

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Memory and the Politics of Cultural Identity in Michael Ondaatje's

In the Skin of a Lion

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English.

By

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Letter of Recommendation

Suman Bhusal has completed his thesis entitled “Memory and the Politics of Cultural Identity in Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from March 2012 to September 2012 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Memory and the Politics of Cultural Identity in Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion*” by Suman Bhusal submitted to Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Michael Ondaatje, Sri Lankan-Canadian novelist's *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), focuses on the plight of the immigrants, especially of a marginalized character Patrick Lewis who was lost in the vast land of Toronto as he sets out his journey from Ontario village. In Toronto, he is unable to situate himself. Gradually, he sees his image reflected with the Macedonian co-workers. Patrick's gradual move from a private isolated sphere to an interpersonal relationship with Clara, finally leads towards to the collective site of the immigrant community. Nicholas Temelcoff never looks back but once reminded by Patrick, he shows the wealth in himself. Their memory of the past remains 'incomplete' and 'fragmentary', therefore they are unable to look back at the root precisely and accurately. The passing of the stories is the only way to ensure the histories of ordinary people, those without power, are sewn in history. Material referents of cultural – bridge, water station – have always been subject to decay but narrative, travelling through time from subject to subject, has always been able to carry cultural identity to future generations. By narrating the stories to Hanna, a sixteen year old girl, Patrick not only confirms his identity but also confirms the identity of the Macedonian community of workers at large.

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