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Mobility Writers in–between Multiculturalism and Transculturality: Case Studies in Canadian Literature

Doctoral Dissertation

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Introduction

1. Overview

The world witnessed many waves of immigration during the twentieth century and Canada was one of the countries exposed to these waves. Immigrants who arrived in these countries descended from different cultures, identities, ethnicities, religions, and social classes, thus these factors reflected on their new location in the host country. This new mixture of communities on a global scale, particularly in Canada, contributes to the revival of travel–writing.[1] Mobility can be considered as one of the important means for writers to compare cultures, nations, genders and ethnicities, it helps immigrants to integrate into the new communities in addition to being a means of redefinition of cultural heritage, mother tongue, and original identity. At the same time, a tension that occurs is a result of the mobility and acculturation[2] process that appears through transcultural writing.

2. The Aim of the Study and the Methodology

Canada is one of the first countries in the world which has cultural diversity and officially recognizes the rights of minorities through the Multiculturalism Policy[3]. This policy was adopted based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which became an official when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced it in his statement to the House of Commons on 8 October 1971:

> A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help to break down discriminatory attitudes and

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[1] For travel writing studies See Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge. [1992] 2008); Graham Huggan. "Anthropology/Travel/Writing: Strange Encounters with James Clifford and Nicolas Rothwell." In *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies*, edited by Julia Kuehn & Paul Smethurst, 228–46. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[2] See Fernando Ortiz. "The Social Phenomenon of 'Transculturation' and Its Importance." In *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Translated by Harriet De Onís, 97–103, repr. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, [1947] 1995).

[3] In 1988, the Multiculturalism Policy was modified to become an official Act which includes the following rights: (a) Canada is a culturally and racially diverse society, (b) it protects the cultural heritage of all the population in Canada and gives them the freedom to share it with others, (c) multiculturalism is the main resource in shaping the Canadians' future, (d) the equality right of all individuals and communities regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, etc., and seeks to eliminate any barrier in their participation of the development of Canadian society, (e) gives ethnic minorities the right of enjoying their cultures, (f) the two official languages are English and French but it also gives the right to use other languages. See Canada. *The Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (Ottawa, Ontario: Minister of Justice, 1988), Act 3, 3-4.

cultural jealousies. National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.[4]

As Canada was the first country which implemented the multiculturalism Policy in 1971, this policy aimed to assist ethnic minorities to integrate (not assimilate) into Canadian society. Thus, it fosters to respect for the cultural diversity of ethnic minorities and gives them the right to preserve their original culture adopted by the Canadian government in the following points:

(1) To assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada. (2) To assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society. (3) To promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity. (4) To assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society.[5]

Based on what is mentioned in the Multiculturalism Policy, Canadian media and studies supported this policy. But part of Canadians, especially Quebeckers, was afraid of the future implications of this policy due to believing that it would foster the notion of divisive rather than asserting a unified identity. Though the Prime Minister asserts in his statement that "Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism. Indeed, we believe that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity. […] A policy of multiculturalism must be a policy for all Canadians."[6] In general, there was a positive reaction and welcoming such as an editorial of the *Ottawa Citizen* which asserted that "Canada's multicultural society is not only a fact but one that should be nourished"[7] in order to increase cultural diversity. Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka, one of the proponents of multiculturalism, affirms that policy succeeded in

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[4] Canada. *Announcement of Implementation of Policy of Multiculturalism within Bilingual Framework*. (Ottawa, Ontario: Parliament. House of Commons. Debates, 1971), 8545.

[5] Ibid., 8546.

[6] Ibid., Appendix 8580-81.

[7] The Ottawa Citizen. "Editorial." *The Ottawa Citizen*, (October 12, 1971), 6.

increasing the rate of integration of ethnic minorities and decreasing racism. Kymlicka points out that

> these rights enable individuals to form and maintain the various groups and associations which constitute civil society, to adapt these groups to changing circumstances, and to promote their views and interests to the wider population. The protection afforded by these common rights of citizenship is sufficient for many of the legitimate forms of diversity in society.[8]

Thus, increasing programs that support studies and research related to the right of ethnic minorities through federal funding of the Canadian government contributed to raising the number of people who are interested in this area. Many studies discuss and analyze significantly these themes such as *Literary Pluralities* (1998) edited by Christl Verduyn, *Tricks with a Glass: Writing Ethnicity in Canada* (2000) edited by Rocio Davis and Rosalia Baena, and Smaro Kamboureli's *Scandalous Bodies* (2000). Within this thriving area of research and studies, there is still a gap in studying the case of ethnic minorities who live in Canada and descend from immigrant roots before the declaration of the Multiculturalism Policy in a comparison with changes that happened to the ethnic minorities after the declaration of this Policy. As Canada is a multicultural state with two official languages and a mixture of the population of immigrants (Anglo–Canadians and French Canadians), transcultural writing related to Canada has its value and features. Mari Peepre–Bordessa sees that transcultural writing helps in revising Canadian literature and culture in the future:

> It does seem to me that a major cultural transformation has taken place in Canada. A reading of recent Canadian literature reveals a diversity and richness of cultural production which I would suggest few other countries can equal at this point. It seems clear that the creative friction produced by migration and the acculturation process have sparked a re–writing of their world, […] Furthermore, a reading of just a few examples of these migrant fictions will uncover an innovative and radical counter–discourse which speaks against many

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[8] Will Kymlicka. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Right*, repr. (New York: Oxford University Press, [1995] 2003), 26.

of the stereotyping tendencies of the canon even as it reveals much about Canadian society.[9]

In the reading of the text above, there are two questions present: How does the literary discourse of ethnic minorities writers contribute to developing Canadian literature and culture with the help of Multiculturalism Policy? and how does this discourse make influence the relationship of ethnic minorities writers with their local community as well as the relationship with the majority in Canada? During the last decades, Canadian narratives contributed to the radical change of stereotypes of Canadian society on the level of the relationship between ethnic minorities themselves and on the level of the relationship between ethnic minorities and the ethnic majority[10] in Canadian society.

Thus, any study of transcultural fiction in Canada must begin with a comparative study of mobility writers' texts who descend from different locations to explore the impact of their production on the development of Canadian culture and literature. Therefore, this study investigates three different images of Canadian writers: one from Eastern Europe, one from the Middle East, and one from South Asia to explore how those writers represent their self–identity[11] and belonging to the original home before/after the declaration of Multiculturalism Policy. The focus is on mobility writers who immigrated to Canada in three different periods of the twentieth century in order to study the transcultural aspects of their texts. Canadian mobility writers usually use narrative to present the Canadian identity and re-present the original identity.

The selected texts in this study link to the notion of 'transcultural discourse'[12] which is used in their narration as a result of the clash and dialogue between the ethnic minorities of

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[9] Mari Peepre-Bordessa. "Beyond Multiculture: Canadian Literature in Transition." In *Transcultural Travels: Essays in Canadian Literature and Society*, edited by Mari Peepre-Bordessa, 11: 47–57. (Lund: The Nordic Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), 48.

[10] In Canada, the term of the ethnic majority or main–stream refers to the dominance of Anglo–Canadians who descend from British and Irish Protestants while the French-Canadians' nation represents the dominant ethnic majority in Quebec. See Eric P. Kaufmann. *Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities,* edited by Eric P. Kaufmann, repr. (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [2004] 2005).

[11] Self–identity refers to the constant characteristics of one's perception of the subjective norms which reflects on his behaviors and attitude to the others, thus, it can be controlled through the behavior of the individual himself.

[12] The concept of 'transcultural discourse' implies that the writer can articulate 'here' and 'there' synchronously, thus, can engage the minorities and majority in his/her narrative to foster the discourse of diversity. The development of this mode writing does not only depend on the fictionalization of the immigrants' experiences but also treats and internalizes the double cultural worlds which are derived from them. See Mari Peepre-Bordessa. "Beyond Multiculture: Canadian Literature in Transition." In *Transcultural Travels: Essays in Canadian*

Eastern European, Arab Jewish and South Asians descent one hand and the ethnic majority in Canada on the other hand. In this study, I explore new realities and new spaces of the transcultural writers through challenges which they faced in different stages of their life. The findings then refer to the change which gets into the discourse of ethnic minority writers in recent years. Consequently, transcultural discourse permits ethnic minorities to develop their discourse dynamically not only concerning the past or the present but also to the future. Therefore, the best understanding of defining ethnicity is through studying the transcultural discourse which appears in the texts of ethnic minority writers and does not only rely on presenting differences with the ethnic majority but is also based on creating a space of dialogue to eliminate these differences. This kind of discourse is necessary but not always possible inside ethnic minority communities themselves or with the majority in Canada.

Each one of the selected writers John Marlyn, Naim Kattan and Michael Ondaatje deals explicitly with the ethnic theme and puts it in his discourse with the other part of society though all of them belong to the ethnic minorities in Canada and have various cultural roots. They are also distinct in the use and manifestation self–consciousness in their texts because the best understanding of the 'Self' is through the mirror of others in which

> [Self] does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing. In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture. For one cannot even really see one's own exterior and comprehend it as a whole, and no mirrors or photographs can help; our real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people, because they are located outside us in space and because they are others.[13]

The three writers are different concerning the place of birth, cultural roots, and traditions, the importance of the choice lies in the common points between them. Marlyn belongs to the second generation who arrived in Canada as an infant; therefore, he had a limited connection with the mother language, habits, and cultural roots. Kattan and Ondaatje who arrived in Canada adults (Kattan was 26 and Ondaatje 19) keep contact with everything which connects them to their original roots. So there is a degree of difference between them as a result

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Literature and Society, edited by Mari Peepre-Bordessa, 11: 47–57. (Lund: The Nordic Association for Canadian Studies, 1994), 52.

[13] M. M. Bakhtin. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Translated by Vern W. McGee, 12th ed. (Texas: University of Texas Press, [1986] 2010), 7.

of the spatial dimension, political changes, the influence of colonialism, and empires for long periods. For instance, Hungarian culture and society were closely influenced by the Ottoman Empire and the Austro–Hungarian Empire. While Iraqi culture and society were also influenced by the Ottoman Empire and British colonization. In Sri Lanka, the influence was greater due to colonization which expanded for a long period from Portuguese to Dutch to French to the British and continued with the civil war. All these political and economic changes are part of the main reasons that forced people to immigrate to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, or Western Europe.

Those three writers belong to one of the two official languages in Canada: Kattan is a Francophone writer while Marlyn and Ondaatje are English writers. Neither of them has ever written any literary text in their mother tongue after their arrival to Canada so the selected texts of their literary productions in this study are written either in English or translated into English. Writing in one of two official languages in Canada allows them to create a space of dialogue with the majority in order to present differences and commonalities. Hence, this study concentrates on cultural differences, the question of belonging to double places and the impact of ethnic identity on their allegiances to these places which reflects the personal experience of these three writers in displacement, migration, and the diaspora. But the description of belonging to multiple places is never uniform and stable: Smaro Kamboureli mentions that "labels are vexing and sneaky things because they are intended to express a stable and universal representation of both communities and individuals."[14] Therefore, the categorization of each one of these writers always shows the 'doubleness' of belonging such as John Marlyn (Hungarian–Canadian), Naim Kattan (Iraqi–Jewish–Canadian), and Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lankan–Canadian).

The determination of identity is stable for this kind of writers but the general form changes based on belonging, ethnicity, and allegiance. These writers express their 'double' identity and belonging through their cultural and ethnic experiences in the diaspora or displacement. Thus, their complicated life in displacement becomes an important means to examine the dilemmas of ethnic minorities in Canadian literature and history; therefore, this kind of narrations affirms its position in Canadian literature due to shedding light on immigrants' experiences and ethnic minorities. Moreover, they have common features despite

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[14] Smaro Kamboureli. "Introduction to the First Edition." In *Making a Difference: Canadian Multicultural Literature*, edited by Smaro Kamboureli, xviii-xxxiii, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, [1996] 2007), xxi.

the differences in the generic form as Margaret Atwood explains that "we are all immigrants to this land […] the country is too big for anyone to inhabit completely."[15]

The focus is on sample texts of those three writers: John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death*, Naim Kattan's *Farewell Babylon*, and Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*. The purpose of selecting these texts is that they represent "a form of resistance to the exclusionary practices of traditional humanism and part of a valuable reshaping of the field,"[16] and thus these writers "go on expanding, responsive to the politics of lived experience and of that culture constructing to which both texts and critics contribute."[17] Therefore, I attempt to show how these three writers concentrate on their self–consciousness to present their ethnic identity and also point out the characteristics of this kind of writing, referring to the aesthetics of their discourse. Their concentration on cross-cultural features and experiences of crossing borderlines helped them foster their self–consciousness contributed to developing their literary production. The focus on the cultural and ethnic discourse in the three texts attempts to show the importance of the approach of this study, thus paying attention to tensions aroused by complicated significances are important to the methodology of it.

3. 'Multiculturalism,' 'Interculturality,' and 'Transculturality'

The cultural discourse is often influenced by political and social forces which make this discourse difficult in certain situations. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* clarifies the role of this discourse and its importance:

> Culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought. […] In time, culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them.' […] [Thus] culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent 'returns' to culture and tradition. These 'returns' accompany rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behavior that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity. […]

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[15] Margaret Atwood. *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), 62.

[16] Susanna Egan. *Mirror talk: Genres of Crisis in Contemporary Autobiography*. (Chapel Hill: London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 14.

[17] Ibid.

[Therefore,] culture is a sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another.[18]

Through the interactions and changes which happened in the 20th century, several literary studies related to cultural diversity under globalization tend to presume that cultures can remain in steady systems and isolated; therefore, they tend to confront the differences for survival. The term culture is represented as central to presumptions concerned with the concepts of 'multiculturalism,' 'interculturality,' and 'transculturality' in this study. The first concept is 'multiculturalism' which is often used interchangeably with the concept of 'ethnic pluralism' to refer to communities that consist of diverse cultures and ethnicities which are a result of waves of immigration or openness to mobility. In a country such as Canada, 'multiculturalism' is used to describe the management of public policy of the cultural diversity in their society; therefore, this term is conceived on the political level as of encouraging and supporting the cultural mosaic to protect the cultural diversity in Canadian society in contrast to the concept of 'melting pot' [19] which was used in the United States. Moreover, "Canada has become characterized by ethnic pluralism with a lower degree of accommodation to the prevailing dominant national culture, and with greater ethnic diversity and greater retention of original cultures than many other receiving countries."[20] However, the concept of 'multiculturalism' is usually criticized due to its encouraging small communities to be in a close circle to maintain differences, thus, the lack of communication with other cultures creates a gap between 'them' and the majority in other communities. The main argument of these criticisms is that the concept of 'multiculturalism' fosters the notion that stereotypes of cultures of small communities are unable to change or integrate with other cultures.

The second term 'interculturality,' is used to encourage cross-cultural dialogue and challenge the policy of self-separation of a group of (ethnics, racial, linguistics, religions, etc.) within the community itself or the whole society. In 'interculturality,' the process depends on the right of articulation and interaction between marginalized or minority cultures and the

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[18] Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism*, repr. (New York: Vintage Books, [1993] 1994), xiii.[19] The term 'melting pot' is used to refer to a concept of monoculturalism to describe the move of society from heterogeneous to become homogeneous, thus, this term described to the assimilation of immigrants in the United States.

[19] The term 'melting pot' is used to refer to a concept of monoculturalism to describe the move of society from heterogeneous to become homogeneous, thus, this term described to the assimilation of immigrants in the United States.

[20] Jiri S. Melich. "Multiculturalism and Integration: Lessons to Be Learnt from Cases of Canada and Europe." In *Travelling Concepts: Negotiating Diversity in Canada and Europe*, edited by Christian Lammert and Katja Sarkowsky, 41: 169–91. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010), 173.

majority which their relationship usually refers to a mutual impact between them. The concept of 'interculturality' appears in facing the policy of multiculturalism because critics argue that 'multiculturalism' fails in the integration of different cultures in the same society. According to its critics, 'multiculturalism' divides society and thus gives legitimacy to small groups and minorities to separate and be in isolation.

> [But] theories of 'intercultural' communication thus create the very problem they set out to solve: they posit 'cultures' as separate entities and people as 'belonging' to these separate entities, thereby failing to acknowledge the fact that in an increasingly interconnected world, cultures are increasingly intertwined and people often constitute their cultural identities by drawing on more than one culture.[21]

Therefore, the appearance and the development of the third concept, namely 'transculturality'[22] coincided with the emerging crisis of 'multiculturalism' and the criticism towards 'interculturality' in the last decade of the twentieth century. The development of the concept of 'transculture,' 'transcultural,' or 'transculturation' passed through different stages, thus there are three main views that present the concept of 'transcultural' on both local and global levels. Fernando Ortiz[23] was the first who introduced and developed the concept of 'transculturation' in the 1940s which came to replace the concept of 'acculturation.' Based on his view, the concept of 'acculturation' describes the process of transition from one culture to another while 'transculturation' covers the process of crossing beyond the trajectories of assimilation to create a 'contact zone'[24] between old and new cultures to reach a coherent body.

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[21] Frank Schulze-Engler. "Introduction." In *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*, edited by Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helff, ix–xvi. (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2009), xii.

[22] I presented the concept of 'transculturality' in the 11th International PhD Students' Conference on "Literature in a Globalized Context" which took place at Martin-Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. 16–18 March 2018 and published in 2020. See Ahmed Joudar. "The Influence of Transculturalism on Writers in Exile: The Cross-Cultural Writings of Naim Kattan." In *Literature in a Globalized Context*, edited by Carmen González Menéndez, Daniel Santana Jügler and Daniel Hofferer, 8. (Wittenberg: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2020), 45-53.

[23] Fernando Ortiz. "The Social Phenomenon of 'Transculturation' and Its Importance." In *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Translated by Harriet De Onís, 97–103, repr. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, [1947] 1995), 97–103.

[24] Mary Louise Pratt defines 'contact zones' as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today." See Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge. [1992] 2008) 7. But James Clifford expands Pratt's notion of the 'contact zone' to include 'times and history' in order to affirm that the 'contact zone' is a dynamic concept which is always able for re-reading as he mentions that "the new paradigms begin with

This assumption is built on the process of cultural interaction which happens between groups of dominant and non-dominant cultures in a close contact zone.

German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch adds a new element to the term 'transculturality.' Welsch believes that cultures cannot be in a closed circle or have inner homogeneity and outer separation. All cultures have a wide variety of mixing features and permeation since they go beyond the traditional concept of culture and pass-through traditional boundaries. So he asserts that the "deep differences between cultures are today diminishing more and more, that contemporary cultures are characterized by cross-cutting elements – and in this sense are to be comprehended as transcultural rather than monocultural."[25] All in all, there are two main approaches to commonalities and differences between cultures. Some believe that commonalities make an influence on the merging cultures while the other trend claims that the cultural differences are the starting point for merging cultures, and commonalities come then on a second level. Therefore, Welsch, in the concept of 'transculturality,' redefines the cultural practices through affirming that "differences no longer emerge between different kinds of monolothic identities, but between identity configurations that have some elements in common while differing in other elements, in their arrangement as a whole, and often in their complexity." [26] As in the elaboration of the concept of 'transculturality,' he asserts that "there are not only commonalities that arise through the permeation of cultures, but there are also commonalities that already precede and underlie the formation of cultures."[27]

The third view of the concept of 'transculture' is presented by the Russian thinker Mikhail Epstein who proposes that "culture frees humans from the material dependencies of nature, it also creates new, symbolic dependencies–on customs, traditions, conventions, which a person receives as a member of a certain group and ethnos."[28] Thus, Epstein affirms that

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historical contact, with entanglement at intersecting regional, national, and transnational levels. Contact approaches presuppose not sociocultural wholes subsequently brought into the relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally, entering new relations through historical processes of displacement." See James Clifford. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 7.

[25] Wolfgang Welsch. "On the Acquisition and Possession of Commonalities." In *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*, edited by Frank Schulze–Engler and Sissy Helff, 3–36. (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2009), 4.

[26] Ibid., 9.

[27] Ibid., 12.

[28] Mikhail Epstein. "Transculture: A Broad Way between Globalism and Multiculturalism." (The *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 68 (1), 2009), 327.

'transculture' represents the development of cultures that stands in front of "globalism and isolating pluralism."[29] He takes into consideration the cases of migrants who cross borders and still keep their original cultures, languages, and traditions and at the same time, successfully integrate into the new culture with their ability to keep a balance of both cultures. Overall, both 'multiculturalism' and 'interculturality' make an influence on the development of cultures through the integration of outside perspective with a vision of 'Self,' thus helping a new model of cultural understanding and tolerance appear.

4. The Relation Between the 'Self' and 'Doubleness' of Belonging

I observed Epstein's view when I presented questions to a group of migrant/exile writers from different countries at the beginning of this study. I classified the outcome of the questionnaire into three groups: The first group in which writers acknowledge melting in the new culture of the new home with forgetting their past and culture heritage. While writers in the second group refuse the integration in the host country; therefore, they concentrate on nostalgic memories of the past despite living for a long time in that country. In the first group, writers never think to return or at least visit their original home while writers of the second group live in the hope of return; therefore, they live in complete isolation and a closed community in the migration home. The immigrants' hope to return to their original homeland is not always the aim but in certain cases and for specific nations, the hope and desire of returning to the homeland became the significant aim such as the hope of Palestinians in the diaspora is to return to their original homeland as well as the hope of Iraqi Jews return to their native country. The writers of the third group are different in the way of dealing with the case of migration or displacement so they choose to live in the 'doubleness' of time, place, and history to create a hybrid space of the contact zone through this duality.

Edward Said affirms the notion of 'doubleness' in *Reflections on Exile* that "exiles are aware of at least two [homes, cultures, and identities], giving them a plurality of vision, giving rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions."[30] Linda Hutcheon in *Other Solitudes* also asserts the importance of this notion: "Doubleness, […], is the essence of the immigrant experience."[31] Consequently, the strategy of 'doubleness' represents a source of inspiration for

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[29] Ibid., 330.

[30] Edward Said. "Reflections on Exile." In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 173–86. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 186.

[31] Linda Hutcheon. "Introduction." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 1–16. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 9.

immigrants writers to articulate their ethnic identity. Therefore, writers of the third group combine creativity and aware critical reading during the process of looking for their identity, ethnicity, and original homeland. While writers in the first two groups are unable to inscribe themselves in the global literature though they achieved literary success in some areas. As Kattan has this experience in exile and immigration, he clarifies in the *Reality and Theatre* that

> the dilemma of the divided man is that he becomes accustomed to living in a double dramatisation, and even when he returns to his native country it no longer seems real to him; it becomes bearable only if it is transformed in turn to a stopover in relation to his second world and embellished by nostalgia.[32]

Furthermore, the writers of the third group focus not only on the question of belonging and self–identity but also on the strategy of separation and the challenges of belonging which they face along their life stages. The question presents here what is the impact of general disruption on subjects of displacement and self–representation in the texts of these three writers? The answer to this question is not that easy because assembling these three texts in one study with a difference of their environment, cultural roots, traditions, and even the life-style needs a high concentration to identify the concept of the 'Self'[33] and belonging rather than concentration on the temporary ties which resulted of general disruption and subjectivity.[34] The writing of these texts may be regarded as a reaction to a historical moment and a response to specific concepts of the 'Self' but the enlightenment theory asserts that the 'Self' as a stable identity represents a sovereign and independent entity. Thus, those three writers express the traditional practice of their ethnicity in a conventional form as the sociological theory suggests that identity is not only the given but also can be constituted through social relationships. These theories concentrate on the policy of representation, the dilemma of dealing with the majority, and restrictions that distinguish and give advantages to some individuals over others. Therefore,

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[32] Naim Kattan. *Reality and Theatre*. Translated by Alan Brown, repr. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, [1970] 1972), 132.

[33] There are two meanings of the concept of the 'Self,' the first one refers to understand the 'Self' as an object of experience while the second meaning is defined as a subject of experience. See William James. *The Principles of Psychology: Volume 1*, repr. (New York: Cosimo Classics, [1890] 2007).

[34] Subjectivity here refers to the real paradox that the self-consciousness involves the 'I' as subject and the 'I' as an Object. See Edmund Husserl. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, edited by Walter Biemel. Translated by David Carr, 4th ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, [1970] 1978).

the displaced people who live on the margins try to create a special form in the literature associated with them to make themselves heard.

The postmodern theory mentions that the subject of identity is double located, fragmented, and sometimes competing in the performance. So the texts of those three writers are constructed based on the diversity of performance and 'doubleness,' thus the impulse in their texts is generated through the relation of 'Self' to the place where is the existence of complicated forms of belonging such as racial, ethnic, national and gender. Those texts provide readers with useful means of thinking which permit negotiation and acceptance of the notion of difference. So the form of their texts is significant when dealing with the new life through the aspects of the 'Self' and overlapping of belonging. Therefore, these texts need a reader who not only consumes the meaning of the text but can become an active reader able to participate in producing the meaning. Edward Said in the *World, the Text, and the Critic* describes the role of the reader in the text saying that "the reader is a full participant in the production of meaning, being obliged as a mortal thing to act, to produce some sense that even though ugly is still better than meaninglessness."[35] In *Scandalous Bodies*, Smaro Kamboureli sees that this kind of texts does not only need "someone who desires to learn but also as someone who learns how to desire;"[36] therefore, she asserts that these texts need conscious readers who realize that

> they don't simply learn knowledge as a specifically designated object: they also learn how knowledge is produced, perceiving the power relations usually concealed behind the force of knowledge […], then, deal with a different kind of knowledge, the kind that traces the relationship of knowledge to ideology, and vice versa.[37]

Moreover, those writers use self–awareness for themselves and their readers. In this kind of texts, the writer writes the text and at the same time is written by the text,[38] thus "autobiography replaces the writer."[39] Therefore, there is no disconnection between 'Self' and the text by acknowledging that the writer expresses himself through writing in which the text comes to him because the real space of belonging for the writer is the text itself. But the relation

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[35] Edward Said. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 41.

[36] Smaro Kamboureli. *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada*, repr. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, [2000] 2009), 26.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Roy Miki. *Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing: Essays*. (Toronto: Mercury Press, 1998), 50.

[39] George Bowering. *Errata*. (Red Deer, Alta, Canada: Red Deer College Press, 1988), 34.

of the writer to the text is influenced by the history of displacement, consequently, these three texts represent a response to Canadian history as ethnic and race themes become obvious in the daily life of Canadian society. Though Kattan and Ondaatje differ from Marlyn's dealing with the ethnic theme, all three of them have sought to show a real picture of ethnic minorities in Canada. As particular moments in history are very important to understand these works, thus concepts belonging, identity and 'Self' represent the significant elements of these texts. Because individuals who live in the condition of displacement and on the margins, it is not easy for them to realize the meaning of belonging to ethnic identity after they are lost connection with their original homeland where the home for them is a process of continuous mobility and not being static in one place.

They also concentrate on the differences between here/there, I/Other, thus those writers challenge these differences in their texts: *Under the Ribs of Death*, *Farewell Babylon*, and *Running in the Family*. Their approach leads to open a wide space of discussions and studies to explore the relationship between subjectivity and ethnic belonging in Canada. As a result of their ethnic belonging, they experience the 'cultural recovery' through exploring the relationship with their cultural roots and ethnic identity. Stuart Hall, in *Ethnicity: Identity and Difference*, explains that "this new kind of ethnicity [...] has a relationship to the past, but it is a relationship partly through memory, partly through narrative, one that has to be recovered. It is an act of cultural recovery."[40] So the process of 'cultural and ethnic recovery' helps ethnic minority writers to identify the location of ethnicity and then draw the cultural points of difference and similarity with the ethnic majority. In each one of these three texts, writers concentrate on the act of writing through the narrative process, thus they negotiate to dismantle the complications of cultural differences by using a certain language to enable them to present their identity and ethnicity. Edward Said mentions concerning the complexities of cultural difference in *Representations of the Intellectual* that

> the fundamental problem is [...] how to reconcile one's identity and the actualities of one's own culture, society, and history to the reality of other identities, cultures, peoples. This can never be done simply by asserting one's preference for what is already one's own: tubthumping about the glories of 'our' culture or the triumphs of 'our' history is not worthy of the intellectual's energy,

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[40] Stuart Hall. "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference." (*Radical America* 23 (4), 1989), 19.

especially not today when so many societies are comprised of different races and backgrounds as to resist any reductive formulas.[41]

The problem areas in these texts are not only important to present dilemmas as migration, displacement, isolation, race, ethnicity, alienation, and identity but the way of literary representation of the conflict of cultural differences is also important. As Sherry Simon clarifies that the "literary language is not a given, but always an expression of affiliation or transgression."[42] However, the general disruptions become a strategy of the narrative to resist norms; therefore, Marlyn, Kattan, and Ondaatje challenge these differences to prove their cultural identity. Based on these facts, these three writers enable to redefine/define their ethnic identity through the restoration of the relation to the past and then connect it with the new culture in the present. The process of recovery depends on the negotiation with the past to reactivate it as these three writers use their memory in the process of the restoration to create a space of the self–awareness which they use in their texts to firm the concept of 'Self.' In *Culture's in Between*, Homi Bhabha clarifies the notion of restoration of the past through using the memory:

> Communal memory may seek its meaning through a sense of causality, shared with psychoanalysis, that negotiates the recurrence of the image of the past while keeping open the question of the future. The importance of such retroaction lies in its ability to reinscribe the past, reactivate it, relocate it, *resignify* it. More significant, it commits our understanding of the past, and our reinterpretation of the future, to an ethics of 'survival' that allows us *to work through the present*. And such a working through, or working out, frees us from the determinism of historical inevitability, repetition *without a difference*. It makes it possible for us to confront that difficult borderline, the interstitial experience, between what we take to be the image of the past and what is in fact involved in the passing of time and the passage of meaning.[43]

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[41] Edward Said. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*, repr. (New York: Vintage Books, [1994] 1996), 94.

[42] Sherry Simon. "The Language of Difference. Minority Writers in Quebec." (*Canadian Literature Supplement* 1, 1987), 121.

[43] Homi Bhabha. "Culture's in Between." In *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, edited by David Bennett, 29–36, repr. (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1998] 2001), 35–36.

The three texts express the issues concerning the marginal explicitly through the choice of form and content containing references to the personality of the writer which is surrounded by forces of history, culture and society. This research aims to investigate how those three writers define the 'Self' through the process of the recovery of the past to express differences between cultures, however, their texts cannot be defined explicitly as autobiographical texts, they perhaps can be called texts which use autobiographical elements. Based on Philippe Lejeune's view, autobiography[44] is a pact between writer and reader in which the writer appears as a protagonist and a narrator at the same time.[45] Therefore, this genre depends on sending and receiving signals between the narrator and the reader to maintain the power of the text and assert the notion of 'Self' which is essential in autobiographical narratives and is affirmed by the stability of subjectivity.

In *Autobiography: From Different Poetics to a Poetics of Differences,* Shirley Neuman illustrates the concepts related to identity and subjectivity in autobiographical texts. Neuman's perspective shows the manner of presenting differences concerning ethnic, racial and gender identity which reduce inside the group. Based on her view, "theories of group identity prove reductive of differences;"[46] therefore, it can include the differences of the writer inside the text itself. Neuman, thus, admits that not only the discourse constructs the subject, but it is also constructed by the subject. As well, Stuart Hall defines the ethnicity of the margins in which he says: "We all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, [and] a particular culture […], ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are."[47] Thus, ethnicity is a cultural form that can apply to all kinds of regions, communities, nations and subject to question and negotiation. Therefore, those three writers are classified based on their ethnic identity but ethnicity is not the only signifier of their identity because other identities might also accompany or undermine their original identity.

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[44] The autobiography is a special image of the author which differs from other images of the writing which represents self-reflexive of the author's own image. See M. M. Bakhtin. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Translated by Vern W. McGee, 12th ed. (Texas: University of Texas Press, [1986] 2010), 109.

[45] Philippe Lejeune. *On Autobiography*. Translated by Katherine Leary. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 3–30.

[46] Shirley Neuman. "Autobiography: From Different Poetics to a Poetics of Differences." In *Essays on Life Writing*, edited by Marlene Kadar, 213–30. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 221.

[47] Stuart Hall. "New Ethnicities." In *The Post–Colonial Studies Reader*, edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, 223–27, repr. (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1995] 2003), 227.

Poststructuralist theorists also work on the redefinition of this genre as they deconstruct the notion of stability of the autobiographical texts. Helen Buss in her book, *Mapping Our Selves*, describes the current notion of subjectivity that locates between "a rock and a hard place"[48] and is expressed in autobiographical writing. The first opinion determines conditions to express the autobiography as "a concept of the unique individual, [and] a 'conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life.'"[49] But several poststructuralists doubt "the control of the subject over […] self–construction as well as the referentiality of language."[50] They claim that "the self […] is not a unified psychological representation whose 'essence' or 'identity' is fixed prior to the language which gives it being, but, rather, its essence and identity is constituted in and by the language which produces it."[51] Consequently, they describe the autobiographical as "only an illusive, unstable version of a self that did not exist before the act of writing and has little reference to the writer in his ongoing life."[52]

Based on the above perspectives, all three writers show their concern in articulating the own experiences which help them to show their consciousness because this kind of writing is a formal construction participating in the process of literary production. At the same time, other critics concentrate on the subjects which deal with ethnicity, race, and class to which poststructuralists do not give much attention as Shirley Neuman illustrates that the Canadian writing is

> most sophisticated and thoughtful about the problems of inscribing the self in literature, and most innovative in its presentation of auto/biographical content, is not auto/biographical in any strict formal or generic sense at all. Instead, it crosses and recrosses the borders between auto/biography and fiction in order to question static and holistic conceptions of the writing subject.[53]

The process of writing this kind of texts illustrates the collective manner which is used by these three writers in which the writer begins his journey of looking for the 'Self.' In *Under*

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[48] Helen M. Buss. *Mapping Our Selves: Canadian women's autobiography*. (Montreal, Quebec: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1993), 4.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Shirley Neuman. "Life-Writing." In *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, edited by William H. New, Carl Berger, Alan Cairns, Francess G. Halpenny, Henry Kreisel, Douglas Lochhead, Philip Stratford, and Clara Thomas, 4: 333–70. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 333.

the Ribs of Death, Marlyn begins his search for the development of his personality and his 'Self' outside his community and ethnicity to fill the gap which results from the isolation in his community. Kattan in *Farewell Babylon* does not only search the 'Self' but also the search expands to cover the whole of his community, the origin of his ancestors, cultural roots, and ethnic identity to fill the gap of forced exile from the original home. While Ondaatje in *Running in the Family* uses the search for his father as a means to look for the 'Self'; therefore, he uses the memory to fill the gap which results from losing his father. Thus, neither of them can concentrate on their own life without portraying the life of their community or family members in order to find any connection to make the process of writing possible. Therefore, they insist on self–representation to focus on their own life with a minute description of daily life through movement between places to describing cafe, school, farms, and prairies. We must take into consideration that all of them had been immigrants in Canada for a long time and are far from their original home, thus, their personal life and self–identity is embodied through the life of others to extend a wide web of relations.

The significance of all these three texts is the location and the move across cultures in which Kattan and Ondaatje connect to the homeland or the place of ancestors, while Marlyn attempts to move from his ethnic community in the North end to a new location in the South End of Winnipeg. Kattan and Ondaatje try to build a bridge between the imaginary and real picture of the duality of locations in their texts, thus creating a connection between 'here' and 'there.' But Marlyn's case is different because he attempts to cut off any connection with his ethnicity and anything that reminds him of his community. However, the movement between locations contributes to the disruption of the unity of the subject, for example, in *Under the Ribs of Death*, Marlyn's text shows the disconnection of ethnic identity because of the movement from the location of his community to the English part in Winnipeg. On the contrary, Kattan in *Farewell Babylon* presents his connection to the birthplace and the origin of his ancestors as very important elements of his personality. Similarly, Ondaatje tries to explore the reason for disconnection which happened because of the movement from Sri Lanka to England and then to Canada. Consequently, I propose that those three writers challenge both sides of critics by pointing to the fact that it is unthinkable to limit their writings to a certain definition of autobiography. Therefore, they seek to maintain the social and historical aspects which allow them to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity as Stuart Hall in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* elaborates:

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity', lays claim.[54]

5. Differences, Overlapping, and Interaction between Ethnic Minorities and the Ethnic Majority in Canada

The classification of immigrants based on their ethnic and cultural backgrounds began at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries in Canada, thus this classification intensely made an impact in Canadian history. Canadian nationalist feelings rose, and the ideology of racism appeared in a wide form coinciding with the arrival of waves of immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia to Canada at that time. Therefore, ethnic minorities suffered from the difficulty of integration due to their small number and also the weak role in the contact zones. Anglo–Canadians were the majority, thus their reaction against immigrants was sometimes very negative as mentioned in the Annual Report of the Methodist Missionary Society for 1907-1908:

> The Orientals are here, and a time will come when they will be here in larger numbers. How shall we deal with them? Shall we regard and treat them as barbarians, a menace to society, to be mobbed, boycotted, driven out of the country? […] The presence of large numbers of Asiatics in some of the provinces of the Dominion has become, from the political and economic points of view, a serious problem. The forces of organized labor see in these Oriental strangers what looks like a dangerous competing element, and if they are permitted to come in large numbers many workmen believe the result will be that wages for both skilled and unskilled labor will rule at much lower figures than if white men only were in control of the situation. This sentiment is very strong, especially in British Columbia, and during recent years steady pressure has been brought to bear—not without success— to induce the Dominion

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[54] Stuart Hall. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Colonial Discourse and Post–Colonial Theory*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 392–403, repr. (New York: Routledge, [1993] 2013), 392.

Government, if not to banish the Orientals now in the country, at least to prevent

the entrance of anymore.[55]

As a result of the friction that occurred between ethnic minorities and the majority, some of the individuals of the second and third generations of ethnic minorities tried to change their family name or first name. Because their family names deny them to access to better jobs and sometimes these names become a source of ridicule by the majority as in the case of Marlyn's protagonist, Sandor, who tries to change his family name first, but his attempt ends with a change of his first name. The dominance of Anglo–Canadian shows that "the power of English ethnicity to enhance class ascendancy and privilege – with full belonging in Canada identifies one of this country's most powerfully normative ethnocultural pairings."[56] The dilemma of names which is faced by ethnic minorities in Canada is not the only one as James S. Woodsworth reveals in *Strangers Within Our Gates: Or Coming Canadians* that the racism and discrimination in dealing with incoming immigrants of ethnic minorities extend to the colour of skin, i.e. white and non–white. Woodsworth also mentions that newcomers to Canada who have different colour, classes and religions "cannot be easily assimilated"[57] in the society of the majority while he asserts that incoming immigrants of white skin such as "Germans […] are more among our best immigrants. […] They are 'easily assimilated.'"[58] Therefore, the complicated aspects of these differences and clashes invite us to look for these kinds of ethnic minorities in order to study their relationship with the ethnic majority in Canada.

After the declaration of the Multiculturalism Policy in Canada, the discussions emphasized the right of ethnicities, language, and cultural heritages. But some of the critics argue that this Policy permits to concentrate on the consuming aspects of ethnic minorities such as traditional dances, songs, or food. Smaro Kamboureli elaborates in an extensive debate the impact of the Multiculturalism Policy on Canadians as she points out that this policy

yields to history […] [that] constitute[s] a discursive site where 'ethnicity'

designates at once a subject position and Canadian marginality. It is a site where

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[55] James S. Woodsworth. *Strangers within Our Gates: Or Coming Canadians.* (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, 1909), 295–96.

[56] Daniel Coleman. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 81.

[57] James S. Woodsworth. *Strangers within Our Gates: Or Coming Canadians.* (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, 1909), 189.

[58] Ibid., 100.

multiculturalism is held together as a manifestation of legal positivism but also where it falls apart, and hence is fraught with ambivalence.[59]

Therefore, she argues that the support which is given to some of the ethnic groups can contribute to marginalizing the ethnic majority to become part of the past arguing that

support for folklore promotes the exotic image of Others—a view that has become commonplace. The availability of funds and the media's readiness to report on such heritage performances create a web of complicitous relations and dubious obligations that guarantees the 'preservation' and 'enhancement' only of the kind of culture that fits the fictionality of the diasporic subject as imagined by the state. At the same time though, it is important to consider some of the implications of this sanctioned exoticism.[60]

Based on her view, the state of Canada through its policy contributes to fostering exotic aspects of ethnicities, thus sets how individuals of ethnic minorities present their ethnic identity and how the majority will see it. Believing that stereotypes of ethnicities which promote it in some of the places contribute to "a fetishization of ethnic imaginaries: they cast minority Canadians as objects of national voyeurism by keeping them, as it were, under surveillance."[61] Therefore the process of ethnic minority construction which is encouraged by the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy causes uneasiness for several writers and critics. This process limits aspects of the development of ethnicity which are recognized by the Multiculturalism Policy since "the emphasis is placed on reproducible and therefore reductive heritage images, precisely because they are seen as reflecting a past irrelevant to Canada's and therefore of little, if any, political pertinence to Canadian culture."[62] Kamboureli emphasizes that the concentration of Canadian Multiculturalism is on ethnics communities in which the production leads to "stereotypes without necessarily considering the history that produced them."[63]

Most critics concentrate on differences in which the Multiculturalism Policy forms them within literary contexts but some of them ignore that the separation process of ethnic minorities from the majority in Canadian society made an impact on all other ethnicities before the

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[59] Smaro Kamboureli. *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada*, repr. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, [2000] 2009), 104.

[60] Ibid., 107.

[61] Ibid., 110.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 89.

declaration of Multiculturalism Policy, thus this led minorities to live totally in a 'ghetto'. Though ethnicities intersect in various locations in Canadian literature as well, the focus is mainly on differences in which the Multiculturalism Policy forms them within literary contexts. As in *The Dark Side of the Nation,* Himani Bannerji points out

> here difference is not a simple marker of cultural diversity, but rather, measured or constructed in terms of distance from civilizing European cultures. Difference here is branded always with inferiority or negativity. This is displayed most interestingly in the reading of the non–white or dark body which is labelled as a visible and minority body.[64]

Although the Multiculturalism Policy in Canada concentrates on 'visible minority,' Bannerji never mentions the positive aspects of differences because she claims that "difference here is branded always with inferiority or negativity."[65] Based on her view, writers of ethnic minorities might be described as having 'negative differences' in comparison with other ethnicities as she believes that

> the case of Canada and its nationalism, when considered in this light, is not very different from the 'official nationalism.' […] These are cases of colonial 'community' in which nation and state formations were created through the conquering imagination of white supremacy. An anxiety about 'them' — the aboriginals, pre–existing people — provides the core of a fantasy which inverts the colonized into aggressors, resolving the problem through extermination, suppression and containment. Dominant cultural language in every one of these countries resounds with an 'us' and 'them' as expressed through discursivities of 'minority/sub/multi–culture.' A thinly veiled, older colonial discourse of civilization and savagery peeps out from the modern versions.[66]

Later and as a result of the rise of racism in addition to other factors, it becomes necessary to emphasize race in studies and discussions related to multiculturalism in the Canadian writings as Linda Hutcheon affirms that "the single most significant factor in the

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[64] Himani Bannerji. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender.* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc, 2000), 107.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

response to multiculturalism in Canada today appears to be race."[67] Critics realize the need to use new terms which are beyond the differences and the aspects of ethnicities to displace the multiculturalism concept; therefore, Enoch Padolsky asserts in the article *Cultural Diversity and Canadian Literature* that the task of "a pluralistic approach […] is to replace the current terminology – 'main–stream' and 'ethnic' writers/writing – by the terms 'ethnic majority' and 'ethnic minority.'"[68] In an interview with Rosalia Baena, Linda Hutcheon clarifies that "'interculturalism' is a very useful term […]. It has another advantage too: it avoids the negative baggage that has accumulated around 'multiculturalism.'"[69] The critic Janice Kulyk Keefer observes that "multiculturalism seeks to preserve and succeeds in paralyzing cultures"[70] while "transculturality […] brings out the dynamic potential of cultural diversity, the possibility of exchange and change among and within different ethnocultural groups."[71]

Canadian society being a mixture of various cultures, identities, and ethnicities, the notion of transculturality may be more useful to ethnic minorities in order to interact and communicate with the ethnic majority to increase "interconnection, mobility, and transformation"[72] between them and also with other minorities. Consequently, transcultural dialogue is the best means which is used by ethnic writers to reflect the real image of their ethnic minorities through literary texts. Though the reality sometimes is different because Multiculturalism Policy indicates to individuals who do not belong to English, French, or First Nations as the 'Others.' Therefore, the recent discussions related to multiculturalism which focus on race rather than ethnicity are increased because of the rise of discrimination against visible minorities among communities in Canada. Therefore, the classification of immigrants based on ethnicity, language, culture, and habits is replaced with the classification based on race and colour. In his study on the conditions of new immigrants, David Roediger mentions that "[they] often existed between nonwhiteness and full inclusion as whites, not just between

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[67] Linda Hutcheon. "Introduction." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 1–16. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.

[68] Enoch Padolsky "Cultural Diversity and Canadian Literature: A Pluralistic Approach to Majority and Minority Writing in Canada." In *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, edited by Ajay Heble, Donna Palmateer Pennee, and J. R. Tim Struthers, 24–43. (Ontario: Broadview Press, 1996), 25.

[69] Linda Hutcheon. "Critical Perspectives on Writing Ethnicity in Canada. Linda Hutcheon Interviewed by Rosalía Baena." In *Tricks with a Glass: Writing Ethnicity in Canada*, edited by Roćio Davis and Rosalía Baena, 287–98. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 287.

[70] Janice Kulyk Keefer. "From Mosaic to Kaleidoscope: Out of the Multicultural Past Comes a Vision of a Transcultural Future." (*Books in Canada* 20 (6), 1991), 16.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

black and white."[73] Roediger classifies the 'non–white' into "'situationally white,' 'not quite white,' 'off–white,' 'semiracialized,' and 'conditionally white,'"[74] thus this kind of immigrants always try to be "inbetween peoples"[75] to obtain the privilege of whites. However, Roediger asserts that the long process of new immigrants to be "white ethnics"[76] will be messy due to the negative impact of complicated factors "across time, space, and circumstances"[77] such as "naturalization bureaucracies, […] wide local variations based on the demographics of particular workplaces and industries, patterns of strikebreaking management strategies, language acquisition, and labor markets."[78]

In addition to the racist treatment of non–white immigrants, white immigrants of ethnic minorities also subject to racism and discrimination; therefore, dealing with ethnic minorities in Canada becomes unequal in recent years. In *Imagination, Representation, Culture*, Myrna Kostash, who is of Ukrainian descent, mentions that: "I had discovered that, in the new terms of the discourse, I was white. I was a member of a privileged majority. I was part of the problem, not the solution."[79] Consequently, she feels belonging to the visible minority such as other non–white writers who belong to visible minorities; therefore, Kostash realizes that "solidarity [is] no longer the point. Power and privilege […], [are] the point."[80] According to these views, immigrant writers of white skin of Eastern Europe and Arab Jews become part of the 'white majority' but this privilege somehow negatively affected them as Lisa Grekul refers to the influencing factors:

> It is precisely the privilege of being able to discard the scarf–the ability to pass–
> that has rendered ethnic minority writers speechless vis–a–vis their enduring
> feelings of otherness. Ironically, it is racialized minority writers' inability to

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[73] David Roediger. *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2005), 13.

[74] Ibid., 12-13.

[75] Ibid., 13.

[76] Ibid., 27.

[77] Ibid., 37.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Myrna Kostash. "Imagination, Representation, Culture." In *Literary Pluralities*, edited by Christl Verduyn, 92–96. (Ontario: Broadview Press, 1998), 92.

[80] Ibid., 93.

change their marginalized status in the economy of race that has brought them to voice, and brought serious, focused attention to what they have to say.[81]

In *Coming Across Bones*, Keefer also affirms the notion of marginalization and racism through how ethnic minorities are treated in Canada:

> I know that however much I may see my ethnicity as scar rather than as a scarf be tied on or discarded at will, the colour of my skin is not going to adversely affect people treat me on the subway or in a store, whereas for persons of colour, it is often only the fact of their race that is seen at all, and acknowledged in the most insulting and aggressive ways.[82]

However, the question presents here is whether immigrants of ethnic minorities can preserve their 'white ethnicity' among this wave of racism in Canada, particularly generations descending from Eastern European and Arab Jews. According to Laura Marcus' view that "the pervasive hybridity attributed to autobiography […] has made it the crucial site for the exploration of new identities."[83] So the case of John Marlyn and Naim Kattan shows that there is a point of transformation from one generation to another due to the existence of hybridity in Canadian society, thus their contribution can be observed through the view of transcultural discourse. As differences of ethnic minorities are overlapping, it is important to show how the ethnic majority views these differences because sometimes they are visible and other times are invisible. Thus, the dialogue is the cornerstone to determine this interference 'in–between' visible and invisible differences or as Roediger suggests that "'inbetweenness' also carries a useful expectation of possible change over time."[84] In *Haunted Nations*, Sneja Gunew elaborates differences between 'ethnicity' and 'race':

> In an earlier era ethnicity was seen as a way of circumventing the racist history of 'race' and was associated with apparently cultural choices; in other words, that one could choose the groups to which one belonged and within them could

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[81] Lisa Grekul. *Leaving Shadows: Literature in English by Canada's Ukrainians*. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005), xvi–xvii.

[82] Janice Kulyk Keefer. ""Coming Across Bones": Historiographic Ethnofiction." (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 57, 1995), 93.

[83] Laura Marcus. *Auto/Biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 281.

[84] David Roediger. *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2005), 13.

also choose what to preserve as part of an imagined past. […] [But] race on the other has been associated with irreducible difference […] often located in what have been termed 'visible differences.'[85]

The definition of 'ethnicity' and 'race' is overlapping in both the 'content' and the 'differences.' Linda Hutcheon illustrates the concept of 'ethnicity' based on the language of discourse which the first part refers to "the Greek root ethnos, meaning 'nation' or 'people'"[86] as Hutcheon asserts that "all Canadians are ethnic, including French and British; the fact that the word is not so used points to a hierarchy of social and cultural privilege."[87] The other meaning of the word 'ethnic'[88] associates with the "'pagan' and 'heathen,' or in its more recent contexts with 'foreign.'"[89] So the first meaning of the notion of 'ethnic' which appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century refers to a group of people or nations who are known as an ethnic community. While the second notion of ethnic 'pagan' and 'heathen' retains a negative meaning, it recurred in the Christian texts in Latin from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. Based on Hutcheon's view, "the word 'ethnic' always has to do with the social positioning of the 'other,' and is thus never free of relations of power and value."[90]

Therefore, both 'ethnicity' and 'race' have negative as well as positive aspects because both terms are constructed and developed socially and always changed through time. However, I observed that the discrimination based on visible differences was popular at the beginning of the twentieth century and is perhaps increased again in recent years; therefore, I will discuss these visible differences of ethnic minorities at the beginning of the twentieth century in the first chapter of this study in the case of Eastern Europeans, particularly John Marlyn. The language, food, costumes, and even the location where ethnic minorities lived in Canada were a strong indication of the 'visible differences.' Though some individuals changed their language, identity and location, racism and discrimination continued over their life due to the relationship of these differences with the concept of ethnicity. However, these factors are

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[85] Sneja Marina Gunew. *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 21.

[86] Linda Hutcheon. "Introduction." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 1–16. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 2.

[87] Ibid.

[88] See the definition of the term 'ethnĭcus' in Charlton T. Lewis, and Charles Short. *A Latin dictionary founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary*, repr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1879] 1993), 661.

[89] Linda Hutcheon. "Introduction." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 1–16. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 2.

[90] Ibid.

changed over time by changing the discourse of intellectuals and the recognition of the Multiculturalism Policy. Several representatives of ethnic minorities can be present in Canadian society with no longer visible differences having made a great contribution to Canadian literature.

I argue that concentration must be on the definition of ethnicity in order to explore how the individual of an ethnic minority defines himself/herself and how the ethnic majority identifies and defines the character of the individual based on ethnicity. Benedict Anderson clarifies that "communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."[91] The members of the ethnic minority, thus, imagine their community in a particular form while they imagine the ethnic majority in a different form, at the same time, members of the ethnic majority imagine them in another form. In *The Politics of Recognition*, Charles Taylor determines the concept of 'recognition' saying that:

> Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.[92]

Therefore, the way how the ethnic majority identifies the individual of the ethnic minority is important in addition to the definition of the individual to himself. The stereotype of the ethnic minority in Canada which exists in the imagination of the ethnic majority makes an impact on their works, lifestyle, and experiences in Canadian literature.

6. The Transition of Ethnic Minority Writers from Ethnic Identity Reconstruction to Transcultural Dialogue

In the previous passages, I mentioned the negative arguments concerning Multiculturalism Policy, here I will present the positive arguments of this Policy and continue in the second and third chapters to prove the effectiveness of the Canadian Multiculturalism policy on ethnic minorities in Canada. Several critics admit that Multiculturalism Policy helps

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[91] Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, [1983] 2006), 6.

[92] Charles Taylor. "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited by Amy Gutmann, 25–73. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25.

in increasing the interest and desire of the ethnic majority to know more about ethnic minorities due to hidden positive aspects which may help in decreasing the gap if they appear. In *Technologies of Ethnicity*, Dawn Thompson claims that they still call to permit counter-reactions because "the pedagogical narrative of multiculturalism constructs and contains ethnic - minority subjects, that technology also contains within it the possibility of resistance in the form of an ethnic performance -- or rather, a performance of ethnicity -- that promises to rewrite multiculturalism and the nation of Canada." [93] Based on Thompson's view, the ethnic performance of the individual can occur in a dynamic form rather than restricting his/her behaviour because the stereotype of ethnicity is a reflective mirror that permits the ethnic majority to identify and define ethnicity through it. It becomes necessary for ethnic minorities to engage in a dynamic dialogue with the majority in order to fight stereotypes of ethnicity and take part in transcultural exchange instead of being on the margin or "on an 'orbit' far from the centre, where [they] work partly in isolation."[94] This kind of dialogue, thus, has to deal with certain values of time and location to build a specific narrative that engages with the ethnic majority. Hayden White, in *The Content of the Form*, asserts that narrative form is "epistemic authority, […] cultural function, and […] general social significance"[95] in which the "natural is the impulse to narrate […] [and the] inevitable is the form of narrative."[96] Hence, White recognizes "that narrative, far from being merely a form of discourse that can be filled with different contents, real or imaginary as the case may be, already possesses a content prior to any given actualization of it in speech or writing."[97]

The discussion of differences and interactions between ethnic minority and the ethnic majority becomes necessary to form a real image of dynamic dialogue. Because the dialogue which is created by ethnic minority writers in their narratives becomes a bridge of transcultural dialogue. It does not only focus on aspects of the differences between them but also focuses on what the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy encourages for creating a space of dialogue with their cultural and ethnic roots. The dialogue aims to show the bright side of their ethnic and cultural identity and thus preserves its dynamicity. Smaro Kamboureli emphasizes that "the ethnic subject speaks of and through herself, she does so by interpreting how she has already

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[93] Dawn Thompson. "Technologies of Ethnicity." (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 57, 1995), 51.

[94] Katalin Kurtosi. *Modernism on the "Margin" – The "Margin" on Modernism: Manifestations in Canadian Culture*. Edited by Martin Kuester. (Augsburg: Wissner–Verlag, 2013), 61.

[95] Hayden White. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), x.

[96] Ibid., 1.

[97] Ibid., xi.

been constructed, thus speaking back to, or together with, what defines and delimits her as ethnic."[98] By letting the voices of ethnic minorities to participate in constructing the ethnic subject, transcultural discourse shows the advantages of developing the dynamic of ethnicity. The characteristics of this model are to encourage ethnic minorities to be far from ghettoization, simulate the ethnic majority, build a contact bridge between them and the ethnic majority, and engage in transcultural dialogue. In this context, the performance of ethnicity repeats the ethnic construction in a different form every time to permit the individuals to displace the norms to enable the repetition of performance once again.[99] As Thompson remarks that

> the performative subject retains the possibility of agency, of resistance to the dominant pedagogy, by choosing and negotiating between identifications and displacing that which it is supposed to repeat. Within the nation, by the nation, and against the nation, the subject is constantly being rewritten.[100]

The dynamic of ethnicity is not only influenced by differences but also is influenced by the dialogue and interconnection with the language and culture of the majority. As the hypothesis indicates that the dynamic of the ethnicity occurs through a simultaneous sequence, starting from the phase of displacement to segregation and then the move to the phase of integration in an identification pattern. But this movement cannot shift from one direction to another during any period without going through the phase of marginality. However, this sequence might occur in a reflexive direction or what is known as 'reflexive conversion' which occurs when there is contact with another ethnic or cultural identity. This process perhaps changes the feelings and the ideology of the individual when the contact occurs with people of a certain ethnic identity and thus, results in a process by a reflexive direction. Winfried Siemerling clarifies that "ethnicity is […] a relational identification that requires more than one identity in order to exist"[101] and thus the existence of ethnicity depends on a 'connection bridge' and 'dialogue' with the ethnic majority. The significance of transcultural dialogue is located in ways in which ethnic writers imagine this dialogue to get back a benefit for their community as well as for Canadian literature and Canadian society in general. Therefore, ethnic minorities

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[98] Smaro Kamboureli. *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada*, repr. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, [2000] 2009), 94.

[99] Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, repr. (New York: Routledge, [1990] 2010), 202–3.

[100] Dawn Thompson. "Technologies of Ethnicity." (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 57, 1995), 53.

[101] Winfried Siemerling. "Writing Ethnicity: Introduction." (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 57, 1995), 2.

depend on transcultural dialogue as an approach to communicate with the ethnic majority in order to understand each other. According to Siemerling

> ethnicity thus arises with the construction of cross–cultural identification, every notion of ethnicity implies an act of 'ethnogenesis,' a communal identification whose emergence is marked, at least for those who wish to be thus affiliated, precisely as different from the previous, seemingly unmitigated cultural identity to which it refers—yet which it cannot but name, remember, and construct from its new perspective.[102]

Based on Siemerling's view, each ethnic writer can rebuild his ethnicity inside his community and also with the majority community through the dialogue "because such acts of ethnogenesis imply simultaneous identification by both contrast and cross-cultural implication, they are marked by hybridity and invention."[103] Consequently, ethnic minorities benefit from the Multiculturalism Policy to draw a dynamic line of the future of their ethnicity in the narrative through the relationship with the past.

The case requires concentrating on the chronology of the transition of ethnic minority writers in Canada from the stage of identity–building to creating a space of dialogue with the ethnic majority which becomes a central subject in ethnic minority writings after the second decade of the twentieth century. The dialogue space which is created in earlier texts of ethnic minority narratives sometimes is linear in form and content. When the Multiculturalism Policy was declared, the narrative mode of a transcultural dialogue changed from linear to dynamic. The study compares the period before the Multiculturalism Policy declaration in which John Marlyn was more interested in the construction of self–identity with the period after the Multiculturalism Policy declaration in which Naim Kattan and Michael Ondaatje are concerned more with the definition of their ethnicity. Both two writers aim to establish a transcultural dialogue between the minority and the majority parallel with the definition of the 'Self' and 'Other.' The focus on the realistic writers who criticize political and social conditions and put ethnicity in a certain mould to participating in "a process of transforming […] reality"[104] in order to open a space of transcultural dialogue which helps to construct reality in a particular form. In the next three chapters, I will discuss the following questions: What is the stable sense

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, repr. (New York: Routledge Classics, [1981] 2002), 97.

of 'Self' of the writer when he faced racism and discrimination due to his ethnicity in the first decade of the twentieth century? What are the role and the impact of displacement, community, ethnicity, and identity on the personality of these three writers? How do writers of ethnic minorities establish the relationship between a sense of 'Self' and a sense of belonging?

The first chapter of this study discusses the dilemmas of the Hungarian minority in Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century by analyzing John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death* (1957). Marlyn's text deals with Eastern European ethnicity, especially Hungarian ethnicity, which located in a conflict with the ethnic majority between 1910 and 1930. In this chapter, the focus is on questions related to a sense of belonging: Who decides a question of belonging of an individual? How does the immigrant of ethnic minority decide to which community to belong? Does the individual have the choice to determine his/her belonging? What is the individual's response if one gets a rejection from the new society? All these questions will be explored through analyzing Marlyn's text which represents an Eastern European narrative in Canada: his text offers a realistic representation of the question of belonging. The dilemmas of identity and isolation are obvious in *Under the Ribs of Death*, particularly, the Hungarian community which lived in a ghetto in Winnipeg at the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, Marlyn's text presents important problems that the ethnic minorities faced in Canada before the recognition of the Multiculturalism Policy. In his text, Marlyn portrays how Hungarians in Canada succeed in preserving ties with their cultural heritage, language, and their ethnicity although Hungarians struggled to preserve their identity in their original home country, Hungary, and in Canada as well over the past decades.

The second and third chapters of this study focus on texts of ethnic minority writers which appeared after the declaration of the Multiculturalism Policy in Canada. The exploration in these two chapters will be through the two texts in which Naim Kattan and Michael Ondaatje move to their original home country either in imagination or personally. These two writers use their past to draw a dynamic line of the future of their ethnicity in both parts of Canada: The Francophone part and the English part. Consequently, their texts engage with the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy which assists them in integration on one hand and protection of their belonging on the other hand because their experience is a part of Canadian success which enables immigrants to preserve connectedness with their cultural heritage.

In the second chapter, I deal with Naim Kattan's *Farewell Babylon* which was published first in the French version under the title *Adieu Babylone* in 1975 and then was translated into the English language *Farewell Babylon* by Sheila Fischman in 1976. Naim Kattan is a Jewish

Iraqi writer whose life is changed from a victim to a victor when he achieved prominent prizes such as the Order of Canada (1983) and the French Legion of Honor (2002). In *Farewell Babylon*, Kattan returns in his imagination to Iraq, especially the city of birth, to narrate a young Jewish story of who was born in Baghdad. Kattan's text refers to the complex experiences of the Jewish community in the cosmopolitan Arab city, Baghdad. The questions which are discussed in this chapter: How can Iraqi Jews prove their belonging to Iraq and Babylon particularly? As they were a minority in Iraq, how was their relationship with the majority there? What were the struggles which they faced between 1930 and 1951? And how do the Jews represent the Iraqi identity after they migrated to Canada? This chapter explores the imaginary journey of Kattan to return in memory to his birthplace Baghdad in order to explore the case of the Jewish community and dilemmas which they faced in the middle of the twentieth century. Kattan's case is studied in four dimensions: the exile of Jews to/from Iraq, the case of diasporic and the sense of belonging to the original home, the move between imaginary boundaries in Baghdad, and the search of the 'Self' and ethnic identity. This chapter focuses on examining the case of Jewish ethnicity in Baghdad between 1930 and 1951. The study of Kattan's case elaborates how he uses a transcultural discourse in order to affirm the ethnic identity of his community.

The third chapter is like Kattan's case, but Michael Ondaatje visited his homeland personally during two journeys. After these journeys to Sri Lanka, where he left it when he was a child, Michael Ondaatje wrote *Running in the Family* which first appeared in 1982. In his text, Ondaatje concentrates on specific issues such as memory, self–representation, and a sense of belonging. Therefore, this chapter explores the following questions: What is the writer's sense after these two journeys? Does the writer find his 'Self' during these journeys? What is the relationship between the 'Self' and the 'Other'? How does memory help him to restore the past? Does the writer find the contact zone between the homeland and the host country? And what is the challenge of alienation for the writer? Through the exploration of the notions of 'Self' and 'Other' in Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*, the case of Ondaatje is studied in four main principles: the temporary return to the homeland, the challenge of identity and alienation, the exploration of cultural roots, and the exploration of 'Self.' The analyzing of Ondaatje's text shows that the writer uses his journeys in order to look for the roots of his ethnicity; therefore, he challenges the alienation by using the transcultural discourse to convey the real image of his ethnic and cultural identity into the host country. Through the answer to questions in the following chapters, the conclusion helps us to understand how writers of ethnic

minorities in Canada can create a hybrid identity in a dynamic form. The shape enables the writers to create a space in the cultural diversity zone in which the dynamic of belonging and ethnicity allows them to be in the third space in–between multiple cultures to create a transcultural dialogue.

Chapter One: The Dilemmas of Hungarian Minority in John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death*

1. 1. Introduction

In the first half of the twentieth century, Eastern European literary works began to emerge in Canada which were written by immigrants in the English language or Eastern European languages and then translated into English. These works reflect the interior struggle of ethnic minorities in Canada between the acquisition of English Canadian identity or preserving of Eastern European identity. One of the immigrant writers who dealt with these struggles was John Marlyn (1912–2005) descending from Hungarian parents who migrated to Canada in the early twentieth century. In addition to the problems of the Hungarian ethnic minority, Marlyn also introduces historical aspects of the Eastern European community in Canada in his novel *Under the Ribs of Death* (1957). Marlyn in this text relies on portraying the subjectivity of his protagonist, Sandor Hunyadi, as a member of an immigrant and poor family who lives in the north part of Winnipeg. He describes the protagonist's attempt to become English Canadian as a result of conflicts and discrimination that Hungarians faced in the new community in Winnipeg. The life of Sandor is like, the life of the writer, who is a Hungarian immigrant and arrived in Canada with his parents around 1900. Though Marlyn in an interview asserts that this novel is not an autobiography text and he is not the protagonist, he mentions that "[he has] taken parts of people and incorporated them into characters." [105]

The investigation in this chapter is going to be through the exploration of certain questions related to Maryln's text in order to examine the dilemmas of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Canada in the first decade of the twentieth century. The exploration is if Marlyn enables presenting obvious answers to the dilemma of the relation between the father who represents the Hungarian identity and the son who seeks to change it to the English Canadian one. Then, the study explores if the isolation of Hungarian ethnicity in Canada makes an impact on the success of the protagonist. The discussion concentrates on the reasons which lead the protagonist to change his name and whether the new name supports him to achieve his desires.

1. 2. The Isolation of the Hungarian Community in Canada

The foundation which Marlyn uses in *Under the Ribs of Death* relates to Hungarian ethnicity in order to portray the isolation of ethnic minorities of Eastern Europeans in Canada.

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[105] Beverly Rasporich. "Interview with John Marlyn." (*Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14 (1), 1982), 37.

The character of the protagonist reflects reasons that forced Eastern European immigrants to live in isolation in Canada and thus force the protagonist to think of leaving his community and moving to the English community in Winnipeg. The feelings of isolation, class-position, racism, and discrimination lead him to think of changing his identity. In his text, Marlyn uses an ironic manner to assert the shift from one case to another and thus his ideas reach the reader easily in order to understand the deep meaning of the text. Linda Hutcheon clarifies the notion of irony as contemporary in Canadian literature which is "a more positive mode of artistic expression with renewed power as an engaged critical force, that is to say, as a rhetorical and structural strategy of resistance and opposition."[106] Hutcheon also asserts that there is a doubleness of irony between "a trope and the historical and cultural nature of Canada as a nation."[107] This irony becomes a critical mode in Canada to deepen classification between communities to create new concepts as North End and South End in Winnipeg but the notion of irony expands "to represent a central mode of understanding or the basis of human subjectivity."[108]

The writer uses the ironic mode to clarify the double location of the protagonist between 'nativist' and 'ethnic' identification; therefore, Sandor tends to the English part and not to his ethnicity. Kurt Korneski elaborated on the influence of classes in Winnipeg in the first decade of the twentieth century by referring to John Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of the Death*:

> Pressures from Anglo–Canadians on both sides of the class divide encouraged non–British immigrants in the city to develop organizations that expressed both their class standing and their alternate – i.e. non–British–ethnic identity […]. It is also suggested by the fact that some male youths who were either immigrants or the children of immigrants, as John Marlyn recalled, sometimes joined working–class street gangs composed of other young men of their own ethnic background–gangs whose members […] viewed the 'British', particularly in the south end of the city, as totally divorced from themselves.[109]

Through the text above, Anglo–Canadians foster the concepts of racism and discrimination which contributed to the notion of the solitude of minorities in Canada. Thus, Marlyn's view is

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[106] Linda Hutcheon. "Introduction." In *Double Talking: Essays on Verbal and Visual Ironies in Canadian Contemporary Arts and Literature*, edited by Linda Hutcheon, 11–28. (Toronto: ECW Press, 1992), 11–12.
[107] Ibid., 12.
[108] Ibid., 14.
[109] Kurt Korneski. "Britishness, Canadianness, Class and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s–1910s." (*Canadian Studies* 41 (2), 2007), 175.

a mirror that reflects the role of the British in Canada from the point of view of immigrants. These conditions motivate the protagonist to look for the key to success in order to move from victim to victor. In his text, Marlyn classifies Canadian society into British Canadian and immigrants because the British Canadian is dominant while 'Others' or 'non–British' are considered as foreigners. Based on the writer's perspective, the protagonist needs to move from a foreigner position to an English position in order to achieve his desires.

These elements make a negative effect on the relationship between Sandor and his father, it is clear that they are different in dealing with the 'immigrants dilemmas.' The father, Joseph, deals with these dilemmas in an idealist way while the son deals with them based on the materialistic goals in order to reach the best understanding of how to achieve success in Canada. The difference in perspectives of father and his son is because the father arrives in Canada as an adult while the son arrives as an infant; therefore, the father preserves his philosophy, his Hungarian identity, his traditional culture and mother tongue. On the other hand, the son does not have any memory connecting him to his cultural roots and heritage because he grows up in Canada, his knowledge and culture are developed in Winnipeg. As well, he cannot make a connection with others in his Hungarian community because he thinks that his perspective is opposed to their perspectives. Moreover, his experience in Canada and his belief in materialistic philosophy help him in drawing the road to achieve his dream far from his community. Nevertheless, the father, Joseph, opposes Sandor's perspective by pointing out:

> It is meaningless to call anyone a foreigner in this country. We are all foreigners
> here. And what is more, I detect a prejudice against the English in what you say.
> This is wrong, as I have told you many times. Nationality is of no consequence.
> In the things of the spirit, there is no such barrier.[110]

The text above shows that Marlyn indicates different views in order to compare the father and the son: these views are introduced through the contradictions between these two characters in order to build a moral story in his text and point at the generational differences between them. The writer presents the struggle between the father and the son in which the father declines to call individuals of other communities 'foreigners.' The strife transforms to advise from the father to his son: "you are ashamed of the wrong things, Sandor, [...] it is shameful to be a

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[110] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 18.

money–chaser, to be dishonest and to remain ignorant when the learning opportunity is so great here. But to be ashamed of your name because you are Hungarian and are poor!"[111]

The notions of ethnicity and social class are present in the words of the father; therefore, Joseph asks his son to go to university and continue his studies but at the same time Sandor begins changing the style of his thinking to the English style. However, the father continues giving moral lessons to his son as he points out "buying and selling"[112] is an "abomination"[113] that "turn[s] the man into an animal with only a mouth to fill. […] This is spiritual death. Where is there room here for what is good and beautiful, for time to reformulate the eternal questions, for the study of man's conduct? A savage who worships a tree lives a richer life."[114] The strength and optimism in the character of the father help him to hide the difficulties which he faces during his life in Winnipeg. Besides, the father does not only give optimism to his son but also Sandor's son: "Ach, what a wonderful world awaits you!"[115]

On the other hand, Sandor attempts to cut any moral connection which links him with the Hungarian community as his interest in the life of Canadians early. His interest does not begin in adulthood, but his interest is showed when he holds the Canadian flag in his hand on Victoria Day in his childhood.[116] As the conflict between the father and the son continues, the writer affirms that "the overriding element is not ethnic but humanistic. The basic conflict is the philosophical dichotomy between the father and the son, Sandor, between humanism and blatant, rampant commercialism."[117] Therefore, the conflict is not "only in the sense that it is so very intensive. There is an Oedipal situation at the bottom of it. Immigrant fathers are so often supplanted by sons."[118] Eli Mandel clarifies that Marlyn's ideas are "the link between the themes of intolerance, materialism, and the quarrel of the generations."[119] So the factor of ethnicity in Marlyn's text represents the most important element in the development of his perspective.

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid., 256.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., 259.

[116] Ibid., 29.

[117] Beverly Rasporich. "Interview with John Marlyn." (*Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14 (1), 1982), 37.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Eli Mandel. "Introduction." In *Under the Ribs of Death.* 7–14, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 9.

In addition to the conflict between the father and the son, there is another conflict is between the ethnic minority and the ethnic majority in Canada. Hence, the conflict shows the power of influence of the majority on immigrants. Sandor's condition as a young boy descending from an immigrant family leads him to the perspective that 'being English' is the factor of success in contrast with his condition as 'immigrant.' Therefore, his desire to be accepted by the English community leads him, later, to leave behind his Hungarian ethnicity and his family to reach his goal. The first confrontation for Sandor appears with his English classmates at the school who ridicule him because of his Hungarian ethnicity and Hungarian name. Sandor admits that Anglo–Canadian is the main ruler in Canada which gives him a sense of a foreigner among his classmates; therefore, he explains to his father how English people have advantages based on their names:

> 'Pa, the only people who count are the English. Their fathers got all the best
> jobs. They're the only ones nobody ever calls foreigners. Nobody ever makes
> fun of their names or calls them 'bologny–eaters,' or laughs at the way they dress
> or talk. Nobody,' […] 'cause when you're English, it's the same as bein'
> Canadian.'[120]

Consequently, the ethnic conflict of Eastern Europeans in Canada which is narrated in Marlyn's text refers to cultural differences in Canadian society. As I mentioned previously, before the recognition of the Multiculturalism Policy 1971 in Canada, immigrant minorities suffered from racism and discrimination; therefore, several texts which appeared in the early writings of immigrant minorities dealt with these themes. When Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death* appeared, the writer emphasizes in his text the portraying of the Canadian identity and Canadian literature from the side of 'one ghost.' Blodgett mentions that "first Nations and Inuit people who have always been part of the Canadian social contract, forgotten, neglected and abused as they may have been."[121] Based on Blodgett's view, the symbolism of 'ghostly' can be expanded to other minorities in Canada as he points out:

> It is impossible to construct a notion of Canadian culture without bearing in mind
> that it is not two, but many cultures. Histories of its literatures are dominated,

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[120] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 17–8.

[121] E. D. Blodgett. *Five–Part Invention: A History of Literary History in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 303–4.

however, by the notion that there are two literatures, and in practice, these histories are written as if there were only one literature and perhaps another.[122]

The reason is that the majority in Canada conceived that they were the only ones who produced Canadian literature for long times, but the literary productions of ethnic minority writers show a wide contribution to the development of Canadian literature and culture. Therefore, Marlyn's text aims to assert the identity of minorities in Canada because the success of minorities leads to integration within Canadian society. As well, the Eastern Europeans in Canada made their best to change their condition for the better through hard–work and exploiting chances. Thus, hard work becomes the foundation for the success of immigrants in Canada though the ethnic identity of minorities, sometimes, becomes the hurdle to success.

There were inequalities between Anglo–Canadian majorities and Eastern Europeans minorities in Canadian society before the recognition of the Multiculturalism Policy. According to John Porter that "some ethnic groups have felt, even after their two or sometimes three generation stay in Canada, that they still do not share a status of equality with the charter groups is indicated by some of the briefs submitted to the Senate Committee on Immigration and Labour in 1946."[123] As a result of inequalities and also the fewer economic opportunities for minorities ethnicities, Marlyn in his text presents the real picture of Eastern European in Canada. His text proves that contributions of Eastern European writers to Canadian literature foster chances of integration in Canadian society, thus, these contributions increase their economic success. But the majority view stands as an obstacle to all aspects of economic or cultural success; therefore, belonging or integration are not the only measures for their success.

Furthermore, it is obvious that the representation of Eastern Europeans is unfamiliar in Canadian literature; therefore, Marlyn's text contributes to assert that the sense of belonging to the ethnic minority is the same as the sense of belonging to the ethnic majority. The writer wants to emphasize that the matter of belonging can be solved through the interaction between cultures, thus, he portraits the experience of the Hungarian minority in Canada and how they contribute to the development of Canadian literature. In his text, he concentrates on how immigrants make a connection between the original and new culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. As his text portrays the complicated matter of belonging through the relationship of the protagonist to the Hungarian community and the majority. Therefore, Sandor

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[122] Ibid., 207.

[123] John Porter. *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, repr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [1965] 1992), 69.

decides to assimilate totally to the English Canadian community but later finds out himself that he does not belong either 'here' or 'there'. Marlyn in his text attempts to negotiate the question of belonging on the social and the cultural level; therefore, he shows that the sense of belonging is more important than other factors for immigrants.

Moreover, the structure which Marlyn uses in the text leads him to discuss interculturalism on different levels; on the one hand, he emphasizes the interaction between cultures while on the other hand, he shows how forces make an impact to prevent the protagonist from the interaction. The writer focuses on the necessity of intercultural dialogue believing that realism in the dialogue makes an influence on the receivers (readers). Using this approach, Marlyn leads his readers to form what Frederic Jameson calls "the ideology of the form, that is, the symbolic messages transmitted to us by the coexistence of various sign systems which are themselves traces or anticipations of modes of production."[124] As well, Northrop Frye observes that the Canadian canon preserves the realism in the narration; therefore, "there is a strongly conservative element at the core of realism, an acceptance of society in its present structure."[125] Through the realistic style which Marlyn uses in his text leads his readers to a better understanding of the realities of Canadian society at that time. Despite his criticism for that reality, he uses it as a mimetic representation to reflect the real picture of the minorities in Canada. As well, the failure of his protagonist helps his community to think about changing their reality. The literary critic W. H. New mentions that Canadian literature shifted "towards realism"[126] after 1930. Furthermore, George Levine asserts that:

> Realism, as a literary method, can in these terms be defined as a self–conscious effort, usually in the name of some moral enterprise of truth telling and extending the limits of human sympathy, to make literature appear to be describing directly not some other language but reality itself (whatever that may be taken to be); in this effort, the writer must self–contradictorily dismiss previous conventions of representation while, in effect, establishing new ones.[127]

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[124] Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, repr. (New York: Routledge Classics, [1981] 2002), 62.

[125] Northrop Frye. *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 164.

[126] W. H. New. *A History of Canadian Literature*. (London: Macmillan Education LTD, 1989), 156.

[127] George Levine. *The Realistic Imagination*, repr. (London: The University of Chicago Press, [1981] 1983), 8.

Based on the perspectives above, the effect of 'realism' comes from the need of changing the reality in Canadian literature as Levine points out that "writers and critics return to 'realism,' from generation to generation because each culture's perception of reality changes and because literature requires ever new means to intimate that reality."[128] Therefore, *Under the Ribs of Death* represents the reality that forces the protagonist to leave his original ethnicity and choose another one. The writer uses this kind of representation in order to get a better understanding of the 'Self' and 'Other' in Canadian society. Jameson clarifies that this kind of literature represents "a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community."[129]

Once again, the writer uses the ironic element as he aims to reflect the reality of immigrants who tend to copy the style and behaviour of the majority. Immigrants imitate the majority by using English words and learning Canadian values in order to assimilate into Canadian society:

> Only a few months or years–a few words and recently acquired habits […]. He knew how hard it was […] to change their ways. But they were changing. They used tinned goods sometimes at home now, and store–bought bread when they had enough money. English food was appearing on their table, the English language in their home. Slowly, very slowly, they were changing. They were becoming Canadians.[130]

Through the mimetic manner, the writer tries to outline the main points which help immigrants to assimilate into Canadian society, and thus they can help in the construction of the state of Canada. I argue that the construction of Marlyn's text in this manner can be a program to help immigrants to be easily assimilated into the Canadian Market.

Marlyn's *Under the Ribs of Death* was published after the Hungarian revolution in 1956 which was followed by tens of thousands of Hungarian refugees in Canada. The wave of immigrants after 1956 took there a large number of educated and professional people in contrast to the waves of migration before 1956 when immigrants were mainly poor and uneducated people. But in both cases, it was difficult for immigrants to assimilate within the Canadian community as a result of the discrimination of ethnic minorities in Canada at that time. Hence,

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[128] Ibid., 7.

[129] Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, repr. (New York: Routledge Classics, [1981] 2002), 56.

[130] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 83–4.

the writer presents views on how to assimilate ethnic minorities in Canada; therefore, he reflects these views through his protagonist. Once, the protagonist seeks to find an opportunity to work out of his Hungarian community but the only opportunity which Sandor finds to work is with a gang in his ethnic community:

> He was sure of himself when he was with the gang, because everybody was the same there. They were Italian and French and Hungarian, German, Swedish, Russian and even English […] but they were the same in the things that counted. They were dressed the same; they all wanted to get away from Henry Avenue; they talked the same language even though their parents did not. Inside the red fence you could just be yourself, he thought. In there you learned how to be a man, and to be thrown out was so terrible it was unthinkable.[131]

The writer presents the protagonist's view who believes if he joins a gang, he can learn how to be a man. As well, he asserts that there is no discrimination based on ethnicity or identity in this group. The activities of the gang, however, are against Canadian law; therefore, Sandor's dream is to find a position outside the gang which allows him to work in the English community even though the group is not homogeneous. Soon the protagonist decides to leave the gang in order to belong to Canadian society to achieve his dream, but he fails to assimilate into English society because the power which represented the discourse of the majority between the 1920s and 1930s prevented ethnic minorities from assimilation into Canadian society. It was not easy for the majority to accept immigrants during the Depression years because immigrants who arrived from Eastern Europe were poor and uneducated.

Once again, the protagonist faces racism when he moves to live in Henry street in the South End and one of his neighbours invites him to a birthday party for his daughter. But Kostanuik and his wife humiliate Sandor because of his Hungarian origin; therefore, the protagonist recognizes that Kostanuik's family sees him "as something darkly alien in their midst and yet disturbingly familiar […]. He was something out of their past. All of them had come from Henry Avenue. He was everything they wanted to forget." [132] However, Sandor insists to continue in his dream, thus he influences by Mr Nagy, the businessman Hungarian immigrant, who attracts Sandor to the road of success. It is obvious that Sandor seeks to become Anglo-Canadian because he believes that the success starts when

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[131] Ibid., 47.
[132] Ibid., 37.

someday he would grow up and leave all this, he thought, leave it behind him forever and never look back, never remember again this dirty, foreign neighbourhood and the English gang who chased him home from school every day. He would forget how it felt to wear rummage–sale clothes and be hungry all the time, and nobody would laugh at him again, not even the English, because by then he would have changed his name and would be working in an office the way the English did, and nobody would be able to tell that he had ever been a foreigner.[133]

The novel moves ahead, Sandor finds out that the Anglo–Canadians who live in the South End have power, culture, and wealthy life in contrast with the Hungarians who live in the North End. He observes these elements when he begins his work with Mr Hamilton's family in the maintenance of the River Heights lawn. He also finds out that people in the South End humiliate minorities; therefore, he tries to hide his name and ethnic background. Later, he leaves work when he realizes that Hamilton's family finds out his real identity.

1. 3. The Conflict between Ethnic Minority and the Anglo–Canadian Majority in Canada

Marlyn concentrates on the elaboration of matters of identity, ethnicity and 'ghetto' because they represent the reasons which prevent the protagonist from assimilation into Canadian society. The writer shows that Sandor rejects his original identity but at the same time, the protagonist seems to forget that Canada consists of different cultures and identities and Canadian society consists of majority and minority separated by temporary boundaries. These matters make an influence on assimilation and interaction between ethnic cultures. Margaret Atwood, in *Survival*, elaborates on previously failing experiences of immigrants in Canada and connects them with the experience of Marlyn's protagonist. She clarifies the main reason for the failure of immigrants in the assimilation into Canadian society. Atwood's perspective is that if the immigrant "sacrifices his ancestral identity to become successful,"[134] he will "find [the] only failure"[135] because she believes that "failure in Canada has been easier to imagine than

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[133] Ibid., 9–10.

[134] Margaret Atwood. *Survival*. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1972), 150.

[135] Ibid.

success."[136] Then, she identifies elements that help immigrants to achieve their success through integration into Canadian society be far from the isolation of minorities:

> First, Canada does not demand a leap into the melting pot, though the immigrant may decide to attempt one anyway. Secondly, if he does wipe away his ethnic origin, there is no new 'Canadian' identity ready for him to step into: he is confronted only by a nebulosity, a blank; no ready–made ideology is provided for him. And thirdly, though he has sacrificed his past and tried for success, he is much more likely to find the only failure. The sacrifice has been made for nothing: not nothing plus money, just nothing.[137]

According to Atwood's view, the attempt of Marlyn's protagonist to change his ethnic identity is not in a deep way because the cultural values of his family remain inherent in their ethnicity. Therefore, the protagonist realizes that his sacrifice is "made for nothing"[138] because his "eventual poverty is without these compensations"[139] as Margaret Atwood identifies the sacrifice pattern. For instance, if I compare the experience of Marlyn in *Under the Ribs of Death* and the experience of Mordecai Richler in *Duddy Kravitz*, they are different because Richler points to the American pattern when his protagonist sacrifices his identity to achieve success at the end while Marlyn's protagonist uses the Canadian pattern to sacrifice for nothing. The difference as Atwood points out is that "there is no new 'Canadian' identity"[140] which Marlyn's protagonist (Sandor) can achieve. However, it does not mean that there is no Canadian identity, but Canadian ideology is controlled by British power which the second generation in Canada loses as Daniel Coleman clarifies:

> Marlyn's novel shows how Britishness itself is the flaw in Canadian civility; rather than functioning as the pan–ethnic sign of the civil as English–speaking Canadians liked to assume, Britishness operates in this novel as a fortress, an impervious social echelon that keeps people considered enemy aliens, such as Sandor, in their inferior positions in the vertical mosaic.[141]

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., 153.

[140] Ibid., 150.

[141] Daniel Coleman. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 215.

Marlyn in his text reveals to readers the space that surrounds Canadian identity at the beginning of the twentieth century and the extent of its impact on the success of the protagonist. When immigrants arrived in Canada, they experienced feelings of frustration which generated inside them a sense of victimhood. Based on Atwood's view of victim/victor, immigrants have to adapt themselves to the new environment in order to move from a sense of victim to a sense of victor or based on Susanna Moodie's advice in her book *Roughing It in the Bush* that they must not come to Canada.[142] Nevertheless, some criteria determine the victim because not everybody feels like a victim, it depends on ethnicity and majority/minority status in Canada. Moreover, it is not the choice of immigrants to belong to a 'ghetto' or the majority because Canada as a state failed to include the ethnic minorities before recognition of the Multiculturalism Policy. Therefore, Arnold Itwaru asserts that "Marlyn's novel is a presentation of the inner, the experienced realities behind the national facade. The mosaic opens to a discovery of shattered dreams, bigotry, socio-economic inequality, dehumanization, estrangement."[143]

Marlyn succeeds in portraying the theme of the 'ghetto' by pointing to the imaginary boundaries between minorities in the North End and Anglo–Canadians in the South End. The people who live in the North End, as a result of the 'ghetto', represents the dilemma of the Hungarian community who inhabited Winnipeg in the first decade of the twentieth century. Arnold Itwaru clarifies that "the group to which these immigrants are said to belong is a fragmented one."[144] The fragmentation in Canadian society forces the protagonist to move away from his community but it increases when he moves into the South End. The fragmentation generates a big problem for the majority of the Hungarian community from the second and third generations, they do not speak the mother language and have a limited connection to their heritage. After the end of WWI, the misunderstanding of Eastern Europeans made an influence on the structure of Eastern European ethnicities in Canada. As Latham Hunter elaborates that:

> In the War Measures Act, the groups within the 'enemy nationality'–a composite
> of Polish, Italian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Turkish, Serbian, Hungarian, Russian,
> Jewish, and Romanian civilian immigrants […] –were labelled "Galician,"

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[142] Margaret Atwood. *Survival*. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1972), 149.

[143] Itwaru Arnold H. 1990. *The Invention of Canada: Literary Text and the Immigrant Imaginary*. (Toronto: TSAR, 1990), 67.

[144] Ibid., 64–5.

'Bukovynian,' or "Ruthenian," revealing that their actual nationalities were largely discounted or misunderstood in Canada. The internment operations simply lumped these 'enemy aliens' […] into one war–centric classification: 'Austro–Hungarian' […]. Canada, under the British Empire, simply assumed that to be Ukrainian, to be Hungarian, to be any Eastern European nationality, was to be classed as Austrian – i.e., German – and therefore as sympathetic 'with the war aims of the Austro–Hungarian Empire.'[145]

Hunter mentions the reasons which lead Canadians to classify all ethnicities of Eastern European as 'German.' But it seems that there are other reasons which Hunter overlooks that forced Eastern immigrants to define their ethnicity in different ways. Some immigrants define themselves as 'Galician,' 'Bukovynian,' or 'Ruthenian,' because they came from big empires, and thus their allegiance to regional identity is more important than national identity.

Misunderstanding is not only between ethnicities and Canadians but also between the different ethnicities themselves. In the twentieth century, identities had never developed on the national level in Eastern Europe as they were under the control of Empires as well as Eastern Europeans faced the same problem in Canada at the same time. Marlyn mentions in his text the misunderstanding of belonging when the protagonist faces the same 'enemy nation' category four years after WWI finished: "There was a misunderstanding; he was taken for a German and the interview closed before he had time to explain […] he told himself, the man who had interviewed him was wearing a war–service medal in his buttonhole."[146] After the end of WWI, it is obvious that minorities in Canada suffered from misreading their national identity and being classified 'Others.' Eastern Europeans immigrated to Canada often escaping from the Austro–Hungarian Empire, most of them ended up living in a 'ghetto' of immigrants in Canada.

John Marlyn's narrative elaborates on the impact of power relations which the protagonist faces because of his ethnicity although he refuses them. The real problem is his existence in the Hungarian community which becomes an obstacle to becoming an English Canadian. Once again, the text shows that there is a difference in grasp between the father and the protagonist as Sandor sees that "they [are] all foreigners, every one of them, and as though that [are] not bad enough, they [are] actually proud of their foreign, outlandish ways. Not one

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[145] Latham Hunter. "Under the Ribs of Death: Immigrant Narratives of Masculinity and Nationality." (*Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 36 (2), 2003), 105.

[146] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 157.

of them had yet made a serious effort to learn English."[147] Therefore, he tries to distance himself from them and not be foreign in addition to his attempt to assimilate into the majority community, but he excludes though he speaks English very well and knows the Canadian rhetoric. It seems that the connection with his ethnicity continues and thus prevents him from assimilation into Canadian society. The writer describes the protagonist's feelings when he meets new immigrants from his relatives:

> Sandor turned pale at the sight of them. They stood there, awkward and begrimed, the men in tight–fitting wrinkled clothes, with their wrists and ankles sticking out, unshaven and foreign–looking […] And it was this that was frightening. They were so close to him […]. [He] separated his parents from them. The kinship was odious […]. And now here it stood. Here was the nightmare survival of themselves, mocking and dragging them back to their shameful past.[148]

The text shows that the protagonist refuses everything connecting him to his ethnicity; therefore, he sees new immigrants in the English Canadian's eyes that they are 'shameful' ethnicity. Daniel Coleman points out the "predominance of White, British Canadians by inexplicitly stated contrast with the French, Natives, and immigrants"[149] thus they represent the foundation of Canadian nationalist project.

The protagonist shows ambivalent and repulsive feelings towards his ethnic community in Canada expressing it on more than one occasion in the text. His relationship with the gang "Hunky, Hunky—Humpy Ya Ya"[150] increases these feelings against his ethnicity. Though the gang beats him, he remains with them in order to achieve his desire to be accepted by English Canadian society. However, Canada recently represents the real image of the mosaic of cultures and ethnicities in which immigrants construct the real image of different ethnicities, the image which fascinates and attract other ethnicities. In the afterword of the novel, Neil Bissoondath refers to the form of Canada in the early twentieth century:

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[147] Ibid., 13.

[148] Ibid., 83–4.

[149] Daniel Coleman. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 171.

[150] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 17.

Displacement, the absence of belonging and the search for it, is a major feature of the twentieth century […] Canada, a haven to so many, is inevitably a major part of that story. It is curious to what extent our country has been formed from the flotsam and jetsam of upheaval and yet how little the experiences of the displaced have shaped the development of the country.[151]

According to the above view, there was an internal exile in Canada during and after WWI. Immigrants from Eastern Europe could not participate in the construction of the country due to their ethnicity. However, Canada which prevents 'Others' from the right of belonging, at the same time, requires them to preserve its identity.

Moreover, all the Hungarian characters in *Under the Ribs of Death* live in different stereotypical situations which were in Canadian society. For instance, women have a specific role as their responsibility is to take care of their children and husband, they cannot participate in any activity outside their home. Marlyn mentions that Sandor's mother "[is] only a woman. In the end, she always [gives] into his father."[152] Later in the novel, Sandor's wife is only interested in cooking and taking care of her children. Therefore, these women are described as stereotypes within Hungarian Canadian society even if they later get jobs or change the style of their daily life. Marlyn's text reflects the real picture of ethnic communities' habits which depend on the male rather than female, and thus this kind of communities is traditional; therefore, it is impossible to develop them as stereotypes fill their daily life.

1. 4. The Influence of Changing Identity on the Assimilating in the Majority Community

The difference in habits leads to a conflict between the first and second generations, but this is not the only problem as the conflict between the two generations expands to encompass all values. Marlyn's text shows that the first generation of immigrants' desire is to preserve their mother language, their names, their cultural roots, and ethnic identity, thus these things grant them the sense of the 'Self' and the sense of belonging to the original homeland such as the case of Sandor's father who continues advising his son and grandson in that direction. The second generation of immigrants, however, can be located in-between the old world of their parents and their new world; therefore, they have a sense of contradictory and conflicting values within themselves. Besides, they are afraid that if they keep on the connection with their ethnic roots, they will continue to suffer from marginality and be classified as 'Others' by the majority.

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[151] Ibid., 262.
[152] Ibid., 13.

Thus, they believe that if they change their names and cut off any connection with their roots, this process will lead to developing their 'Self' and a sense of becoming part of the majority community, like in the case of Sandor who locates in–between two different cultural values: the reality of Hungarian cultural values and the reality of Canadian cultural values as well as the reality of exclusion from them. When Sandor faces racism and discrimination from English people even at school, he starts thinking to change his name from Hungarian to Anglo–Canadian:

> People laugh when they hear me say our name. They say, 'how do you spell it?' The lady in the library made fun of me in fronta all the people yesterday when I took your book back and she hadda make out a new card. And the school nurse […] everybody […] even the postman laughs. If we changed our name I wouldn't hafta fight no more, Pa. We'd be like other people, like everybody else. But we gotta change it soon before too many people find out.[153]

The protagonist is also influenced by the story which is mentioned in the book that he gets from Eric Hamilton. The story shows how the poor American Horatio Alger becomes rich, and his life is changed; therefore, Sandor believes in that story and feels if he follows rules in that book, it guides him the right way to success in his life:

> The great men his father talked about, what were they after all but talkers like himself? The great ones in this book were the doers, the men of wealth and power, the men who counted, whose words people listened to. And one had only to work hard and devote oneself whole–heartedly to the things they believed, to become one of them.[154]

His desire increases to change his identity because the important thing for him that the Anglo–Canadian community in the South End accepts him to be one of them; therefore, he decides to change his social rank and name to become such wealthy people there. He, thus, agrees with their philosophy and believes in their materialism principles in which he thinks will allow him to become a businessman like them. After these long conflicts between the protagonist and his family, the protagonist and his community, protagonist and the 'Self' and protagonist and Anglo–Canadian society, he decides to change his name from Hungarian name

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[153] Ibid., 17.
[154] Ibid., 126.

'Sandor' to English name 'Alex.' Howard Palmer elaborates the reasons which led the immigrants of the second generation in Canada to change their names:

> The relationship in the public mind between ethnicity, lower social class origins, and political 'unsoundness' explains why during the late 1920s and 1930s so many second–generation non–Anglo–Saxons, who were anxious to improve their lot economically, made deliberate attempts to hide their ethnic background, such as changing their names. Ethnic ties were clearly disadvantageous for those non–Anglo–Saxons seeking economic security or social acceptance.[155]

In his new name, Alex, the protagonist begins a new life as an "Assistant Manager"[156] to get out of poor life and discrimination. Later, he seeks to get another job with a good salary in the Real Estate Division but in the interview, the protagonist meets with "the manager of the Real Estate Division […] Mr. Atkinson"[157] who deals with him in a discriminating way. Atkinson focuses his questions not only on the protagonist's skills but also on his ethnic background. When he knows that the protagonist descends from "Hungarian"[158] ethnicity, Atkinson ends the interview and expels him out of the office. Thus, the new life of the protagonist begins with discrimination despite changing his name to the English one; therefore, his first attempt starts with suffering and racism too. Later, the protagonist gets a chance to work at the Insurance Agency with the help of Lawson who supports him by introducing a new perspective of the concept of the 'Canadian way.' As the protagonist mentions that: "Lawson went even further than he in condemning foreigners who refused to adapt themselves to Canadian ways; Lawson included Englishmen in his denunciation, and what was more, objected violently to being called anything but a Canadian."[159]

When the protagonist starts his new job at the Agency in the North End, he works hard to achieve success. In addition to attending an evening school, he works all day in order to become a businessman. At the same time, he begins the new life with a nice wife, Mary Kostanuik, and a beautiful home. His ambitions never stop at one level; therefore, he gets a new job as a manager in a small management agency. But, he finds out later that is a waste of time,

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[155] Howard Palmer. "Mosaic versus Melting Pot?: Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada and the United States." (*International Journal* 31 (3), 1976), 21.

[156] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 129.

[157] Ibid., 153–4.

[158] Ibid., 155.

[159] Ibid., 188.

thus he does not accept to continue his life in North End and decides to "get out of this hole and away from all this nonsense."[160] The main reason that makes him leave his job because his clients are "bricklayers and sewer–diggers"[161] and some of the small businessmen so he believes that it is no sense to waste time with peasants. The protagonist despises even foreigners who succeed in their life, for instance, he believes that Kostanuik is just a small businessman because he lives in the "ordinary North end working man's house."[162]

The inner conflict continues inside the personality of the protagonist, but he still has a little hope because he believes in the promise, which is mentioned in Horatio Alger's story, thus his ambition increases gradually. Sandor believes that hard-working is going to move him to a better life and will be accepted by English society; therefore, he convinces himself that the key to his success is to leave the North End. But the protagonist could not reach his goal though he worked hard because there are external reasons beyond his possibility, thus, the promise is ended with a failure. He faces discrimination from Anglo–Canadians due to his Hungarian ethnicity despite changing his name so Daniel Coleman mentions that the protagonist fails

> because Sandor believes in the liberality of Englishness, he thinks he too can enter its charmed civil circle. He believes a change of name, fluency in the English language, and a few stolen accoutrements will gain him access to the class ascendancy that comes with belonging to the British family.[163]

It is obvious that the protagonist does not realize, it is impossible to become English Canadian and cannot "secure a place among them. He [also] does not realize how impervious to outsiders the entwined thistle, shamrock, and rose could be,"[164] thus it becomes impossible for him to be accepted in the South End society.

In addition to racism and discrimination, the Great Depression in 1929 also causes the protagonist to fall economically and thus he fails again. It is a great ironic manner when the protagonist's fortune is completely undermined. He is forced to return to the North End and thus admits his need for his Hungarian ethnicity and his family which he rejects earlier. When the protagonist finds out Brown's about bankruptcy, he mentions that "if only he had not

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160 Ibid., 206.
161 Ibid., 189.
162 Ibid., 167.
163 Daniel Coleman. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 84–5.
164 Ibid., 85.

involved himself so deeply,"[165] he would not lose his business and the hope for the assimilation into the Canadian society. The other paradox is that the English businessman, Lawson, who supports the protagonist in the English community to find a job and increase his fortune is the same person who leads him to fall financially. So his adulation toward the English community and the Depression are the main reasons which punish the protagonist on the moral level. I argue that changing the name of the protagonist from Hungarian to an English one is not that easy because the power of discourse is associated with British allegiances during and after WWI. The failure of the protagonist to shift from one identity to another identity is due to living in–between two different communities Hungarian/Canadian and thus he has difficulty to differentiate between the two identities. The process of changing cannot succeed because he cannot erase his Hungarian heritage though he changes his Hungarian name to an English name.

The shifting from one status to another makes concern for critics who discussed Marlyn's protagonist, Sandor. One of the critics points out that "a great gulf opens up between the two worlds of father and son. The father's perspective is a humanistic, collectivist ideal […]. Sandor's world, on the other hand, is self–centered, opportunistic, and immediately real."[166] The argument is only on factors of the novel while the reality of both worlds is connected because 'humanistic' is always linked with the father's Hungarian legacy while the conditions which make an impact on the protagonist are linked with conditions of Canada. As a result, it is not possible to divide them into 'Hungarian' and 'Canadian' because they complete each other. The protagonist has not achieved the dream of his father to "serve mankind"[167] as his father hopes but he preserves his father's ideals and "blood in his veins, carrying this weakness–his father's lifelong concern for other people, handed on to his son."[168] Even if the protagonist refuses the kindness of his father, considering it a symbol of 'weakness,' it is impossible to split between these two worlds which he has inherited from the original ethnicity and "his father's lifelong concern for other people." [169] So the real problem which the protagonist faces is that he refuses his original ethnicity and he cannot acquire a new one due to the big difference between his father's ideals and Sandor's materialistic perspective, thus I

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[165] Ibid., 243.

[166] John Roberts. "Irony in an Immigrant Novel: John Marlyn's Under the Ribs of Death." (*Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14 (1), 1982), 44.

[167] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986),19.

[168] Ibid., 209.

[169] Ibid.

argue that the protagonist could not create a dynamic connection between materialism and idealism for them in Canada.

Moreover, the character of Sandor is an unstable vibrating character between Hungarian ethnicity and English Canadian society but this form of identity supposes to be limited because it needs a coherent subject.[170] Thus, he desires to look for a unified identity as he says "I'm not English […] and I'm not Hungarian […]. I'm Canadian."[171] I argue that though the character of the protagonist shows this kind of stereotype, it also shows the need to reform identity because he cannot make a bridge between the two identities. The protagonist shows that he is unable to work on both sides; therefore, Marlyn's text shows us the failure of the national pattern due to a lack of intercultural dialogue. Itwaru points out that "Alex–Sandor, like the novel, is an embodiment of the antithesis of the promise which has lured his fellow Hungarians. He is at the crossroads where neither nostalgia for Hungary nor the plunge into the scramble for material gain provides resolution."[172]

Therefore, Hungarian immigrants or Anglo–Canadians both fit the protagonist's story, and both relate to the hybridity experience for the protagonist as foreign. Most critics focus on the refused ethnicity as well as how Sandor is forced to inhabit these two different worlds. As the chosen characters in the novel are influenced by social forces from the real-life in which they exist. However, Itwaru has another view that the novel is "an indictment against the political propaganda, the national statement-making which presents Canada as a zone of multiethnic harmony, a domain of prosperity for all."[173] From the context of the novel, the need for transcultural dialogue is revealed between borderlands in Canada which to help immigrants to inhabit together.

At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist's imagination is to have an English lord as "his real father"[174] shows his fascination with English identity and his dream to transform to another world in the future. Latham Hunter elaborates that Sandor tries to find the father that can help him in the maturation;[175] therefore, he points out that "the male immigrant's

[170] Marlene Kadar. "Reading Ethnicity into Life Writing: Out from "Under the Ribs of Death" and into the "Light of Chaos" -- Bela Szabados's Narrator Rewrites Sandor Hunyadi." (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 57, 1995), 70.

[171] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986),145.

[172] Itwaru Arnold H. 1990. *The Invention of Canada: Literary Text and the Immigrant Imaginary*. (Toronto: TSAR, 1990), 67.

[173] Ibid.

[174] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 11.

[175] Latham Hunter. "Under the Ribs of Death: Immigrant Narratives of Masculinity and Nationality." (*Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 36 (2), 2003), 94.

masculinity and maturation" were not developed during WWI.[176] The protagonist looks for different kinds of father–characters because Marlyn thinks his protagonist exists in two different worlds between Hungary and Canada; therefore, the character of the protagonist shows that he looks for a character that helps him to understand his position. Daniel Coleman points out that:

> Sandor's repeated and discouraging repulsions from the ethnocentric fortress of middle–class British Canadian privilege make Marlyn's novel a counter discursive answer to Ralph Connor's The Foreigner in the way it so clearly echoes but also twists the maturation story of the immigrant boy in Winnipeg who rises in social status as he gradually assimilates to (British) Canadian ways.[177]

Marlyn's protagonist lives in a restricted world that prevents him from assimilation; therefore, there is not any possibility of his successful assimilation in Canadian society. I argue that the protagonist attempts to find in the character of the father the real ethnic image in Canada. The two characters somehow help the protagonist, namely Mr. Nagy who represents economic success and also Onkle Janos who represents the traditional Hungarian ethnic culture. The protagonist finds the connection to Hungarian ethnicity through the old immigrant "the Pirate Uncle"[178] who is "tall and elegantly dressed […] an air of distinction around him […] the ends of his moustache, and with a faint click of his heels and a slight bow, bent over"[179] to kiss women's hands.[180] When Janos arrives in Canada, he immediately tries to assimilate into the new society, so he tries to escape from poverty by marrying Fraulein Kleinholtz. However, the protagonist does not get a real chance to have a connection with his original ethnicity because Janos is not a character who helps to know more about Hungarian roots. On the other hand, Mr. Nagy never gives a father character for the protagonist because Mr. Nagy does not get any benefit from his success though he is "a man worth sixty–five thousand dollars at the very least, living in this whole year after year, denying himself the comforts of life; yes, and even begrudging himself its necessities, living alone here almost like an animal."[181] Therefore,

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[176] Ibid., 93.

[177] Daniel Coleman. *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 213.

[178] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 85.

[179] Ibid., 86.

[180] Ibid., 88.

[181] Ibid., 138.

these kinds of characters never represent the father character who could support the protagonist in Canadian society.

1. 5. Conclusion

At the end of the novel, Marlyn presents to us that the protagonist spends the time to bring his goals together, but he loses everything which he builds in his past years. The wife and the son are the only things that remain for the protagonist after he loses his fortunes due to the high level of his ambitions as well as the connection of his personal life with Brown's business; therefore, he loses everything when Brown's business falls. As well, the father warns him several times from dealing with Lawson, but the protagonist is influenced by only one thing when Lawson does not call him "a foreigner."[182] After he loses everything, he mentions that

> this way of life his father condemned had taken him to the very threshold of everything he had hoped to achieve. But how could he explain, how tell his father that without it there was nothing left to him? He had started with nothing at all but the belief that this could be accomplished, and if he had not succeeded the fault lay with him and not with what he believed in.[183]

I argue that the explanation for this is that the protagonist builds all his ideas based on materialistic philosophy, on the contrary, the father builds his ideas based on moral principles, thus continues his life with his family without losing anything. The result shows that the protagonist's fate ends by returning to live with his Hungarian community which he had refused in his youth after his failed attempt of changing his identity to English Canadian. He describes his fate thinking that "perhaps this being if it did exist, acted upon motives as inexplicable and capricious as his own."[184] Thus, the elements which cause the failure of the protagonist to continue in the new life are not only in his goal as others believe but also the main reason is the manner of thinking of the protagonist himself. His main idea that if he changes his identity, there is nothing to worry about and the new life will continue forever. Therefore, his belief in Horatio Alger's story that the individual has only to "work hard and devote oneself whole–heartedly to the things they believed, to become one of them."[185]

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[182] Ibid., 143.
[183] Ibid., 256–7.
[184] Ibid., 250.
[185] Ibid., 126.

But I argue that the story in that book does not mean if the protagonist changes his name and works hard, he will achieve his desire and become a businessman. There are two significant matters that the protagonist has never realized: first, the story is not suitable for immigrants, and the second, he has to believe that 'Sandor' whom he erased, is the same as Alex, thus both names lead to the same 'Self.' Concerning this issue, Robert Thacker claims that "Sandor is never spiritually aware and, therefore, the ending Marlyn provides is not genuine. It represents a romantic hope rather than a technically-realized fiction."[186] John Roberts gives a different view, he feels that Sandor "has sacrificed an organic identity for an artificial one. He has allowed himself to idealize an alien culture founded on false principles […]. After being driven back into the slums does he realize his mistake in identifying it with being rich, English, and respectable. He learns that to be Canadian is to synthesize the Old World and the New."[187] However, the protagonist sees the future in the eyes of his son; therefore, his relationship with his son in the last scenes shows that it is the opposite of Roberts' perspective as he describes the protagonist:

> He was filled […] with a gladness such as he had rarely known, because in those
> mild depths, it seemed to him, were all those things, miraculously alive, which
> he had supposed in himself; stifled for the sake of what he had almost felt within
> his grasp, out there, over his son's head, out and beyond in the grey desolation.[188]

Overall, the father fears that the optimism, pessimism and contradictory ideas of the protagonist will make a negative impact on his grandson. On the other hand, the protagonist also fears that his parents "would try to steal his son from him"[189] by learning the grandson the moral philosophy. In an interview, Marlyn affirms the reality of optimism in *Under the Ribs of Death* when he says: "In Sandor Hunyadi, you have a deformed father, but there is hope in the son, in the next generation."[190] In my view, Marlyn's text shows clearly that the second generation of immigrants suffered from discrimination and racism which influenced their life before the declaration of Canada's Multiculturalism Policy. But the protagonist and his father increase their ambitions to achieve their desire through the sons and grandsons; therefore, they

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[186] Robert Thacker. "Foreigner: The Immigrant Voice in The Sacrifice and Under the Ribs of Death." (*Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14 (1), 1982), 33.

[187] John, Roberts. "Irony in an Immigrant Novel: John Marlyn's Under the Ribs of Death." (*Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14 (1), 1982), 47.

[188] John Marlyn. *Under the Ribs of Death*, repr. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, [1957] 1986), 260.

[189] Ibid., 237.

[190] Beverly Rasporich. "Interview with John Marlyn." (*Canadian Ethnic Studies* 14 (1), 1982), 40.

have an optimistic view of the next generations in Canada. It becomes real after the declaration of Multiculturalism Policy thus for the following generations it is possible to integrate into English Canadian society rather than assimilation as I will discuss that in the next two chapters.

Chapter Two: The Duality of Identity in Naim Kattan's *Farewell Babylon*

2. 1. Introduction

This chapter starts with analyzing the notion of 'beginning' as it represents the principal means of proving our beliefs in the present time. In the *Beginnings: Intentions and Methods,* Edward Said presents the idea of 'beginning' which is the starting point of the investigation for this chapter. Said clarifies the difference between the concept of 'beginnings' and the notion of origins[191] which is connected with the development of the idea of "authority"[192] and thus, Said uses these arguments to make a connection between modernism as an intellectual and social project. He points out that:

> Modernism was an aesthetic and ideological phenomenon that was a response to the crisis of what could be called *filiation*–linear, biologically grounded process, that which ties children to their parents–which produced the counter–crisis within modernism of affiliation, that is, the creeds, philosophies and visions re–assembling the world in new non–familial ways.[193]

Therefore, he points out that "constant re-experiencing of beginning and beginning–again whose force is neither to give rise to authority nor to promote orthodoxy but to stimulate self–conscious and situated activity, activity with aims non–coercive and communal."[194] Said clarifies that the human beginning helps us to explore the mythical status which connects the social truth with worldly intentions through the process of creating meaning.

Novelists focus on the production of social narration to create global fiction and thus the goal of 'beginnings' or 'origins' tends to put the authenticity of the ideas in the transcendent. Based on Said's view, the history of tradition is "a dispersed, variously arranged series of cultural archives sedimented on top of each other, somewhere in the manner of a gigantic palimpsest."[195] So this kind of texts needs conscious readers to get a better understanding. Said's argument underlines that the beginnings are the main way to access the texts which produce meaning. The question posed here is whether all kinds of narratives have a historical

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[191] Edward Said. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1975] 1985), xi–xiii.

[192] Ibid., xiii.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid., xiv.

[195] Ibid.

beginning? Because the beginnings are the base in determining the place, the time, and the action as these parts connect to develop the intention. In general, the idea of beginnings relates to earlier ideas in which the reader needs to distinguish between the beginning of the divine and the beginning of human actions. As Said observes that the system of meaning is constantly changing, the concept of beginning constantly gives different meanings at various times connected to the original concept. His clarification of the idea of 'beginnings' means that it "inaugurate[s] a deliberately *other* production of meaning – a gentile (as opposed to a sacred one)." [196] Thus, the Western narrative beginnings give "authorizing, institutional, and specialized role in art, experience, and knowledge."[197]

In this chapter, I explore the beginnings of the Jewish presence in Iraq through examining specific texts which are written by Naim Kattan, a Jewish Iraqi writer who lives in Canada. Hence, I investigate how Kattan imagines his original home and how it is reflected in his texts. This chapter studies the isolation of Jews as a minority in Iraq and how they cross borders to adapt and live with the majority. Said's argument of the concept of 'beginning' is the basis of the discussion in this chapter and based on his perspective, I analyze Kattan's novel *Farewell Babylon*. The concentration on the concept of beginnings permits us to conceive what the process of the production of knowledge is.

Kattan in his novel presents to us a different view related to the beginning of Jews in Iraq. In *Farewell Babylon*, the writer focuses on the beginnings of Jewish communities and their roots in Iraq before they emigrated to various countries around the world. Through the text, he shows how the young people at the beginning of the twentieth century were thinking and how they were trying to build the Iraqi identity regardless of the different religions and nationalisms. Therefore, the beginning of the text is not only a group of words or an ordinary opening like in other novels because the opening takes the reader and the critic to multiple entrance points. The choice of this text is not to focus on the history of Jews in Iraq, but the aim is to clarify how Naim Kattan could portray the Iraqi identity even after his exile and emigration to Canada and after all the political changes which happened to the Jewish community. The text discovers the cultural diversity in the Iraqi community and how it makes an impact on the development of their identity.

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[196] Ibid., 13.
[197] Ibid., 17–18.

2. 2. The Exile of Jews to/from Iraq

In *Farewell Babylon*, Kattan begins with a restoration of memory to put his ideas in the mould of reality. He constructs his ideas on the real stories which happened in Iraq during the first decade of the twentieth century. His stories reflect the reality of a Jewish young man who attempts to become a writer. He uses a quotation from the *Bible* in the preface of his novel *Farewell Babylon*: "And [they] that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons."[198] The quotation reflects what is mentioned by Martin S. Jaffee in the *Torah in the Mouth*: "It is best to begin, as always, with a text."[199] The quotation refers to an important story that relates to Jewish history; therefore, Kattan uses it at the opening of his memoir in order to be the basis in the construction of the text later. In *Sephardi Jewry,* Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue point out that the voice of Arab Jews is silenced in the history of Jewish people. It is usually the focus on the history of Occidental Jews which related to issues such as nationalism and the Holocaust while the history of Oriental Jews is neglected.[200] Besides, Kattan mentions in his text that "the European Jews have departed from the true spirit of our religion;"[201] therefore, he concentrates his text more on issues related to the Eastern Jews.

In the light of the above, I argue that Kattan uses in the opening of *Farewell Babylon* a quotation from *Tanakh* to connect between the history of Jews in Iraq and his exile; therefore, he attempts to reinsert the story of Jews in Babylon in the modern history of Jews. In the forward of *Farewell Babylon*, the writer asserts his perspective:

> When I wrote this book, the Jewish community of Baghdad, though very small, still existed to some degree. Today, there are practically no Jews left in Iraq. The prisoners of Nebuchadnezzar have left a country where they had lived for twenty–five centuries. They were there before the Christians or the Muslims. To preserve the Book, they studied it, composing the Babylonian Talmud. And while they became integrated into a series of empires, caliphates and colonial powers, they remained Jews. After years of harassment, the Iraqi government

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[198] Naim Kattan. *Farewell Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 5. The quotation from the *Bible* (II Chronicles. 36:20).

[199] Martin S. Jaffee. *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE–400 CE*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

[200] Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue. *Sephardi Jewry: A history of the Judeo–Spanish community*, 14th to 20th centuries. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xvii.

[201] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 174.

allowed Jews to leave the country in 1951, on the condition that they relinquish their nationality and their property. The State of Israel, born three years earlier, took in the majority. Others took refuge in London, New York, and elsewhere in Europe and America.[202]

In the text above, Kattan confirms the reason for writing his memoir. Besides, he clarifies in an interview why he chose 'Babylon' in the title of the first edition and why he added 'Baghdad' to the title in the later edition to become *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*: "In the first part, I mentioned in the title 'Babylon' because it represents the first place of the Jews after their exile to Iraq by Nebuchadnezzar. But in the second edition, Baghdad was added to the title because all events revolve around the character of a young Jew who grew up in Baghdad."[203] Furthermore, the writer refers to the story of Jews when they were exiled to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar which became, later, their homeland. He points out that Jews lived in Iraq, the old name Babylon, for a long time until they exiled from Iraq in 1951. Iraqi Jews faced the most struggles between the 1930s and 1950s when the Iraqi government harassed and forced them to exile.

The theme of exile[204] was not a product of the twentieth century or invented by postcolonial writers: on the contrary, it has a very long history. One of the hypotheses links the appearance of the theme of exile with the story of Adam and Eve when they were displaced from the Garden of Eden as it is mentioned in the *Hebrew Bible*, Genesis chapter: "The Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."[205]

In the twentieth century, Edward Said was one of the postcolonial thinkers who developed the theme of exile. According to Said, exile means a banishment and refers to anyone who is forced to leave the original homeland and "prevented from returning home is an exile"[206]

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[202] Ibid., 7.

[203] Ahmed Joudar. ""The Cultures of Orient and Occident must be Together in the Character, Imagination, and Ideas of the Writer": A Conversation with Naim Kattan." Edited by Laura Moss. Translated by Ahmed Joudar. *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review* 60th Anniv (239), 2019), 181.

[204] I presented the theme of 'exile' at the international conference on Migrating World: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Migration and Integration, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland. 7–8 July 2017 and published in 2020. See Ahmed Joudar. "Exiles and Plurality of Cultures in Edward Said's Perspective." (*European Academic Research* 8 (9), 2020), 5586–99.

[205] Gen 3:23–24 (English Standard Version).

[206] Edward Said. "Reflections on Exile." In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 173–86. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 181.

due to political reasons, even if this kind of exile is voluntary or involuntary. But Said clarifies that "exile, unlike nationalism, is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being;"[207] therefore, it leads to a "crisis of identity."[208] Nevertheless, it does not mean that anyone in exile is to cut off from his/her original roots, culture or land as Said claims that "any real exile will confirm, once you leave your home, wherever you end up you cannot simply take up life and become just another citizen of the new place."[209]

According to Said's view of the theme of exile and the extent of the connectedness of exiled people to their roots, Kattan connects the exile of his ancestors, who were forced to leave Jerusalem to Babylon (currently Iraq) by Nebuchadnezzar, with his real exile as he mentions in an imaginary scene:

> Eyes closed, I saw myself barefoot, burned by the sand, a burden on my back, beside my captive brothers, crossing the desert, the rivers and the plains. Our backs were straight and instead of lowering our heads, we closed our eyes to the scene of our humiliation. We were preparing to give the world the Talmud, that treasure of infinite wisdom.[210]

The writer presents the Jewish identity to narrate the 'Self' as part of his text though the theme of exile, sometimes, makes disruption when the story interferes with the 'Self'. This condition of exile causes instability and lack; thus, it leads to a state of chaos. Berg mentions that "the heart of the condition of exile is the state of homelessness, which implies both the loss of a home and the need for one. The writer in exile may attempt to mediate this lack through the creative process that is, by recreating home through art;"[211] therefore, Bergs claims that the exiled writers can solve the crisis of instability and loss of identity through the strategy of writing. Writers in exile tend to construct the meaning in order to create a homeland from the temporary location; therefore, the construction of a new homeland offers stability for the writers. Though most of the exiled writers suffer from the pain of loss, the suffering helps

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[207] Ibid., 177.

[208] Nancy E Berg. *Exile from Exile: Israeli Writers from Iraq*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 5.

[209] Edward Said. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*, repr. (New York: Vintage Books, [1994] 1996), 61–62.

[210] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 80.

[211] Nancy E Berg. *Exile from Exile: Israeli Writers from Iraq*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 8.

intellectual writers to argue the social criteria.[212] In addition to Said, Julia Kristeva discusses in her text the experience of exile:

> The language of exile muffles a cry, it doesn't ever shout […]. Our present age is one of exile. How can one avoid sinking into the mire of common sense, if not by becoming a stranger to one's own country, language, sex and identity? Writing is impossible without some kind of exile. Exile is already in itself a form of *dissidence*, since it involves uprooting oneself from a family, a country or a language. More importantly, it is an irreligious act that cuts all ties, for religion is nothing more than membership of a real or symbolic community which may or may not be transcendental, but which always constitutes a link, a homology, an understanding. The exile cuts all links. […] For if meaning exists in the state of exile, it nevertheless finds no incarnation, and is ceaselessly produced and destroyed in geographical or discursive transformations. Exile is a way of surviving in the face of the *dead father*, of gambling with death, which is the meaning of life, of stubbornly refusing to give in to the law of death.[213]

While Kristeva claims that exile is an "irreligious act that cuts all ties,"[214] Kattan presents the distinct feature of exile: he believes that the people in exile can construct religious links and encourages them to build strong social ties. However, the meaning in the state of exile as Kristeva views is "ceaselessly produced and destroyed in geographical or discursive transformation"[215] which agrees with Said's view of the 'beginnings' that are "something secular, humanly produced and ceaselessly re-examined."[216] In contrast, Kattan believes if the writer in exile is far away from the original home physically, he still preserves the original cultural identity. He refuses to call himself an exiled writer because he chose the real place of his exile instead of living in an imaginative location.

Kattan's text aims to refer to the origin of Jews in Iraq and their relationship with other religions in order to affirm that Jews preceded other religions in Iraq and confirm the belonging

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[212] Edward Said. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*, repr. (New York: Vintage Books, [1994] 1996).

[213] Julia Kristeva. *The Kristeva Reader*, edited by Toril Moi. Translated by Séan Hand. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). 298.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Edward Said. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1975] 1985), xix.

of Jews to Iraq and not to Israel. Therefore, the principal aim of his writing is to preserve the connection of Jews to 'Babylon' (modern Iraq). Kattan uses *Talmud* as a reference to prove the origin of Jews in Babylon though most Iraqi Jews left Iraq after Israel declared its state as Kattan points out:

> I remind myself that peoples outlive their lands, even lands that are hostile. Sometimes ungrateful people damage the legacy and the wealth of their land. I never forget that Abraham was born at Ur in Chaldea, not far from Baghdad. He is still the father of all monotheistic religions, even if his message is handled roughly. His word endures, even when we do not hear it. That is his victory; it is also our hope.[217]

The reference of Kattan to the figure of Abraham who was born in Ur in the south of Iraq is a message which gives the writer hope to negotiate the relationship to the original homeland from a point of critical distance. Therefore, he attempts to explore the Jewish roots in Iraq while history seeks to silence it, but the case of their exile becomes a challenge for Kattan that undermines the Jewish beginnings in Iraq. Iraq for him is not only a place where he was born, it also symbolizes his youth. When he refers to Iraq, he wants to restore his memory of schools, cafes, and friends there. Iraq is the place where he started his moral consciousness, his belonging sentiment to the homeland and his beginnings to become a writer.

The opening of Kattan's *Farewell Babylon* is at the Yassine cafe in Baghdad where a group of young people from different religions and nationalisms meet frequently. Their frequent meeting aims to discuss how they can develop Iraqi literature and culture:

> We got together at the Yassine Cafe every evening, making plans for the future based on our day's reading. It was an endless debate that we resumed night after night. We were painfully tracing our path, each of us seeking in the others' approval a confirmation of the dictates of his temperament; and under cover of discussing the future of our culture, we were defending our own first writing.[218]

Nessim, the Jewish young man opens the discussion with a reference to outstanding Western novels and the Arab traditional novels. Their discussion is associated with Said's argument of

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[217] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 88–9.
[218] Ibid., 12.

'beginnings' that the novel represents the real world which is hidden beyond the words.[219] Kattan, thus, seeks to portray the reality of the complex world through his depiction of the imaginative possibilities which play an important role between the theatre and reality. At the meeting of the group, Nessim speaks Arabic with a Jewish dialect though the group is a mix of Kurds, Arabs, Chaldeans, Armenians, and Muslims who represent the majority in their group; therefore, the Jewish dialect represents a kind of a challenge to members of the group.

According to the narrator, Jews frequently distinguish themselves by including some English or French words in their speech as Kattan points out "a child who called his father 'papa' or 'daddy' was already guaranteed a future aristocracy"[220] or sometimes they use some Muslim terms. At the same time, Muslims sometimes use the Jewish accent for ridicule or "only to amuse visitors"[221] because "a typically Jewish word in the mouth of a Muslim was synonymous with ridicule."[222] Though Nessim insists on speaking with a Jewish accent, the protagonist of the novel tries to be silent and not participating in this kind of discussion but he, later, changes the accent into literary Arabic, the language of *Koran*, because he believes that the Koran language is above other accents. Nevertheless, he says that:

> Nessim was forcing me to take a stand against the solidarity of the group. I could
> not reject our common language without humiliating myself. It was no longer
> the language of friendship, but of the clan. I listened to myself and the Jewish
> words stood out in all their strangeness, coldly and naked. My sentences were
> frozen. Before I uttered them, I heard them echo in my ears. I was reciting a
> lesson I had learned. I slipped in a French word. Nessim, pitiless censor,
> immediately translated into the Jewish dialect.[223]

However, the discussion suddenly stops joking and they begin a real discussion related to the future of Iraqi culture and literature: "The masks had fallen. We stood there in our luminous and fragile difference. And it was neither a sign of humiliation nor a symbol of ridicule. In a

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[219] Edward Said. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1975] 1985), 81.

[220] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 13.

[221] Ibid.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Ibid., 14.

pure Jewish dialect, we made our plans for the future of Iraqi culture."[224] Then, the young Muslims begin an attempt to practice the Jewish accent:

> They stammered over words they had heard so often but never allowed to cross their lips. They apologized for the awkwardness […] By the end of evening Said and Jamil and all the others too were being introduced to the Jewish dialect, with as much awkwardness in the serious matter that it was.[225]

At the end of the meeting, the discussion changed from a comic tone to negotiate serious matters which are related to their country. Differences in their religions, nationalisms or accents cease to matter. It is a beautiful ending of the meeting and the new beginning portrays the real relation between Arab Muslims and Jews. It is a new role for the young in order to think about how they develop their culture and how they can export their literature to the world: "In our group, we were neither Jew or Muslim. We were Iraqis, concerned about the future of our country and consequently the future of each one of us."[226]

The distinct beginning of Kattan's memoir represents the prominent feature that Kattan presents to us through the real pictures of a multi-religious country. There are several pictures present in the text in which he refers to the acceptance of the 'Other' in Iraq despite cultural and linguistic differences. In the text, he clarifies the role of Jews in the development of Iraq and their close connections to Iraqi society. Kattan's pictures are very different from the Zionist's perspective which portrays to the world that Muslims are anti–Semitic. The text portrays the Iraqi mosaic through a group of friends who involve in the discourse while challenging the social norms and sharing the same cup of coffee. The writer succeeds in portraying tolerance and the acceptance of others by presenting Jewish voices which are accepted by the majority. The most important picture which he presents, in his text, are Jewish characters who freely use their accent in Arab society and there are no restrictions.

Said encourages writers to begin from "the most chaotic place on earth, believe something strongly enough, apply it to that place, and you can author a new beginning whose intention is to make order out of chaos because underneath everything there is a benign continuity;"[227] therefore, Said means that the 'beginning' is a determination of an individual to

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[224] Ibid., 15.

[225] Ibid., 16.

[226] Ibid., 15.

[227] Edward Said. *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1975] 1985), 113.

create meaning from chaos. It can be an entry to the knowledge of history and continues after it. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore the starting points of the narrative and the extent of the author's possibilities to connect them to the present or future. In the case of Kattan, he insists on beginning his memoir with a connection of Jews to Babylon and modern Iraq this way emphasizing that Jewish identity connects to Iraq and not to Israel.

The narratives associate with the Postcolonial decade helps the modern cultural movements to the maintenance of the original identity of exiled people or immigrants. But, in the case of Jewish identity, Zionism takes identity as a central feature to create a meaning of Jewishness in Israel. Kattan, in his text, tries to prove that there is no exclusive connection of Jewish identity with modern Israel through the mention of the beginnings of Jews. Besides, He refuses to depend on a single source to prove his perspective; therefore, he uses different beginnings to prove the origins of Jewish identity. Nevertheless, he clarifies to us that there is a complex tension in proving the authenticity of identity because there is no single feature of Jewishness that can involve the individuals who claim it.

2. 3. The Double Diasporic Situation and the Sense of Belonging to the Original Home

In *Farewell Babylon*, the writer depends on two main elements (home and neighbours) in the construction of his text as the investigation, here, is to explore the relationship between these elements and how the writer uses them in his text. Both terms represent the space that indicates belonging, the nation, and identity. Erin Manning explains the notion of 'home:'

> As many of us provisionally assume a political stance that refutes nationalism, we often design our homes to mirror the exclusionary aspects of the nation's mandate on belonging, forgetting, perhaps, that the notion of home (or homeland) remains one of the nation's most powerful ontopological enunciations. If we refrain from questioning the validity of the political structures that guarantee our 'safety' within the discourse of the home, we are blinded to the ways in which the home mirrors the politics of state-sovereignty, offering protection from the outside by condoning an ethics of exclusionary violence on the inside. We must therefore develop an awareness that, as we mortgage our lives and construct fences and walls, install security systems and

guard dogs, we are offering unwavering support to a vocabulary that is at the heart of the imaginary of the nation.[228]

For Iraqi Jews, the concept of 'home' is a unique challenge because there is an ambivalence between its concept as a regional nation and its concept as a nation that extends beyond the boundaries. As they desire to look for space that connects 'them' to the location of their ancestors in order to conserve the 'Self' because both space and 'Self' are important for the presence of Iraqi Jews. Thus, the process of the exploration of 'Self' for Iraqi Jews is an attempt to distinguish the imaginary boundary which is created between 'them' and 'Muslims' in Baghdad. Based on Kattan's text, the line draws the extent of performance between the 'Self' and 'Muslims', 'here' (the Jewish district) and 'there' (Muslims district). The determination of borderline, even if it is an imaginary line, controls the behaviour of individuals because their behaviours inside/outside these boundaries are based on identity, belonging and culture as violence is one of the reasons which creates differences between people. According to Gregory

> this space of potential is always conditional, always precarious, but every repertory performance of the colonial present carries within it the twin possibilities of either reaffirming and even radicalizing the hold of the colonial part on the present or undoing its enclosures and approaching closer to the horizon of the postcolonial.[229]

The interrelation between spaces and places becomes a symbol to create a form of belonging of individuals inside/outside the boundaries; therefore, this action produces a conceptual change in the community. In Baghdad, the relationship between the identity of Arab Muslims and the identity of Arab Jews is between 'us' and 'them' established sometimes on dialogue space and other times on conflicts. The language of dialogue and its meaning are expressed through the ambiguity and ambivalence in the space where the 'Self' and 'Muslims' meet together at the 'cutting edge.' As Homi Bhabha points out:

> The act of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which

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[228] Erin Manning. *Ephemeral Territories: Representing Nation, Home and Identity in Canada*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xvi–xvii.

[229] Derek Gregory. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq*. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 19.

represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation.[230]

Through indirect communication, language involves the ambivalence to the act in the third space; therefore, the function of language does not always convey the intention of the speaker and thus negatively affects the reader's understanding [231] as any understanding is prospective at this moment due to creating a space of transforming thoughts. Soja clarifies that the 'third space' is a "radical challenge to think differently, to expand your geographical imagination beyond its current limits;"[232] therefore, the third space is a free zone which is in-between two locations, each one of them tries to control the other. In literature, the third space is the meeting point for a group of people when they cannot meet in their real locations. As well, the narration sometimes introduces real situations through the imagination in which texts can be travelled into locations where bodies cannot do so physically. Thus, the concepts of 'home' and 'neighbours' deconstruct the discourse in order to create interaction between them: Kattan's text presents one such strategy. Based on the definition of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari of the 'concept' as "the inseparability of a finite number of heterogeneous components traversed by a point of absolute survey at infinite speed,"[233] Kattan in his text uses the 'concept' to create a space of meanings which expresses the performance of a group of ideas in a heterogeneous environment. The content of space is related to a certain point which permits to move of these ideas to infinity; therefore, the concept of the 'home' which the writer creates in his text from a certain point draws the imaginary borderline in a certain space and time.

The concept of 'home' in Kattan's text can be connected with the definition of Benedict Anderson of the concept of 'nation.'[234] According to Anderson, the nation is an imagined political community that is conceived as inherently limited and sovereign. The nation fixes boundaries in which people imagine being connected to the land where they were born. As Anderson claims that the modern nation can grow if citizens let go of some of the cultural

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[230] Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*, repr. (New York: Routledge Classics, [1994] 2004), 53.

[231] Zygmunt Bauman. *Modernity and Ambivalence*, repr. (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, [1991] 1998), 1.

[232] Edward W. Soja. *Thirdspace: a journey through Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 2.

[233] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1991] 1994), 21.

[234] Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, [1983] 2006), 6.

concepts related to history, religion and the faith in the sacred texts and believing that the ruler has a link divinely. However, the communities in the diaspora exceed the nation because their movements are outside the borders of their native lands. Deleuze and Guattari mention the "need to see how everyone, at every age, in the smallest things as in the greatest challenges, seeks a territory, tolerates or carries out deterritorializations, and is reterritorialized on almost anything – memory, fetish, or dream."[235] The process of territorialization of people's thoughts does the same what it does with social fields; therefore, the locations are impossible to be permanent because they continue to determine new locations to inhabit.

Based on Deleuze and Guattari's view, one can conclude that nations grow by moving people from one location to another continuously. For instance, the diasporic movements create new territories and sometimes participate in a recreation of other territories as Jewish diaspora communities; therefore, people cannot claim that they belong to a single location. Furthermore, the exiled people live in double locations, physically in the host country and imaginatively often in the country of origins; therefore, they have a duality of the existence as Said points out "most people are principally aware of one culture, one home, or one setting,"[236] while "exiles are aware of at least two, giving them a plurality of vision give rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions."[237] This plurality generates an absence of uniform cultural identity because most of the exiled people mix their original culture with the acquired one and thus they create a hybrid one such as Kattan's case who has multiple cultures (French and Canadian) in addition to his original culture (Iraqi).

However, Erich Gruen challenges the perspective that claims that there is a positive conception of the Jewish diaspora which concerns modernity and Jewish emancipation; therefore, his view is that there is a dark picture to the Jewish diaspora which is more common. As Jews believe that the deliverance is in the homecoming and its restoration, Gruen sees that Jews are "the people of the Book"[238] and the text represents "the portable temple,"[239] thus, there is no need to restore the homeland. Therefore, he claims that both images are

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[235] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1991] 1994), 67–68.

[236] Edward Said. "Reflections on Exile." In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 173–86. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 186.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Erich S Gruen. *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 232.

[239] Ibid.

the whole idea of privileging homeland over diaspora, or diaspora over homeland, derives from a modern, rather than an ancient, obsession. The issue is too readily conceived in terms of mutually exclusive alternatives: either the Jews regarded their identity as unrealizable in exile and the achievement of their destiny as dependent upon reentry into Judaea or they clung to their heritage abroad, shifting attention to local and regional loyalties, and cultivating a permanent attachment to the diaspora.[240]

Gruen asserts that the Jewish diaspora[241] began a long time before the destruction of the Temple happened in 70 CE and continued because there were large waves of voluntary migrations where 5 million ancient Jews lived in the diaspora far from their original home. Some thinkers solidify the concept of the 'diaspora' as a social process that features like a closed concept while James Clifford elaborates that the concept of 'diaspora' is a dynamic concept that includes overlapping features of politics, society, and culture. Thus, the concept of 'diaspora' is flexible and covers the chaotic tangents which increase the imaginative prospects as Clifford, in his article, explains the conceptual borders of Jewish diaspora:

The history of Jewish diaspora communities shows selective accommodation with the political, cultural, commercial, and everyday life forms of "host" societies. And the black diaspora culture currently being articulated in postcolonial Britain is concerned to struggle for different ways to be "British" – ways to stay and be different, to be British and something else complexly related to Africa and the Americas, to shared histories of enslavement, racist subordination, cultural survival, hybridization, resistance, and political rebellion. Thus the term diaspora is a signifier, not simply of transnationality

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[240] Ibid., 234–5

[241] Not only the Jewish diasporic community suffer but also the other ethnicities, for instance, the black slaves in the United States or ethnic minorities in Canada. Therefore, the multiplicity of diasporic communities show that marginalization does not only face single community, ethnicity, or religion, but also the other communities. For instance, Canadian members of Parliament presented a question to find a solution to the bigotry against other diasporic communities and not only the Jewish community: "Why, then, is anti–Jewish bigotry (anti-Semitism) the only concern of Irwin Cotler, Jason Kenney and other members of parliament who in 2009 formed the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA)? No coalition of parliamentarians is pursuing remedies for any other group that is a target of bigotry in Canada today." Mordecai Briemberg and Brian Campbell. "Anti–Semitism and Free Speech: In Parliament This Weekend." (*Rabble.Ca*., 4 November 2010).

and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement.[242]

In the diasporic communities, the emphasis is on belonging to the original home and at the same time, the negotiation is with transnational belonging; therefore, the concept of the doubleness of belonging is present here. Based on the clarification of Linda Hutcheon,

> doubleness is what characterizes not just the complicitous critique of the postmodern, but, by definition, the twofold vision of the postcolonial – not just because of the obvious dual history […] but because a sense of duality was the mark of the colonial as well. Doubleness and difference are established by colonialism by its paradoxical move to enforce cultural sameness […] while, at the same time, producing differentiations and discriminations […].[243]

As a result of problems that are produced by colonialism such as discrimination, differentiation and racism, the double sense of belonging appears through the consciousness of diasporic communities. Therefore, double consciousness creates a recognition of the 'Self' and a simultaneous sense of belonging to the national culture. Although it is hard for the individual in the diaspora to fully integrate into the host country, it is also impossible to fully return to the original home; therefore, the doubleness of belonging affects both identities. Theorists of the diaspora introduce important arguments related to the Jewish diaspora studies since the Jewish diaspora is often seen as a model[244] of studying the doubleness of belonging.

When the concept of 'doubleness' deconstructs, it leads to a stabilization of the concept of 'diaspora.' The individuals in the diaspora often locate between two paradoxical relations of belonging because the double sense of belonging embodies the contradiction between belonging to the homeland or the host country. Some individuals in the diaspora experience deterritorialization but cannot achieve reterritorialization as they are displaced from two homes and live in the third one such as the case of Naim Kattan who lives in Canada after his exile from Iraq and his emigration from France. Therefore, these three homes create an unsettling sense of belonging to him. Clifford, in his definition of diaspora, tries to narrow this tension

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[242] James Clifford. "Diasporas." (*Cultural Anthropology* 9 (3), 1994), 308.

[243] Linda Hutcheon. "'Circling the Downspout of Empire': Post–Colonialism and Postmodernism." (*Ariel* 20 (4), 1989), 161–62.

[244] William Safran. "Recent French Conceptualizations of Diaspora." (*Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 12 (3), 2003), 437–41.

because the double experiences, sometimes, can push the individual to a feeling of isolation. Clifford presents several possibilities to the concept of 'diaspora' in order to preserve the concept of 'doubleness' and also emphasize the political conflicts which override across borders.

Moreover, the establishment of Israel creates a new concept of 'diaspora' for Oriental Jews, especially for Iraqi Jews. Because Israel succeeded in detaching them from their original home and at the same time, it deals with them as citizenships of second-class; therefore, they found themselves, strangers, in Israel as Shohat claims that

> the Israeli establishment regards Arab Jews as irremediably Arab – indeed, that Iraqi Jews were allegedly used to determine a certain toxin's effect on Arabs suggests that for genetic/biological purposes, at least, Iraqi Jews are Arabs. On the other hand, official Israeli/Zionist policy urges Arab Jews (or, more generally, Oriental Jews, also known as Sephardim or Mizrahim) to see their only real identity as Jewish.[245]

The division of Jewish identity in Israel that you are Jewish but still Arab creates a sense of duality. It is evident that Israel was founded on the displaced and exiled Eastern Jews but some of them left Israel and chose to live in another country because they felt that they were marginalized in their imaginary homeland. Furthermore, several Arab Jews have a sense of belonging and connection to the place of birth more than a sense of belonging to the imaginary homeland (Israel). The concept of the doubleness of belonging shows the difficulty of the case of Arab Jews as they never belong to a single nation. Therefore, the third home for this kind of individuals can be the solution after the impossibility to be in one of the first two homes as both first two homes reject each other.

Kattan in his texts expresses the Jewish consciousness of doubleness of belonging. He presents the Jewish identity by concentrating on the experiences of Jews in the diaspora which appear clearly in his texts. Therefore, this phenomenon must be investigated by exploring the double sense of belonging and studying the movement between locations in the text of Kattan, *Farewell Babylon*. The double sense of belonging means the desire for movement as this movement enables the writer to move between locations, thus it helps him to present a better understanding of the Jewish identity. In one scene of *Farewell Babylon*, the narrator shows the

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[245] Ella Shohat. "The Invention of the Mizrahim." (*Journal of Palestine Studies* 29 (1), 1999), 5.

sense of belonging to Babylon when he describes students' journey to Babylon and what their teacher tells them about the history of Jews there:

> Only the Jews can feel the upheaval of a living past under these piles of stones […] we came here as captives, the slaves of Nebuchadnezzar. But we triumphed over defeat. On this ground, we wrote the Talmud. The descendants of captives, the sons of slaves were great scholars, great philosophers. Are we worthy of our ancestors?[246]

These words elaborate that the sense of belonging of Jews to Babylon exists not only physically but also in their soul and imagination. Surely, the title of Kattan's novel, *Farewell Babylon*, involves evidence of the connection of Jews to the land of their ancestors. Kattan clarifies this idea, in his book *La Mémoire et la Promesse*, evoking his feelings when he says:

> Je suis parti de Bagdad, emportant le rêve d'un lieu fixe, héritier de vingt–cinq siècles d'histoire en unpoint donné. Nous étions entourés de nomades, les empires s'étaient édifiés puis effondrés, et nous, les fils de prisonniers de Nabuchodonosor étions toujours là et pourtant nous étions nous aussi des nomades, nous avons appris qu'il n'y a de lieu que de passage et que Dieu habite tous les lieux.[247]

In another scene of *Farewell Babylon*, the narrator seeks a sense of belonging to the majority community in Baghdad by looking for sexual experience in their community:

> We were all Jewish. But as soon as we crossed the threshold of the house, we changed our identities. In this exotic land, the Jewish accent would seem out of place. Speaking an adopted language, we would carry on only simple business

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[246] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 79.

[247] Naim Kattan. *La Mémoire et La Promesse*. (Paris: Denoël, 1979), 14. (I left Baghdad, took away with me the dream of a fixed place, heir of twenty–five centuries of history at a given point. We were surrounded by nomads and empires which had been built up and then collapsed. We were the sons of prisoners of Nebuchadnezzar still there and yet we were also nomads. We have learned that all places are passageways and God dwells in all places.). [This paragraph is translated to English by Hugon Julia].

negotiations and any embarrassment would be superfluous. With our new faces,

we would become unknown.[248]

He tries to hide his original identity when he visits the "Maydane,"[249] the area which is known as the red–light district. In that area, identities, nationalisms, classes, and boundaries disappear while the control is for the power of masculinity, thus he gets a temporary sense of belonging to their community. Therefore, he and his friends try to speak in an Arabic accent, but they fail because their Jewish accent is clear and thus, he is forced to remove the Arab mask: "'Are you from Baghdad?' I asked with a Jewish accent. 'I come from Karbala. My father is a mullah,' she said in the purest Muslim accent."[250] Obviously, the mask of the majority can no longer work with him; therefore, he uses his real identity to continue his relationship with the girl:

I barely had time to look at them when I felt a hand pulling on my manhood. It was the one–eyed woman. I was dumbfounded to see a woman go so directly to an unknown man. I had to shed my old beliefs and accept this complete reversal of roles. Here the women were totally nude. According to the laws of the desert, this physical nudity was naturally accompanied by moral nudity. The boundaries between what was real and what was dreamed became evanescent. Obscenity had no meaning since everything was obscene.[251]

In the scene above, the narrator's description goes beyond religious or ethnic features to shift into gender; therefore, the shifting into the sexual stimulation helps to reverse the roles and embodies a psychological role instead of classifying the world into the 'us' and the 'them.'

Later on, the narrator manifests an inability to integrate into the majority community in Baghdad after he recognizes the idealistic image of Europe. His dream is to emigrate to France to settle in a new home because of the inspiration which is received through the reading of French literature. But his dream is faded when he meets a French teacher during the primary examination. The teacher asks him to translate a poem of French poet Baudelaire: "I could not do it. Patiently my examiner explained the meaning of the word 'ostensoir' (monstrance). I discovered through his words, that France concealed a thousand concrete details, that she had

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[248] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 153–4.

[249] Maydane is an Arabic term which means in English language "the Square."

[250] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 158.

[251] Ibid., 192.

an everyday life and a religious tradition that escaped me completely, that no book had revealed to me yet."[252] The narrator is surprised again when he realizes that the French teacher had never heard the name of the famous Arab writer Gibran Khalil Gibran. He reveals to his friend:

> I was disappointed when I talked with my French teacher about Gibran […] Was it possible for a cultivated European not to know the name of such a great writer? For us, Romain Rolland and Gibran, so far apart, so different, expressed the same revolt, muffled by a diffuse spirituality, a vague mysticism. Their cries and their appeals were transformed into a subtle evasion that allowed us to escape from a world that struck us as unreal and abstract because it was so narrow. We did not take refuge in dreams but transplanted ourselves outside our stifling existence into the enchanted mountains and villages of Lebanon, the forests of Europe and the women of the West. They walked before us, far more real than the veiled shadows who populated the streets of our city.[253]

Throughout the discussion above, the narrator locates himself between the contradiction of cultures which becomes his main challenge before he crosses borders to Europe. The challenge begins when he mentions Gibran Khalil Gibran, a Lebanese American immigrant writer, whom he considers as a model of diasporic writers. As Gibran did, the narrator also faces the challenge of minorities in the French part of Canada when he tries to keep the connection with the Arab diasporic community to preserve his Iraqi identity. Therefore, the diasporic case of Gibran and the ignorance of his teacher represent for him a challenge of preserving the national identity. While he is transmitted between "mountains and villages of Lebanon, the forests of Europe and the women of the West,"[254] the narrator realizes in this space that there are common conflicts concerning his cultural identity and the disorder of adolescence alike. But his desire and insistent help him to create a certain space for himself, then sets out to his religious community and the whole society and thus carve his identity everywhere.

2. 4. The Move between Imaginary Boundaries in Baghdad

As I mentioned previously, the Baghdadian community is a multicultural and multi-religious community but Kattan, in *Farewell Babylon*, focuses on the relationship between his

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[252] Ibid., 125.
[253] Ibid., 83.
[254] Ibid.

community and the Muslim community in Baghdad. The imaginary boundaries draw the map of cultural and historical relations between these two communities. In the first decade of the 20th century, Jews integrated deeply into the Iraqi society and Baghdad was particularly prosperous in their culture. They contributed with Muslims in developing the society and culture in Iraq as they had an intimate connection in the prominence of Arab poetry, novels, and magazines. But Iraq Jews got more attention through Western, particularly the Alliance Israélite school in which Kattan completed his studies and it was the road to continue studying in Paris later. However, the attempts of Western Jewish leaders[255] to change Iraqi Jews never reach the planned results because Iraqi Jews attempt to protect their ethnic and cultural identity even after political changes so Kattan's experience represents a true example of preserving Iraqi Jewish identity. But the narrator realizes the difference between Jews and Muslims when he refers to a group of people who attract him, and they are known as 'Bedouins':

> I would beg my mother to lift me above the enclosure. Speaking to the closest Bedouin, I would shout with the secret satisfaction of crossing boundaries that adults would not have the audacity to transgress: 'Ammi, Ammi. Uncle, Uncle.' The respect I owed to every older man required me to use this familial term. In these circumstances, it tasted of the forbidden. In the Muslim dialect, I would address the stranger. The tall Bedouin would spin around his *akal* and turn his head. Trembling with fear and courage, I would toss off, in my best Muslim dialect, 'May God help you.' And the man, still talking to his camel, would answer, 'May God keep you, my son.' And so he became my uncle and I his son. In the world of childhood, I was neither Jew nor Muslim, and without running any risk I could speak directly to a Bedouin.[256]

Kattan uses the term 'Bedouin' to refer to a group of people who inhabit outside cities of the "vigorous men with chiseled faces who conversed with their camels with the familiarity reserved for humans."[257] Kattan's description is a reference to 'Arab masculinity' as Julie Peteet clarifies that

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[255] Zvi Yehuda. "Iraqi Jewry and Cultural Change in the Educational Activity of the Alliance Israélite Universelle." *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era*, edited by Harvey E. Goldberg, 134-145. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

[256] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 41–42.

[257] Ibid., 41.

Arab masculinity (rujulah) is acquired, verified, and played out in the brave deed, in risk-taking, and in expressions of fearlessness and assertiveness. It is attained by constant vigilance and willingness to defend honor (sharaf), face (wajh), kin, and community from external aggression and to uphold and protect cultural definitions of gender-specific propriety.[258]

Moreover, the narrator describes the relationship between 'them' and Muslims stating that there is a danger in using different dialects, but he finds that he is attracted to them. He challenges the dangers to break down boundaries which create an artificial opposition between Muslims and Jews: "we have been able to live among the Bedouins because we have managed to escape the destiny of the nomad. Even though we're in exile, we are not desert nomads, but the nomads of Gods and we take shelter under his watchful eye, in a community."[259] In another scene, the narrator refers to a parallel process that Jews and Muslims do in order to maintain their community: "When a Jewish mother reprimanded her son, she would call him a Muslim. The Muslim mother returned the insult by calling her offending son a Jew."[260]

Besides, Kattan describes differences in their traditional religious customs as he mentions the occasions when he goes with his grandmother to Muslim areas in Baghdad to participate in their celebrations where they often cross the river by boat, it looks like crossing an imaginary border. When they cross to the other side of the river, they see that there are different cultures and traditions.[261] Nevertheless, at the moment of their meeting, they integrate easily. In Muslims' areas, people usually celebrate together while children hold "their wounded, painful manhood."[262] Once, the narrator attends these celebrations with his grandmother, he keeps these traditions in his mind and later, he clarifies: "These customs were quite unlike our own. Circumcised eight days after our birth, we had no memory of our bleeding manhood."[263] He also narrates another annual event which is celebrated by Shia Muslims: "I remember another spectacle, the *Sbaya*, with terror."[264]

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[258] Julie Peteet. "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian 'Intifada': A Cultural Politics of Violence." (*American Ethnologist* 21 (1), 1994), 34.

[259] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 174.

[260] Ibid., 42.

[261] Ibid., 44.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Ibid., 45.

[264] Ibid.

The narrator and his family usually go to their cousins' houses who live in the Shia's area to see the annual scene of Ashura[265] where he describes the scene that Shia Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Al–Hussein, martyr of the faith. The narrator describes that groups of men hold "the apparatus of war and a panoply of green–and–black banners attested to the passage of death – so that the faith might triumph and live."[266] In my view, though these scenes of rituals involve pain, they represent the power of masculinity for them. It is worth noting that the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Iraq moved between high tide and ebb during the first half of the twentieth century.

There was a rapprochement between these two communities in certain periods but in other periods, there were differences and problems until the serious violation occurred, which was the 'Farhoud' incident. Kattan himself never ignored in his text this violence which was one of the reasons for Jews to leave Iraq: "The wave of violence was reaching the district. The 'Farhoud' had every appearance of a tribal engagement […] the community had lost three hundred members."[267] The narrator connects between the scene of ritual which he observes and the scene of 'Farhud.' But I argue that the event of 'Farhud,' which happened in the middle of the last century created a big antagonism between Muslims and Jews, it almost cut all the common lines between them. Therefore, the trauma of violence creates a new borderline of 'them' and Muslims. However, Iraqi identity attracts young Jews to involve with Muslims against one enemy 'British imperialism' as the narrator mentions that:

> In this holy war being fought against a reviled invader, there was no question of
> Jews or Muslims. We were all in the same brigade in this fight to the death
> against a colonial power that was sucking our blood and our oil […]. Jews or
> Muslims, we had but one enemy: the English.[268]

But the situation is different for the elders of Jews, they fear that they are in the same line with Nazis because they know what Hitler did with Jews in Germany.[269] Therefore, 'Farhud'

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[265] Ashura is the 10th of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar where Al–Hussein ibn Ali, the grandson of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, was martyred with 70 persons of his family and followers in the Battle of Karbala, Iraq in the year 61 AH. It is a day of public mourning where millions of Shias remember the sorrow and sadness all over the world.

[266] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 46.

[267] Ibid., 25–29

[268] Ibid., 20.

[269] Ibid., 21.

increases the impossibility of Jews to integrate into Muslim society which creates a wide gap between them. Kattan describes the moments when British colonial forces leave and the Iraqi political leader arrives in Baghdad, in those moments, there is lack of security and the country is without a government: "In 1941, a pro-Nazi government, under Rashid Ali al–Gailani, took power and declared war against Great–Britain. Its defeat was followed by the Farhud, a pogrom that ended the feeling of belonging the Jews felt for this country."[270] Some of the people use this occasion to attack Jews, steal and destroy everything which relates to Jews. Kattan symbolizes that conflict as one tribe attacks another saying that Jews are "ignorant of the tradition of such combats."[271] Some of the news mention that around 300 Jews killed that night and the other mentions that the number of victims was over 300 and a lot of things were stolen.

The narrator mentions that he meets his friend Nessim after the government controls the situation. Nessim was safe but his uncle was killed when he tried to protect his belongings so this event makes him desperate: "For months he thought he could recognize in every Muslim in the street the face of his uncle's murderer."[272] The factors which help this kind of violence are the difference in classes as well as social distinctions between Muslims and Jews. Some Jews describe that the 'Farhud' was the decisive factor that forced most of them to leave Iraq and emigrate to Israel. I argue that the reasons for the 'Farhud' are not only differences in social class or religion because the values of the Iraqi identity have several common features regardless of religion or ethnicity but also there were political reasons to force Jews to immigrate from Iraq to Israel. For instance, Nazism played a role in destroying the relationship between Jews and Muslims in modern Iraq.

The narrator also describes a literary group that consists of "emancipated liberals and revolutionaries who were working to demolish the walls put up by prejudice and misunderstanding"[273] and thus this group plays an important role in fighting extremist ideas within Iraqi society in order to preserve Iraqi identity. For instance, Said, the editor of the narrator's article attacks him because the editor believes that the text has "often concealed a strong odour of Zionism."[274] The narrator clarifies that this kind of accusation is against Jews in general though there is no clear evidence of threatening Arabs by Jews. On another occasion,

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[270] Naim Kattan. "Jewish of Arab Origin and Culture." (*Global Jewish Magazine* 1 (1), 2006), 6.

[271] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 25.

[272] Ibid., 31.

[273] Ibid., 18.

[274] Ibid., 19.

the editor of the newspaper asks Nessim to change his family name in his article from Abraham to Ibrahim, as a Muslim name, because the editor thinks if it is a Muslim name, it gives more sense. But Nessim refuses and asks the editor to introduce him as a Jewish writer.

Kattan, in his text, reflects the idealism of Arab and Jewish cultures in the first decade of the 20th century. There are many Jews who still have a strong relation to their Iraqi identity as in the case of Kattan. Even Jews who immigrated from Iraq to Israel still have this connection; therefore, this space of discussion could be a foundation for the continuity for several writers, poets, and intellectuals to strengthen their relationship with their original identity (Iraqi identity). As I mentioned previously, many Arab Jews suffered inside Israel from the insider discourse because they are Oriental Jews. So Kattan's memoir presents the prosperous culture of Muslims and Jews in Iraq. Although the narrator refers to the violence which happened to Jews in Baghdad, this city still considers the main feature for the Iraqi Jews which represents the spatial concept of belonging. Lital Levy describes Baghdad for Jewish writers as a paradoxical city because the city has an unstable relationship between identity and space.[275] De Certeau clarifies that:

> Space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e. a place constituted by a system of signs.[276]

Therefore, by locating his memoir in Baghdad, Kattan's text represents a special space for him because it is not only a Jewish city but also an intercultural space.[277] The Iraqi Jewish writer presents to us a Jewish memory of Baghdad which currently does not exist in his daily life. The writer through his text creates a space of Jewish Baghdad– the process of writing helps in recreating this space. He focuses on portraying a sense of intercultural society in Iraq, so the writer emphasizes any interaction between the Jewish community and their neighbours. The concept of boundary is introduced through the neighbourhoods surrounding the Jewish district in Baghdad. When the arm of the narrator is injured, his father takes him to "see the Rabbi of

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[275] Lital Levy. "Self and the City: Literary Representations of Jewish Baghdad." (*Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* 26 (1–2), 2006), 165.

[276] Michel De Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Translated by Steven F. Rendall. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). 117.

[277] Lital Levy. "Self and the City: Literary Representations of Jewish Baghdad." (*Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History* 26 (1–2), 2006), 166.

the neighbourhood synagogue who was also a bonesetter,"[278] but his injury becomes worse; therefore, his father decides to take him to a Muslim man in Bab el-Sheikh (the Muslim district). His mother tries to hide any signs which prove that he is Jewish because she thinks that districts of Muslims are dangerous for Jews:

> Holding my father's hand, I felt as though I were leaving on a trip, and secretly prepared myself to cross the boundaries of my own country. How surprised I was when I entered these foreign alleys to see doors that look like ours, windows that were identical to those on own houses […]. I had expected that we would be taken for curious creatures, that people would stop and look at us, that they would hurl insults or even throw stones at us. So we were not so different from the others after all.[279]

Because of the imaginary boundaries which separated between Jews Muslims districts, the family and the young man prepare carefully before crossing borders and entering the Muslims district. The young man is surprised to discover that the design of buildings and shops outside the Jewish district is like inside their district. But each district has specific buildings to symbolize to people who inhabit them, for instance, the Mosques in Bab el-Sheikh symbolize Muslims while Synagogues symbolize Jews in their district. The paradox when the narrator crosses the border, he finds out that there is no danger and violence from Muslims against Jews.

The narrator reveals that at the beginning of the 20th century, the Jews lived in a specific and pure district in Baghdad located on the eastern bank of the Tigris. After the increase of the Jewish population in the 1930s, some of them move to the other side of the river which was designed in Western-style. The new districts inhabited people of different religions and cultures so it was different from the old districts which were only for Muslims or Jews. The narrator also moves with his family to one of these districts which are called 'Bataween.' In general, the moving from one part to another becomes the basis of the division inside the Jewish community because only the rich could move into these modern districts while the poor Jews stayed in the old area:

> Invisible boundaries separated the poor neighbourhoods in the Jewish community from the others. Crossing the barrier made one realize one's own

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[278] Naim Kattan. *Farewell, Babylon: Coming of Age in Jewish Baghdad*. Translated by Sheila Fischman, repr. (Vancouver, Raincoast Books, [1976] 2005), 49.

[279] Ibid., 49–50.

wealth in comparison with the inhabitants of Hennuni and Abou Sifain, who were crowded five and six into one room. About the children of these sections I knew only the legendary image of rudeness and bad language I was warned against.[280]

In the text above, the narrator reveals that the differences between social classes are similar for Jews, Muslims, Arabs and Kurds. The wealthy people of all nationalisms and religions are separated and distinguished from poor people. Nevertheless, there is a negotiation between the wealthy and the poor because the poor people work in hard jobs so the wealthy always need them and usually cross these borders to obtain their needs, for instance, when the young Jewish boy is treated in a Muslim poor district.

According to Kattan's text, there are two kinds of Jews in Baghdad: Arab Jews and Kurdish Jews. As I mentioned earlier, the Arab Jews are wealthy while the Kurdish Jews are poor. The Kurdish Jews emigrated from the north of Iraq to Baghdad to "do the heavy work: porters, furniture movers, laundry women and maids. Huddled together in their sordid neighbourhood, they lived on the margin of the community;"[281] therefore, the narrator believes that they are "the most deprived of the Jews."[282] He mentions that the Jewish society divides based on classes as the Kurdish Jews represent the lower class of the Jewish Baghdadi hierarchy; therefore, their poor condition becomes a symbol of their material condition and its extent of connectedness with their neighbours. The narrator shows us that he belongs to the higher class of Arab Jews in Baghdad and is proud of his identification as well as the sense of belonging. Moreover, the masculinity of the narrator helps him to be beyond religion and ethnicity in both Jewish and Muslim communities in Baghdad.[283]

The sense of belonging to Iraqi identity allows the narrator to get into all districts of Baghdad and outside of Baghdad though people in these districts have different religions, cultures, ethnicities and nationalisms. The political changes in Iraq and the Urban sprawl in Baghdad help that the districts of the city are to open to all people regardless of their religion and nationalism; therefore, it becomes impossible to control the boundaries between these districts. This condition helps Jews to integrate with the majority community. The optimism of the young age encourages the narrator to cross boundaries physically, at a time when the family

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[280] Ibid., 48.
[281] Ibid., 48–9.
[282] Ibid., 48.
[283] Ibid., 85–89.

and the parents are afraid of this crossing. Baghdad, like other multicultural cities, has big spaces that involve Muslims, Jews, Christians, Arabs, and Kurds. Therefore, the diversity of society helps the narrator to create a wide space of dialogue in the text. He imagines borders that help him in the negotiation between popular and strange things as the boundaries which the narrator draws in the text embody the dual tension visible and invisible between neighbours. In each scene of his narration, he presents a new neighbourhood through which he deconstructs terms and vocabularies, thus deconstructing the foundations of the pure and bounded community. Moreover, the narrator is never limited to the mention of boundaries between districts in Baghdad, but he also mentions crossing boundaries when he decides to go to study in Paris. In this scene, he describes the real moment of crossing Iraqi boundaries:

> My whole family was there. The pain of separation was mixed with relief at leaving these walls which were being covered with shadows […]. These faces looking at me, moving away from me, which I saw through the window of the bus – they were Iraq. All that remained of it for me. And I hoped I would be able to take away forever, within myself, its last reflection. It had to be so. In that way, my childhood would be preserved. I would enter the new world without cutting off a privileged part of it, without dispersing my dream and memories ... We would cross the desert and the next day I would be in Beirut, the first step on the road to the West.[284]

2. 5. Conclusion

Overall, the suffering of Kattan forces him to concentrate on the restrictions of social and national connection due to excluding the Jews from being on Iraqi territory by the government. Therefore, he seeks to integrate into the new home and also locates himself between the boundaries of his homeland (Iraq) and host country (Canada). As his dream is to be a writer, the detachment from Iraq forces him to continue developing his writing in various locations such as a diasporic writer so Kattan in his writings sometimes moves physically between locations and, at other times, he moves on the imaginary level between thoughts. This mobility left an impact on his original and new identity and as he is a double diasporic writer, he enables to produce a new model of the concept of diasporic identity. Therefore, Kattan in *Farewell Babylon* insists to connect the holy book with the roots of Jews in Iraq, then he refers to the impact of Jews on the development of Iraqi literature and culture. He intends to create a

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[284] Ibid., 217–18.

new beginning of the Jewish Canon through his writings which are different from the Jewish traditional narratives. With the importance of the 'beginning' of Kattan's text, the reader can read from any point in the text. The history, identity, homeland, and belonging are clear for the reader wherever he starts reading the text; therefore, he succeeds to put himself in the contact zone in-between Muslims and Jews.

Kattan's text involves all religions in Iraq and different accents of the Arabic language in order to demonstrate the interference between cultures. Furthermore, the cultural identity constructs and reconstructs the third space from a chaotic territory; therefore, the construction of identity in this way enables Kattan to imagine the relationship between individuals and communities that is what postcolonial and poststructuralist thinkers discuss in their theories. The writer in the double diasporic situation attempts to control the construction of identities and to draw the imaginary borders from infinite thoughts. Deleuze and Guattari claim that:

> What matters is not, as in bad novels, the opinions held by characters in accordance with their social type and characteristics but rather the relations of counterpoint into which they enter and the compounds of sensations that these characters either themselves experience or make felt in their becomings and their visions. Counterpoint serves not to report real or fictional conversations but to bring out the madness of all conversation and of all dialogue, even interior dialogue.[285]

Based on the above view, I argue that Kattan uses the concept of neighbours to refer to exchange the dialogue and the interaction with them through crossing borders which represent the chaos of communication. As well, the dialogues between characters represent a chaotic conversation between 'Arabs' and 'Jews' which sometimes create a conflict between them.

However, the concept of double diaspora is the best to reflect the critical prospects of the conflict between Arabs and Jews as Deleuze and Guattari's perspective emphasizes that the philosophy of concept creates consistency in the clutters with an infinite speed of thoughts which build a link between nations and locations. These locations represent the signification for people who still inhabit provisionally along boundaries. Based on this view, the double diaspora keeps the relation of the ambivalence between these locations while the individual in the diaspora lives in a third location. Therefore, this view clarifies that communities in diaspora

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[285] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, repr. (New York: Columbia University Press, [1991] 1994), 188.

are impossible to be in a single location because they inhabit unstable locations. Therefore, Kattan in *Farewell Babylon* focuses on the illumination of the experience of Jews in Iraq as the text exemplifies the tension between people who are displaced from two homes, thus it is important to solve this conflict and all boundaries must break down between the land and identity.

Furthermore, the text shows us how the narrator moves across the clutter instead of settling in a single place as a result of the sense of loneliness that forces the individual to be unstable and always imagine home. Therefore, the realization of loneliness and unsettledness in the clutter of thoughts open wide thinking beyond the boundaries for individuals regardless of their ethnicity or religion. In this chapter, I affirm that doubleness is one of the multiple relationships between Arabs and Jews as well as the social classes between Arab Jews and Kurdish Jews, thus, doubleness leads to unstable thoughts. As I mentioned previously, Deleuze and Guattari permit to expand the idea of doubleness but it must be in an infinite speed of thought. However, the concept of 'doubleness' concentrates on the interference of two locations which leads the duality into infinity. As a result, I argue that the double diaspora is not only the ambivalent relationship between homeland and host country, but it also refers to multiculturalism and the multiplicity of identities. In the next chapter, I am going to explore a new ethnic identity through Ondaatje's journeys to his homeland (Sri Lanka).

Chapter Three: The Exploration of 'Self' and 'Other' in Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*

3. 1. Introduction

Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* shows the complex diversity of immigrant writings which draws two different trajectories of the 'Self' and the 'Other.' Ondaatje's text refers to a desire to express a deep faith that lies invisibly within a reality in which meaning only exposes itself in flashes. This obsession with correspondences is causally linked with the desire to give shape to the past and to predict the future. His work explores the unpredictability of chaotic systems inductively and presents the haphazard process of textual creation. The shifts are a form of spatial and temporal compression in Ondaatje's text; they also represent bifurcation points that open multidirectional pathways in which multiple potentialities are explored. So this chapter aims to read Ondaatje's condition which reflects the ways that self–identity is manifested in his immigrant culture as well as exploring how his immigration intersects with literary practice and his experience in searching for his roots and identity. The aim is to get a better understanding of the contact zone between the homeland and the host country by analyzing Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*. The creation of hybrid identities is central to the dynamic ethnicity which shapes a temporal and locative bifurcation zone and creates cultural diversity.

When *Running in the Family* was first published in 1982, it presented an accurate picture of "the first stage of a post-colonial Sri Lankan culture, the later stages of which can be seen in the increasingly consumer–oriented and westernizing contemporary Sri Lanka under capitalism."[286] This category of narration represents a kind of autobiography or personal history in which the text "keeps its final intelligibility forever at bay by practicing a deferral of meaning and of generic definition related to the autobiographical elements of the book."[287] It describes complicated aspects of Ondaatje's postmodern challenges to boundaries; therefore, this text is unlike complicated texts which attempt to dismiss ancient notions of human deliberateness. It is like other texts by Ondaatje which make traditional readings possible and reject them at the same time, drawing us into its clear exemplification even as it shows the deep fiction agenda of

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[286] Suwanda Sugunasiri. "'Sri Lankan Canadian Poets': The Bourgeoisie That Fled the Revolution." (*Canadian Literature, 1992*), 63.

[287] Smaro Kamboureli. "The Alphabet of the Self: Generic and Other Slippages in Michael Ondaatje's Running in the Family." In *Reflections: Autobiography and Canadian Literature*, edited by K. Peter Stich, 79-91. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 80.

all writings. *Running in the Family* discusses the life of Ondaatje's father and mother but also focuses on "the history of good and bad Ondaatje and the people they came in contact with."[288] Ondaatje managed to reach members of his mother's family because they also played an important role in aiding him with information on the history of his community. The entire book looks like a collage of fragments in which some of the sections are deeply particular, while others are extravagantly common. The text begins with a history of a whole generation of the mingled race of Sri Lankan Burghers who lived from 1920 to 1930.

3. 2. The Temporary Return to the Homeland: The Challenge of Identity and Alienation[289]

In his text, Ondaatje concentrates on memory which considers the foundation of this kind of texts. He attempts to create a relationship with the past by performing all acts of his journeys in physical and imaginary performances of listening and reproducing. Although Ondaatje's attempt depends on the memory, his memory does not coincide with stories which he heard in addition to historical documents that tend to conflict with each other. Therefore, he faces difficulties in arranging fragments and thus he reveals challenges which tied to his methods of cultural revival through the narration of his stories. He met these difficulties in non–linear form and sometimes stunning text plans. In this kind of narration, memory is a form of fiction which is the fundamental document with which the narrator works. All Ondaatje's texts are equal in wealth but in this text, he creates a deeply dialogic text which carries his voice, his family, his friends and his relatives. The text is created of fragmental foreground for contributing to the biographical or historiographic metafiction method that the reader can easily share. The writer relies on temporal reversal which forms a key feature of the immigrant imagination to seek wholeness through a connection with the past. The reality of the immigrant writer shows that violent temporal rupture enforces him to live in isolation, displacement and a "different place from his past."[290]

The displacement creates conditions for an imaginary desire to negate time, reverse it, and enact an endless return to the past. It seems that the irreversible transition involved in the act of migration and settlement opens up imaginative possibilities for the immigrant writer who wants not so much to reverse time but to step back in time and embark on a journey of reversal.

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[288] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 19.

[289] I presented this section of dissertation at the international conference on Migrating World: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Migration and Integration, Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK. 10–11 February 2018 and published in 2020. See Ahmed Joudar. "The Temporary Return to the Homeland in Michael Ondaatje's Running in the Family." (*Journal of Language and Cultural Education* 8 (3), 2020), 162–74.

[290] Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991*. (London: Granta Books, 1991), 12.

Psychologically, an individual suffering trauma will surely not remember what happens at the moment of the traumatic incident, so people often attempt to forget horrible moments to avoid apprehension because those moments upset their unconscious and have an impact on their actual conduct. As the re-memory brings pain which influences the actual conduct psychologically, Homi Bhabha's view mentions that the act of memory "is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present."[291] The suffering may enable people to know their inner power that "allows real human pain to be converted into a regime's fiction of power."[292]

The impulse which guides Michael Ondaatje to return to his native land through his voyage creates an intimate imaginary landscape that allows him to create a dialogue with his dead father. It is obvious that the desire for such a connection is strong and no reconciliation is possible; therefore, Ondaatje is unable to imagine the information barrier that divides the past from the present. Sometimes, there is a bifurcated perspective in which the disjuncture is marked by the results of spatial and temporal dislocation that Rushdie explains as "stereoscopic vision."[293] John McLeod claims that "the idea of the home country becomes split from the experience of returning home"[294] and thus this divided perspective results in irreversible ontological instability for future migrants, who are displaced from their homeland and resettled; it creates a site of endlessly deferred desire. In her question "Where is home?"[295] Avtar Brah wants to affirm the place of 'home' for the immigrant, exile, or diasporic so she claims that "'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'."[296]

Therefore, the place of the immigrant writer locates always on the edge of the cultural exchanges due to the crisis of alienation and displacement and thus the crisis of alienation involves an act of dislocation that positions the writer at a point of perpetual emergency. It is a space that puts immigrant writer between the instancy of the transition of a dynamic system and

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[291] Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*, repe. (New York: Routledge Classics, [1994] 2004), 90.

[292] Elaine Scarry. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 18.

[293] Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991*. (London: Granta Books, 1991), 19.

[294] John McLeod. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 209.

[295] Avtar Brah. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, repr. (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1996] 2005), 188.

[296] Ibid.

the quest for a fixed location which is subverted by a sudden expansion of locations. According to Hutcheon's view of simultaneous[297] inscription and disruption, writing one's past becomes a desperate attempt to search for locations forever parading before one's mental eye as each of the locations in this round is fixed into the narration, some sort of finality is carried out though only temporally.

However, a postmodernist point of view sees that this proliferation of spaces is not tantamount to losing the idea of space as such because of the proliferation of meaning: we can state, for instance, which living in many places does not involve to be placeless. Homi Bhabha explains that for the individual "to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres."[298] It is the juncture between the appropriation of homelessness in a deconstructionist context and the rootlessness of the modern world. Bhabha clarifies the concept of 'unhomeliness,' which is the condition of belonging to many places at the same time. Furthermore, Ahmad Aijaz explains that "the myth of ontological unbelonging is replaced by another, larger myth of excess of belonging: not that he belongs nowhere, but that he belongs to too many places."[299] But the effects of living in several locations is relevant to exiles and displaced people who sometimes dismiss and other times want to return to their original home; as Rushdie clarifies the concept of "homeland," which symbolizes the imaginary, it sometimes is broken by exiles who return to the original home.

Nevertheless, for immigrants and exiles who still live in the host country, the concept of 'transnational' represents a fortification against ethnic exclusivism. The notion of inseparability is mapped on the circle of nationalism, but the thought of space is itself seen as out of date if the nation is compared with ethnicity. The fiction of a homogeneous nation is set against the multicultural community in which the form of multiculturalism asserts the way that all cultures always influence each other and are no longer retrievable in their unique shape. In this form, the idea of pure culture itself shows that is imaginary, besides, the attempt to disentangle the intermixture of cultures may be a futile one. Therefore, the notion of origin is difficult through the complicated fusion of new culture and old culture, thus the hybridity must be treated in addition to exploring the root of these cultures instead of accurate reconstruction.

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[297] See Linda Hutcheon's books for more clarification about the 'simultaneous'. Linda Hutcheon. *The Politics of Postmodernism*, repr. (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1989] 2001), 1–23 and Linda Hutcheon. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, repr. (New York: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1988] 2004)

[298] Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*, repr. (New York: Routledge Classics, [1994] 2004), 13.

[299] Aijaz Ahmad. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, repr. (New York: Verso, [1992] 2000), 126–27.

Nationalities are no longer moored in their correct traditional meanings because the integration of individuals in the new cultures permits them to cross the national boundaries, thus the feature of these cultures cannot be deconstructed in the linear form.

In *Running in the Family*, the extent of the connection of Ondaatje's self is the original homeland, cultural segregation, the duality of spaces, and identification of his autobiography as the 'Other.' He mixes up his autobiographical expectations in several ways but through his text, he symbolizes the questionability of representing a displaced self. In his text, the most important postcolonial themes deal with ethnicity, hybridity, and cross–cultural alliances in the critical argument; therefore, Ondaatje recognizes the challenging task in autobiographical writing which he faces when he chooses terms of cross–cultural identifications. As well, the double identity and immigration make the process difficult in terms of ethnic belonging because he is in–between two separate locations, Canada and Sri Lanka.

All these formal complications are clear in the text in which response to these difficulties. Michael Ondaatje plays a dual role of narrator and reader in order to present the imaginary homeland of Sri Lanka to his readers but it is obvious that he felt loneliness and saw his Sri Lankan community as an exotic land during his visit. The writer returned to the original homeland to explore his identity and ethnicity where he faced an odd situation. However, Ondaatje's predicament of an identity of alienation comes from the argumentative space between Sri Lankan and Canadian cultural identity and the impact of colonization on Sri Lanka. The hidden feelings of the indirect conspiracy of colonization lead him to the feeling of Sri Lanka being an exotic land. So the other important concept which Ondaatje presents in his text is exoticism as he uses it to take the imagination of his readers to the exotic land to show them the exotic identity. Ondaatje sheds light on the actual identity crisis experienced by Sri Lankan people in the age of decolonization and how they enable them to transition to a new order.

The time in his text is the past and the location is Ceylon where Ondaatje's parents and grandparents had grown up. Indeed, Ondaatje uses Ceylon to refer to the old name of the country, which is currently called Sri Lanka, so he might be doing this to draw the attention of his reader not only to the history of his family but also the history of the place. His effort is not to conduct a study of the history of Sri Lanka but he somehow wants to reactivate the memory of his readers; therefore, he builds details of his story on the ventures of past generations, particularly, his grandmother Lala and his father. When Ondaatje starts to know more about his family, he realizes that he has a deeper connection not only on a personal level: "That night, I will have not so much a dream as an image that repeats itself. I see my own straining body

which stands shaped like a star and realize gradually I am part of a human pyramid. Below me are other bodies that I am standing on and above me are several more, though I am quite near the top."[300] The portraying of his family supports him in clarifying the importance of the familial link which is considered central to the text so he thanks his family at the end of the text when he says that they were "central in helping me recreate the era of my parents."[301]

Ondaatje depends on both larger family and individual life to draw the real picture of his autobiographical. As well, he works to reconstruct his past through other persons in his community and other stories so that he could create a sense of his own life which connects him with his family to make them a part of his story. Since the beginning of his narration, Ondaatje affirms his dual identity when he mentions in a conversation with Linda Hutcheon: "I do feel I have been allowed the migrant's double perspective, in the way, say, someone like Gertrude Stein was 'refocused' by Paris."[302] Ondaatje's double identity locates him in an ambivalent and difficult state to find a unified identity. Therefore, he attempts to look for his original identity through his new identity in the host country. He begins restoring his memory through the first dream about his father in Sri Lanka while he is still in Canada. As he points out in the first section, "what began it all was the bright bone of a dream I could hardly hold onto. I was sleeping at a friend's house. I saw my father, chaotic, surrounded by dogs, and all of them were screaming and barking into the tropical landscape."[303]

The writer illustrates how he returns in a dream from a frosty Canadian winter to hot Asia. He awakes "tense, not wanting to move as the heat gradually left"[304] him while "the sweat evaporated"[305] and then he "became conscious again of brittle air outside the windows searing and howling through the streets and over the frozen cars hunched like sheep all the way down towards Lake Ontario."[306] He refers to "the midst of the farewell party in [...] growing wildness;"[307] thus he recognizes ambivalence. Ondaatje says that "I was already running [...] back to the family, I had grown from those relations from my parents' generation who stood in my memory like frozen opera. I wanted to touch them into words."[308] Clearly, the picture shows

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[300] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 20.
[301] Ibid., 168.
[302] Michael Ondaatje. "'The Bridge' Interview by Linda Hutcheon." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 179–202. (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1990), 197.
[303] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 15.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.

a poster of the opera advertised on a large sign which he sees from his home. The writer wants to associate with words in that scene through the act of writing to contact his roots. The first section begins with a dream in Canada and closes with a picture of a big drunk party for young people whose parties and their aftermath are described in the next chapters of the novel. The group of pictures and net of figures slowly take the writer deep into the network of relations in the following chapters; however, nothing is essentially resolved. The problem that Ondaatje faces is a large gap between his memories of his father and the stories which he hears about him.

The ambivalent dialogue between 'here' and 'there' is often an investigation between the 'Self' and the place so he finds that he is not 'Sri Lankan' and not 'Canadian' in any way. The writer mentions in another section: "I am the foreigner. I am the prodigal who hates the foreigner;"[309] therefore, he feels ambivalent while he lives in Canada. When he returned to Sri Lanka, he also felt uncomfortable and not at home. Ondaatje's text deals implicitly and not obviously with Canadian subjects; therefore, his position as a writer is uncertain for critics to call him a Canadian writer. Because he often puts his works in-between spaces in which he crosses boundaries such as Sri Lanka in *Running in the Family* (1982), Canada in *the Skin of a Lion* (1987), Italy in *English Patient* (1992), Sri Lanka in *Anil's Ghost* (2000), the United States and France in *Divisadero* (2007), Sri Lanka and England in *The Cat's Table* (2011) as well as England and Singapore in *Warlight* (2018).

Though Canada as a location gets little space among his writings, they are collected in Canadian studies and taught in Canadian courses since he finds 'himself' in Canada after his immigration in addition to the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy helps him to find the 'Self' and makes him a well-known writer. Some critics classified Ondaatje as a 'cosmopolitan' or 'third world' writer because his works include diverse cultures and deal with multiple identities; therefore, his texts are part of transcultural literature. Leela Gandhi clarifies this kind of writing as "entirely explicit in its commitment to hybridity. Positioned on the margins or interstices of two antagonistic national cultures, it claims to open up an in-between space of cultural ambivalence."[310] Meanwhile, Catherine Bush refers to Ondaatje as " the first of the real migrant tradition that you see in a number of writers of our time – Rushdie, Ishiguro, Ben Okri, Rohinton Mistry – writers leaving and not going back, but taking their country with them to a new

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[309] Ibid., 66.
[310] Leela Gandhi. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. (Crows Nest (Australia): Allen & Unwin, 1998), 153.

place."[311] Hence, it is clear that his text is entirely related to belonging, migration, self–identity, and others. He emphasizes pain and dislocation, but his text preserves a sense of location, which is always lost in cosmopolitan texts. Otherwise, Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* cannot be included among cosmopolitan writings because this text is concerned with a certain history and memory.

The main problem which he faces through writing his text that he is unable to reach any community outside his family he left his homeland at the age of eleven. Therefore, he describes the path into time and place as unsteady because his memory of Ceylon is not sufficient to cover all the stories about the community, thus, his identity connects with things larger than himself. Despite his family history is different from social history, he uses it to investigate social history. Certainly, Ondaatje does only deal with members of his family and famous people in his community as artists who are a large "sacrifice of his regionality, his past, and most importantly, his experience of otherness in Canada."[312] The writer in his text concentrates on imagination and myths more than reflecting a real picture of Sri Lankan society; therefore, he attempts to hide the reality of people and place.

Mukherjee explains that reading *Running in the Family* gives "the impression that the other Sri Lankans – the fishermen, the tea estate pickers, the paddy planters – are only there as a backdrop to the drama of the Ondaatje family"[313] because she believes that "Ondaatje's unwillingness or inability to place his family in a network of social relationships makes the book a collection of anecdotes which may or may not be funny depending on one's own place in the world."[314] As well, the writer in one section of his text describes the society in Sri Lanka that: "All of them had moved at times with an ass's head, Titania Dorothy Hilden Lysander de Saram, a mongrel collection part Sinhalese part Dutch part Tamil part ass moving slowly in the forests with foolish and serious obsessions."[315] Therefore, it is clear that he is unable to make a real connection with the community there because the ethnic identity of the community is unclear and there is a lack of authenticity. Although he attempts to demonstrate the privilege of his community in some passages, there is still a deficiency of certain roots there.

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[311] Catherine Bush. "Michael Ondaatje: An Interview." In *Essays on Canadian Writing*, edited by Jack David and Robert Lecker, 53: 238-249. (Toronto: ECW Press, 1994), 240.

[312] Arun P. Mukherjee. "The Poetry of Michael Ondaatje and Cyril Dabydeen: Two Responses to Otherness." (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 20 (1), 1985), 50.

[313] Ibid., 57.

[314] Ibid.

[315] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 155.

3. 3. The Exploration of Cultural Roots

Consequently, Ondaatje's ambivalent relationship to 'home' is known in *Running in the Family*. Therefore, his wish is to recreate a sensation about his origin by searching for the history of his father at the place where he was born in Ceylon. Ondaatje's separation from his childhood place makes it more complicated for him to develop a sense of belonging though he enjoyed a chance to return to his homeland twice. His journeys to Sri Lanka did not seem to be simple homecoming because his connections are tenuous; therefore, the text itself becomes the location in which looks for his self–identity through familial connections and the birthplace in which to represent the place of his complex act of cultural revival. Throughout the text, Ondaatje attempts to return to the past by creating an imaginary picture to inscribe himself into a specific time and place. Probably, the text does not link directly to his society but his desires to identify his identity encourages him to look for the threads which connect him to his society.

Ondaatje's process passes through different stages in order to find a link to his past; therefore, he focuses on the extent of his belonging to his family throughout the text. His family and relatives are part of the Sri Lankan community, so they suffered from colonization, racism, classism, and displacement. His community was completely disconnected from other parts of the world as a result of colonization. According to Daniel Coleman, the reason which forces Ondaatje to be disconnected from "his own national and cultural past, […], is the effect of the combined history of his élite Burgher class ancestry, his British colonial education and his family's history of divorce and emigration."[316] Therefore, the narrator explains that:

> Everyone was vaguely related and had Sinhalese, Tamil, Dutch, British, and Burgher blood in them going back many generations. There was a large social gap between this circle and the Europeans and English who were never part of the Ceylonese community. The English were seen as transients, snobs and racists, and were quite separate from those who had intermarried and who lived here permanently […]. Emil Daniels summed up the situation for most of them when he was asked by one of the British governors what his nationality was 'God alone knows, your excellency.'[317]

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[316] Daniel Coleman. *Masculine Migrations: Reading the Postcolonial Male in New Canadian Narratives*. (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1998), 114.

[317] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 31

The writer clarifies that 'Ceylon' represents for him the identity that includes a meaning outside the colonizer divide. The interweaving of cultures defies containment even in Bhabha's notion of 'unhomeliness,' confined as this later thought remains to binary oppositions. The questions that arise here are if these hybrid cultures are multi-ethnic because inseparability of origin of their bodies attests to imply the inseparability of the histories of the colonizer and colonized, so the ideas of multiculturalism will not apply. The other question is how might the complexity of cultural connection be adequately portrayed through these concepts (Sinhalese, Tamil, Dutch, British, and Burgher)? Consequently, the writer's attempt to reclaim the history of his family and the past of his father through reclaiming the country from which he emigrated concentrates on the Ceylonese society which represents cultural diversity. Though there are ethnic and religion-based differences within the Ceylonese society, they represent only a small proportion. The intercultural symbolizes the struggle between colonizer and colonized, between first and third world cultures, in which the third world has diverse cultures, whose differences postcolonial thinkers make their entire focus.

Ondaatje portrays the real picture of the Ceylonese community in the period of colonization which represents the hybrid identity. For instance, the double identity of Ondaatje's father, Mervyn, represents a kind of trauma in which he lived in–between two different cultures: primarily, in Britain where he studied at Cambridge University and lived in an aristocratic community and secondly when he returned to Ceylon where he worked as an official. The narrator admits that his father made "a name for himself as someone who knew exactly what was valuable and interesting in Cambridge;"[318] thus the character of his father had an ambivalent identity. On one hand, Mervyn represents "the product of the colonial legacy"[319] due to his study in Britain, but the place of the study offered him privilege and development as well. Mervyn's character leads to a new transnational form in which colonization is the contact zone. Based on Bhabha's view, Mervyn's identity generates from the third space as he has the power to menace the colonizer. However, the character of the father did not benefit from the positive side of hybridity because he suffered from a sense of a loss of identity and displacement. Those factors influenced the personal and physical aspects of his character, thus they brought anxiety and an unstable identity to his character so a 'third space' did not give Mervyn a stable identity to embrace.

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[318] Ibid., 22.

[319] Silva Neluka. "The Anxieties of Hybridity: Michael Ondaatje's Running in the Family." (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 37 (2), 2002), 78.

The critical argument concerning Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* is divided into two opposite poles. The argument here is to prove that Ondaatje moderates the tension between these two poles as the writer uses stories, locations, and individuals to form his book while shedding light on his complicated methods of negotiating his past. Therefore, his curiosity related to the place where he came from and his desire to constrain the historical specificities of his family lead to a problematic approach to an ethnic autobiography that praises quality only as a figure for the postmodern state. His sensation of dislocation and the sense of duality thus do not allow for an easy narrative that depends on the concept of integration on the part of the ethnic identity. Ondaatje admits the challenges in identity formation which denies his awareness of the aspect of his method of self–identification with disappointment.

Critics divide Ondaatje's postmodernist experiences into two parts: either approving these textual plans or seeing his exemplifications as irresponsible and marginalizing. Arun Mukherjee rejects Ondaatje's text on the basis that migration narrations must represent history or be historically trustworthy as immigrant writers must interact with the power of authority which must be 'original' and 'authentic.' According to Mukherjee, a probable aim of ethnic literature is not only statements of ethnic identity but the solely fruitful aim.[320] Meanwhile, W. M. Verhoeven claims that Ondaatje's postmodern manners release tropes that raise critical questions about the language of the self and one's ethnic identity: he points out that "Ondaatje's experimentalist writings consistently question conventional, centered notions of a self, identity and origin, and hence the existence of traceable ethnic roots."[321] Verhoeven thinks that such texts are restricted and short-sighted because they reject the possibility of liberation, he conceives Ondaatje's text as "a discourse on the problematic and indeterminate nature of identity, self, and language."[322]

Ondaatje's method is demonstrated by the theme of searching which is the foundation of *Running in the Family* in which the subject is associated with obsession throughout all his writings. The theme related to Ondaatje's separation from his family, culture, and homeland is called "[the] dominant structure of feeling and figure in the carpet. It is not a coincidence that he is formally most experimental and imaginatively most daring when responding to the

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[320] Arun P. Mukherjee. "The Sri Lankan Poets in Canada: An Alternative View." (*Toronto South Asian Review* 3 (2), 1984), 32.

[321] Wil Verhoeven. "How Hyphenated Can You Get? A Critique of Pure Ethnicity." (*Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 29 (3): 97–116, 1996), 99.

[322] Ibid., 103.

pressure of unresolved personal issues;"[323] therefore, it is viewed through the lens of the dynamic text. It is clear in Ondaatje's writings that themes are lost, thus it requires a search on the part of the readers. Verhoeven notes that "persons […] get lost in Ondaatje's stories – lost in legend, lost in the bush, lost in the past, lost in history, lost in memory, lost in myth – and in each case people go after them to recover them, to remember them, or to recreate them."[324] For instance, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, is one of Ondaatje's text which describes a story of Billy's life with different opinions of Billy from several sources. In this text, the character of Pat Garrett is a sort of parallel figure to the reader who follows Billy through the text and attempts to track him down and bring him to justice. It is similar to another text for Ondaatje, *Coming through Slaughter*[325], which represents a story of Pal Bolden's life is an obscurity story with a detective and a collection of clues. In the second text, the act of the character Webb represents a reflection of the writer and reader, thus each of them is on a voyage to reform the obscurity of the character Buddy Bolden. In these two texts, the important character is the prospector which his essential work is to track the main character who is often obscure; therefore, the researcher, here, is a vital component of the story regards the one who is looking for.

In *Running in the Family*, the character who is processed is the writer himself. However, the writer mentions collaboration with others to produce this text which he describes as "a communal act […]. This book could not have been imagined, let alone conceived, without the help of many people."[326] Then, he explains that this text is "a composite of two return journeys to Sri Lanka"[327] and its "raw material came from many sources"[328] for which the writer expresses his appreciation at the end. Ondaatje points out that the book is "a portrait or 'gesture.' And if those listed above disapprove of the fictional air I apologize and can only say that in Sri Lanka a well-told lie is worth a thousand facts."[329] Some critics have different views; for example, Timothy Adams argues that Ondaatje's text is nearest to memory which "operates somewhere between biography and autobiography, focusing as much on the observer as the

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[323] Sam Solecki. *Ragas of Longing: The Poetry of Michael Ondaatje*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 9.

[324] Wil Verhoeven. "(De)Facing the Self: Michael Ondaatje and (Auto)Biography." *Postmodern Fiction in Canada*, edited by Hans Bertens and Theo D'haen, 181-200. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 181.

[325] Michael Ondaatje. *Coming through Slaughter*, repr. (New York: Vintage Books, [1976] 1996).[326] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 168.

[326] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 168.

[327] Ibid.

[328] Ibid., 169.

[329] Ibid.

observed."[330] While Linda Hutcheon asserts that *Running in the Family* is a "postmodern memoir."[331] Another critic, John Russell,[332] observes that Ondaatje's text is a 'non–fiction novel.'

The 'gesture' which is mentioned by the writer in his text represents the key concept that can signify something else or can be signified by itself or can do both. The sign of this term refers to the mystery, hidden names and stories, or even emotions. It is, thus, with such consistency and emotional clarity that readers tend toward a general understanding of what they must sense. In his text, the writer looks to create a sensual awareness of the others who live in complicated experiences within a chaotic life. Certainly, others must explore these experiences, interact with them, or even live with them. So the first sign is the form of writing itself which turns autobiographical into the novelistic is considered the first sign of intertexts. The writer separates the brief section from other sections of the book and does not include it in the table of contents although it is a half–page of writing which serves as an authorial epigraph. Smaro Kamboureli claims that

> it is the exergue of the text, namely, what lies outside the text yet is part of it as well. This half–page subverts both the form and content of *Running in the Family*. Its function is disruptive, thus initiating the long series of generic disruptions and unconventional characters Ondaatje is going to use.[333]

The expectation shows that the title and name of the writer guide readers to an autobiography but Ondaatje's shift from writer to the listener to recorder then back again to the writer in order to record all information that he collected through his voyages; thus, these transmit introduce a destabilization and split inside the narrative theme.

However, the first gap generates when the writer shifts from using the first person to the third person so the writer says: "For twenty–five years, he has not lived in this country, though up to the age of eleven he slept in rooms like this – with no curtains, just delicate bars across

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[330] Timothy Adams. "Running in the Family: Photography and Autobiography in the Memoirs of Michael and Christopher Ondaatje." *La Création Biographique / Biographical Creation,* edited by Marta Dvorak. (Rennes: PU de Rennes, 1997), 97.

[331] Michael Ondaatje. "'The Bridge' Interview by Linda Hutcheon." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 179–202. (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1990), 201.

[332] John Russell. "Travel Memoir as Nonfiction Novel: Michael Ondaatje's 'Running in the Family.'" (*Ariel* 22. (2), 1991), 23.

[333] Smaro Kamboureli. "The Alphabet of the Self: Generic and Other Slippages in Michael Ondaatje's Running in the Family." In *Reflections: Autobiography and Canadian Literature*, edited by K. Peter Stich, 79-91. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 82.

the windows so no one could break–in. And the floors of red cement polished smooth, cool against bare feet."[334] David Huddart points out "that the autobiographical transformation of postcolonial theory is concerned with transforming notions of universal subjectivity that themselves disrupt the possibility of the community."[335] Thus, the focus is on the limitation of personality to transform the polarity from the first person to the third person.

Ondaatje wrote his text in the self–awareness which developed from oral tradition to realism as his discourse is based on the landscape in the original place in Sri Lanka, thus he portrays men rolling ice carts, the nightmare, rooms, and an imaginary picture until the morning moments. These texts are presented in the third person to signify different senses of time rather than narrative and also to convey the alienation and displacement of the writer. Ondaatje points out that "half a page – and the morning is already ancient"[336] as the writer uses the term 'ancient' to refer to the time of writing the half–page which he considers a traditional space out of time in order to describe the first morning after he returned to Sri Lanka. As the process of writing depends on the theme of autobiography in which he could inscribe stories to present in this content and style, the autobiographical subject emerges within the method instead of the content of the text. The process of writing is a functional activity of a basic cognitive process which is what Ondaatje's text is written for, whereas his varied fragmented tales of past and present exemplify family and, in particular, history. Though the first–person narrative comes in the next passages of the book, the influence of the third person narrative in the introduction is unexpected and undermines the unity of the subject.

Based on David Parker's view, we have to analyze how "the thin third person languages of post–Saussurean theory are inadequate for many first person life purposes."[337] So Ondaatje returned to use the pronoun 'I' as a subject after he had used the third person pronoun at the beginning of the text. The subject 'I' is used by the writer in the first section to refer to his autobiography: "In my mid–thirties I realized I had slipped past a childhood I had ignored and not understood."[338] His return to his original home aims to make a connection between 'past' and 'present', 'there' and 'here' to give power to his narration. His text has more than one story and places during the time of his visit to his original homeland, thus the two voyages to Sri

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[334] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 13.

[335] David Huddart. *Postcolonial Theory and Autobiography*. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 4.

[336] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 13.

[337] David Parker. *The Self in Moral Space: Life Narrative and the Good*. (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2007), 37.

[338] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 16.

Lanka focused on his family, Ceylon, frequent conversations, and the 'Self' which appears in the text are provisional. All these reasons force the writer to feel that he is isolated from his roots, his past and his early childhood, thus his feeling of being between the 'Self' and 'Other' is often delayed.

In this case, the research process mingles with his autobiographical expectations because there is a lack in the chronological events, like his childhood, time of departure, and maturity as well the past intervenes in the present or vice versa. Therefore, the process has never been direct as the writer's method is to use a group of non–linear pictures and terms to indicate that the collecting of information was through different books and sources. For instance, he uses the concept of the 'maze' in *Running in the Family* but also in *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*[339] as he mentions that it is "not a story about me through their eyes then. Find the beginning, the slight silver key to unlock it, to dig it out. Here then is a maze to begin, be in."[340] He also uses the same concept in another novel, *In the Skin of a Lion*, which is "the story a young girl gathers in a car during the early hours of the morning"[341] in which "she listens to the man as he picks up and brings together various corners of the story, attempting to carry it all in his arms."[342]

Through the movement of the writer between cultures and spaces in *Running in the Family*, he moves from Canada to 'Jaffna' in Sri Lanka; therefore, he finds direction in a maze-like group of stories when he depicts the interior of the governor's home. The writer mentions that: "Here, in this spacious centre of the labyrinth of 18th-century Dutch defence I sit on one of the giant sofas, in the noisy solitude of the afternoon while the rest of the house is asleep"[343] to spend a morning with "my sister and my Aunt Phyllis trying to trace the maze of relationships in our ancestry."[344] Ondaatje describes his Aunt Phyliss as "the minotaur of this long journey back;"[345] therefore, he leads his readers in a maze to show much of its distinctive design in every passage. The writer portrays the stages of gathering information as a circle which sometimes confuses them as he explains that "no story is ever told just once. Whether a memory

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[339] Michael Ondaatje. *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, repr. (New York: Vintage Books, [1970] 1996). 20.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Michael Ondaatje. *In the Skin of a Lion: A Novel*, repr. (New York: Vintage International, [1987] 1997), 10
[342] Ibid.
[343] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 17.
[344] Ibid., 18.
[345] Ibid.

or funny hideous scandal […] will return to it an hour later and retell the story with additions and this time a few judgments are thrown in. In this way, history is organized."[346]

In the manner of the text, the writer frequently disrupts any singular reading habit in its slippage from genre to genre, thus there are mirrors within the labyrinth of stories but there are also windows onto different sites of the narrative. Again, the writer presents the theme of the maze in discussing the life of his grandmother, Lalla. He refers to fear of risks which assert an aura of danger in the writing. He describes her as an "overbearing charmed flower,"[347] observing that she likes a company of children: "She would quickly divert them into the entrance of the frightening maze in the Nuwara Eliya Park and leave them there, lost, while she went off to steal flowers."[348] Here, the ideal journey "floated over the intricate fir tree hedges of the maze which would always continue to terrify her grandchildren–it's secret spread out naked as a skeleton for her."[349] The mystery is the aim of the writer to preserve and decorate his text; therefore, he tends to leave his readers within the maze of stories to find their path.

Hence, the autobiographical reality is placed into question because all events only take place among his family members and friends. Ondaatje sometimes appears to give up management of the narrative line in which some voices cut out the narration. In one of the sections, *Final Days / Father Tongue*, he creates completely different monologues,[350] while in another section, *Lunch Conversation*, maybe a transcription of confounding and circular oral communication among some of the friends and members of the family;[351] therefore, these two distinct narratives are clarified. These narration models assist the writer in collecting information about the history of his family as he acknowledges that he depends on his relatives and family as historical sources:

> How I have used them [...]. They knit the story together, each memory a wild
> thread in the sarong. They lead me through their dark rooms crowded with
> various kinds of furniture – teak, rattan, calamander, bamboo – their voices

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[346] Ibid., 19.
[347] Ibid., 100.
[348] Ibid., 95.
[349] Ibid., 103.
[350] Ibid., 164–72.
[351] Ibid., 85–9.

whispering over tea, cigarettes, distracting me from the tale with their long bony

arms, which move over the table like the stretched feet of storks.[352]

Ondaatje provides his readers with a range of immediate stories to decipher instead of supplying an already processed version of his past. The result is usually imagined more than an explanation; therefore, it is difficult to explain the real version of the past.

Again, the switch between pronouns is unexpected from 'he' to 'I' in sections; for instance, in the *Thanikama* section, the pronoun is changed. This shift creates an intimate link between the writer and Mervyn Ondaatje. But in the section *Final Days / Father Tongue*, the shift is to 'you' as he says: "In the end, all your children move among the scattered acts and memories with no more clues. Not that we ever thought we would be able to fully understand you."[353] Furthermore, he mentions in the same section "the book [...] is incomplete,"[354] so there is no way to prove that "this book is right."[355] Ihab Hassan explains that "autobiography simulates the past in the present. It feigns recollection. But it cannot escape the pressures of its moment, the prejudices of its author. Why not admit, then, these pressures, these prejudices, from the start?"[356] I affirm that Ondaatje recognizes the pressures which he faced but his desire continued in order to recover the cultural roots of his family. Though he uses magical stories for his characters, he endeavours to reconstitute the self because it appears in the text as provisional and not at home.

3. 4. The Exploration of the 'Self'

Ondaatje shows in several sections of his text that he lacks a sense of belonging to his original homeland, thus he shows his desire to look for the 'Self.' In this text, he concentrates on the theme of autobiography with different strategies to build his narrative in certain ways by using different layers, showing maps, and choosing different intertexts which connect to 'Self,' 'past,' and 'homeland' and offer a sense of authenticity. The writer realizes that he is far from Sri Lankan society, so he asserts that his attempt is "part of a long tradition of invasions and so

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[352] Ibid., 87.
[353] Ibid., 165.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid.
[356] Ihab Hassan. "Counterpoints: Nationalism, Colonialism, Multiculturalism, Etc. in Personal Perspective." In *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, edited by David Bennett, 282–94, repr. (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1998] 2001), 282.

forth."[357] So he depends on collecting information through which he could find a description of his homeland. The writer uses D. H. Lawrence's description of nature in Ceylon who visited it in 1922: "The roads are intensely picturesque. Animals, apes, porcupine, hornbill, squirrel, pigeons, and figurative dirt!"[358] Then he portrays another kind of animal in the *Wilpattu* section: a wild pig, "that repulsively exotic creature in his thick black body and the ridge of non–symmetrical hair running down his back." [359] After that he points out William Charles' description of the jungle in Sri Lanka:

> Here are majestic palms with their towering stems and graceful foliage, the shoe flower, the eatable passionflower. Here the water lily swims the rivers with expanded leaves – a prince of aquatic plants! The Aga–mula–naeti–wala, creeper without beginning or end, twines around trees and hangs in large festoons […] and curious indeed these are from having neither leaves nor roots. Here is the winged thunbergia, the large snouted justicia, the mustard tree of Scripture with its succulent leaves and infinitesimal berries. The busy acacia with its sweet fragrance perfumes the dreary plains while other sad and un–named flowers sweeten the night with their blossoms which are shed in the dark.[360]

In another section of his text, the writer moves to another decade in order to describe the political changes which took place for Ceylon over past years, thus, he mentions that the maps on his "brother's wall in Toronto are the false maps. Old portraits of Ceylon. The result of sightings, glances from trading vessels, the theories of the sextant. The shapes differ so much they seem to be translations [...] growing from mythic shapes into eventual accuracy."[361] Because he believes that the island's form was changed due to the desire of conquerors:

> The island seduced all of Europe. The Portuguese. The Dutch. The English. And so its name changed, as well as its shape—Serendip, Ratnapida ("island of gems"), Taprobane, Zeloan, Zeilan, Seyllan, Ceilon, and Ceylon—the wife of

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[357] Michael Ondaatje. "'The Bridge' Interview by Linda Hutcheon." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 179–202. (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1990), 201.

[358] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 66.

[359] Ibid., 115.

[360] Ibid., 69.

[361] Ibid., 51.

many marriages, courted by invaders who stepped ashore and claimed everything with the power of their sword or bible or language.[362]

Ondaatje recognizes the power of agency which represents the power of the colonizer. Therefore, he emphasizes the power of representation in most of his discussions as he mentions the old poetry of Sri Lanka's poet Lakdasa Wikkramasinha, which is entitled *Don't Talk to Me about Matisse*. It is a political poem in which Wikkramasinha condemns colonization and is a tract of political representation which Ondaatje includes in his text to condemn the colonization of his community:

> Don't talk to me about Matisse […] the European style of 1900, the tradition of the studio where the nude woman reclines forever on a sheet of blood. Talk to me instead of the culture generally – how the murderers were sustained by the beauty robbed of savages: to our remote villages the painters came, and our white–washed mud–huts were splattered with gunfire.[363]

But Ajay Heble claims that including Wikkramasinha's poem in Ondaatje's text represents "a way of undermining the representational legitimacy of his project […] [and] declaring his faith in imaginative understanding"[364] because he believes that the poem "doesn't anything that Ondaatje says about cultural and political phenomena in Sri Lanka inevitably run the risk of playing into the grid of Western thought and representation so sharply invoked and criticized by Wikkramasinha?"[365]

However, Ondaatje refers to an important point that his disconnection from the birthplace is not only geographical but also cultural and literary. He reveals that he never knows the famous voices who influenced the Sri Lankan community, for instance, Ian Goonetileke is "a man who knows history"[366] and helps him to restore a sense of history by emphasizing family and relatives. Therefore, the writer points out "the map and the history and the poetry made a more social voice, became the balance to the family story, the other end of the see-saw."[367] He

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[362] Ibid.

[363] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 72.

[364] Ajay Heble. "'Rumours of Topography': The Cultural Politics of Michael Ondaatje's Running in the Family." In *Essays on Canadian Writing*, edited by Jack David and Robert Lecker, 53: 186-203. (Toronto: ECW Press, 1994), 195.

[365] Ibid.

[366] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 71.

[367] Michael Ondaatje. "'The Bridge' Interview by Linda Hutcheon." In *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, edited by Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond, 179–202. (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1990), 201.

attempts to use different strategies to be in the third space in–between the past/present and there/here at the same time. Nevertheless, his text is undermined by mixing different destabilizing styles through a representation of history in the narrative, thus, this method makes his process extremely complicated to reach his family's past. Ondaatje referred to people with whom he conducted interviews as not having a rich memory. As well, he acknowledged that "all these names may give an air of authenticity"[368] but "confesses that the book is not a history."[369] However, he insists to explore the contact zone between past and present when he passes to the church of his ancestors where he finds old novel lost its pages in the church:

> Ants had attacked the novel thrown on the floor by the commode. A whole battalion was carrying one page away from its source, carrying the intimate print as if rolling a tablet away from him. He knelt down on the red tile, slowly, not wishing to disturb their work. It was page 189. He had not got that far in the book yet.[370]

The writer aims to bring the past to the present, thus he depends on mentioning minute details that happened in the first half of the twentieth century as he refers to the guestbook in the Church: "Lifting the ancient pages and turning them over like old, skeletal leaves. The black script must have turned brown over a hundred years ago. The thick pages foxed and showing the destruction caused by silverfish, scars among the immaculate recordings of local history and formal signatures."[371] Although these different old texts corroded due to the passing of time, they stand for the 'authenticity' and the 'truth' which he seeks. The writer poses a paradoxical challenge in his text to inscribe the form of family and place. As he desires to create his own story by himself, his text represents an unstableness between reality and fiction. However, at some moments, the writer realizes that he wants to reach the truth, so he poses questions:

> Where is the intimate and truthful in all this? Teenager and Uncle. Husband and lover. A lost father in his solace. And why do I want to know of this privacy? After the cups of tea, coffee, public conversations [...], I want to sit down with

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[368] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 168
[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid., 154.
[371] Ibid., 54.

someone and talk with utter directness, want to talk to all the lost history like
that deserving lover.[372]

Further, in another section, he starts a conversation with his family by saying, "wait a
minute, wait a minute! When did all this happen? I'm trying to get it straight."[373] Although he
asks about the truth, this conversation contains a mix of fragments that add nothing. Once again
the writer returns to inscribe himself into the virtual landscape, he mentions a dream "in a
jungle, hot, sweating"[374] in Asia which he knows very well about:

> Asia. The name was a gasp from a dying mouth. An ancient word that had to be
> whispered, would never be used as a battle cry. The word sprawled. It had none
> of the clipped sound of Europe, America, Canada. The vowels took over, slept
> on the map with the S. I was running to Asia and everything would change.[375]

Based on Ondaatje's view, 'Asia' has a lack of specificity despite its breadth; Therefore,
his journey is an attempt to create his image of it. According to Stuart Hall that there is "no way
in which people of the word can act, can speak, can create, unless they come from someplace,
they come from some history, they inherit certain cultural traditions [...] the past is not only a
position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to
say."[376] Thus, Ondaatje's process is to recover ethnic and cultural identity at a moment when
he admits to the doubt. As he insists on exploring the 'Self,' he affirms that this text is the "last
chance for the clear history of the self."[377] The process of writing his story is the process of
writing himself into being. Therefore, he creates some moments in the text which are purely his
invention. The writer exaggerates his love for his family, particularly his father and
grandmother, the love that he inherited from his ancestors. He mentions in one of the stories
the extent of his relationship with his grandmother:

> It was her last perfect journey. The new river in the street moved her right across
> the racecourse and park towards the bus station. As the light came up slowly she
> was being swirled fast, 'floating' (as ever confident of surviving this too)
> alongside branches and leaves, the dawn starting to hit flamboyant trees as she

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[372] Ibid., 44.
[373] Ibid., 84.
[374] Ibid., 15.
[375] Ibid., 16
[376] Stuart Hall. "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference." (*Radical America* 23 (4), 1989), 18–9.
[377] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 60.

slipped past them like a dark log, shoes lost, false breast lost. She was free as a fish, travelling faster than she had in years, fast as Vere's motorcycle, only now there was this roar around her. She overtook Jesus lizards that swam and ran in bursts over the water, she was surrounded by tired half-drowned fly–catchers screaming tack tack tack tack, frogmouths, nightjars forced to keep awake, brain–fever birds and their irritating ascending scales, snake eagles, scimitar–babblers, they rode the air around Lalla wishing to perch on her unable to alight on anything except what was moving.[378]

Overall, there are several realistic moments in the text when Ondaatje gives up the limits of the prospect. He enjoys referring to his family's stories as they allow him to write a history of the family; therefore, he fills the missing gap with these stories in which he adds his voice to the voice of others. Various stories related to his family represent the imagined moments of his writing; thus, these texts represent a link between tradition and postmodernism. They are Ondaatje's direct response to homeland and family, so these texts show his desire to support his connections to his family and his father. The process of writing involves Ondaatje seeking out his original culture by looking for the history of his ancestors in Sri Lanka. His text thus involves time, dates, and family events. In the section of *Monsoon Notebook (i)*, the writer mentions nature again in order to emphasize his sense of the landscape as he shows that is "driven through rainstorms that flood the streets for an hour and suddenly evaporate, where sweat falls in the path of this ballpoint, where the jackfruit rolls across your feet in the back of the jeep, where there are eighteen ways of describing the smell of a durian, where bullocks hold up traffic and steam after the rain."[379] Ondaatje's description is a self–representation as it represents an odd moment for Ondaatje himself. His negotiation and position have the opposite influence on events which allow him to be in contact with what he reflects in the text as he points out:

Midnight, this hand is the only thing moving. As discreetly and carefully, as whatever animals in the garden fold brown leaves into their mouths, visit the drain for water, or scale the broken glass that crowns the walls. Watch the hand

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[378] Ibid., 102.
[379] Ibid., 57.

move. Waiting for it to say something, to stumble casually on perception, the shape of an unknown thing.[380]

In the passage above, Ondaatje makes it clear that one's surroundings are very important. Paradoxically, he describes the place, smells, and sights of Sri Lanka during the Canadian winter, thus, his magic impression of Sri Lanka aids him in bringing himself to the place where he lives:

> Now, and here, Canadian February, I write this in the kitchen and play that section of cassette to hear not just the peacocks but all the noises of the night behind them – inaudible then because they were always there like breath. In this silent room (with its own unheard hum of fridge, fluorescent light) there are these frogs loud as river, gruntings, the whistle of other birds brash and sleepy, but in that night so modest behind the peacocks they were unfocused by the brain – nothing more than darkness, all those sweet loud younger brothers of the night.[381]

However, Ondaatje is provided with a kind of experience that helps him to build a fundamental image of his direct sensory link to Sri Lanka to reach the truth. He clarifies that the relation between the nature of the individual and his past affects the self–representation in his writing. Abena Busia shows the struggle between 'us' and 'them' which comes together when she writes

> an article for a collection on multicultural states. The trouble is, such reflections always assume so much: that we know who 'we' and 'us' and 'they' and 'them' are; that we know where and what 'home' is; that we have a sure sense of 'margins' and 'centres' to help us articulate the manifold implications of the movements of history that have brought into being these multicultural states in which we all live. Yet, as I sit down to write, I must begin with the fragments, the bewildering geography of my life that is part of your legacy to me.[382]

In the last section of his text, *Last Morning*, the writer symbolizes the body like a pot of memory in which he keeps all his memories of his family; thus, he says "my body must

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[380] Ibid., 157.
[381] Ibid., 108.
[382] Abena Busia. "Re: Locations – Rethinking Britain from Accra, New York, and the Map Room at the British Museum." In *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, edited by David Bennett, 267–81, repr. (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, [1998] 2001), 267.

remember everything."[383] At the same time, his memory returns him to the last moments when he left Ceylon with his mother:

> There is nothing in this view that could not be a hundred years old, that might not have been here when I left Ceylon at the age of eleven. My mother looks out of her Colombo window thinking of divorce, my father wakes after three days of alcohol, his body hardly able to move from the stiffness in muscles he cannot remember exerting. It is a morning scenery well known to my sister and her children who leave for swimming practice before dawn crossing the empty city in the Volks, passing the pockets of open shops and their lightbulb light that sell newspapers and food. I stood like this in the long mornings of my childhood unable to bear the wait till full daylight when I could go and visit the Peiris family down the road in Boralesgamuwa; the wonderful, long days I spent there with Paul and Lionel and Aunt Peggy who would casually object to my climbing all over her bookcases in my naked and dirty feet. Bookcases I stood under again this week which were full of signed first editions of poems by Neruda and Lawrence and George Keyt. All this was here before I dreamed of getting married, having children, wanting to write.[384]

Ondaatje reconstructs his past through negotiation with different sides of geographical spaces. Because the contemporary writings after waves of immigration tend to be real, they emphasize experiences and real documents to re-evaluate the terms of ethnicity and genre.[385] Ian Angus points out: "In the case of ethnic identity, which normally draws upon a sense of a traditional cultural unity inherited from the past, it is nevertheless the case that a contemporary politics of identity actively recover and rearticulates the received culture and projects it into the future."[386] Therefore, Ondaatje differs from many writers who believe that it is impossible to link experience and the voice of narration in immigrant autobiography due to include the real experiences in literature in order to generate a complicated speech of 'Self.'

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[383] Michael Ondaatje. *Running in the Family*, repr. (Toronto: Emblem Editions, [1982] 2001), 166.

[384] Ibid., 166.

[385] Marlene Kadar. "Reading Ethnicity into Life Writing: Out from "Under the Ribs of Death" and into the "Light of Chaos" -- Bela Szabados's Narrator Rewrites Sandor Hunyadi." (*Essays on Canadian Writing* 57, 1995), 70.

[386] Ian Angus. *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness*. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1997), 22.

Robert Kroetsch points out how to make a connection to the past through his poem *Seed Catalogue* in which he begins with "how do you grow a past / to live in / the absence of silkworms"[387] as he asks about the absence faced by Prairie writers. The answers to his questions become clearer in the next lines of the poem to refer to the stages of growing the past. In Ondaatje's case, he attempts to clarify how isolated individuals can tell stories about their past to themselves. To compare the link between Kroetsch's questions and Ondaatje's view, Kroetsch desires to fill the space with the past while Ondaatje's view is to recreate meaningful spaces in–between past and present to fill the gap. Therefore, Ondaatje integrates his experience of the present with stories of an imaginary land-based only on his memory of the past. The writer recognizes his text to inscribe himself in the history of Ceylon, thus he focuses on the political representation of his voyage to deal with the past. Nevertheless, he attempts to show the sense of belonging through his writing which might be filtered through the process of the integration between the past and the present. Ondaatje creates his text to look for the 'Self' rather than providing any conclusion about identity, ethnicity and belonging. His experiences with building social text and generating writing texts make the text a complex critical pattern, which shows an insistence on belonging and supporting a narrative of the historical experiment. So his text needs an active reader to take part in gathering stories and tasting sounds, which represent cross-cultural identity.

3. 5. Conclusion

The principal goal of Ondaatje's voyage to Sri Lanka is to seek his roots. What he finds, they represent traditional stories of the past but he understands that stories of the past are not entirely pure. The process of filtering stories of the past passes through his family and relatives to focus on the place where he was born. In the process of looking for his belonging to his homeland, he finds several gaps. The feeling of loss is the voice in the book which is resulted from these gaps so that he could build a story of loss through a recreation of the past. Ondaatje succeeds in creating twofold impulses in the structure of his text as a reflection of his sense of loneliness and belonging.

Overall, Ondaatje finds a connection between belonging, cultural identity, and homeland in the last morning which he spent in his birthplace as this connection helped him to continue the sense of belonging to the land and family. His text shows that not every immigrant

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[387] Robert Kroetsch. "Seed Catalogue." In *Completed Field Notes: The Long Poems of Robert Kroetsch*. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), 35.

writer can find the feeling of connection to the past and reflects it through narration so easily. Ondaatje uses different means such as travelling to motivate himself to find the Self, identity, and belonging. He discovers that searching for the past is a complicated process but his insistence to find a place in–between two different worlds, two different languages, two different homes, two different identities and two different cultures makes the process easier.

Conclusion

Looking to the Future of Ethnic Minority Writings in Canada

> Canada is trying today simultaneously to articulate a totalizing national discourse of consensus and to make space for negotiated difference, so to speak, within that consensus.[388]

In the first part of the twentieth century, fictions that dealt with the theme of ethnic minorities were not popular for reasons which I mentioned in this study. After the 1970s, elements of ethnic hatred begun to decrease radically through attempts to find a state of mosaic on the level of national identity which, later, is known as Canadian Multiculturalism Policy. On the level of the literary Canon, the subject of ethnic minorities found a space in Canadian literature after it has been absent for several decades. Ethnicity performance depends on the repetition of the past to transform it into the present in order to create an open transcultural dialogue to reach the desired goal that enables communities to understand each other. The notion of ethnicity can be used to construct strong links between different ethnicities and nations, besides, help in creating a dialogue between these ethnicities to avoid probable conflicts. The narratives discussed in this study show that dialogue is a starting point to construct a bridge between ethnicities, communities, and nations to help them in developing and communicating with each other regardless of their language, religions, or colour.

As a result of the rapid development of modern technologies in the age of globalization, it becomes possible for anyone interested in the subject of ethnicities and diasporic communities to create a contact web with them even if these communities are at the farthest point on earth because these topics become a focus of attention of readers and researchers all over the world. Through this research, I found that the exploration and discussion of subjects that deal with transnational, cultural heritage, and ethnic identity are increased in Canada in recent years. I observed that this situation is a result of increasing attention to the transcultural dialogue between ethnic minorities on the one hand and the ethnic majority in Canada on the other hand. I hope that this study will play a role in strengthening transcultural and transnational

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[388] Linda Hutcheon. "Multicultural Furor: The Reception of Other Solitudes." In *Cultural Difference & the Literary Text: Pluralism & the Limits of Authenticity in North American Literatures*, edited by Winfried Siemerling and Katrin Schwenk, 10–17. (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 11.

connections as well as defining the dynamics of ethnicity to support this area of ethnic studies, especially studies that are interested in ethnic minorities in Canada.

After the declaration of the Multiculturalism Policy, Canadian writers of ethnic minorities used their narrative to create a space of transcultural discourse to define and redefine the meaning of their ethnicity as dynamic and not stable. This space of dialogue helps them to continue the evolution of their ethnic identity in the future. In addition to ethnic writers in this study who deal with the subject of ethnicities, I can assert that there will be new ethnic writers who will appear soon in order to redefine their ethnicities through a transcultural discourse in Canada and other countries. On other hand, concerning the fear of losing cultural differences and its impact on ethnic minorities in Canada and all over the world as a result of the transcultural dialogue and the integration, it is important to keep in mind that these differences are protected through the bridge of dialogue, which is created from the past to present, then connected with the future. But ethnic minority writers must pay more attention to the definition of their ethnicities in literature, culture, history and so on, otherwise, these ethnicities would melt into the larger communities and then lose their ethnic dynamicity.

The three writers in this study used different approaches in the construction of their texts to produce what is called the narrative exchange. In each one of the three texts, the protagonist is an immigrant who reflects the cultural and ethnic identity of his original home through overlapping and interaction with the majority, thus keeps the dynamicity of his ethnicity. The stages of the life of these three writers show sometimes that they are against the habits and traditions of their families and communities despite offering reconciliation at the end of their texts. In certain stages of their life, they were forced to move from their ethnic community into other communities for various reasons which I discussed in the previous chapters. Consequently, events that are mentioned in these three texts express their self-experiences at that time. Those three writers do not only show their experiences with their cultural and ethnic identity but also show us that there is new rhetoric related to cultural recovery.

These texts concentrate on cultural and ethnic roots to present a new concept of dynamic ethnicity which produces a transcultural dialogue between the majority and ethnic minorities in Canada. However, this new concept is not only useful between ethnic minorities and the majority in Canada but also can be useful for other nations and communities as well as within the community itself because it helps to redefine themselves to individuals of their nation and also to other nations and communities. After the discussion and description of visible and invisible differences between ethnicities, I argue that it becomes necessary to eliminate or at

least decrease these differences and difficulties facing ethnic minorities and that they perhaps threaten their location to be undermined. As we are in the age of rapid changes, our vision of social structure is also changeable. Therefore, the dependence on the dialogue across boundaries will help to remove hatred and rancour between communities, thus enhances the understanding of each other. This may be beneficial in Canadian literature and Canadian society on the one hand and other societies and literature on another hand because it will allow them to understand that other ethnicities can develop.

Through recent political and economic crises as well as wars over the world, waves of migration will likely increase to Canada and other countries in the future. Canada has been applying certain criteria in the selection of incoming immigrants recently, but those new immigrants might contribute to changing the Canadian demographics. It, thus, leads to a change in the majority and minority communities in which the changing will be like the relationship between them. Several factors help in increasing the difficulty of distinguishing between ethnicities and making it more complicated such as marriage which helps different ethnicities to be mingling. As well, the dialogue with others has to teach to the future generations not only in Canada but also in the whole world because dynamic dialogue will allow hybridity to continue, thus leads to diverse ethnic communities through transcultural exchange.

Therefore, writers who belong to ethnic minorities concentrate on how they can make their ethnicity and identity mean to the next generations of their communities and also to the ethnic majority in Canada. But their preoccupations changed at the end of the twentieth century to become associated with the discourse of race as a result of the changes in Canada and the whole world. Though there are differences and criticism of this kind of discourse, I argue that the need continues for minority writers to develop this kind of dialogue to make it prominent in the future. In my opinion, there is still a literary gap in dealing with some of the ethnic genres in Canada, I hope there will be literary texts which deal with their issues to foster Canadian literature and thus there will be a wide space of discussions, studies and researches related to these subjects. Since there are several writers of ethnic minorities in Canada being awarded worthy prizes for their literary texts and productions in English and French such as Naim Kattan, Michael Ondaatje, and others, thus, it will encourage other minority writers to take up these subjects in their literary productions.

In the previous chapters, the texts which are discussed a deal with behaviours, attitudes, and feelings of three different ethnicities: Hungarian, Iraqi Jewish, and Sri Lankan. Through the experiences of these three writers in exile and displacement, a dramatic sensation was

generated in their personality which appeared in their three texts, *Under the Ribs of Death*, *Farewell Babylon*, and *Running in the Family*, as this sensation encouraged them to explore their cultural and ethnic identity. Most of the ethnic minority writers rejected to be located on the margin; instead, they create a space of dialogue to focus on minute details of their life stories to explore their cultural roots. Consequently, the examination of these three texts depends on how their writers portray ethnicity through the exchanging dialogue which enables them to present the habits and values of their community to the majority in Canadian society. The motifs which these writers mention in their texts reveal that they used different pictures to show factors of their ethnicity and the extent of the connection of these factors with the 'Self.' However, there are other writers in Canada who deal with ethnic and race themes in their writings, thus they need more and further attention in the next studies such as George Faludy, George Payerle, Éva Tihanyi, and Wajdi Mouawad.

The literary texts which deal with topics of identity and ethnicity are written mainly by immigrant writers or who descend from migrant origins – these works have often been associated with the life of writers themselves or their ancestors. In this kind of texts either fiction or non–fiction, writers cross boundaries to restore the memory and explore the origin of their ancestors and the origin of their ethnicity. Thus, it encouraged several ethnic writers to mention their own stories through the narrative such as Naim Kattan (*Farewell Babylon* 1975), Michael Ondaatje (*Running in the Family* 1982), Fred Wah (*Diamond Grill* 1996), and Janice Kulyk Keefer (*Honey and Ashes: A Story of Family* 1998). I have not mentioned all of them because there is a long list of writers who deal with ethnic topics. In this kind of texts, ethnic writers use their personal, family, ethnicity, and community stories to create a base in order to affirm their ethnicities in Canadian literature and also to show the importance of their ethnicity to the next generations of their community who are born in Canada or who arrived as children to Canada. As I mentioned before, it deserves more attention through further studies and exploration to affirm the belonging to both Canada and original home.

After the discussion of the three texts in this study, I can assert that they offer an extension for the ethnic minorities within the environment of the majority, thus, it will help them in preserving the dynamic of ethnicity. These texts have features that support the ethnic writer to keep the extension with his ethnicity in which the writer can evolve the process of cultural and ethnic recovery in each one of his texts. Marlyn, Kattan, and Ondaatje worked in their three texts to assemble fragments of their ethnicity and cultural identity for the sake of recovery although there is a difference in the way of dealing with these topics in their texts. As

a result of the Policy of Multiculturalism and based on the hypothesis of the 'dynamic of ethnicity,' both Naim Kattan and Michael Ondaatje show the move from the phase of exile and displacement to marginality and isolation, then the move to the phase of integration, and finally the move to the phase of creating transcultural dialogue to preserve the dynamic of their ethnicity. Before Multiculturalism Policy, the case of John Marlyn shows the move from isolation and marginality to the phase of assimilation, but he failed; therefore, he used the reverse transition to move back to the phase of isolation again.

I argue that the reason for differences is due to the Policy of Canadian Multiculturalism which allows and assists ethnic minority writers who deal with these topics in opening a wide variety of transcultural dialogue. Furthermore, exile, migration, displacement, and diaspora make an impact on the way of their self–representation, the construction of their identity, and also their cultural and literary production. The case of Kattan illustrates this process: he arrived in Canada as an immigrant in 1951 but his first literary appearance was in the 1970s meaning that his first work coincided with the introduction of the Policy of Canadian Multiculturalism which allows him to transmit the real picture of his ethnic identity to the majority in Canada.

Each writer of these three texts, *Under the Ribs of Death*, *Farewell Babylon*, and *Running in the Family* creates a space inside the text itself to express the different sides of identity. All of them use this space of expression to concentrate on the meaning of the 'Self' and belonging through the notion of 'absent home' that they evoke in their imagination. However, each one of them is different in the way of evoking and dealing with this idea. They used various strategies to draw attention to the experience of immigration in Canada and the isolation in which ethnic minorities were exposed to it. The specificity of each text leads to a comparative reading which forces the reader to focus on each angle in the text which considers a feature of ethnic writings. Each chapter of this study works on analyzing these angles and dismantling unstable presumptions. The common denominator which I found in these three texts was that all three writers were exposed to the experience of displacement but each one of them used his particular tools to resist classification and distinction. For instance, Marlyn's text shows that the protagonist tries to escape from isolation and classification due to his ethnicity; therefore, he decides to change his identity and moves to the majority part of Canada. On the contrary, Kattan exploits the space which he gets from the Policy of Multiculturalism in Canada to explore the belonging of Jews to Iraq to redefine his ethnic identity in the diaspora; he, himself, admits in *Reality and Theatre* that:

I refused to hide my origin and reject my dialect. I did not want my relationship with the majority to be established at the expense of the idea I had of myself. The more this idea became conscious, the more decisive it was for me. Gradually this lucid awareness seemed to me a privilege, and my weakness became a strength.[389]

Ondaatje exploits the opportunity of 'doubleness' to travel back to the country of origin to explore cultural identity and belonging to the Sri Lankan community, thus redefine the ethnic identity of his community.

All three writers depend on the process of displacement in their texts to explore the 'Self' and 'ethnicity' which associate them either with the place of origin or their present life. In each one of these three texts, writers admit that there are powers that influenced the definition of the 'Self' – either in Canada or in the place of origin. Therefore, they depend on the strategy of delay and elongation in order to balance the 'doubleness' of belonging and also eliminate the tension resulting from the exploration of the Self. Consequently, it is manifest that they exist in each angle of their text through the process of exploration, ordering, construction, and show. The strategy which they use in *Under the Ribs of Death*, *Farewell Babylon*, and *Running in the Family* works to show the rupture that occurs between the identity and place due to isolation, displacement, and alienation. Thus, the relationship that resulted between the identity and the place, either Canada or the place of origin, might be rather unstable.

These writers never ignored their past unprocessed; therefore, the material reality considers the basis for the construction of their texts. The writers in these three texts depended on their memory and self–consciousness to discuss the subject of ethnic identity. Therefore, they needed to remember their past to connect it with the present, also needed to explore self– identity to treat it based on the condition of ethnicity either in Canada or in their home country. Marlyn in *Under the Ribs of Death* focuses on the ethnic case in Canada with a little reference to Hungary, thus, he attempts to make a connection between two parts of Winnipeg; North End and South End which represent the majority and minority. The case of Kattan and Ondaatje in *Farewell Babylon* and *Running in the Family* is different, they worked on the process of 'cultural recovery' which does not only mean to connect 'there' with 'here,' or 'past' with 'present' but also to negotiate how to bring 'there' to operate 'here' through rewriting the past

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[389] Naim Kattan. *Reality and Theatre*. Translated by Alan Brown, repr. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, [1970] 1972), 137.

to redefine their ethnicity and present their cultural identity to simulate Canadian society and ethnic majority. The results of their process are ethnic recovery, negotiation of the 'past' in the 'present,' and representation of the self–identity.

The process is not only to discover the past but also to use it for the future to redefine their ethnicity for the next generations. However, each text of these three depends on personal memory and sometimes stories that are told by relatives and friends like in the text of Ondaatje more than depending on historical events. Marlyn's text shows also how the protagonist suffered from the pressure of stereotype of racism and discrimination which was directed by the dominant majority. So there is a turning point from complete isolation at the beginning of the twentieth century to the expression of ideas and the display of belonging to ethnic identity. However, all three writers concentrate carefully on the minute details in drawing the map of their ethnicity to send a sign to their readers that this process does not finish yet and their stories are continuing for the next generations.

Since there are significant issues related to ethnic minorities writing in Canada; therefore, I hope that future critical studies give more attention to the approach which ethnic writers use to reveal the ways of treating this kind of writings. The three novels which I discussed in this study have some common features such as they show the development of the protagonist's mind from childhood to maturity stage in an intercultural environment. So these novels can be analyzed in the scheme of the 'Bildungsroman' tradition by concentrating on the experiences that influence the growth of the protagonist's character. Furthermore, focusing on how ethnic writers define their ethnicity in other languages and the role of language in defining ethnicity is also important. Because minority texts which are written in English are different in the approach from texts which are written in French or other languages, for instance, minority texts in Arabic or Hungarian and so on. Some of the ethnic writers offer bilingual passages in their texts; therefore, this approach also needs further investigation in the next studies because this strategy plays a role in the definition of ethnicity and identity, particularly in Canada as there is a long list of bilingual literary texts.

In this study, I focused on ethnic minority writers who represent a little part of this area of Canadian literature so my hope will be able to continue studies that deal with their issues in the recent future. My hope is also that Iraqi and Hungarian ethnic writers in Canada continue writing about their ethnicity in order to connect the past with the present, and also compare their cultural heritage with the new culture in Canada to keep ethnicity vibrant in the future. As all of the ethnic minority writers played and still play an important role in keeping on sustaining

the dynamicity of their texts in Canadian literature, I hope also that the policy of Canadian Multiculturalism is in a wider form to help a fast integration in addition to hybridity between ethnic minorities and the majority to create stronger ties and also decrease conflicts in the future because Canada represents the real model of cultural diversity where several ethnic minorities get the rights that they do not get in their original country. Thus, my hope also through this study is that other countries in the world look for the Canadian experience to analyze how Canada treats the rights of minorities through the Policy of Multiculturalism which they set. In the present time, the task is how to contain others instead of fighting them, thus the main goal is to create a cross-cultural dialogue in order to leave differences behind.

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