deciding which shirt to wear.( 24)

Bolden published information of marginalized people in his scandal sheet *The Cricket*. Ondaatje tried to focus on the official history of marginalized people in his novel.
Bolden married to Nora Bass and this marriage was surprise to most of the friends of Buddy. He was enjoying with all people and never drank wine alone. It shows his humanitarian nature irrespective of caste, culture and creed.

The novel portrays the black community of New Orleans. The black community of the New Orleans is different from the white community. The novelist depicted the culture of 19th century Urban America. All the characters were mixed with each other and lived together.

There was no home for Bolden and it was a feasible thing to him. He was full of dirt and squalor in every part of his being.

What keeps him alive is not food proper, but an alibi for food. He pours in the free ketchup in a glass of water and makes a cup of soup. He basically depends on the effect of the smell which passes from different houses nearby. The narrator ironically quotes:

   And then finding home in the warm gust of soup smells that came through pavements grids from the subterranean kitchen which kept him in their heat, so he travelled from one to another and slept over them at night drunk with the smell of vegetables, saved from the storms that came purple over the lake while he sat in the rain.( 41)

Buddy was living in a Storyville district of New Orleans. This place was famous for prostitution. Bolden always spend his time with the prostitute. And later he married a prostitute Nora.

Lee Spinks depicts the marginal position of Buddy Bolden in his book Michael Ondaatje. He writes:

   The marginal position of Bolden’s Storyville within the cultural iconography of New Orleans is represented as a form of historical dispossession. (Spinks, 83)

Marginal people are neglected from the official history of the country. We cannot find any record of these people. Bolden’s position in New Orleans is represented as a historical dispossession.

Bellocq is also based on a real-life figure of the New Orleans and the novel focuses on the themes of creativity, fame, interrelationship and multiculturalism. He is also a marginal figure depicted by Michael Ondaatje. Bellocq is a photographer, he snaps
photos of each whore in the New Orleans. He tries to bring these marginal figures in focus.

Ondaatje depicted women characters in his novels. Women characters like Nora, Bridget and other prostitutes are portrayed in this novel. They are treated as marginal in this community. He tries to give voice to the marginal people. Buddy Bolden and Webb spend money on women and girls. Ondaatje describes:

Webb twenty and Bolden seventeen when they worked in funfairs along the coast. Being financially independent for the first time they spend all their money on girls and sometimes on women. They take rooms, stock beer, and gradually paste their characters onto each other….. Afterwards busy with women, their friendship is a public act of repartee, bounding jokes off each other in female company.( 35)

Ondaatje depicted the place of women in the patriarchal society. People spend money on girls and women. He also depicted the prostitutes in this novel. The depiction of prostitute means women are seen as a commodity.

3.1.4 Theme of Violence, Suffering and Humiliation:

Violence is also one of the features of multiculturalism. People from the third world countries are humiliated in the first world countries. Violence and Suffering is reflected in this novel. Willy Cornish made his silent trip to New Orleans, partly to see how his friend was doing, partly to do with a Pontchartrain man being murdered there. Black people have to suffer in the white community. They have been humiliated at any time of the life.

Ondaatje portrayed murder of Mrs. Brass in the beginning of the novel. Nobody knows who has murdered her. Buddy Bolden went to Pontchartrain and brought the dead body to the police station and he tells Webb:

Listen we have got a dead body outside. What! Yeah. Nora’s mum. Strangled. We brought her in. Other cops looked round. Webb too his feet off the desk and stood up.( 26)

Nora’s mum is an African American woman living in Storyville district of New Orleans. The police started investigation of this and all the search parties went to the Hill district in search of strangler.
The novel is set in the black community of New Orleans. The culture of New Orleans influenced Buddy Bolden. He is a key figure in the development of Jazz style of music in New Orleans. The author focuses on the little recorded history of Buddy Bolden. The New Orleans is described as a country of sex and the rate of teenage virgin is fixed. In this regard Ondaatje writes:

By the end of the Nineteenth Century, 2000 prostitutes were working regularly. There are at least 70 professional gamblers. 30 piano players took in several thousand each in weekly tips. (9)

Buddy Bolden and E.J. Bellocq are the representatives of all the marginalized people and the representative of all the people who are neglected from the society. Buddy Bolden a character portrayed by Ondaatje has wild desire for sex, has passion for Jazz music, his marries and divorce from Nora Bass. Tom Anderson, ‘The King of the District’ publishes a Blue Book each year in which he writes the list of every whore in New Orleans. Ondaatje writes about the Blue Book as follows:

This was the guide to the sporting district, listing alphabetically the white and then the black girls, from Martha Alice at 1200 Customhouse to Louisa Walter at 210 North Basin and then the octoroons. The Blue Book and similar guides listed everything and at any of the mansions you could go in with money and come out broke. (9)

The book records the prostitutes of the New Orleans. The prostitutes here are the marginalized people of the country who are neglected from the official history of the country. So the writer tries to bring them in the mainstream of the society.

Ondaatje describes the horrible scene of death in his novel. Bellocq, a photographer, set fire against him and died. Ondaatje writes:

Horror of noise. And then the break when he cannot breathe calm and he vomits out smoke and throws himself against the red furniture, against the chairs on fire and he crashes finally in to the wall, only there is no wall any more only a fire curtain and he disappears into and through it as if diving through a wave and emerging red on the other side. (67)

Ondaatje describes the real life of black man in America. His opinions about black man have been expressed through Buddy Bolden. According to Bolden, the black man need
not be lost due to the wilderness of the white system. Whatever it stands for in real life, Ondaatje understands the social system properly and is aware of the consequence of adopting the white culture in the foreign land. Bolden compares himself with a dog who plumbs the depth of water to get away from the waste material while coming home, never bring the external things along with his tail.

Ondaatje faced a worse situation both in England and Canada. It was very much difficult on part of him of survive; the time was very hard which he took as a challenge. He expresses his personal experience through Buddy Bolden. Bolden is the spokesperson of Ondaatje in *Coming Through Slaughter*. The strategy of survival which Bolden adopts to get away from the environment is of mutuality on which he has a lot of trust. Mutual caring and mutual trust is what Bolden aspires for in his life to ward off unhomeliness. To put his vision of life in proper perspective, Bolden cites the behavior current in the hound civilization. In this regard the following passage brings out the point in its proper focus:

> The dog follows me whenever I go now. If I am slow walking he runs ahead and waits looking back. If I piss outside he comes to the area, investigates, and pisses in the same place, then scratches earth over it. Once he even came over to the wet spot and covered it up without doing anything himself. Today I watched him carefully and returned the compliment. After he had leaked against a tree I went over, pissed there too, and scuffed my shoes against the earth so he would know I had his system. He was delighted. He must have felt there had been a major breakthrough in the spread of hound civilization and who knows he may be right. (90)

Buddy Bolden’s world is uncertain, and unlimited in this white community. Death was with him everywhere, Bolden chooses the life of a picaro and lives on virtual dirt and squalor of the Shell Beach District where he spent his life. His miserable condition forced him to choose the path of the picaro and lived on the undertaking of a series of adventures, often most unpleasant to live through. His condition was very worst. He remarks:
He sat frozen. Then when his money was finished he went down to the shore and slept. Tried to sleep anyway, listening to the others there talk-where to hustle, the weather in Gretna. He took it in and locked it. In the morning he stole some fruit and walked the roads. Went into a crowded barber shop and sat there comfortable but didn’t allow himself to be shaved walking out when it was his turn. Always listening, listening to the wet fluid speech with no order, unfinished stories, badly told jokes that he sober as a spider perfected in silence. (40)

The black man’s condition was very worst when Bolden finds himself thing filed in the streets of Shell Beach District. The writer presented his days in Shell Beach district:

For two days picking up the dirt the grime from the local buses before he was thrown off, dirt off banisters, the wet slime from toilets, gray rub of phones, the alley shit on his shoe when he crouched where others had crouched, tea leaves, beer stains off tables, piano sweat, trombone spit, someone’s smell of a towel, the air of the train station sticking to him, the dream of the wheel over his hand, legs beginning to twitch from the tried walking when he lay down. (40)

He lived very humiliated life in Shell Beach District. He had to pick up the dirt and clean the toilets, rub phones etc.

3.1.5 Theme of Cultural Clashes:

Buddy Bolden and other characters live in a multicultural society. They had crossed various cultures. They crossed the boundaries of their culture and mixed with other culture. Ondaatje writes:

What was there in that, before I knew your nation, your colour, your age, that made me push my arm forward and spill it through the front of your mirror and clutch myself? is a self-reflexive passage that accounts for the existence of the novel, a self-interpolation on the part of the author that raises “a fascinating question. Why are we as writers or readers drawn to certain texts? (8)

These lines express that the Buddy Bolden is living in a multicultural society. It shows that Buddy Bolden arrived in the country which is unknown to him. He tries to
understand the culture of the nation and colour of the people. He has mixed in different
culture and lived in a multicultural society.

Lee Spinks writes in his book about the culture of Buddy Bolden. Bolden’s culture is
nomadic and it is beyond the borders of culture. He writes:

A marvelously intimate reconstruction of the everyday culture of black
American life at the turn of the last century, it also seeks to evoke, in its
portrait of Bolden’s nomadic existence within and beyond the borders of
that culture, a mode of being that transcends social and cultural relations
and refuses to conform to a fixed image of life. (Spinks, 80)

*Coming through Slaughter* is the pillar of 20th century popular music, re-appearing in the
myths of Robert Johnson at the crossroads and countless other contexts. Ondaatje
portrayed Buddy Bolden myth with the very idea of reliable, factual testimony. Michael
Ondaatje is himself portrayed through the character of Buddy Bolden. Michael Ondaatje
is living in a multicultural society. Like Buddy Bolden, Ondaatje is interested in Jazz
music.

the writer:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or immigrants or expatriates,
are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, But
even if we look back, we must also do so in knowledge-- which gives rise
to profound uncertainties-- that our physical alienation from India almost
inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the
thing that was lost; that we will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or
village, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India’s of the mind.

( Rushdie,10)

Michael Ondaatje is an expatriate writer in Canada, lives in multicultural society where
he has been treated as a marginal and ambivalent in the society. So, Salman Rushdie
writes about the position and condition of the marginal writers in his book.

*Coming through Slaughter* is thus an inquiry into the facts of music history, the way
those facts are presented, and the relationship between the two in refusing to confirm the
traditional modes of storytelling. The Dutch Canadian Novelist Aritha Van Herk says about multiculturalism:

Some people say that it is only a matter of adjusting to the customs, learning new language and adapting a new environment. For him it is much more profound a displacement of so far reaching that only vanishes after several generations. At least it was for him the world was fiction and fiction was refuse. (Peterson and Rutherford, 156)

Michael Ondaatje’s *Coming through Slaughter* is an autobiographical novel in which Michael Ondaatje portrayed his own picture through the character of Buddy Bolden. There are many things which are similar between Buddy Bolden and the writer. Ondaatje has taken the help of Bolden for his self-autobiography. Michael Ondaatje left his homeland and settled in Canada and adjusted himself with the new environment and learnt the language of the country. The immigrant writer Ondaatje reveals himself accurately describing all the secrecy of his life including pre-marital and extra marital sex, family dispute, his marriage and divorce and the relationship with a prostitute, passion for Jazz music and desire for wild sex etc. are the controversial issues in the life of a writer who has earned name and fame. The memories of the by gone days of the writer have been narrated in the form of the fiction. But in the true sense of term these are not fictional but real. The realistic matter of the writer’s life has been fictionalized. Buddy Bolden is a protagonist of the novel kept various extra marital relationships with the women in New Orleans. He crossed various cultures. New Orleans is a place where white and black culture is existed. These relations can be seen as multicultural relations. Islam writes in his article:

At the end of the 19th Century, Storyville was divided into two parts, one is storyville and another is black Storyville. The central area was reserved for white spectators, because they could listen music of both parts. (Islam 57)

Buddy Bolden was a black American lives in New Orleans at the beginning of 20th Century. Buddy is famous for his cornet playing and for being one of the yearly pioneers of Jazz music. Ondaatje also lives in New Orleans and he is also one of the pioneers of
the jazz music. Unfortunately Bolden does not have any recording through he is an ace player of jazz.

The culture and society of the black and white is different. Barbour Dougloous tells about the culture of Bolden in his book:

The whole story takes place inside the essentially separate community of black New Orleans where everyone is black even Bellocq in this revision of history. In a sense, no matter how impoverished and cut off from power that community was, black at that time had perhaps less reason to question their color because their culture and society were still separate from the larger white culture surrounding it. In that sense, the people would not be self-conscious about their color; they would not, in fact, tend to think about it. (Barbour, 102)

Buddy Bolden rarely thinks on a fixed home. Because of unhomeliness, he has preferred the life of a Picaro rather than being a stable household man. Nora is picked up from an ill reputed area. She is a prostitute and comes from such disreputable communities like “The Swamp” and “Smoky Row,” which is a part of the brothel district of Storyville. Buddy Bolden was a homeless man; it means the man without any fixed culture. He forms a relationship with a woman who is prostitute means he never thinks about any customs of the society.

The fantasy influences on him is described by the narrator as follows:

“There were his dreams of his children dying. There were his dreams of his children dying. There were his dreams of his children dying.”(24)

Bolden is broad and open minded. He is hardly troubled by the questions of morality in his life. He never thinks about the morality. He lives his own life. He equates his life with music which is flux and ever flowing. He does not want to arrest the growth of life by withdrawing himself from life itself. Like a black man, Bolden is all for life. He is a Dionysian by temperament. Webb, Bolden’s police friend who was in search of him “pulled” him “back” but there is nothing on his part to fall back upon. With emptiness all around him, he was getting bored and felt like a bull terrier under a leash. He quotes that all you’ve done is cut me in half, pointing me here. Where I don’t want these answers.

3.1.6 Theme of Multicultural Relationships:
The relation between man and woman can be seen as multicultural because they have to cross their culture to keep relationship with other woman. Bolden is foolish for relationships without which life is unbearable to him. He kept his relationship with the sisters of Nora Bass. His relationship shows that he never follows the customs of particular society. There must be persons around him to whom to make love and converse with, both physically and spiritually. There is not a binary opposition of black/white, poor/rich, animal/human, so on and so forth in Bolden’s life. It is but natural on his part to transcend the binaries. There are no boundaries, no splitting between the Divine and the Hellish in his music.

His relationship with Nora shows the blurring of boundaries. Ondaatje writes:

> He learned all he could about [her], questioning her long into the night about her past. Her body a system of emotions and triggers he got lost in. Every hair she lost in the bath, every dead cell she rubbed off on a towel. The way she went crazy sniffing steam from a cup of coffee. He was lost in the details, he could find no exact focus toward her. And so he drew her power over himself. (15)

He has not married legally to Nora and has a daughter. He never makes any discrimination. It means that he treats everybody equally. Bolden is conscious of his father’s “who put their bodies over barbed wire” in order “to slide over into the region of hell.” He is also aware that “Through their sacrifice they seduced…(him) into the game,” the game which Bolden refuses to play at the moment. His game is completely different from thesis in the fact that it does not touch upon the binary opposites.

Charles Taylor in his essay *The Politics of recognition* writes about the relationships. He observes,

> Love relationships are not just important because of the general emphasis in modern culture on the fulfillments of ordinary needs. They are also crucial because they are the crucibles of inwardly generated identity. (Taylor, 36)

If Bolden becomes mad at the end, it is due to the dissatisfaction of his own life, from his familiar grounds, especially the people and objects which he loved most. In the East Lousiana State Hospital, it is reported that he never speaks and he goes round touching
things. Bolden’s madness is no doubt because of his loss of physical and emotional relationship with his friends and fiancés with whom he was deeply involved and touched them every moment. His death on November 4th, 1931 at the hospital is the acme of his unhomeliness which is the failure of multiculturalism policy in Canada, he becomes a victim. He actually suffers a great deal throughout his life and meets a fatal end. Policies are set apart but these are not actually carried out for the welfare of the beings. It is clearly visualized in the life and sufferings of Buddy Bolden. Thus *Coming Through Slaughter* satirizes multiculturalism policies of Canada through the character Bolden in a true sense. Jon Saklofske expresses his views as follows:

Ondaatje focuses his creative authority on actual people that have been neglected or overwhelmed by history. . . . His activity of collecting and transforming particular seeds and scraps of the past in a fragmented and fictional form enables Ondaatje to avoid the limitation of historical tradition and expectation of historical validity. Covered by his fingerprints, these privately recovered and restored fragments are retold and reintroduced into public circulation. (Saklofske, 73)

Michael Ondaatje depicted the true history of black people who are neglected by the white community. In this novel, Ondaatje portrays Buddy Bolden, E.J. Bellocq and other minor characters who are from the marginalized society who are neglected in the history. The present novel set in New Orleans’ Storyville district at the beginning of the twentieth century and it is based on the life of jazzman Charles “Buddy” Bolden. Buddy Bolden was remembered by jazz enthusiasts for his innovative and improvisational method of cornet playing and the real Bolden is recognized as a ground-breaking performer although his music was never recorded. Little is known about the musician beyond his reputation, and Ondaatje again takes liberties with his sources. Ondaatje portrays Bolden as a man whose wish to immerse himself in the chaotic life of the senses causes him to abandon his family and his musical career, but whose community cannot understand or permit this break from convention and the disappointment of their expectations.

At the time of writing the musician legend Buddy Bolden disappeared for a period of more than two years. He lives with Robin Brewitt and her husband. Bolden escapes from the demands of the various “audiences” who feels to perform music. He is temporarily
away from New Orleans but he is eventually tracked down by his friend Webb who pushes him back to his old life.

At the time of his disappearance an important part of the narrative is focalized by the police detective Webb. Webb’s eager for the search of the musician drives much of the plot as he moves through the different spheres of Bolden’s world, interviewing Bolden’s family and (former) friends to seek clues to the musician’s whereabouts. However, the detective’s search is hindered by the fact that, despite the many conversations he has with Bolden’s intimates, he “discovered nothing” about Bolden for “their stories were like spokes on a rimless wheel ending in air. Buddy had lived a different life with every one of them” (60). Because Bolden gave himself completely in his relationships and maintained no barriers, he seemed to have no fixed identity, no set habits or patterns that would assist in the detective’s search. As Webb’s investigation continues, we realize that this search is less concerned with locating Bolden physically or geographically than with locating him within a narrative context, in which Webb intends to expose Bolden’s character fully and pin his story down.

3.2 Multiculturalism in In The Skin of a Lion

3.2.1 Introduction:

Michael Ondaatje’s novel In the Skin of a Lion is published in the year 1987. The novel is about the experiences of individuals who are migrated, displaced, disempowered and shattered due to their circumstances. The novelist depicts the lives of immigrant workers and their contribution to the building of the city Toronto in the early 1900. Their great effort of constructing major places of Toronto was not recorded in the official history of Toronto. Patrick is the protagonist in this novel. He lives in Depot Creek a rural town with his father. His father is a calm and quiet man and Patrick lives alienated life on the farm. Patrick migrated to Toronto after his father’s death. The novel depicts the story of migrants who contributed in the construction of Toronto, Prince Edward Viaduct and Water plant. The whole story revolves around these three historical monuments. In Toronto, Patrick lives with immigrants who came from different cultural backgrounds. Nicholas Temelcoff is from Macedonia and is working with Patrick on the bridge. Once there was a fire on the bridge where workers congregated at night. Some of the nuns move towards the thirty yard point. One of the nun falls from the bridge and everyone
believe she is dead. But Nicholas Temelcoff caught her and saved her life. In his attempt, his arm is dislocated.

The novel is taken from two epigraphs. The first is Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh from where the title of the novel is taken: ‘The joyful will stoop with sorrow, and when you have gone to the earth I will let my hair grow long for your sake, I will wander through wilderness in the skin of a lion’ and the second is from John Berger: ‘Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one.’

Patrick Lewis gets a job as a Searcher in Toronto. He searches the missing millionaire Ambrose Small and he comes in contact with Small’s mistress Clara Dickens. He falls in love with Clara Dickens. Clara has not given any response to Patrick. She has not given any information of Ambrose Small. Patrick’s heart is broken and he starts working as a labour. He lives alone among the immigrants. Later on he works as a dynamiter to build the tunnel. All the Macedonian immigrants become friend of Patrick. They invite him at the place of gathering. Patrick mixes with the culture of Macedonia. Even he learns the language of Macedonian. It shows his cross-cultural relations with immigrants.

All the immigrants gather at Waterworks. They enact the frustration of the immigrants in the puppet show. Patrick falls in love with Alice and he moves with Alice and her daughter Hana. Alice’s father, Cato, is killed during the work and Patrick becomes surrogate father of Hana. They lived very happily for two years. Alice dies when she picks up a suitcase bomb accidentally. The novelist portrays violence, suffering and humiliation of each and every migrant.

Patrick meets a thief named Caravaggio and his wife Gianetta. Both convince Patrick to take revenge of Commissioner Harris who started the project which took many lives of labour. Patrick fights for the cause of immigrants. The novel is set during the industrial growth in the city Toronto. It focuses on the history of Toronto city. The clashes between the rich and the poor are depicted in this novel. These laborers remained out of the official history of the country. Their contribution is not recorded in the official history of the country.

Ondaatje portrays various aspects of multiculturalism in the novel In the Skin of a Lion. These aspects are marginalization, cultural clashes, violence, suffering, humiliation and
multicultural relations. To understand multicultural, it is necessary to study these aspects. These aspects are depicted as follows:

3.2.2 Theme of Marginalization:

Michael Ondaatje portrays labourers, workers in his novel *In the Skin of a Lion*. The prime focus of the novel is construction of Toronto, the construction of Prince Edward Viaduct commonly known as the Bloor street viaduct and the R.C. Water treatment plant. The suffering of the immigrants, workers and labourers is also given more importance in this novel. The plot of the novel has included many true facts or events like the fall of the nun from the bridge, Nicholas the dare devil’s adventure and the missing of Ambrose Small. Culture and language acquisition of the immigrants is one of the important focuses of the novel.

All the characters are emigrated from their country and now settled in host country to build a Toronto City. They are away from their culture and mixed with the culture of the host country. These immigrants have deliberately selected this place but their work is not recorded in the official history of Toronto. They are treated as a marginal figure in the host country.

There are two epigraphs included in the introductory part of the novel. The first epigraph is taken from the Babylonian legend i.e. the epic of Gilgamesh -“The joyful will stoop with sorrow, and when you have one to the earth I will let my hair grow long for your sake, I will wander through the wilderness in the skin of a lion”. And the second epigraph is from a Marxist critic John Berger’s story - “never again will a single story be told as if it were one”.( Ondaatje, 1)

The main focus of the novel is migration and challenges faced by the immigrants in the adopted land and their role in the building of the nation and their absence from the nation’s history. The immigrants are Macedonians, Finns, Greeks and Italians in this novel portrayed by the author. Here the protagonist Patick Lewis is the immigrant in his own country. Ondaatje portrayed marginal figures such as labours, prisoners, a thief, tanners etc in his novel. In this regard Avinash Jodha in his book *Poetics of Exile* writes:

Immigration is, whether forced or voluntary a complex act. It involves multiple dislocations-of geo political spaces, culture, sensibilities-and
forces the hitherto unquestioning individual to discover and negotiate his or her own identity in terms of belonging. (Jodha, 81)

Because of the impact of globalization, the world is like a village. People migrate from their own country to host country and settle there. They are treated as a minority in the host country. Everything is strange and new to them in the country they are living.

3.2.3 Theme of Cultural Clashes:
All the characters crossed their own culture and mixed with other culture. Patrick Lewis is born and grown up in the village Depot Creek, Ontario as a motherless boy. He is a lumberjack and a dynamiter in feldspar mines. The sounds of insects are familiar to Patrick in Depot Creek. In his early years he observes nature like “bugs, plant hoppers, and rust-dark moths. He observes on these things which have traversed the warm air above the surface of the earth and attached themselves to the mesh with a muted thunk. He had heard them as he read, his senses turned to such noises”. He was born in a region which is unknown and it did not appear in the maps until 1910. Though his family had worked there for twenty years and the land had been a homestead since 1816. Patrick creates an imaginary world in his mind:

He longs for the summer nights, for their moment when he turns out the lights, turns out even the small cream funnel in the hall near the room where his father sleeps. Then the house is in darkness except the bright light in the kitchen...... Caspian, Nepal. Durango. He closes the book and brushes it with palms, feeling the texture pebbled cover and its coloured dyes which create a map of Canada. (8-9)

Patrick looks into the book of geography. He observes hundreds of migrants arrive at the place with their lanterns to work in the mills. They are the Finnish loggers. He observes the physical strength and their mastery of the local terrain. He is moved by the way the common fraternity transforms a collection of strangers into a community. Patrick experiences a sudden epiphany when he sees these loggers in the frozen lake with their burning sheaves of cattails.
He turns away and goes into the trees taking his own lamp into a private darkness. He did not know that these migrants will have some relationship later on in his life. He was unhappy by his father’s fascination of working with dynamites. He used to observe his father from far. His father died in the feldspar mines while working with the dynamites. He drowned in the pool and died leaving his son Patrick alone. Patrick is having the knowledge of his father’s profession as a dynamiter and he migrates from rural area of Canada to the metropolis of Toronto. He was a migrant at the age of twenty one and felt a stranger in the new land where people spoke different languages and people belonged to varied cultures. The novelist describes it as follows:

Patrick Lewis arrived in the city of Toronto as if it were land after years at sea. Growing up in a country had governed his childhood: the small village of Bellrock, the highway of the river down which loggers came, drinking, working raucous and in the spring leaving the inhabitants shocked with silence. Now, At twenty one, he had been drawn from small town like a piece of metal dropped under vast arches of union station to begin his life once more. He owned nothing, had scarcely any money. There was a piece of feldspar in his pocket that his fingers had stumbled over during the train journey. He was an immigrant to the city.(53)

The picture of the railway seems as if he is in “the belly of a whale”. He was stranger to the place with all past locked away. He is a passive observer of the people who move around the union station. Patrick Lewis for a year works at various odd jobs as construction worker and tannery worker and undertakes the job of a searcher of Ambrose Small, a missing millionaire in the year 1924.

Glen Lowry in his article “The Representation of Race in Ondaatje’s In the Skin of a Lion” comments on the linguistic and cultural differences in the city of Toronto:

The city Patrick enters is a space of linguistic and cultural diversity beyond the purview of Franco-Anglo biculturalism or Anglo-imperialism, but coterminous with it.( Lowry Glen, 2004)

Patrick once again starts his life in searching the Ambrose Small, a millionaire and establishes his own identity linguistically and culturally in these working class
Patrick is a man who migrated in his own country from his small town Ontario to Toronto. He is migrated from rural to urban area. In Toronto, he thinks himself alien and stranger. It makes him to adopt a culture of Toronto. The author depicts it as follows:

   Now, in the city, he was new even to himself, the past locked away. He saw his image in the glass of telephone booths. He ran his hands over the smooth pink marble pillars that reached up into the rotunda.(54)

Patrick is new to himself in his own country. The past things are gone away and everything is new to him. He also touches pillars and feels different here. He also saw a man who is well dressed and speaking in another language. Here the language is different for him.

The construction of Bloor Street Bridge shows the struggle between culture and tradition. It is one of the important places in the city which connects eastern Toronto with its centre providing water, transport and electricity. It was under construction and was incomplete. All the immigrants are involved in the construction of the Bloor Street Viaduct. The novel portrays the suffering of the immigrant workers.

The labourers not only suffer but they make the history of the country by using their artistic skills in the building of the Toronto city.

Nicholas Tamelcoff a Macedonian immigrant saves the nun who was falling from the bridge. He jumps off the bridge and caught the falling Nun before she fell into the river. Nicholas was swinging in mid-air beneath the central arch, reaches out to catch the “black-garbed bird, a girl’s white face” as she spills out of the sky towards him. His one arm was broken in the attempt. The author writes,

   The two strangers were in each other’s arms, beginning to swing wilder, once more, past the lip of the chute which had tempted them, till they were almost at the lower level of the rafters. He had his one good arm free. Saving her now would be her responsibility.(32)

He gives first aid treatment and breakfast in a restaurant called, The Ohrida Restaurant. The nun transforms into an ordinary woman; naming herself as Alice after she sees the parrot in the restaurant, she disappears from there. She transforms herself from a religious
nun into an ordinary woman, later an actress marrying Cato, a Finnish immigrant and a political activist. This amazing incident would be remembered by both Nicholas and the nun. This helps them to find their identity.

The name of the restaurant is taken from the name of the city Ohid in eastern Macedonia. In his article, ‘Unmasking Michael Ondaatje’s In the Skin of a Lion’ Kwasi Hoffman quotes:

> The restaurant itself is named after the city of Ohid in eastern Macedonia, and it becomes a representation of the immigrants’ nostalgia and longing for their homeland. (Quayson and Daswani, 17).

Nicholas Temelcoff is unable to tell his name to the Nun shows the lack of languages and his inability to speak English language. Language plays vital role for understanding of the culture. Ondaatje writes:

> For Nicholas language is much more difficult than what he does in space. He loves his new language, the terrible barriers of it. Does, she love me?—Absolutely. Do I love her?—Positively (43)

Nicholas faces the problem of language in host country. He tries to learn the English language. He has decided to attend the school to learn the English language and he works in the Macedonian bakery. Ondaatje describes this as follows:

> 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. He used to get up at two in the morning and make dough and bake till 8.30. At nine he would go to school. (46)

Like Nicholas, all the immigrants face the problem of language. All the immigrants learned the language by mimicking or from recorded songs until the talkies came.

The rich and poor clashes are also presented in the beginning of the novel. Patrick as a boy observes the loggers crosses the road. The cows are owned by the landowner and Patrick’s father works as a labourer. Patrick’s father works in the feldspar mines. It is a dangerous works which his father undertaken. Poor workers are given less salary compared to the rich.

The racial discrimination is also portrayed in this novel. The workers are given English names. So Upper class people are not calling them by their names. They work from
morning to till six in the evening. Ondaatje writes, “The labour agent giving them all English names. Charlie Johnson, Nick Parker. They remembered the strange foreign syllables like a number.” 132)

3.2.4 Theme of Violence, Suffering and Exploitation:

The novelist, Michael Ondaatje, observes the division between capitalists and laborers. Because of the vision of capitalist many people got jobs and the city was a well-planned and modern city. Nicholas Tamelcoff now owns a bakery and makes use of the bridge that he was constructed when he was a builder to transport his bakery products. Patrick Lewis is stranger in the city and he is in search of a new possibility. He is searching a missing capitalist multi-millionaire Ambrose Small. Ondaatje has mixed both reality and fiction in telling Toronto’s history. Patrick adjusted himself in the new area of Toronto. He mixed with the multicultural community of his country. He does not know about the civilized society and the culture of the civilized society. Patrick’s life in Toronto was related to industry after his immigration. Commissioner Harris’s dream of a new water plant across Lake Ontario is depicted. The work of tunnel is started and many migrant workers from different parts of the world are involved in building the tunnel. The sufferings of the immigrant workers are projected in the novel:

> Work continues. The grunt into hard clay. The wet slap. Men burning rock and shattering it wherever they come across it. Filling hundreds of barrels with liquid mud and hauling them out of the tunnel. In the east of the city a tunnel is being built out under the lake in order to lay intake pipes for the new water works. (105)

Patrick is aware of Marxist ideology through the puppet show which was secretly organized by the fellow immigrants in an unfinished water plant. He transformed himself from a silent immigrant into a revolutionary. He was confined setting on fire Muskako hotel. He meets Caravaggio who is an immigrant in the prison. Both came together to obtain access to the harbor. They planned to blast a bomb at the water works which is the major source of water supply to the city. They blasted bomb at Commissioner Harris water treatment plant and caught by Commissioner Harris. Commissioner Harris revealed that he is also an immigrant facing the same sufferings and negotiates with them.
Avinash Jodha writes in his book Poetics of Exile about the condition of the immigrants in the Toronto. All the immigrants Finnish loggers, Macedonian labourers, Greeks, Italians formed the working class of the country. About this he writes:

Everyone is a stranger in the city; they have come across physical and mental landscapes to be a part of it. They chart and map the city in their own ways, holding on to their versions, relating to it. Claiming it in their own ways. It is not only the immigrants but also people born in Canada like Patrick, Commissioner Harris, Alice, Clara Lewis are strangers in the way they forge their identities and relate to the city in their characteristic manners. (Jodha, 80-81)

Patrick struggled hard to achieve the current position. His prime focus is on the marginalized immigrant from various places who are struggling to build a new life for themselves. In Patrick’s quest two women play a prominent role in finding his identity in the alien, new world of Toronto city. He immigrates to Toronto in search of a new life and possibility at the age of twenty one. The protagonist is transformed from an innocent little boy in Depot Creek to manhood.

A Finnish immigrant worker, Cato, writes to Alice about the position of the immigrants. Ondaatje describes:

The only heat in this bunkhouse is from a small drum stove. In the evenings the air is thick from the damp clothes in the rafters above the fire and from Tobacco smoke. To avoid suffocating the men in the upper bunks push the moss chinking between the logs. (154)

The loggers are constantly exposed to severe cold and they never enjoy freedom and comfort. They live in the place which is overcrowded without any privacy. It exposes lack of comfort and their mental agony because of their mental and physical suffering. These immigrants without telling their suffering die or live with psychological wounds. The hands of Daniel Stoyonof’s are cut off in a slaughter house. They are the victims of various diseases and die. Cato was murdered and Hazen Lewis dies by dynamite explosion. When Patrick asks Commissioner Harris about the reason of deaths of the immigrants, he simply answers, “There was no record kept” (Ondaatje, 248).
These workers are from Macedonians, Poles and Lithuanians. They speak four or five sentences in English. They never read the newspapers Mail and Empire or Saturday Night. Ondaatje depicts worst conditions of labourers. He writes:

That during the day they ate standing up. That they had consumed the most evil smell in history, they were consuming it now, flesh death, which lies in the vacuum between flesh and skin, and even if they never stepped into this pit again- a year from now they would burp up that odour. That they would die of consumption and at present they did not know it.(130)

All these immigrants were from Eastern Europe and belonged to the working class and they were exploited by the English speaking upper and middle class Canadians. Their stories were told orally for they don’t speak the language of the host country. English speaking people like Patrick and Alice fought for the class struggle. The authorities of Canada have imposed law on the immigrants not to speak any other language other than English. “They will be jailed” (ISL 139). There is a gap of culture and they should communicate only through gestures, sentiments and small words.

Patrick found the Macedonian word for Iguna, ‘gooshter’ and used it to explain his requests each evening at the fruit stall for clover and vetch. People corrected his pronunciation. Couple of men and four women circled around him and tries hurriedly to leap over the sign of language between them.

Alice filled the gap between the minority population by talking in Finnish or Macedonian. But she dies unfortunately before the story ends. These quiet people join together to form unity to fight against all odds. Cato turns many people against the capitalists. He is murdered when Alice was on her family way. Hana, her daughter, came to know of her father’s value only after his death. Patrick realized that the loggers who sliced the ice with cattails in their hands were the Finnish immigrants. “Now in his thirties he finally had the name for that group of men he witnessed as a child” (ISL 157). He is a stranger to the cultural codes and norms of the new city. When Patrick is released from the penitentiary he finds that many people have joined the rebellion. By 1938 many immigrants were deported out of the city.

Patrick gets mined up with the working class community when he begins his life as a searcher. Franco-Anglo biculturalism or Anglo imperialism ruled over Canada. It is a
city full of linguistic and cultural diversity. He develops among Greek, Macedonian, Russian and Italian immigrants.

Patrick mixed within the network of many cultures in which cultural difference between Canadian and foreigners are seen between labourers and the rich. The author focuses less on the people like the officials, city planners and commissioners who are recorded in official history and focuses more on the poor and the marginalized who built the city. He revises the civic history. The official history actually exists. He used the information recorded from the past and used it in his fiction as a proof. He registers the unofficial history of a small community in Toronto. The story is presented for understanding not only to the little girl but also to the readers.

_Epic of Gilgamesh_ relates with the narrative of Patrick’s life. Patrick Lewis wanders through the city as an immigrant and an enemy of the establishment like the Gilgamesh story:

> Patrick has clung like moss to strangers, to the nooks and fissures of their situation. He is always a stranger, the third person in the picture. He is the one born in this country who knows nothing of the place. (156)

He remains into the darkness of his own country. The author uses different frames of the myth of Gilgamesh giving different aspects of the hero and different characters of the story. Gilgamesh is an adventurer. Patrick is also an adventurer. The epic shows human relations and feelings like love, friendship, revenge, regret and fear of death. The person of Uruk is treated by the Gilgamesh in an oppressive manner. Similarly Commissioner Harris treats the immigrants in an oppressive manner. The critic, Pereosa writes in his article about the novel:

> The book expresses and celebrates the new aspect, the new viaducts, underground tunnels, subways, train ways, waterways and even motorways. (Pereosa, 89)

In the new working class community Patrick is very happy. He is brought up in the new land away from his Anglo Irish roots. He develops a sense of cultural awareness and identity in a New England alien society. The letters of Cato teach him the identity of the Finnish loggers. The relationship of Patrick with Hana and Alice helped him to form a community and to find his identity in a multicultural society. At the time of searching his
identity he finds out the histories of those immigrants neglected by the nation’s history. All the women, workers and immigrants are neglected by official history. He takes up the skin of a lion and becomes the narrator of their history.

The work of Nicholas Temelcof is not recorded in the official history. All these characters came together to form a new society culturally. They find a space for themselves. During the search for Ambrose Small, Patrick finds the history of Alice Gull. The nun who fell from the bridge was none but Alice Gull. He reads the official history of Toronto because of her photograph and also learns about the history of Cato, her husband who is one of the Finnish Loggers whom he witnessed as a little boy in his native place Depot Creek, Ontario. They came there to cut logs to construct the bridge and the water works.

Rowland Harris was constructing a Prince Edward Viaduct. He was a commissioner of Public works. Suddenly there was a fire. All the workers scattered everywhere. Some are washing their faces and nuns are moving towards thirty yard point on the bridge at that time. Suddenly one of the nuns disappeared on the bridge and fell from the bridge before the bridge was finished. Ondaatje writes:

> The men covered in wood shavings or granite dust held the women against them. And Commissioner Harris at the far end stared along the mad pathway. This was his first child and it had already become a murderer.

(31)

The novelist portrays the scene of violence and suffering of the workers in his novel. Many workers died in the construction of the bridge. Ondaatje writes:

> On his return swing the curled into a ball to avoid them, hearing the wires whip laterally as they completed the energy of the break. His predecessor had been killed in a similar accident, cut, the upper half of his body found an hour later, still hanging in the halter. (41)

Daniel Stoyanoff a friend of Nicholas earned lots of money in North America. In North America everything is rich and dangerous. You can go there as a traveller and came back as a wealthy man. Ondaatje tells, “Daniel buying a farm with the compensation he had received for losing an arm during an accident in a meat factory.(44) Ondaatje further tells the suffering of these factory workers. He tells:
He could see Stoyanoff’s body livid on the killing floor-standing in two inches of cow blood, screaming like nothing as much as cattle his arm gone, his balance gone. He had returned to the Village of Oschima, his sleeve flapping like a scarf, and with cash for the land. He had looked for a wife with two arms and settled down. (44)

Two of Nicholas’s friends died in their journey to Switzerland. They died because of high fever on the boat which is going to Canada.

Patrick Lewis acquires a lion’s skin and tells the history of Toronto’s past and present while driving to Marmora and Hana stays awake to keep him company. Patrick taught her driving and told the story of Toronto and Clara. The novel has different types of history which is related to the lives of individuals and to that of the society. A single narrator tells the history of multicultural society and its relation to the past. It discovers the hidden stories of early Toronto as recorded in the official history blending fact and fiction. The novel’s search goes along with Patrick’s search for Ambrose Small, and for Clara and to the tragic search for Harris waterworks.

3.2.5 Theme of Multicultural Relationships:

The novelist has focused on various types of relationships in this novel. Patrick met Clara Dickens and fell in love with her. He welcomes this relationship as a motherless boy. Clara Dickens introduces Patrick to Alice Gull who was a fallen nun turned actress. His love affair should be seen through the multicultural way. The intra cultural relations lead to multicultural relations. Life without love is incomplete. He gets respect, love and freedom which are the aspects of multiculturalism.

Ashok Chaskar in his book ‘Multiculturalism in Indian Fiction in English” writes about the socio-cultural relations. He writes:

As an official policy, multiculturalism succeeds to create socio-cultural harmony, mutual tolerance and respect among different cultures. It not only recognizes the fact of cultural diversity but also holds that such differences should be respected and publicly affirmed. (Chaskar, 7)

Alice Gull changed his life and brought love among him when he was tortured by the memory of Clara. He was invited by the restaurant owner and Alice for the pantomime show arranged by the immigrant workers in a hall in the waterworks. All these shows are
arranged secretly because the authorities did not permit such gathering among the working class people. Because of the puppet show Patrick realizes the sufferings of the voiceless immigrants and determines to fight for their cause. He realizes his own identity in the adopted land. After realization he becomes a political activist. It is an important turning point in the novel. The presentation of Alice brings a great effect not only with the audience but on the Patrick who decides to give voice to the voiceless immigrants. Patrick feels himself that he is moving like a puppet while the performers on back stage were “theatrical and seemed to have locked within metamorphosis”.

Nicholas Tamelcoff saved the nun who fell like “a black garbed bird” shows the immigrants quest in strange world. Ondaatje described Nicholas as:

He is the happiest at the daily chores- ferrying tools from pier down to trestle, or lumber that he pushes in the air before him as if swimming in a river. He is a spinner.(34)

The marginal community of the country is neglected from the official history of the Toronto. The contribution of Nicholas in constructing the major places of Canada is not mentioned in historical and archive records. He lives at the heart of Toronto migrant community. He is having a personal and social bond with the community. The vision of Harris is depersonalized and materialistic. Nicholas love for community makes him take a great risk in saving the nun by losing one of his arms. The nun and Tamelcoff both get their identity. Learning English was very difficult for Nicholas before he comes to Canada. He came in the year 1914 because of a spell cast upon him by the language. These travellers to North America were called ‘Judas goats’, who narrated the story of North America. His imagination for the green pastures compels him to leave Macedonia after it was destroyed by the Balkans. He adopts this cultural transformation to suppress his past tragedy. Just like other migrants before him he becomes a vault of secrets and memories.

He enjoys his work and Nicholas is a spinner. He meets them as they cling-braced but wind against the metal they are riveting or the wood sheeting they hammer into-“but he has none of their fear”. He is very famous on the bridge and is known as a daredevil. Nicholas constructs the bridge and disappears. He becomes a baker and leads a happy married life.
Carravaggio who is an Italian thief becomes friendly with Patrick in the prison. He is a burglar who steals paintings like Jeffrey paintings. He takes his name from a famous Italian Renaissance painter. Patrick saved him when he was about to be killed. He escapes from the prison by painting himself blue like the blue roof top. It is an artistic way of escaping the prison. The job is given to the prison workers was to paint. Carravaggio paints the blue roof matching the sky and evades the prison authorities by painting himself blue. In Trenton he met a boy who helps to remove his paint. The identity of him was an intelligent thief in a multicultural society. He escaped by moving from Trenton to Bobycagon and from, Purdy to Wilkinson. In the company of thieves he has not learnt robbery but studied how they lived their lives. Behind the shadows of these men he learns to be comfortable.

The self-discovery of immigrants helped them to understand their cultural origins. The immigrants in North America created their new identity. Ondaatje calls them as cultural hybrids. These immigrants learnt a new language and new set of social convention. All the immigrants learned English from recorded songs or, until the talkies came, through mimicking actors on stage. They learnt a language from the plays which was performed in Toronto by frequently asking the questions in the middle of the play. It is one of the ways in which the immigrants learn the language of the new place.

The theme of Migration is explored by Ondaatje. Multicultural Act of Canada which was passed in 1988 gave an opportunity to many construction workers and skilled labourers to emigrate from central and eastern province of Europe. The people have migrated due to various circumstances like war, natural disaster, in search of better opportunities in greener pastures. They suffered from displacement, alienation, relocation, nostalgia and many other reasons. They try to develop a sense of belonging in the new place. These migrants are unable to adjust with a new culture. This leads to misunderstanding and transgression of law. The novel *In the Skin of a Lion* deals with heterogeneous, marginalized groups of people from various places like Macedonia, Hungary, Polish, Lithuania, Italy and Finland. Patrick arrives in the city as an immigrant and at that time he felt himself new:

> Now in the city he was new even to himself. He saw his image in the glass of Telephone booths. He ran his hands over the smooth pink marble pillow
that reached into the rotunda. The train station was a palace, its richness and caverns an intimate city. He could be shaved, eat a meal or have his shoes coloured. (54)

Patrick observes on the station a man who was dressed in well manner and carrying three suitcases with him and speaking in strange language. After two days, he has seen the man again showing his unwillingness to move into the new city. This new city plays an important role in the life of Patrick who is a migrant and the well-dressed foreigner.

The development of Toronto city by the immigrant labourers is one of the postmodern and postcolonial concepts of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is one of the areas where the migrants form a confluence of varied cultures from different nations settled in the new land. Canada is a country of immigrants. The major area Toronto focuses class struggle. The important sites that lead to the development of Toronto are the Prince Edward via duct or the Bloor street viaduct and the water works. According to Seimerling:

When Patrick enters the city it is a city of linguistic and cultural diversity. Canada was a place ruled by Franco-Anglo bicultural or Anglo imperialism. (Seimerling, 97)

The unhealthy working conditions of the tunnel workers loosen the miserable plight of the immigrant workers. All these immigrants worked in dark tunnel below Lake Ontario and many became a prey to the dangerous waves. The hard work created pain in their body and the difficulty of banging the walls of the caves is unbearable. There was not a time to take any rest. They are also given low salaries in the unhygienic conditions. Their communication between them is less as they come from various linguistic backgrounds. All the time they remain calm and quiet and they are compared to the beasts of burden.

Ondaatje describes Toronto where all the immigrants gathered at one place:

The southeastern section of the society where he now lived was made up mostly of immigrants and he walked everywhere not hearing any language he knew, deliriously anonymous. (112)

Every immigrant faces the problem of language. People on the streets are his only mirrors. So these labourers were unrecognized and marginalized. They eat at any place like where they urinate. They communicate with each other through gestures and non-
verbal communication. Through imitation they learn the language. One of the immigrants, Patrick came late to his home and exhausted goes to feed the Iguana. The Next day, in the morning at six o clock he left to the work without washing the clothes and took the unwashed clothes, eats breakfast for ten minutes. The culture of these labourers is quite different.

Colours and skins are also used in this novel. The skin and colour imagery has great significance. Avinash Jodha in his book quotes:

The skin imagery has multiple implications, they are imposed by the establishment, assumed by the individuals to camouflage their identity but more importantly they symbolize changing of subject positions, taking responsibility.(Jodha, 86)

Later, Patrick had to work in a tanning factory where the skins of animals were mixed with dye. The workers were tarred with the colour and they have given little water and less time to bathe. The smell of that was so worse that Alice was afraid that they might catch some infectious disease like pneumonia and die. The performers in the drama show the skins of animals with pelts of animal in them. Changing of the skins is that of a willing assumption of responsibilities. The character narrates the difficulties by wearing the skins of animals. It is the symbol of identity. They should kill the animals in slaughter houses and the smell of the tanning factory goes into their noses and lungs and stays there for life. It stuck to Hana’s father. They get burns from the spurring process also. Arthritis, rheumatism. That’s the truth.

3.2.6 Theme of Inequality:

The novel is based on Marxist ideology. Marxism ideology is based on the concept that the rich powerful bourgeoisie class people exploit the proletariat. The sociological theme and Marxist ideology is mixed in the novel. There is voiced majority and the voiceless immigrants in the novel and it represents class struggle between the haves and the have-nots, the rich and the poor, the preliterate and the middle class capitalists known as the bourgeoisies.

The inequality between them and the higher people for Patrick and other immigrants is a devastating pain. The class struggles are highlighted in the novel from different ways
such as the working conditions of the labourers, and the fact that there were no records kept of the workers who died.

The proletariats were exploited with poor working conditions and less wages and people were exploited by the upper middle class who used them for cheap labour and fewer wages. They were paid one dollar a day. This is the plight of workers of bridge, tunnel and the tannery workers who take the skins of animals for dyeing. They were really dying with contagious diseases due to unhygienic conditions. Patrick encounters Commissioner Harris at the water works which is his dream come true; he says that there were no records kept regarding how many died in constructing the city. Patrick is angry when he says that the cost of the tiles is more than half their salaries put together. This incident in the novel is a highlight of division of labour and the class consciousness between the high and the low and between the rich and the poor. Patrick tries to react violently upon the so called upper-class, Harris replies, “you don’t understand power”.

The author discards the rich by giving voice to the voiceless immigrants. The helpless people were neglected in history. Alice Gull expresses to Patrick her bitterness about the rich exploiters thus:

I’ll tell you about the rich’ Alice would say, the rich are always laughing. They keep saying the same things on their boats and lawns; Isn’t this grand! We are having a good time! And whenever the rich get drunk and maudlin about humanity you have to listen for hours. But they keep you in tunnels and stockyards. (132)

The rich people always laugh on the poor people. They treat them marginalized and the poor people accept everything. Through this Ondaatje gave a voice to the marginalized people in the society. The rich encourages people like Harris to exploit the laborers. At the end Harris explains to Patrick that all are made of the same stuff and still he belongs to the dwarfish section of the society where they cannot compete with the powerful rich people. Through forming a unity people express their anger and fight for their rights. Cato triggered the people against the rich and he was murdered. People express their anger through puppet show. Language is a main problem to overcome in the immigrant society. People become powerless when they are asked to speak the colonizer’s language. They took great effort to learn the language by listening songs and watching movies. In
the pantomime show the puppets express their helplessness by banging and screaming loudly with a thud. Patrick reacts for the first time in life by going to the stage. He begins to mix with the fellow immigrants.

The water works filtration plant is the place where all the workers gather is not just a sanitized filtration plant but a place where the migrant workers look for their own histories. He is enraged by the power mongers exploitation of the poor and sets the Muskako hotel ablaze by blasting dynamite. Alice Gull is killed when she is blown by dynamites. Patrick returns from the prison and he finds that revolution has already started brewing in the place. The novel also projects that a society crosses the borders to another country, language and culture for survival.

The immigrant labourers who constructed bridges viaducts and tunnels mean a lot to the labourers of the city. This city is humanized in its transformations. Harris saw this new building as a human body. Ondaatje who is immigrant to Toronto from his native country Sri Lanka has explored the immigrant history of Toronto. Immigrant labourers are from various places, language and culture. Anglo- Americans and Irish dominate the place as natives. Patrick Lewis who is from his Anglo Irish roots moves to multicultural new city Toronto.

The immigrants, women, workers who were silenced in the official histories of Canadian Literature is given prime importance in the novel. He takes up the skin of a lion after being enraged by Alice. He takes the responsibility for the narration of lives of those multitudes of immigrants who are left nameless in official history. The history of Toronto is an incorporation of realistic records and oral narratives.

Migration is an act which is imposed or voluntary, so a transformation takes place by wearing different skins metaphorically meaning to take different identities. The workers who are working in the tunnel were in contact with the skins of wild animals and the dye from the skins get absorbed in their skin. Patrick understands the sufferings of the fellow immigrants through the puppet show organized by Alice Gull. Patrick feels himself as a moving puppet in the alien world. He provokes the rich people whom he is planning to destroy for the sake of taking revenge for the wrongs meted out to the fellow immigrants. Most of the immigrants are working class people and they are exploited by the rich and middle class English speaking people.
Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* writes about the individual experience. Patrick is the spokesperson of the immigrants. He writes:

> The telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole labourious telling of the collectively itself.  
>  
> (Bhabha, 140)

Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* tells the concept of self and other. Other means minority and immigrants. All the immigrants in the novel are marginalized. Patrick Lewis told the stories of immigrants in the form of oral history. Alice and Patrick fight on their behalf. Due to language barriers the cultural gap is existed and they communicate through broken gestures, sentiments and single words. When Patrick arrives in Toronto found the immigrants being exploited. And when he came out from the prison he found that many rebellious dissident groups were already voicing out themselves against the capitalists. “In 1938 over 10,000 foreigners were deported out of the country”. It shows that cultural conflicts are always unavoidable. Patrick changed his mind when Harris disclosed that he is actually belonged to the working class community once. Harris is answerable to the persons in “real power”. He does not blow up the waterworks and sleeps for quite a long time and Harris does not hand over him to the police.

The role of language and narrative in the individual’s relation to both history and society is focused in the novel. Social injustice is also an important focus of the novel. The narrator focuses on a community that is based on oral narratives. The narrative is non-linear. The characters mutually respect each other, love their fellow migrants, there is a strong bonding among themselves as immigrants, labourers and ruling class.

The novel *In the Skin of a Lion* opens with multiple epigraphs, dedications and acknowledgements which form a collage and has many intertextuality references. The epigraph the “Epic of Gilgamesh” is taken from a Sumerian, Akadian legend. Patrick Lewis is the parallel to Gilgamesh. The death of Alice Gull by the unfortunate explosion of the dynamite made Patrick revengeful.

Marxist postmodernist John Berger’s epigraph forms a study of intertextuality in the novel. It tells, “Never again will a story be told as if it were only one”. (Ondaatje 1) The library collections also reveal Toronto’s history. The past of Alice as a nun who fell from the bridge who had a astounding release by Tamelcoff is exposed through the photograph.
in the newspaper article found in the library. There were many photographs in the Riverdale library. Hine’s photographs deceived official history. The novel depicts the multiculturalism through the characters.

3.3 Multiculturalism in *The English Patient*

3.3.1 Introduction:

*The English Patient* is an award winning novel of Michael Ondaatje. The tool of multiculturalism is used in this novel. The characters from different cultures come together in the villa and reconstruct their identity. The problem of identity is discussed in this novel.

The novel depicts the story of English Patient, Hana, Kirpal Sing and Caravaggio. All these characters belong to different cultural backgrounds. They come from different countries. They try to adopt the western culture. Hana is a Canadian and Patrick is the step father of Hana and friend of the thief Caravaggio. Almasy is a Hungarian. Kirpal Singh nick named as Kip is the Punjabi Indian who is fond of western culture. The novel is set at the end of the Second World War in 1945 and published in 1992. It is set in a dilapidated Italian Villa named Villa San Grioloma and The Sahara Desert. The protagonist of the novel, Almasy, is burned in the plane accident. His body is totally burnt. Nobody recognizes him. The patient does not have any sense of his belonging. Hana takes care of the English Patient and nurses him. Hana is depressed because of her father and husband’s death. Caravaggio, an Italian thief, joins them. His fingers were amputated by the Nazis. Caravaggio is a friend of Hana’s father. He thinks that she should not spend her life by taking care of this dying man.

The English Patient reveals his history to them. He is a Hungarian Count Ladislaus Almasy. He works as a spy for the Germans and a desert explorer, reader of books and Cartographer. He draws the maps of mapless desert. Ondaatje brings together people from different cultures in his novel. Caravaggio describes the torture given to him by the Nazis. He also describes various dangerous incidents.

Kirpal Sing, an Indian man, does the work of defusing bombs in the Villa. He has adopted a nick name i.e. Kip. He adopts English culture and way of life. Hana falls in love with Kip because she likes his brown skin and simplicity. The extra marital relationships between Kip and Katherine Clifton form a subplot of the novel. Her
husband took her in a plane to kill her. In that attempt Mr. Clifton dies and Katherine is injured. Later on Katherine dies and Almasy, the English Patient took her dead body with him in a plane. Unfortunately, the plane crashed and caught fire. Almasy is burned beyond recognition. He narrates his desert experience to Hana and Caravaggio. He meets many desert explorer such as Gilf Kebir Plateau, Madox, John Bell, Kemal el Din, Carparius etc.

Kip tries to establish new cultural identity after crossing the border of the nation. He falls in love with Hana and this love affair comes to an end when USA drops bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The violence of dropping bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is described in this novel. Many innocent people lost their lives and they would face problem in future. The novel also depicts the cultural clashes faced by Kip. Hana and Caravaggio are surprised to see Kip who is eating with his right hand. He cuts onion with a knife. Kip is a dark man like a burned English patient. The cultural clashes are portrayed in this novel. All these characters live happily in the Italian Villa. At the end of the novel, all thinks where to go after the war is over. They decide to go to their homeland once the war is over.

The various aspects of multiculturalism are depicted in this novel. These aspects are marginalization, cultural clashes, violence, suffering, humiliation and multicultural relationships.

3.3.2 The theme of Marginalization:

All the characters live in an Italian Villa which is in dilapidated condition. The English Patient, Hana, Kip and Caravaggio are migrated from other countries and live happily with each other in an Italian Villa. Ondaatje tries to mingle four different nationalities and tries to establish a community. These four characters live a life of minority at the host land. Almasy is the protagonist of the novel; his body is burnt in a plane crash. His body becomes black and he is beyond recognition. He doesn’t belong to any culture or any country. Now he is only a marginal figure in the society. Hana cures his wounds. Ondaatje has portrayed marginal figures like spy, thief in his novel. Almasy has worked as a desert explorer till the end of the Second World War. In his exploration, he came across different tribes. These tribes are unknown to him. Ondaatje writes:
And all the names of the tribes, the nomads of faith who walked in the monotone of the desert and saw brightness and faith and colour. (261) 

Bedouins is nomadic tribe which is portrayed in this novel. They are nomads who live a very simple life. They helped Almasy when he burnt totally. They never believe in the concept of nation. Almasy says:

The Bedouins were keeping me alive for a reason. I was useful, you see. Someone there had assumed I had a skill when my plane crashed in a desert. (19)

David Caravaggio, a thief arrives at the villa to look for Hana. He is friend of Hana’s father. His fingers are amputated by the Nazis. He is a thief with the thumbs cut off, searching for his identity, having to find himself again. He came in search of Hana at Italian Villa. He had not revealed anything about him except his serial number.

Ondaatje writes about the marginal people like thief, black people and women in his novel. Ondaatje portrayed women inferior as compared to Men. Hana is portrayed as a marginal figure. Women’s place in the society is marginal. She has to work in the house and clean everything. Her living place is very dirty.

Hana is living like a vagrant. She is treated as a servant whereas English patient is treated as a king. Ondaatje deliberately portrays women as a low or inferior as compared to the men. Avinash Jodha writes:

However, in the Clifton-Katherine–Almasy and the Hana-Kip relationships, there is evidence of a reevaluation of male sexuality, specially in relation to notions of ownership, naming and an increasing recognition of the independence of women. (Jodha, 40-41)

Women are treated inferior to men in all the relationships. She has been used as a commodity in the male dominated society. Katherine and Hana is projected inferior in this novel.

All these migrants are living in The English Patients room. There is no light in that room. All are living in darkness. They enjoy party in dark room. They were celebrating the birthday. Kip feels himself marginal in that group. He also feels uncomfortable in celebrations and victories.
3.3.3 The theme of Cultural Clashes:

All the characters cross their border and live in an Italian Villa. They cross their culture and live in a multicultural country. Ondaatje writes about the world where there is no barrier of place or cultural. He writes about the world where the people live in hybrid culture. Cultural hybridity means interaction between varieties of culture. The culture colonizer and colonized is a two-way process and they are changed and their meanings are also changed.

Ondaatje writes about the cultural otherness and generates new galaxy for multicultural meets. The characters came from Hungary, Canada and India at Italian Villa. They came from different cultural background and mixed with each other.

As an immigrant writer he brings out multicultural meetings across the border. The union of multicultural like Indian, British and Canadian is one of the aspects portrayed in the novel. Hana and Caravaggio from Canada, Almasy from Greece and Kip from India meet and form a relationship in the Villa. All the four characters from the different parts of the world attempt to explain forthcoming events accordingly by adopting a range of nationalities. Hana is Canadian and Caravaggio is also Canadians, Kip is an Indian and the English patient is a Hungarian. He discovers the perception of identity through the temporary movement of the characters at the end of the war. After the war, all these characters of the novel are searching for their new identity. However, the novel moves around the English patient who does not recollect his name. The main story is interrupted by the memories that the English Patient is telling to Hana and other characters.

John Bolland writes in his book *Poetics of Exile* about this new community and the inhabitants of the Italian villa as:

\[
\text{A new community which crosses barriers of age, culture and gender and which is cut off from the violence of the outside world controlled by money and power. (Bolland, 35)}
\]

All characters in this novel have their own cultural identity and their nationalities. They come together in the Italian villa. They gave the name to this Italian Villa as ‘Oasis Society’. Oasis means the people who became nationless. Almasy is found by the newly married Clifton. Initially, there is some resentment between him and Katharine but it later develops into a most passionate love affair. Their adulterous affair is found by Geoffrey.
Clinton who flies with Katharine in a flight to the place of Almasy. Almasy collects his instruments and attempts to kill them.

The love affair between Almasy and Katherine could be seen as cross cultural or multicultural relations. Both Almasy and Katherine came from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Almasy tells Hana and Caravaggio some of his desert explorations and his experiences in finding the lost oasis Zerzura. He meets many desert explorers in Gilf Kebir plateau like Madox, John Bell, Kemal el Din, Carparius who explored the Lybian mapless desert. He is a good cartographer. He recalls the kind of food, heat and the sand storms he experienced. He has come across many people from various cultures. They belong to German, English, Hungarian and African:

Gradually we became nationless. I came to hate nations. We are deformed by nation states. Madox died because of nations. …All of us, even those with European homes and children in the distance, wished to remove the clothing of our countries. It was a place of faith. We disappeared into the landscape. …I didn’t want my name against such beautiful names. Erase the family name! Erase nations! I was taught such things by the desert. …I wanted to erase my name and the place I had come from. By the time war arrived, after ten years in the desert, it was easy for me to slip across borders, not to belong anyone, to any nation.(147)

Ondaatje portrays the culture of nomadic through the character of Hana. It is the culture of nomadic not to settle at one place. They continuously move from one place to another place.

The novel portrays the theme of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism plays a major role in the story. Kip is caught up in fixed stereotypes and conventions of orientalism and European colonialism. Ondaatje trusts upon unequal levels of realistic representations when it comes to Kirpal Singh. There is a distinction between fixed and fluid signifiers and signified in portraying Hana and Kip. Kip is seen as outsider and he is never entering the villa except for some reasons. He represents his Indian heritage. He says: “I grew up in India uncle. You wash your hands all the time. Before all meals. A habit. I was born in the Punjab.”(Ondaatje, 81) He brushes his teeth outside and it is the culture of India or
the culture of eastern country. Ondaatje describes, “the brushing of teeth, since he was child has always been for him an outdoor activity.” (Ondaatje, 92)

Ondaatje depicts eastern and western culture in this novel. Kip belongs to East and he wears Sarong. Ondaatje writes:

In the east end of Toronto I met these Indians. I was robbing a house and it turned out to belong to an Indian family. They woke from their beds and they were wearing these cloths, sarongs, to sleep in, and it intrigued me.(220)

Kirpal Singh breaks the tradition of his family and fights for India. He is the second son. His father expects that his sons should get good positions. In England, Lord Suffolk welcomed him and Kirpal has accepted his changed name Kip. His acceptance of the name Kip indicates the acceptance of western culture. Lord Suffolk, who is the teacher of Kip introduces the English customs to Kip.

Lord Suffolk describes the English customs and the villages of the England to Kip and Hana. He tells about the training of the bomb disposal and about his closest female friend who hates English society.

The cultural clashes of East and West are prevalent in this novel. The character arrived at Italian Villa from different cultural background. They try to adopt each other’s culture. Almasy and other desert explorer wander all over the country. They entered into a desert town El Taj. They have seen Italian food which is different from their countries. They enjoyed Italian food of El Taj. They watched market of El Taj where they saw different decorations, street dentist and book merchants. All these are different from East. So the culture of west is totally different from the east.

The rich and poor clashes are also seen in this novel. Geoffrey Clifton is a rich man and other desert explorers are poor. He met a friend at Oxford and got married next day and flew to Cairo. All these desert explorers want to go to the place of Gilf nestled Zerzura but they can’t go there because they don’t have plane.

Clifton is with his wife meets Almasy. He is seating in his two seater plane and they walked towards him from their camp. He stands up from his seat and poured a drink out of his flask.
3.3.4 The theme of Violence, Suffering and Humiliation:

Violence and suffering is also portrayed in this novel. All these characters from different countries come together at the Italian Villa. They are stranger to this land. Hana nurses the English patient as a devotion and dedication to the burnt man. The novel begins with the story of the burnt man. It describes the violence and suffering of the English patient. Ondaatje describes:

The man with bandaged hands had been in the military hospital in Rome for more than four months when by accident he heard about the burned patient and the nurse, heard her name. (29)

The identity of English patient is erased because of his burnt body. Everybody make fun of him. When Hana told to the doctors about the English Patient that the face is unrecognizable and if you pass a match across the face, you cannot find any expression. Doctors laughed after listening this. People make fun of the marginal figure like English patient.

Both Hana and English Patient are living very worst life in ruined Villa. They are living very humiliated life. Hana has to take care of burned patient. She has to read books and give doses of morphine to the English patient. She works in the Garden and orchard. She lives unhappy life. This ruined Villa is a safer place for her. They have to live in darkness. Darkness indicates suffering of migrated people. Ondaatje writes:

She lights a match in the dark hall and moves it onto the wick of the candle. Lights lift itself onto her shoulders. She is on her knees. She puts her hands on her thighs and breathes in the smell of the sulphur. She imagines she also breathes in light. (16)

She is living her life in darkness like a smell of smoke. This life is changed after the arrival of Italian thief Caravaggio. Caravaggio narrates his tragic life to Hana. His hands were amputated by the Nazis. He also tells blood curdling incidents to Hana and the English Patient. Hana describes:

Then he had been a thief, a married man, slipped through his chosen world with a lazy confidence, brilliant in deceit against the rich, or charm towards his wife Giannetta or with this young daughter of his friend. (42)
Caravaggio’s fingers are amputated by the Nazis. The blood is running from his left hand. There is blood everywhere. His hands are now useless.

The novel also depicts the violence of World War II. USA dropped bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many innocent people were killed in the bomb explosion and many people have to suffer in future.

Ondaatje portrayed marginal figures like thief in his novel. Caravaggio is a thief and he works as a spy. Hana was living very sad life. Caravaggio told Hana about sadness. She is unhappy because she is living solitary life. She always imagines who will come along with her. All the characters suffer psychologically and emotionally. John Bolland writes:

The identity and nationalism is depicted through a number of aspects such as the body, mapping, sexual relationship and also the problematizing of history, intertextuality, the crossing of boundaries and disruption of conventional narrative form. (Bolland, 300)

The deserted Villa is a full of bombs left by the Germans. There are many dark rooms with paintings in a Villa. Kip and other migrants suffer in western country. The violence incidents are seen near the Villa. It becomes the war hospital. Ondaatje writes,

It is still terrible out there. Dead cattle. Horses shot dead, half eaten. People hanging upside down from bridges. The last vices of war. Completely unsafe. The sappers haven’t gone in there yet to clear it. The Germans retreated burying and installing mines as they went. A terrible place for a hospital. (31)

The smell of the dead body is so worst and there is need of snowfall or raven to clean the country. The novelist portrays the scene of war. Many people and animals are killed during the war. Everywhere there is violence, suffering of innocent people. There is a smell of a dead body. So there is a need of snowfall to clean this country. Hana received reports of the war:

As the war got darker she received reports about how certain people she had known had died. She feared the day she would remove blood from a patient’s face and discover her father or someone who had served her food across a counter on Danforth Avenue. (52)
Ondaatje suggests there should be no war in future. War takes life of innocent people. Many people are wounded in the war. Geoffery Clifton is a suspicious man. He suspects on his wife Katherine. He goes mad and killed all the people. He killed himself and his wife but Katherine is not dead. Almasy pulled the body of Katherine from the clutches of Clifton. Kip is Indian man working as a Sapper in British army. He is taking training under Lord Saffolk. He has seen bombs everywhere. Eighty percent of bombs are dropped on Britain by airplanes. These bombs are ranged from a hundred pounds to a thousand. A 2000 bomb is called Hermann or an Esau and 4000 pound bomb is called Satan. These bombs kills many people, destroys the nations etc. Madox is a friend of Kip. He leaves for England and says good bye to Kip. He is living with his wife in Somerset. In July 1939, he went to a village Yeovil. He listened sermon in a church for half an hour. He grew more impassioned and killed himself. Ondaatje writes:

He pulled out the desert pistol, bent over and shot himself in the heart. He was dead immediately. A great silence. Desert silence. Planeless silence. They heard his body collapse against the pew. Nothing else moved. The priest frozen in a gesture. It was like those silences when a glass funnel round a candle in church splits and all faces turn. (257)

This is the condition of migrants in foreign country. They lose balance of their mind and kill themselves. There is violence and bloodshed everywhere. Many people died in the explosion of bombs in Italy. Germans killed many Italians. In October 1941, Germans throws 1403 explosive bombs. In this regard Ondaatje writes:

As sappers entered cities they walked along avenues where corpses were strung from trees or the balconies of buildings. The Germans often retaliated by killing ten Italians for every Germans killed. Some of the hanging corpses mined and had to be blown up in midair. (293)

People left the city and started living in the caves outside the city. Germans bombed the entrance of the caves for people should not leave the country. The war is everywhere, the central office is blown and 72 people are killed and wounded.
3.3.5 The theme of Multicultural Relationships:
The multicultural relations are seen in this novel. All the characters from different cultural backgrounds come together and live in a wretched condition. They want to erase their nation means they want to erase particular culture. They want to erase their past and think of the future. After crossing the border people take new cultural identities. Kirpal Singh tries to establish community and bond through the people in the villa. Halder writes in his article about the love affair between Kirpal and Hana. He writes, ‘Hana found love as a liberating force, so naturally fell in love with Kirpal Sing.’( Halder, 113) The love relations between Kip and Hana could be seen as a multicultural relation. Both came from different cultural background and mixed with each other. The brief love affair between Hana and Kirpal Singh comes to an end when USA drops bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The significant barriers between the brown and white races are very noticeable to Kip. He leaves the villa and the short lived relationship and leaves for India and settles down as an Indian. The novel’s epilogue shows that he has re-established himself as an Indian in Punjabi village. He serves as a local doctor in India. Kirpal Sigh, the Sikh who becomes a sapper in the British army represents multiculturalism which rejects national borders, but at the end of the novel he finds his own identity as an Indian. He thinks himself to be an alien away from his nation and family. He is attracted to the British culture and has rejected his family and traditions. He serves Lord Suffolk, Morden and other officers in British army. His brother, on the contrary, is anti-colonial and hates British as he was imprisoned when he rebelled against their colonial rule. Kip feels the bomb squad as his family, Suffolk being his surrogate father. The English re-christen him as Kip, and he becomes a passionate lover of the English and their culture.

His expertise, technological knowledge, sense of discipline and orders, and courage in defusing bombs, gain him respect and establish in him a confident sense of identity in his adopted land.( Bolland, 27)

Kip got respect in the multicultural country or in his adopted land. He defused bomb with full confidence. Ondaatje writes, ‘the English are hanging the Sikhs “who are fighting for
independence”. (Ondaatje, 87) Hana and Kip understands their culture by looking towards each other. Hana says that she understood the Asian culture by watching this only man Kip. Ondaatje writes:

> She imagines all of Asia through the gestures of this one man. The way he lazily moves, his quite civilization. He speaks of warrior saints and she now feels he is one, stern and visionary, pausing only in these rare times of sunlight to be godless, informal, his head back again on the table so the sun can dry his spread hair grain in a fan-shaped straw basket. (229)

He spends his time with the Englishman and he is familiar of Hana. He tells everything to Hana. Hana asks Kip about the colour of her eyes. He only adores her eyes and never tell the colour of the eyes. It shows the lack of language. He is unable to describe the colour of her eyes but only watches.

Avinash Jodha writes in his book about the relationship between Hana and Kip. He writes:

> The masculine self’s need for differentiation is, in Kip’s case, enhanced by his position as racial outsider, but Hana comes to resent the self sufficiency in him, and in their sexual embraces Kip learns that to sacrifice isolation and surrender self control may be the basis of a fuller identity gained through relatedness. Increasingly, we see Kip entering into networks of relationship, organizing the snailshell lights for Hana’s birthday celebration at the Villa. (Jodha, 40)

This relationship between Kip and Hana is beyond their culture and nation. They try to form new type of relationship which is multicultural. Kip is Indian and his culture is totally different from Hana. They establish this relation to overcome the barriers of the culture. He involves in the birthday celebration of Hana at the Villa.

The second love relationship in this novel is between Almasy and Katherine. The love relationship has broken the demarcation of geography, race and culture in this novel. Ondaatje writes about love story. He comments:

> A love story is not about those who lose their heart but about those who find that sullen inhabitant who, when it is stumbled upon, means the body
can fool no one, can fool nothing—not the wisdom of sleep or the habit of social graces. It is a consuming of oneself and the past. (104)

After the disposal of bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he started rejecting the colonial power of the west and the culture of the west. In anger, he holds the rifle against the English patient. He says:

I grew up with traditions from my country, but later, more often, from your country. Your fragile white island that with customs and manners and books and prefects and reason somehow converted the rest of the world. (301)

Kip looks Almasy as the representative of the colonizer and the west. He thinks that English culture dominated the culture of other countries. They banish, if the people pick up the tea cup with wrong finger. English and American countries fooled us and converted with their missionary rules.

Hana takes care of the patient who is having a lot of knowledge. He was a father figure to Hana and by treating him Hana feels that she serves her own father who died in a fire accident. Hana is a 20-year-old Canadian nurse, who takes care of the badly burned man. Hana lives the life of nomads which is the culture of Hana. She follows her own rules and lives free from any cultural constructions. She says that she sleeps in rooms that had walls missing. The rooms without wall mean the hybridized cultural constructions and demolished architecture.

All the characters have multiple cultural identities. The main character, the English patient, is a Hungarian expatriate become a citizen of the world without any particular national identity. They experienced that their cultural identity is fluctuating and fluid one. The cultural identity is formed and continually accustomed by cultural hybridity. Cultural hybridity is diffusive and is fluid one. It doesn’t have any clear boundaries. Cultural connections between diverse cultures create hybridity.

Almásy believes that he has formed his own ethnic and national identity. According to him, he is a citizen of unknown nomadic culture with his the desert explorers. Madox is a close friend of Almasy within the group of desert explorers. After his return to England, he went to church and sat in the worshippers of a church and listened sermon in honour of war and at last took his revolver and shot himself and died. His death is the
protest to nationalism. Almásy praises the life of desert life and construction his own identity outside his nation. Amy Novak writes in his article about Almasy continuous displacement:

He is one of the privileged in society; as Count Almásy he embodies the ideals of an aristocratic, cosmopolitan world, which has the ability and privilege to move itself beyond nationality and identification.

( Novak, 218 )

Almasy chooses nomadism and hybridity. All the immigrants explore the nations of North Africa for bring them under the English culture. Almasy speaks many languages including the language of different desert tribe. He is a multilingual who speaks many languages. He says:

I have spent weeks in the desert, forgetting to look at the moon, he says, as a married man may spend days never looking into the face of his wife.

These are not sins of omissions but signs of preoccupation. (4)

The thoughts of Kips about Hana in the English patient's bedroom emphasize the urgency of interpreting such crises, as they produce the potential for new forms of cultural interaction:

If he could walk across the room and touch her he would be sane. But between them lay a treacherous and complex journey. It was a very wide world. And the Englishman woke at any sound, the hearing aid turned to full level when he slept, so he could be secure in his own awareness. (113).

Kip struggles through the narrative to control the interpretation of his own experiences and actions but too often feels, as he does while Hana sleeps in the field.

Avinash Jodha in his book Poetics of Exile writes:

Nations deform individuals, Madox Kills himself and identities persecute but they cannot be avoided. Thereby Kip who had learnt everything from the white man and who risked his life for their sake can no longer remain in Europe after the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

( Jodha , 131 )

Kip challenges the authority of the West to legitimate his actions and define his identity. The decentralization of political and cultural power means for Kip the opportunity for a
new understanding of identity, organized around difference and disunity, responsive to his own particular experiences of cultural diversity. Ondaatje thus returns to World War II to introduce contemporary questions about cultural identity, privileging the context of this resulting decentralization and the concomitant imperatives to rethink identity. He returns to India and becomes a doctor and continues his own family tradition. Hana and Caravaggio return to their country. All these three characters become a human being due to this experience.