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EXPLOITATION OF INNOCENCE IN MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S NOVEL, ANIL'S GHOST: A STUDY OF PAST IDENTITY IN PRESENT SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study of haunting memories, and exploitation of innocent souls in the amidst of political mosaic. Since the familiar history of human, the continuation of sufferings keep following throughout the centuries. Anil's Ghost a spotlight novel of another milestone on portraying human sufferings, exploitations, traumas, political exploitations and all. Even in the 21st century people do away their life under the umbrella of so called influences which is institutionalised by the human themselves.

This paper travels in searching light of hope for the human world, though, it registers it duty of representing the same for the human society and it searches the voice of sufferings to reach the eardrum of human. Here the paper travels in the same boat like many people who is researching for forecasting of world's timeline. The representation of Anil Tissera, who is the protagonist of this novel searches her natives dawn in the eclipse of human lives, her search brings her hope of nothing even though the author's conclusion note repairs the bridge between the shattered souls and hope.

Key words: Civil War of Srilanka from 1980^s to the early 1990^s - three essential groups - political murders - bitter past - hidden facts.

The problem of Past identity enthrall the question of self and twin culture this in turn means that the reflection and its implication on the reasonable motive of self-interpreting and questioning. The longing is laid on the idea of a self that observes uncertain or insufficient to reflect idea of self or reassuring the weakness of different culture in which the person is living. The issue of literary identity is reasonably based on the context of the ambience in which the native pursue his life and based on the language of one's own national culture.

The complication of past identity in present situation manipulates to a question of cross-cultural identity and question of present-past interaction also. It is prominently a concept of belongings to the field of Diaspora literature. Literary works of a country, state, province and region cannot exist as an isolated and a manifested works of a closed national existence. These literary works cannot be understood without the contacts with literary phenomena of other national cultures.

As argued by Bakhtin's that "literature is an inseparable part of the totality of culture and cannot be best studied outside the total cultural context. It cannot be severed from the rest of culture and related directly (by-passing culture) to socio-economic or other factors. These factors influence culture as a whole and only through it and in conjunction with it do they affect literature. The literary process is a part of the cultural process and cannot be torn away from it" (140).

The Present identity cannot be identified or analyzed only on the basis of living country/nation ground. The present adopted identity of living in foreign land is a form of adopted culture, may be given its identity only based on the form of other influential cultures in which the nation is exposed and the native identity would be hidden in the existing culture. This means literature is a part and parcel of artistic and cultural background of other influences from several cultures. This reception or mutual reception of culture and other thought expresses the evolution of adapted endurance. The adopting to different identity is unalterably means native reality. This adaptation may be an equivalent to the measurement of originality of a migrated national subjectivity in it. The present identity has the chance of postulating its past identity.

Michael Ondaatje was born in Srilanka on 1943 and he was moved to England while 1950s then later his life has travelled in south London, as the situation persuades him to begin his school life in London. Later he emigrated to Canada, where he has lived ever since. His books include his memoir, 'Running in the family', numerous collections of poetry, and five novels including *Anil's Ghost*.

Among the diaspora writers the identity crisis drives them to create a process of negation and privilege which they maintain what it is today. For years diaspora writers struggled for an identity which in turn defined as nativism as a spring of longings. Even the Easterners are not left in this regard. The diaspora writers are representing the two countries' geographical, cultural, customs, ethnicity, and identity of the new dimension of a persona.

The intention of this paper is uncovering the past identity of a native soul, despite their adopted

nations is splendid. The work *Anil's Ghost* by Michael Ondaatje is taken by me to search the past identity from one's present adopted identity and political exploitations through the character Anil Tissera on the background from the middle 1980^s to the early 1990^s in Srilanka. The novel deals with the experience of Srilankan born woman Anil in a foreign land as well as in her native country. Her job paves way to settle the haunting of past and her travel to native land urges her voice against political exploitations. This novel distributes a thought triggering insights to the lives of Diaspora people.

The fragmented families of the characters face the peril life in their native land, and Anil faces the uncertain identity, meanwhile forced to cope with the hostile society along with the problem of political issues of civil war. The author's conceptual in his picturing of the story makes one to view the novel through the eyes of the victims of the novel itself. Hence traumas of the characters survive in order to accomplish the grace period of time, and time plays a role of healing its victims and continues its confidential till the destination of its travel.

"The tiniest of hearts in them beating exhausted and fast, the way Srisa had died in the story he invented for her in the vacuum of her disappearance. A small brave heart. In the heights she loved and in the dark she feared." (307).

At the outset Anil Tissera, a young forensic anthropologist middle aged woman comes to Srilanka from U.S. coincidentally the nature of job alarms the illusion of Anil Tissera. From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, her native land Srilanka was in crisis that evolved three prominent groups; the government, the antigovernment insurgents in the south and the separatists guerrillas in the north. The war is declared against the government by the other two groups which resulted in turn of blood stains of the land. Anil's return to Srilanka, recaps her past identity and the consequences are facing by the people due to civil war since her left. Each and every characters of this novel takes responsibility to the representation of Srilankan people's miserable condition in the deserted land. Anil's mind shuttles between her foreign land and native land, like all human longings of their patriotism memory, once

imposed in their genetic memory by their ancestors. It is natural of thought process which emerges every citizen of the native land requesting the soul personally. The longings and comparings of miserable voice of the native soil with the adopted land's prosperous citizens, stands unanswerable to the migrated peoples.

Anil sets her investigation (forensic anthropologist) journey in srilanka with the characters Sarath, Gamini, Ananda, Palipana and others to investigate the bones of hidden skeletons and its life mysteries. As Anil Tissera appointed by the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, to establish the identity of a corpse due to the suspect to have been the victim of a political killing by the government. Anil, Sarath and the local archaeologist penetrate in the complicated world of the government, the antigovernment in the south, and the separtist guerrillas in the north.

"Safer than combat boots. Anyway, these guys who are setting off the bombs are who the Western press calls freedom fighters.....And you want to investigate the government?"

There are innocent Tamils in the south being killed too,' Sarath said. 'Terrible Killings. You should read the reports.'(133).

Anil's Ghost displays the trapped characters of the innocent souls in the cruelty of civil war by the three groups whether they participate or not. It does not matter of concern of common folks, and they would fall prey to the civil war's burning fire. Anil, the protagonist of the novel willing to serve the Centre for Human Right, indeed, her past identity urges her to struggle for her own land's peace, however, the traumas, and dangerous living zone threatens her to select the identity of present or past. The prevailing situation of predicaments befuddles her, that, whether going back to U.S, or continues her investigation in Srilanka. The question haunts her until the unearthed corpse which has been hidden by the political groups in the museum and the fact is found in her forensic experiment. Anil names the corpse TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER and SAILOR her discovery triggers her intelligence of investigating against the sinners. However her instinct and

knowledge alarms the existing difficulties in getting at the truth. Anil's nativism unveils her longing of pursuing the journey towards her country as well as reminds her original identity. The adopted life in a new country could secure her from the perilous of her native land however her past identity stimulates her indebtedness for her nation.

"The Skeleton I had was evidence of a certain kind of crime.

That is What is important here "One village can speak for many villages. One victim can speak for many victims.".remember? I thought you represented more than you do."(275).

The forensic task gradually becomes a spotlight endeavor to Anil. Through her long journey of investigation and obstacles, she encounters many hair raising incidents and deadly turnings; however, she understands that she could not escape from the warp and weft of destiny's shackle, like wise her native peoples also could not be saved by her, even her Centre for Human resource. Eventually by her emptiness, poignantly she endures all the traumas, and the death of her closed persons become haunting to the memories of her time. The irrepressible violence, blood stains, bomb blasts are become permanent scar in her mind, and she moves herself in a life cycle with hope of nothing. The alleged death of Sarath (murdered by political groups yet not proved) scatters her reconstructed of balanced mind, and crucially haunts her present too. The journey of her exploration comes to witness the destination of murdered dead bodies, and unrecoverable loses of common people in the hands of civil war.

"Their Marriages, their careers on this border land of civil war among governments and terrorists and insurgents. There had never been a tunnel of light between them. Instead they had searched out and found their own dominations."(289).

Anil leaves Srilanka with overburdened guilty because of failing to secure her native identity and people. She is forced to leave her home land by the hands of insecurity of the native soil even her

forensic investigations of truth becomes futile in the hands of political influence. The reader could trace the feeling of confusing rival-in-reality between past and present identity in a foreign soil. The author evidently portrays the difficulties faced by the protagonist and her longing for her own root in srilanka. Anil's plays vital role of distributing the emotional attachments of migrants towards their native soil and its future betterment. Ondaatje carefully deals how his protagonist is haunted by past in her present scenario and leaves the permanent scar of reality.

All through the threatening phase of war's experience, Ondaatje enhances the appearance of fear and people's life used to be set off by a lot of longing voices. The nations those who preyed to injustice of war, will run away all harmonies of life, and wants to get away with the immortal wounds to inhabit a deadly life. Anil Tissera, the protagonist of the novel is become alienated from her native land, and falls to the haunting of past, which persists her to stay alive where she loses her true existence, though in the struggle for continuation she fails in front of the situation.

Michael Ondaatje attempts to explore as how migrants are reconstructing themselves to face the difficulties in order to face the pressurised life of past. Century after century pass, circumstance, situation, scenario and environment change but the position of a common soul remains the same. Through his efficiency and handiness in portraying the terrific face of war and its haunting past, Ondaatje holds lens to the world, he focuses on how common people are exploited by the hands of government, separtists, and insurgents in the power for their personal profits.

The writer has unfathomable compassion for the innocent soul and tries to liberate them from the exploitation in numerous names. He portrays that it will exist unbroken as long as conflicts based political groups exploit people and sentiments to earn their personel leverage. Anil is the character who is very close soul of the native soil and hence unable to stop the happenings in the country even though she is from Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, further her past haunts permanently

because of unstoppable killings of innocents in the land. The novel 'Anil's Ghost' unveils that Humanity and not lament of crisis is that what people should require.

"He felt the boy's concerned hand on his. This sweet touch from the world."(307)

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