

Tribhuvan University

Reconstruction of History in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*

**A thesis submitted to the Central Department of English
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English**

By

Gokul Prasad Jaishee

Central Department of English

University Campus, Kirtipur

Kathmandu, Nepal

December, 2006

Tribhuvan University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

This thesis entitled "Reconstruction of History in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Gokul Prasad Jaishee has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head
Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

The present research could never have come into its present form without the scholarly guidance and encouragement of Mr. Sankar Subedi of Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. In addition, he has provided scholarly guidance by going through the script and correcting my innumerable mistakes. I express my sincerest gratitude to him.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of Central Department of English, T.U. for granting me an opportunity to carry out this research work. Similarly, I am highly grateful to my respected teachers Dr. Birendra Pandey, Dr. Chandra Prakash Sharma, Dr. Arun Gupto, Lecturers Devi Gautam, Sirjon Chhetri, Mr. Hem Sharma for providing me with constructive suggestions.

Similarly, I am grateful to writers, critics and editors of the source materials from which I have cited.

Last but not the least, I express my thanks from within to my friends C.P. Dhungel, Krishna Wagle, along with my wife Ganga Koirala, son Samir Pandey, my sister Nanda Koirala, brother-in-law Ram Lal Koirala and my parents for their assistance in one way or the other in course of this research work.

Lastly, I am grateful to Mr. Manik Dangol, proprietor of M.M. Communication, Kirtipur for his accurate and high speed that helped me to digitize the thesis in time.

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Gokul Prasad Jaishee

December, 2006

Abstract

Ondaatje's *The English Patient* breaks away from the tyranny of chronology. It moves backward and forwards, in bits and pieces like natural motion of memory. By juxtapositioning history and personal history, he focuses the characters and their emotions. The four shell-shocked human beings began to gather the broken pieces of their lives. He subverts the traditional idea of viewing history as a record of facts and absolute truth by presenting the fragments of history of characters. The scene of loss, devastation, trauma are portrayed in the novel. In their memory, the characters recreate the military and political events of 1942 the year before and after. *The English Patient* discloses the various truths of the characters that are hidden in traditional history.

Contents

	Page No.
I: INTRODUCTION	1-11
II: THEORETICAL MODALITY	12-30
New Historicism	12-15
Nietzsche Foucault and Genealogy	15-30
III: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS	31-53
War, Devastation and Its Impact	31-37
Memory as a Tool for Recreating/Rewriting History	37-48
Subjective History: Merely a Version	49-53
IV: CONCLUSION	54-57
Works Cited	

I. INTRODUCTION

Michael Ondaatje, a poet, novelist film maker and editor was born in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on September 12, 1943. His father Marvin Ondaatje was tea and rubber-plantation superintendent who was afflicted with alcoholism. Because of his father's alcoholism, Ondaatje's parents eventually separated in 1954 and he moved to England with his mother. Ondaatje was initially educated at St. Thomas College in Colombo, Ceylon. After moving to England, he continued his education at Dulwich college in London. Between 1962-64, Ondaatje attended Bishop's university in Lenoxville, Quebec. He received his B.A. from the University of Toronto in 1965 and then his M.A. from Queen's University in 1967.

He has taught at a variety of institutions, including the university of western Ontario, York university, university of Hawaii at Manoa, Brown University and the university of Toronto. Currently he is a member of the department of English at Glender College, York University in Toronto, Ontario. He has held this position since 1971. Now he has been residing in Toronto with his wife, Linda Spalding. During his career, Ondaatje has received numerous awards and honours Ondaatje is the author of number of novels, poems, plays, memoirs and an assortment of pieces in literary criticism.

Michale Ondaatje started with poetry, in 1967 publishing *Dainty Monoters*. In the title, Ondaatje Juxtaposes opposite images, and as a

result explores these seemingly incongruent ideas, a trait that links almost all his works. His serial poem *The Man with Seven Toes* (1969) was inspired by paintings by an Australian artist, and a true story of a woman living among the Aborigines after a shipwreck. These interests in historical fragments and visual arts would also become signatures of Ondaatje's writing. Both the collection of poem *The collection Works of Billy the Kid* (1970) and his first novel *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976) were inspired by pictures, historical fragments as well as oral legends, many of which are included in the final published works. Ondaatje calls *In a Skin of a Lion* (1978) his first novel, and it takes place in Toronto within the Macedonian immigrant community. Again, he relies heavily on historical documentation for inspiration, weaving it into a fictional story. Two characters from this novel turn up again in *The English Patient*, another story based on historical archives. In 1982, he published *Running in the Family*, a fictional biography of his childhood in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Instead of relying on archival history, Ondaatje, instead use the oral history of his family to reconstruct his father's tumultuous past.

In his recent novel *Anil's Ghost* he develops a main character as a bridge between homeland and abroad. Ondaatje has also done short movies, plays and photography. He is also editor, and has read, influenced and shaped numerous Canadian authors. He has won the Governor General's awards four times, as well as the Booker prize, the Giller prize and the prix medics. He was named the Order of Canada in 1988.

Ondaatje, in some of his writings, manifests his bio-graphical condition. His 1982 work *Running in the Family* is the good example of it. Critics say, it is a semi-autobiographical poetic memoir. It is the imaginative reconstruction of the author's family history that chronicles Ondaatje's attempt to gain insight into his own identity. Critics seem to have been interested in the diverse aspects of his writing. Ondaatje as a migrant writer raises the question about his own personal experiences of displacement. Moreover, he perceives his writing an attempt to come out of his own 'hyphenated position.' Cultural split, multiculturalism, and center margin dichotomy are the central issues of his writing.

A well distinguished of his literary works, Ondaatje's 1992 novel *The English Patient* has received the worldwide acclaim, leading to its 1996 film adaptation. The novel quickly became an international best seller. The film adaptation of the novel received the award of best picture at the Oscars of 1997. The novel has received serious and favourable critical response from various corners of the world since its publication.

Novak Amy says that the novel is about a narration of memory. He sees the individual memories in the novel are just such cul-de-sacs. *The English Patient* weaves his tapestry of memories, tries to pieces together, the events that led him to lie in this bed in Italy. But his work of memories produces a tension between the desires to contain the past by remembering, bearing and return to it. Expressing the idea of memory he says:

The patient remembering propels the narration other character within him into the well of memory. The circular and repetitious movement of his recounting is replicated at the level of the entire text. Memory moves the text forward, draw the characters around him, leads to a further unfolding of his own memory and those of other characters. (15)

Encyclopedia of Post-colonial Literature in English tries to explore the relation between or among the nations in post colonial situation. It writes: "*The English Patient* appears to have smaller ambitions, but its exploration of the relation of Britain to its colonies and of 'first world' politics to 'Third World' ones, signs its desires to engage the postcolonial imagination" (1181).

The novel implicitly raises the issues that are pertinent to the Post Colonial situation. The question of identity is of prime importance. Identity is a matter of associating oneself with certain ideological or cultural position. The characters are engaged at the portion of cultures bear the predicament of identity crisis. They are the process of cultural transformation without concrete shape.

In the same way Goldman Merlene explores the impact of war and people's suffering. He comments:

The novel examines the effect of Second World War and event of 1942 on human psyche and suggests how human being searches for silver lining despite the devaluation and

devastation of values. The novel resists any kind of preaching, and yet search for peace, balance and kindness is constantly highlighted. (3)

Goldman Marlene argues that it is not the story of war but the pathetic story of humans enmeshed in the war willingly or unwillingly, in particular culture, in particular moment of time. It is his quest for the resurrection of humanity from the devastation and the possibility of overcoming the brutality, selfishness and dehumanization by single minded conviction and dedication of handful people.

The novel unusually represents the history of the World War II. A reader does not see the battles or the propaganda of the war. One can see only the effect of war on few people. All of them are shell-shocked in one or another way Ondaatje incorporates a number of characters with different nationalities. Hana and Caravaggio are Canadian, Kirpal Singh is Indian and English patient is Hungarian. The main character The English Patient, whose face is severely disfigured by burns, exists outside. The national passion of war. He exists at the center and focus of the action despite the fact that he is without name or identity for much part of novel. When English Patient name is revealed, the reader discovers the great irony of the novel that The English Patient is not even English but a Hungarian by birth. Kirpal Singh, nicknamed by kip by English people, is an Indian character. Hana, the Canadian nurse living at the villa San Girolamo.

Ondaatje has repeatedly been engaged in an attempt to incorporate marginal figures out of the historical past into non historical genre. Several characters in the novel are indeed such 'marginal figures out of historical past. He is using the method of using marginal figure from history. Ondaatje's in his novel *The English Patient* historicizes those people who exist on the margin of everyday history but not in convention method. He gives the voices of those whose voices were unheard in official history.

The four shell-shocked humans begins to gather the broken pieces of their lives. It is the process of reconstruction after devastation. The bridge between the countries that has collapsed due to the political and national reasons is rebuilt. There is kindness, forgiveness and selflessness. The inherent qualities of civilized humans surface to rebuild the world except The English Patient who is likely to die, other return to their respective world.

Kyser Kristina views that, "This novel is about the frustration of identity of characters that leaves them shrinking from harsh division" (7). Kyser finds that all the character is shell-shocked in one or another way and question of identity is of prime important.

Ondaatje's *The English Patient* breaks away from the tyranny of chronology. It moves backward and forward in bits and pieces like the natural motion of memory. His historical subtext connects with a fictional rendition which represents the fullness, complexity, fragmentation,

degradation, and uplifting of life through the story of four characters fixed in some moment of history. The 'truth of his fiction' articulates an imaginative account of past that was not possible except by means of imaginatively constructed, fictive elements. He uses fictionalized history to reveal the human meaning of war in a way denied to conventional history. The history of devastation of the people and nature is casually treated by conventional historians, but in these novels, the real and the imaginary fuse together to give a vivid sense of the experience of war with all its attendant emotions and scarred relations. And the novels, unlike histories provides a vision of history that takes into account these experiences and relations.

In the background, the arena of the war remains highly activated and yet the human endeavor to reconstruct from total devastation and chaos is reaffirmed. The imagination, perception, and communication of human experiences through fictionalized history open up many new dimensions of life that history can not dream of. The novel *The English Patient* on the one hand, recreates the destructive impact of wars on human life and society, but on the other suggests the possibilities of overcoming the evils of brutality, selfishness and dehumanization by the single minded conviction and dedication of handful of people.

Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992), opens in 1944 in an isolated Tuscan Villa in central Italy devastated by the war. Initially, the villa had served as a military hospital for the Allied forces, but with the

shifting of war to the north, it had been evacuated. Now it has been inhabited by Hana, the Canadian nurse and her burned beyond recognition patient whom she considered to be English. Hana, the nurse herself a patient wrecked by emotion has to suffer drastically with the death of her father in the war. Moreover, the wound of aborting her child continues to bleed in her. The English Patient drifts in and out of consciousness. Into this monotonous existence enters a Canadian, Caravaggio, petty thief who has inducted into the allied army as a spy. Sometime during 1942 he was caught; his palm was crushed and he was maimed forever. Into this small shell shocked group, variously fortune'd by the happenings of the Second World War, enters "sapper Kirpal Singh (K.P.), who had been entrusted with the job of dismantling the bombs and mines deployed by the retreating German Army. Apparently, the Second World War has ceased in the physical arena, but in this lonely isolated villa, the human face of war, its victims carry on human drama of pain and shattered lives that the war has created in their memory, they create the political and military events of 1947 and the years before and after.

Juxtaposing history and fictionalized history is an intentional move by Ondaatje to narrate the human personal history of Almasy. The Caravaggio's query 'What happened in 1942 is answered by series of facts about his love life and political life. Caravaggio's statement "Let me your (Hana) a story" covers the major historical details of The English Patient life. But this is a just prologue to the human story. Gradually, history

disappears in the fictional history of his love for Katherine Clifton. Soon, cultural barriers dissolve in the personal relationships, it is no longer important that he is a Hungarian who had assisted the Germans. For Hana, he is English, and for Kip he is "brother." The war is over for the Allied and the German forces, but the war-ravaged minds and bodies on both sides continued to fight a war that may never come to an end. The explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945 extends the war externally in the cancer stricken generation or in the minds of those who lost their near and dear ones. The historical impacts of war may be removed people's memory but the cultural and emotional devastation may lineage forever. It is significant that *The English Patient* is faceless and that he has lost the track of political history. His personal history survives in bits and pieces. Historicizing is interested in the principal events constructed by thousand of faceless but Ondaatje, by fictionally, historically the truth of Almasy's life, has inscribed an unconventional history that often remains buried.

The novel at one level will be read not as the author's imaginative construction rather as the written history of the characters of the novel who bear no existence of the official history. In another level, it will be viewed as the written history of marginalized people and the immigrants who have been struggling to be free from the cultural plurality.

Michael Ondaatje in his writing, both in form and content has gone beyond the restriction of the tradition. The fashion of linear plot sequence that was persisting gets shattered. He sometimes begins with the historical

facts and continues them through fictionalization and such blending of fact and fiction gives a magic realistic touch. It bridges the dichotomy of fact and fiction. It is good blend of real events with fictional life. Deliberate avoidance of old existing concept of progressive history, Ondaatje is writing the history of the characters.

In this way Ondaatje and his texts have been examined so far. Critiques in Ondaatje and his texts include both traditional and modern approaches. The most crucially examined aspects are: The style, subject matter, position of the characters, class of the characters they belong, author's position among his contemporaries and so on. Being an author of contemporary time and issues, there is no lack of critics to view his works with the contemporary approaches. Post – colonial issues of belonging, resistance, migration, cultural, plurality, center-margin dichotomy etc are central in both his writings as well as research of his writings. The issues of the present research is also not other than to give a new historical reading to the text which undoubtedly is a new approach developed in the area of cultural studies. In addition to the aforementioned critical reading this reading is based basically on the Foucauldian idea of history that lays history of the periphery rather than that of center. Nietzsche idea of history, Foucauldian idea of history, Foucauldian idea of history discourse and power will be discussed as prime theoretical subject.

This research paper is tentatively divided into four chapters. The first unit is the synopsis of the entire research work. It begins with the

writer's general introduction and his works, Michael Ondaatje as an author and his individual texts literature review of the text that I want to the research.

The second unit will present the theoretical framework. For that some new historicist critics will be used for tool. New historicist's "textuality of the history and the historicity of text" will be used as base formula. Michael Foucault as new historicist and his idea of history, discourse and power will be discussed as prime theoretical subject. Besides Fredrick Nietzsche idea of history, (from which Foucault got impetus) will be the support for the research.

The third unit will be the most important part of the research work in which the text *The English Patient* will be given a new historicist reading. For that the theoretical model discussed in the preceding unit will be applied to the text. In the course of textual analysis some lines from the text will be taken up for discussion.

In the concluding chapter whether the hypothesis is justified will be the prime question of consideration. It is hoped that this research paper will be a support for the scholars who want to conduct a research in post-colonial literature and its parallel subjects as well as for those who are interested to know Ondaatje's novel.

II. THEORETICAL MODALITY

New Historicism

New Historicism basically is a concept that opposes the ideas of historicism. According to Historicism, history is the main determining process. And so, Historicism denies human agency and valorizes the past tradition over the present. But in 1980s, there occurred a break from these assumptions of historicism, and thus, a movement termed (New Historicism started. It is a type of literary criticism that developed during the 1980s largely in reaction to the text-only approach pursued by formalists. New Historicists and their critics acknowledge the importance of literary text, but they also analyze the literary text with an eye to history.

New Historicism rejects traditional historicist notion of continuity progress, and underlying historical unit. Instead, it makes a parallel study of history and literature, and gives equal weight to both genres. So, it neither evaluates literature at the cost of history, nor it goes the other way round. It puts both literary and non literary texts on the same ground because both of them are after all the products of the same ideology of the time. So, main job of New-Historicists is to show the operation of ideology in the production of various cultural artifacts. There is an inseparable relationship between literature and history. There is no primary and secondary characteristics between history and literary because literature is to be embedded within history. New Historicists also

tend to define the discipline of history more broadly than their predecessors. They view history as a social science and social sciences are being treated as properly historical distinct from the history that is relevant to it because literature is the part of history and cannot be separated from without loss. So, a prominent critic Rene Wellek in an essay *Literary Theory Criticism and History* suggests, "a literary work can be interpreted only in the light of history and that ignorance of history distorts a reading of the work... the critic needs the help of the history is one of the complex facing literary study" (555).

They have erased the line dividing historical and literary materials; showing not only that the production of one of William Shakespeare's historical plays was both a political act and historical events. Instead of taking history as a set of fixed, objective and stable thing; New Historical deals with the text as a diversity of dissonant voice. In this respect, M.H. Abrams in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* writes:

History is not a homogenous and stable pattern of facts and events which can be used as " the background " to explain the literature of an era or which literary can be said simply to reflect or which can be adverted to (as and earlier type of mortism criticism and the "material" condition in a simple and unilateral way, particularities of a literary texts. In contrast to such views a literary text is said by new historicists to be "embedded" in its context as an interactive

component within the network of institutions, belief and cultural power relations, practices and products that in their ensemble, constitute what we call history. (250)

Louis Montrose has described New Historicism as a "reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and textuality of History" (242). The historicity of texts basically refers to the cultural specificity, the social embodiment, of all modes of writing whether it is social, political, economical or religious- not only the texts that critic study but also texts in which we study them. The textuality of history is related with past. But the relation between the past and present is not coherent but exhibits discontinuities or break: by this they hope to distance the earlier text and so sharpen their ability to detect its difference from their present ideological assumptions. Catherine Belsey in an essay *Literature, History and Politics* suggests the following questions should be included in any New Historical texts which she borrowed from Foucault:

What are the modes and conditions of these texts? Where do they come from; what controls them; on behalf of whom?

What possible subject positions are inscribed in them? What meaning and what contests for meaning do they display.?

(405)

The French philosophical historian Foucault brought together incidents and phenomena from areas normally seen as unconnected encouraging New Historicists to redefine the boundaries to historical

inquiry and evolutionary process, a continues development toward present. No historical event to Foucault, has a single cause, rather each event is tied into vast web of economic, social and political factors. History is not set of fixed, objective facts but, like the literature with which it interacts, that a text, whether it is literary or social is a discourse which reflects an external reality. Catharine Belsey asserts:

Foucault's work gives us a methodology for producing our own history and politics, a history which is simultaneously a politics,....work in the institution of literary criticism in centrally concerned with the reception of literary texts, with the text as a site of range of possible meanings that may be produced during the course of history and with the knowledge's inscribed in both dominant and radical discourses. Its importance seems to me together literature, history and politics in crucial way... (405-06)

Nietzsche, Foucault and Genealogy

Friedrich Nietzsche, (1844-1900) a German philosopher, best know as a radical critic of the western tradition, with its belief in truth, morality and god. He is one of the major contributors in the re-evaluation of western metaphysics. He opposed the history, which saw itself as tracing the development to culmination, implicitly outside time based on the behalf of an eternal truth, a stand point from which all can be measured. He argued that every thing that was thought to be immortal must be

placed with in history. He questioned the hitherto existing belief about history as unquestionably and absolutely true. He defines history as a human construction that evolves from interpretation, theorizing, inference from data and records and subjective biases of the individuals who make it up. He radically rejects the traditional idea of history in his book *on the Uses and Abuses of History for Life*.

Hegel's ideas were flourished and dominated all over the Europe at that time when Nietzsche was born. Hegel's view is that history is moving forward that human being moving forward that human being moving toward the point of perfection. He thought that every (temporal) movement is a new movement and every experience of life is new experience. Nietzsche's is idea of historiography radically opposed such idea and conception about time and history. He charges Hegelian idea to be abstract and says there is no such superimposed idea that humanity in general is headed towards a point of perfection. He perceives the idealists' negation of impulses not more than a fallacy and says human creature is instinctively animalistic and lives basically on impulses. Infact, despite the suppression of natural energies, the reality is that human beings make the best possible progress when all their potentials, the so called evils as those good are exploited. He celebrates the neglected aspects of things, which were supposed to be evil, immoral and irrational and so on.

The idealistic tendency to privilege the so called rational is sharply criticized in his famous magnum opus *The Birth of Tragedy*. In his book,

he has made a division between two modes of life: apollonian and Dionysian. The Apollonian stands for order, clarity, reason etc. whereas Dionysian impulses excite the life of intoxication, chaos, darkness, madness and other irrational forces. He equally emphasizes the importance of Dionysian impulses to live a healthy life that was neglected by the idealistic philosophers. The contemporary supposition of history as the representation of truth no longer existed in Nietzsche because he says life can never be understood in terms of ultimate truths. He thought that the proper creative use of history is the only useful use of it: otherwise it kills or destroys humanity in the long run. Reality is all the time revealed by suffering. He prefers the metaphoric language of poetry because poetry is the outcome of imagination.

The celebration of madness is another challenge posed by Nietzsche to the history of western metaphysics one who tries to deviate from real life was considered to be mad. In his book *Anti-Christ*, he talks about the creeds of Christianity that are bad and destructive to life because it never gives us a chance to adventure it gives us a herd morality. It gives shelter to those who are weak not only physically but also mentally.

Thus Spake Zarathustra (1883-1885), one of the most controversial works of the time brought a revolutionary theory of superman (translated from Germanic term *Ubermensch*). According to Nietzsche, the society of the time was suffering from the traditional values based on " slave

morality" His powerful assertion "God is dead " means that traditional morality was no longer relevant in peoples lives. Nietzsche's Zarathustre teaches human beings to live a risky but creative live.

The originality of life comes though impulses or the animality. Creating Zarathustre, a character beyond the domain of fear, he encourages people to come out from the existing slave morality. Slave morality is a morality created by weak and resentful individuals who encourage such behaviour in the name of gentleness and kindness because such behaviour served their interests. He claimed that new values could be created to replace the traditional ones, and his discussion of possibility led to his concept of the superman.

Nietzsche's critique of historicism confronts with Hegelian idea. Against the idealistic' assumption that the historical process is a rational process which in Hegel's time, has ended in an absolute moment in Zenith, Nietzsche asserts that the historical process neither is nor can be finished since the completion of history is not merely impossible but undesirable because it would led to a degeneration of man and that history is not a rational process but it is full of blindness and injustice.

It might, thus appear that Nietzsche simply affects a return to a pre-Hegelian view point from which he counters history as a realm of chance rather than dimension of meaning. However it doesn't mean that there is no point in which Nietzsche agrees with Hegel. The implication of history for Nietzsche is not escape from the present or to deviate from present or

life and action rather their service. In the forewords of his 1873 text Nietzsche asserts:

We need it (history) for life and action, not for a comfortable turning away from life and action or merely for glossing over the egotistical life and the cowardly bad act. We wish to use history only insofar as it serves living. But there is a degree of doing which life atrophies and degenerates. (1)

In this essay, the issue of historicity is central. He begins this essay with the consideration of the life of animals. According to Nietzsche, what distinguishes human beings from animals is the awareness of history. Animal forgets each moment as soon as it passes. To live entirely in the present, without the memory of past, means to live under historically. Man remembers the past and cannot escape from it, every time man lives with the awareness of history such awareness of the past and the passing of the time makes man suffers. If man doesn't forget the past, it causes unhappiness in him for he would see only the flux and change and would have no fixed points by which to take his bearings.

But the problem with man is that it's not possible to live without a memory of the past. Therefore, it needs man to maintain a balance between remembering and forgetting which is the most conducive to him to live as a man. If such balance is not maintained it causes pain and suffering to man. Being a man, one cannot enjoy the forgetting as animals

so. Such historical knowledge of a man is surrounded by unhistorical atmosphere that limits his historical sense.

Although Nietzsche has entitled his essay as *Use and Abuse of History*, he is concerned more with abuses than uses. He submits more with abuses than uses. He submits three kinds of way is to analyze history. He names them as Monumental, Antiquarian and Critical History. He further clarify how history can be misused in all the aforementioned ways of analysis.

Monumental history concerns the erection of model of past greatness but preserves the potential danger to overshadow the greatness of present. This means the misuse of monumental history makes man neglect the present in which he is living, the present in which he is living for the sake of past. The reverence for the past which antiquarian history fosters cannot stultify the present. So we can say that the misuse of antiquarian history carries the danger to be uprooted. Critical history, although contains less chances to be misused is also not completely safe. It may fail to realize the extent to which men are the result of past they seek to condemn: Nietzsche asserts the potential flow of critical history:

For when its past is analyzed critically, then we grasp with a knife at its roots and go cruelly beyond all reverence. It is always a dangerous process that is a dangerous process for life itself. And people or ages serving life in this way, by judging and destroying a past, are always dangerous and in

danger. For since we are now the products of their aberrations passions, mistakes and even crimes. (31)

Foucault inherits some of the ideas from his predecessors and invents some of his own. He borrows the term and even the idea of "genealogy" from Nietzsche and goes beyond the tradition to limit history as the event that took place in past Foucault's major contribution is the new concepts that challenged people's assumption about prison, the police, madness, gay etc.,. the main influences on Foucault's thought were German philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. Nietzsche's idea is that human behaviour is motivated by a "will to power" and the traditional values have lost their power over society and the ways in which power relates to the self. He investigates the changing rules governing the assumption about what is true or false at different times in history.

The French born philosopher Michael Foucault (1926) was always interested in the mechanisms, the character of subconscious underlying all human actions. Foucault's interest in history was different from the traditional notion of history. He was fascinated by the fact that even ideas, concepts, experiences as well as problem all have histories. Further into his writing, he becomes aware of how the seemingly divergent issues of power, knowledge, the idea of truth and pleasure resided within the self. He critically analyzes and interprets the histories of changing attitudes and modes of thought the given period.

In his *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he studies the ontological status of language and comes to conclusion that during the renaissance language was a thing to be deciphered like the other objects in the world. By the classical age which Foucault defines roughly as the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, language was valued as a representation of the world it describes. Foucault remarks modern age beginning roughly with Kant, where he sees languages becoming part of the world again although holding the status as an imperfect means of expression, a distortion of reality yet one of the most important mediums human had with which to communicate. In the introduction chapter of the *Archeology of Knowledge* entitled "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" Foucault develops his own ideas about history. The idea that every epoch of history is rejected by Foucault because his idea of genealogy conceives history as a process of discontinuity.

According to Foucault, a true genealogist is one who goes against the pursuit of origin and absolute truth. In this sense he gets Nietzsche as a true genealogist when he says:

Why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit of origin (upspring), at least on these occasions when he is truly a genealogist? Firm, because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities and their carefully protected identities because this search assumes the existence of immobile form that precedes the external world

of accident and succession. This search is directed to "that which was already there" the image of a primordial truth fully adequate to its nature, and it necessitates a removal of every mask to ultimately disclose an original identity. (318)

Idealist philosopher like Hegel and Kant believed history as a continual progression of human life that is based on certain rules and guidelines. They tried to present objective truth without giving their own opinion and pretended themselves to be disinterested. They also tried to create coherent identity and the synthesis is the most important thing to create certain identity. For Kant knowledge is gained, in a real sense, with the synthesis of priory and a posterior. They believed that the history is moving toward a theological point, a point of perfects.

A genealogist's view is entirely different from the idealists. For Foucault every epoch of history is not connected with each other, rather it is a kind of fragmented series of events, a chain of unrelated events for the genealogists even insignificant and minor events are significant because they don't believe in the point of perfection. They don't believe in the possibility of teleology and concept of origin. History, for them is not linear and cyclic, critics see Foucauldian terms like archeology and genealogy as tools. Arun Gupta in his *Healing Thoughts on Tender Theory* asserts:

For Foucault, archeology and genealogy are complementary rather than being too different approaches, if archeology

studies statements, genealogy studies statements but in relation to power. These statements are in continuous process even today for Foucault, they are not a thing of a historical slot for instance, Edwards Saids concept of Orientalism is not merely an object of archeological research of a time frame, but an idea that holds significance in the present context through differently in this time frame and in the time to come. (116-17)

Like Nietzsche, Foucault also talks about three different ways in the analysis of history. Foucault names them as Periodic, Dissociative and Sacrificial history. Although the idea of such histories was derived from Nietzsche's Monumental, Antiquarian and Critical history there are both similarities and differences in their ideas. Foucault's idea of periodic history corresponds to Nietzsche's monumental history. Periodic history can be used to mask or hide one's identity by bringing up the images of the great figures of the past by taking up the common mask in vague, people go on revitalizing the bogus of so called and make up for the unreality of their own identity. It would be possible to overcome this falsity by parodying the parody themselves Nietzsche, later neglected and renounced the idea of monumental history as a parody in itself but Foucault sees this history equally important.

Dissociative history, according to Foucault, is the systematic dissociation of history from history instead of imposing it on identity.

Such uses of history correspond to Nietzsche's antiquarian history but in opposite way. Nietzsche's antiquarian history seeks to discover continuities in which our present is supposed to have been rooted whereas dissociative history seeks to explore the discontinuity so that the origins and the series of logical progression are more impositions and not reality of history. The purpose of history that is guided by genealogy is not to discover the root or origin of our identity rather to show that there is not definite root as such, since identity is a matter of process and perpetual change. Foucault differentiates his concept of dissociative history with Nietzsche's Antiquarian history in the following lines:

The purpose of history, guided by genealogy is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to commit itself to its dissipation. It doesn't seek to define our unique threshold of emergence, the homeland to which metaphysicians promise to return, it seeks to make visible all of those discontinuities of soil, language and urban life in which our present is rooted [...]. (335)

Foucault's third use of history, that is sacrificial history, corresponds to Nietzsche's critical history. Such use of history, according to Foucault, sacrifices knowledge and its destructive uses. This uses of history transcends common concepts of knowledge and so-called history and reaches nearer to the more reliable truth about the past. It reveals that all knowledge of past is based upon injustice of the system that created

the so-called history in its favor. The will to knowledge is not a nature of universal truth rather it endlessly multiplies the risk and danger and it dissolves the unity of subject. Foucault supposes it's the most reliable one. He takes it as an alternative to critical history since he sees problem with critical history.

Although the central concern in this research is foucauldian ideas of history in relation to Nietzsche it is equally relevant to go briefly through his key concepts, since such concepts are interrelated to his concept of history. His ideas of discourse, power and knowledge deserve great importance in the evolution of western history of ideas. Thus multi-conceptual rethinking goes beyond the structuralism and hermeneutics. He argues reality is constructed out of the human consciousness and its ability to perform interpretation. Foucault makes a clear demarcation of his re-evaluation in the traditional history of ideas. Traditionally power discourse and knowledge are associated with respectively Marxism, structural linguistics and traditional history of 1960 and 70s.

Michael Foucault's concept of power, knowledge and truth are closely inter-linked. The major concern of power is with the language and the society. The language is a social system. The knowledge is associated with language, because it is produced through the later, and the language is related to the society but not with individual mind and consciousness because the language is not the individual component. So, it is the

language that plays the vital role in controlling and losing the power in this sense, language is the means of replacing and displacing the power.

Michel Foucault, while defining truth and power points out that these two are interwoven and attached. They are not isolated concepts. He states:

The important things here, I believe, is that truth is not outside power, or looking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and function would repay further study, truth is not the reward of free spirit, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of these who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is the thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth its 'general politics' of truth, that is, the types of discourse which it accepts. And makes functions as true.

(144)

Truth and power are just like the two sides of the same coin but it is the linguistic discourse that originates the truth and truth produces the power and it is knowledge that brings the better discourse and effective power produced through the better knowledge. In this regard, Rama Selden says:

The real effects of power are exercised through linguistic discourse which is the result of knowledge because all knowledge is an expression of the will to power, and

therefore, the discourse of knowledge is involved in power and therefore, the discourse of knowledge is involved in power but will to knowledge is not power rather it is the impersonal force. (83)

Thus one can make a conceptual connection that knowledge and discourse are inseparable. The discourses are inseparable. The discourses are produced within real world of power struggle. Power cannot exist without truth and it is unstable because it is he who controls the power also controls the discourse. Power is made out in relation to knowledge and the power changes with the change of knowledge.

Foucault's ideas of counter-history avoids the primacy to the idea of individuals and of subjectivity. Alec Mc Houll and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault Primer: Discourse Power And Subject* observe:

Foucault's thought of the human subject itself is an effect of, to some extent subjection. Subjection refers to particular, historically located disciplinary process and concepts, which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise.(3)

Foucault with his new thought counters traditional idea of continuity, multiplicity and difference, he questioned the idea to think historically or an epistemic change was the province of the great thinker and says there was a general move to trace the paths of " system of thought" as objects in their own right regardless of their thinker for

Foucault such systems of thought came to be known as discursive formation and methodology of analysis formation and methodology of analysis comes under the domain of archaeology.

He sees discourses as objective practices which obscure the voluntary and subjective tendencies of mankind and practices that limit the infinite. Potential interpretation with rules and boundaries. Foucault doesn't claim that what he is saying is the truth and that these fundamental are flawed; however he asserts that certain assumptions lead to warped and twisted form of reflection that distort a human interpretation of reality. He identify his idea with Nietzschean criticism of history, which limits knowledge by presupposing a sort of multi historical perspective. The tendency of conventional historian as to explain the past in the frame of continuity is symptoms, which Foucault calls "Temporal agoraphobia, and obsession that fills intellectual space.

The official history is a recorder of facts and facts dominates over fictions. The official history asks, "What happened?" and "What does the event tell us about history?" Official historians believe that history is series of events that have linear, causal relationship. They believe that, we are perfectly capable of objective analysis, of uncovering the facts about historical events, and those facts can sometimes reveals the spirit of an age. The official history study literary works in terms of historical periods, such as the Neoclassical, Romantic, or modernist periods. Finally traditional historians generally believe that history is progressive, that the

human species is improving over the course of time, advancing in its moral, cultural and technical accomplishments.

Official history doesn't give space to narrate the stories of hardships, struggles, agonies, hope, frustration and so on. Marginalized voices and dominated. Human actions and sufferings, various kinds of intimate relationships, psychological and physical problems and undiscovered shattering and experiences are shifted into marginalized a positions. Socio-historical upheavals may be explored by history, but some fundamental human feelings and attitudes that persist through the ages despite other changes are not recorded by history. Death as one of the eternal truths of life has no meaning in the scientific subject; but its presence is felt and assessed in the work of imagination.

Official history is limited in its vision and reach and it has not any instruct relationship between people's inner on outer existence. so against this, new historian challenged the method of official history writing and seeks the truths in dimension of human experiences.

III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

A. War, Devastation and Its Impact

Events of war have always occupied a central position in the narration history. The clashes between rival civilization and rival egos have created the horrors of today and anxieties of future. The first World War, the Second World War many such wars of one country or the other have etched the brutalization, devastation, degradation and alienation that is the result of wars on this world of ours. Interestingly history and fiction greatly involved with such happenings deal with these events differently. The novel *The English Patient* examines the effects of Second World War and the events of 1942, some years before and after Ondaatje in this novel doesn't present the war as major events but he presents the pathetic story of humans enmeshed in war willingly or unwillingly in particular time and place.

The novel opens in an isolated Villa that is "some rooms could not be entered because of rubble" (7-8). The Villa San Girolama was previously a nunnery. During the war time it was attacked and badly damaged. The damaged Villa was occupied by German and "converted hospital after the Allies had laid siege to it. Most of it was apart by bombing, Unsafe. It had been just a temporary field hospital (28). Now the war transfer in the north and four characters live in an abandoned villa, the Villa San Girolamo, that is filled with hidden undetonated bombs. The lives of these four characters, isolated and away from the real

action, reflect the tragedy, horror, terror and brutalization carried and out during the second war" for this cause or that greed" (18). Often confused mind asks telling questions. "But who was has the enemy? Who were the allies? (19). The blurring of boundaries and causes underlines the futility of wars. All characters are shell- shocked and "Where the only way to survive is to excavate everything" (44).

The English Patient is filled with ghosts and ruins that draw the attention to the site of traumatic past. Traumatized and hunted by the violence that they have lived through the characters resides amongst "[d]ead cattle. Horses shot dead, half enter people hanging upside down from bridges. The last vices of war" (29). Left behind at the end or war, they feel the pull of the dead that surround them in the ruined landscape of Italy. Ruins, shorn of the meaning that they once possessed for people now gone, continue haunting the present with reminders of a past that has been forgotten Lying just below the surface of the present are the ruins of the past: "The last medieval war was fought in Italy in 1943 and 1944. Fortress town as great promontories which had been battled over since the eight century had the army of new kings flung carelessly against them. Around the outcrops of rocks was the traffic of stretchers, butchered vineyards, where if you dug deep beneath the tank ruts you found bloodaxe and spear (69). In the midst of the present, the failure of past reappear. The relationship between past and present here is not that of a linear progression. Instead through such fragments, the past is draw the

space of the present. The movement of history is revealed as and contradictory; the feudal medieval past absorbed and erased by modernity and modern warfare returns with the emergence of "blood axe and spear." The appearance of ruins and specters draws the present back to the side of a prior antagonism that has been covered over repressed. The images of ruined, spectral landscape figures the novel's representation of history. Telling the story of four characters struggling to remember and forget the horror of World War II. The novel deals the character's traumatic experience during the war.

All the four characters living in the Italian Villa, Kirpal, Hana, the English patient and Caravaggio are psychologically bruised "All through the night, weeping and shouting, they had to stop each other going crazy" (129). The main character the English patient is almost completely burned. "A burned patient there is a face, but it is unrecognizable, the nerves all gone. You can pass a match across his face and there is no expression. The face is asleep (28) the face is severely disfigured by burns. Almasy does not tell his real name. He constantly retells portions of his story. Portion just like the desert oases appear, disappear and reappear. Almasy's burned body is also reminiscent of a place, the desert, and of a body's capacity to be explored, in this case by a ladybird. "Avoiding the sea of white sheet, it begins to make the long tree towards the distance of the rest of his body, a bright redness against what seems like volcanic flesh" (207). Almasy in a number of times refers to himself

in the third person. His exterior is burned away. Almasy carries with him the history of Herodotus. Herodotus did not simply tell the history of victors. He wrote about and experienced for himself the cultures of all people of the Middle East. Almasy has the same desires to seek out the stories of the people of the desert. He attempts to understand the culture of Bedouins, a nomadic tribe. His attempts is to recover the buried history of desert. Almasy also records the story of his own love of Katherine Clifton in the desert.

The severely burnt Almasy swings between past and present. He loves his nurse Hana at the Italian Villa at the same time; he goes back with Katherine Clifton in his memory. Caravaggio's query "What happened in 1942 (167) is answered by a series of facts about his life and political life. Caravaggio's statement, "Let me tell (Hana) a story" (163), covers the major historical details of Almasy life.

Caravaggio, a Canadian by nationality is another shell-shocked character in novel. Caravaggio arrives in the villa as "the man with bandaged hand" (27). He was a thief. His profession was legitimized during the war when he put his skills to use for the British intelligence effort. He openly criticizes European politics of pleading war. He says, "I think this is called looting. My country taught me all this. It's what I did for them during war" (84-85). He is exhausted by personal or professional robberies, during the Second World War, he was employed by the Allies to collect risky information and important map form the Germans. He was

accidentally caught and "his hands were nearly chopped off and when they cut off my thumb" (55). Many times Caravaggio practiced his skill of robbery putting on monkey suit when the war is over, he comes to realize the futility of war. "The trouble with all of us is we are where we should not be what are we doing by dismantling bombs in orchards, for God's sake? What is the doing fighting English wars?" (122).

During the Second World War, Europeans and Americans made North Africa a war Theater. Millions of peoples were killed; many people of third world were recruited for fighting English war the war also badly damaged the life of Hana, a Canadian nurse.

A twenty year old Canadian nurse Hana is torn between her youth and her maturity. Now, she lives in the evacuated Villa and refused to leave it and she stay with her English patient.

Hana "becomes shell- shocked from dying around them of from something as small as a letter. They would carry as served arm down a hall, or swab at blood that never stopped, as if the wound were a well, and they began to believe in nothing, trusted nothing. They broke the way a man dismantling a mine broke in Santa Chiara hospital when an official walked down the space between a hundred beds and gave her a letter that told her the death of her father" (41).

Hana has emotionally broken-down and herself a patient. Wrecked by emotion; she too has suffered drastically with the death of her father

(. . 30 .). in a sense, she has lost her childhood too early. A good nurse, she learns quickly that she could not emotionally attach to her patients. He calls them all "Buddy" but immediately detaches from them once they are dead. Symbolic of her detachment and loss of childhood, 'She pocked up a pair of scissors out of the porcelain bowl, leaned over and began to cut her hair, not concerned with shape or length, just cutting it away the irradiation of its presence during the pervious days still in her mind when she had bent forward her hair had touched blood in a wound (45-50)". She never looked at herself in mirror again. As the war got darker, she received reports about how certain people she had known had died. She falls in love with the English patient in purely non sexual way. She has also relation with kip.

The futility of war is also projected through Kip's character. His presence in Italy as a sapper, jeopardizing his life for the British and Americans. The danger of destruction hover over every one in the Villa San Girolamo, but especially over Kirpal Singh, the Indian sapper who defused bomb for British army. The danger shapes of faces daily are displaced. Again he aims at a nose on a statue or one of brown hawks veering across they sky of the valley" (73). By targeting the statue, he wants to mutilate that part of himself which figuratively enables him to detect bombs, his nose. He can literally "smell" the danger in the air when he came near the hidden bomb.

Kip and Hana's love life is shattered by the dropping of the bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the world of the Villa San Girolamo is destroyed as the outside world breaks in finally. He becomes disillusioned after the atomic bomb is dropped in Japan. At that time he feels more kinship with Japanese opponents than with English. He comes to realize that his people have been exploited for 'their mechanical skill' Kirpal Singh says: "You and then the American converted us with your missionary rules. And India soldiers wasted their lives on heroes so they could be Pukkah. You had war like cricket, how did you fool us into this? Here . . . listen to what you people have done" (223).

B. Memory as a Tool for Recreating/Rewriting History

Ondaatje believes that history is a subjective phenomena. In order to underline the subjective nature of history, he used memory as a tool to present the alternative version of history. The past exists in one's memory, and any historical writing, in this sense, is a construct of human subjectivity. Since history is account of past events, the historian has to remember them in order to present them in text. The demarcation line between the role of the official historian as a recorder of facts and poet as the creator of plausible facts has been blurred. For instances, Herodotus's histories narrate the famous story of Candaules, the king, and his queen, and Gyges is to be found in historian (these world have been quoted in these novel) that undoubtedly has been restructured Herodotus's imagination. If history concentrates on the events of past that are

determined by our own particular present fictionalized history also inquires about the past by focusing on human predicaments, social responsible, and the observation human values.

The English Patient draws the life breath from the happenings of the Second World War, particularly 1942 and the years around it. The novel attempts to modify our lives and the lives of coming generations by the way we think about history. In a way, he reviews a war that was waged in 1942 and in the process central issues of war change places with peripheral concern human actions and sufferings, various kinds of intimate relationship and psychological and physical problems surface under the sinister impact of war. But undiscovered shattering, experiences dislocate these central issues and shift them to marginal positions. By using these perspectives he challenged the methods of traditional history-writing and seeks the truth in the dimension of human experience.

Traumatized by the past, the characters of this novel seek to cope with their traumatic experience by drawing the event into a narrative space that will contain and position the past. In particular, *The English Patient's* conjuring of memory that organizes the narrative of text as "he whispers again, dragging the listening heart or the young nurse beside him to wherever his mind is into that well of memory the kept plunging into during those months before he died" (4). This passage figures the dynamics of the text's narrative movement. The English patient's remembering propels the narratives and the other characters with him

"into the well of memory." The circular and repetitious movements of his recounting are replicated at the level of entire text. His recounting of the past puts memory into circulation within the narrative of text as his stories "slip from level to level like a hawk" (4). Memory moves the text forward, draws the characters around him, and leads to further unfolding of his own memories and those of other characters.

The fragments of memory that make up the narratives of *The English Patient* and the fragments of images and sentences that compose these memories do not provide a clearly defined representation of past.

Describing his year in Cairo, the patient remembers:

When I went back into the desert, I took with me the evenings of dancing to the 78 of "souvenirs in the bars, the women pacing like greyhound is, leaning against you while you muttered into their shoulders during "my sweet Courtesy of the Societe' Ultraphone of the Francaise Record Company. 1938-1939. There was the war around the corner. (243)

This splinter of memory of the patient does not reveal the past as it really was, but instead, draws forth disjointed instances of dancing, encounters with women, and music heard somewhere - perhaps, in 1938 or 1939 into a single account. Reading this narrative of past composed of fragmentary memory, we find that the relationship of the past to present is not solely one of causality, nor is the past finished and left behind. Lying blind and wounded in the desert, the patient is asked by the Bedouin who

have rescued him to pair together various guns and ammunition. In the midst of this moment, an earlier memory comes to him:

When he was a child he had grown up with an aunt and on the grass of her lawn she had scattered a deck of cards face down and taught him the game of pelmanism. Each player allowed to turn up two cards and eventually, through memory pairing them off. This had been in another landscape of trout streams, birdcalls that he could recognize her from a halting fragment. A fully named world. Now, with his face blind folded in mask of grass fibres, he preked up a shell and moved with his carrier, guiding them towards a gun, inserted the bullet, bolted it, and holding it up in the air fired. (20-21).

The images of past here is not the past as it was when he was a child. Nor is this moment identified with the moment in the present that triggers the memory. The meaning of the past moment in the garden and the moment with Bedouin is neither stable nor self-evident. Rather we find that the meaning of the past that comes to us through the patient's memory escapes totalization because, severed from its fixed point of origin in the past, there is no referent that can ground meaning. In fact, past and present blend into one another. Skating more and quickly between past and present, the fragmentary memories in *The English*

patient Endeavour to supplement the past with the present and the present with a moment in past:

The noise of cracking, crazily down the Canyon walls. "For echo is the soul of the voice exciting itself in hollow place."
A man thought to be sullen and mad had written that sentence down in an English hospital and he, now in this desert, was sane, with clear thought picking of the cards, bringing together with ease, his grin flung out to his aunt, and firing each successful combination into the air, and gradually the unseen men around him replied to each rattle shot with a cheer. (21).

The patient's experience with the Bedouin in the present draws his attention back to moment in the past this fragment of the past is then represented in a memory experienced in present it is through this moment of supplementary that the past or present attains meaning.

Struggling to understand the past, these characters draw our attention to excerpts of memory, passages from books, fragments of ruins, and isolated statues and images of art, and thus the novel narrative as a whole presents a theory of history that replicates the discourse of a patient who "speaks in fragments about Oasis town's the later Medicis, the prose style of Kipling, the women who bit into his flesh. And in his common place book, his 1980 edition of Herodotus's Histories, are the other fragments maps, diary entries, writing in many language, paragraphs cut

out of other books" (96). These copies of Herodotus history the English patients carries with him operate as motif for this reconceptualization of history of Herodotus Endeavour, the English patient says:

I see him more as one of those spare men of the desert who travel from Oasis to Oasis, trading legends as if it is the exchange of seeds, consuming everything without suspicion piecing together a mirage "This history of mine, "Herodotus says, 'has from the beginning sought out of the supplementary to the main argument. What you find in him are cul- de- sacs within the sweep of history . . . how people betray each other for the sake of nations. (188-119)

The individual memories in this novel are just such cul- de-sacs which has been perceived as the dead ends of history. On one level of each the characters separate of past they are lost from the larger historical narrative of the war while on another level that of the novel as whole they are the events that can not be pieced together in to a seamless narrative. These accounts of the past do not provide an alternative linear narrative of past out rather offer a supplement which interrupts the movement of historical progression by introducing discontinuous moments in to the narrative progressions like this book that the English patient has. "added to, cutting and going the pages from other books a writing in his won observations so they cradled within the text of Herodotus, "memory from past to the future but instead, offers a vision of the past as ruin (16).

While the English patient's approach to the past does challenge the traditional concept of history. His memory conflicts to with his desire to know, to map and to control struggling to understand the events that led him to lay bed in Italy. The English patient attempts to chart the like as he mapped the desert. He works to fill in the gaps; moving back to materials already mentioned in order to fill it out, to throw light upon comes still in shadows as he did with Herodotus's histories. "When he discovered the truth to what had seemed a lie, he brought out his glue pot and pasted in map or news clipping or used a blank space in the book to sketch men in skirts with faded unknown animals along side them" (246). The process of exploring both the desert and the past is guided here by the longing for truth. In the patient's discourses, the two acts of mapping and remembering are linked together. Both projects are driven by the desire for order as he seeks to find patterns and connections out of the shifting landscapes of the desert and past "where nothing was strapped down permanent, everything drifted (22). In these acts, there is the desire to chart the distance between the various parts, whether geographical locations or past events and to place them within a larger total framework. History for the patient, is something to be devoured he declares." I am a person who I felt alone in some one home walks to the bookcase, pulls down a volume and inhales it. So history enters us". (18). The patient understanding of history as an object that he "inhales or consumes suggestions that he believes the past is something that he can contain,

catalogue or posses. In spite of this, his statement reveals that in this, act of consumption the present is self possessed as "history enters us."

Turning now the pages on his own past through memory, the patient works to exhaust past and to control the ghosts that make a claim on the present. By retelling the events that led him to lie dying in the bed, the patient attempts to order the past to find links and connections that were not visible at the time of the events however his narration of memory resists such an organization.

His efforts to monumentalize the past are illustrated in his treatment of Katherine's dying body. Like "old warrior [who] celebrated their loved ones by locating and holding them in what ever world made them eternal- a colorful and painting her body (248). Such effects situate both Katherine and past as static objects, something that the he might possess and that has no power to make a claim open him. However, as she lies there dying, her voice indicates him." "You think you are iconoclast, but you are not you just move or replace what you can not have" (173). Katherine's accusation identifies the patient on the maker of icons and objects in these desires to possess them. Her words revel that despite his alternative historical paradigm and his wish to seek out cul-de-seeks history.

The patient's accounts of his desert explorations reveal this colonial approach to history. His wishes to see his attempts to explore and map are separate from the political world of public events. However his accounts

of these explorations are anything but apolitical and instead, reveal the under working of European history, which includes in its narrative only those events that further its progress:

There is after Herodotus, little interest by the western world towards the desert for hundreds of the years from 425 B.C. to the beginning to the twenty century there is an averting an eyes silence. The nineteenth century was an age of river seeker and then in the 1920s there is sweet post script history. On this pocket of earth made mostly by privately funded expeditions and following by modest lectures given at the Geographical society in London at Kensington Sore.(133)

Places are rendered historical only through their significance to the western world. It is historical gaze that provides meanings and existences to people and events. In the absence of this gaze, there is only silence, a "Vast and silent pocket of the earth" (134). These European explorations see the landscape of other countries as blank and set about displacing the history of their people as they re- map the land and provide with other names. This process of exploration, which The English Patient describes on "Our slow unearthing of history in the desert', claim landscape of other cultures and marks it as own (241). The significant of the place for another culture is lost; the people who live there are relegated to place of absence. Entering Africa, the patient finds only "the emptiness of desert where you are always surrounded by lost history" (135).

The denial of the position of knower to the colonial world is figured with the presence of Kip within narrative. With his arrival in the story, a tension is created between the colonial presence of the English patient and the colonized subject, Kip. The process of masking the colonial past is replicated in the narrative positioning of the Indian sapper Kip in relegated to margins of this group of characters within the western world in which the other characters live is denied status as a knowing subject. Arriving in Britain to train of war, Kip's Indian name is taken from him and introducing a counterpoint and challenge to the English patient's cosmopolitan past and career as an explorer. The English patient attempts to draw Kip to him as he with the other characters. Making a comparison between their lives where he says", Kip and I are both international bastards" (76). This identification, though, over simplifies the many differences between their situations on Kip, who has been re-named, whose nation has been colonized, sits in a contentious juxtaposition to the nameless and nation less English patient who has striven to lose his identity. A well- educated European who consciously erases past and nation has very little in common with a colonial subject fighting the war of this colonizers Kip, however penetrates the boundaries of colonial identification. Through the memories of these two characters a pressure develops that strains the narrative of the text. Kip's memories stage a critique of The English patient's past and the western European culture represents. Unable to absurd Kip's memories within this narrative

an antagonism develops that endangers the efforts to lay the past to rest and to bring the history of war to closure. Marginalized in the narrative present of novel, the memory of the Kip's past figures the erasure of non-western histories and his memories supplement the view of European colonization.

Throughout the narrative, Kip has sought to remain untouched by memories of past. He attempts to clearly order. Instantly, the past is drawn in present on kip see," everything all those around him, in a different light". The repressed and erased moment of colonial history are revealed as kip". See the street of Asia full of fire. It rolls across cities like burst map, the hurricane of heat withering bodies as it meets them, humans suddenly in the air. This tremor of western wisdom" (284). Where as before he could penetrate the fixed boarder of colonial world by "being able to hide in silent place" now he feels" condemned separate from the world" and can not longer find a way to translate himself within that world (201.283). He is unable to construct a linear narrative to understand how he came to be where he is. Thrust out of this world that he has inhabited, he realized" his name is Kirpal Singh and he does not know what he in doing here" (287). With his scream the returns, but because this past remains untranslatable within the western world view of other character.

The inner logic of this western culture which he has adopted is suddenly t kip as he comes to understand how the power to write and

construct history has been the foundation of a process of colonization.

With this event, the novel presents an attack on western civilization and the structures of history that support it. Kip turns accusingly to the English patient.

I grew up with the traditions from my country, but later more often from your country. You're fragile White Island that with costumes and manors and books and perfects and reason somehow converted the rest of the world you stood for, precise behavior. I knew if, lifted a teacup with wrong figure I would be banished. It tied the wrong kind of knot in the tie I was out. Was it just ships that give you such power was it, no my brother said because you had the westerns and printing press. (283)

Kip reveals the way in which the ability of the western subject to write history orders and positions the rest of the world. Within the logic of such history, only those colonial subjects are allowed to be represented and included who provide to contradiction to this homogeneous and coherent space. The hegemony of western colonial world with its "speeches a of civilization from kinds of queens and president- such voices of abstracts order" is threatened as the possibility for entrusting history an self- presidents totality in denied" (285). This fragmenting of western power, opening up a space for resistance to the colonial past and drawing forth the colonized.

C. Subjective History: Merely a Version

Thus it has been observed in the preceding chapter that the traditional ideas of viewing history as a group of facts, which exists extra-textually and which can be as it: really was" have been questioned. It is now believed that past is available to us through the textual traces. Thus like fiction, history is textualized, and therefore is a kind of human fabrication. Thus historian interprets the past, present in written form, and makes it intelligible to us. History is therefore, always contaminated, oblique and subjective., the assumptions such as the neutrality of language and the absences of a domineering, ideologies narrating voice are contested by the New Historicism, ' takes the present powers and limitations of the writing of that past to account (Qtd. In Juan Hat Chard 1). This view of history stresses on the impossibility of all embracing and totalizing account of past. History cannot be represented in pure form, for it always remains relative to narrator's prejudices and preoccupations. So the proclamation of truth in history can no longer sustain. What is available to us in only different version and perspective of interpretation in history? Different factors manipulate the representation. History then no longer saves a transparent medium through which we can have an entire picture of past.

The subjectivity of the historian thus, plays a vital role in the creation of history. The historian interprets the historical factors using his imaginative mind. So there are many interpretations of the same event at

many version of same history. In this regard, history is like fiction, a product of imaginative mind. The official historical discourse is not authentic and final history. It is rather shaped by ideology. The ideology controls and manipulates the historical factor as per its interest.

It is in the light of viewing history as a kind of human fabrication that an attempt, in this present dissertation, has been made to study and analyze Ondaatje's *The English Patient*. Moreover, here the present study aims to analyze how the traditional notions of viewing official historical discourse as an absolute, authentic, and the final version of history has as been undermined in the novel; Ondaatje attempts to encourage the readers to reconsider the interpretation of the history. History, like fiction, is subjective and into his creation which memory plays a vital role. He presents the text in nonlinear way which is the parallel to the fragmented of Villa, and the fragmented ruins of the characters. Unlike the traditional history, Ondaatje's *The English Patient* represents the fullness complexity, fragmentations, and degradation and uplifting of human through the life story of four characters fixed in some moment of human history. He gives more emphasizes to action, suffering, psychological and physical problem of characters, their various kind of intimate relationship under the sinister impact of war.

Ondaatje's novel thematizes the concern with fragments on the formal level. *The English patient* is as the title of the second part suggests- "in Near Ruins"(25). The formal fragmentations parallel the

reality that the characters have to face. The present of the narration- at the end of World War Second, they have taken refuge from reality in a "in ruins." All though their stay in Villa San Girolamo could appear on a flighty from the outside world, the fact that each character attempts to remember the past. As a result, the overall consists of flashbacks, which is often vague and provide the reader only with a fragmentary account of both history and each character's story. From the start, the text portrays the English patient, burned to in bone and his, "black body and destroyed feet" (3), as a physical ruin, the first section clarifies that the architectural wreckage surrounds him. Referring to Villa, the narrator explains that some rooms "could not be entered because one bomb crater allowed moon and rain in to library rubble caused by mortars heel attack" (97). On the second section, which bears the title 'in near Ruins' focuses on Caravaggio, the thief whose thumbs were brutally cut off during torture session. The title of the section is drawn from the narrator's comment that Caravaggio was 'In Near Ruin' when he was brought to the hospital for care" (27). In the same section, the narrator goes on to compare Hana to a ruin:" Nurses to become shell- shocked from the dying arms around them (40).

Not only are minds, bodies, and geographies broken and reduced to ruins but the narrative structure itself is seemingly marked by the explosive forces of war. Examples of the text's fragmented structure abound, perhaps the most telling concerns the description of the events

that lead to Caravaggio arrest and torture. Rather than offering an organic, chronological account the text forces reader to contend with a series of non-sequential fragments that must be pieced together in order for them to make sense (35-39), in much the same way, the books that Hana reads to *The English Patient* have, " gaps of plot like section of a read washed out by storms, missing incidents as if the locusts had consumed a section of tapestry, as if plaster loosened by the bombing ahead fallen away from a mural at night" (3). Narrative fragmentation is also the principal feature of the book that the English patient brought with him through the fire, "a copy of Herodotus that he had added to cutting and gluing in pages from other books or writing in his own observations" (16).

The plane crash has made the English patient forget his national origins,. It appears that this amnesia has brought his earlier wish to "erase (his) name and place [He] had come from" (39). The English patient also hates nationality and believes in humanity. In bed he remembers," every where there was war. Suddenly we were 'team' the Bermanns, the Bagnolds, the Slatin Pashas- who had at various times saved each other lives- has now split up in camps" 9 (168). It is in the desert that the English patient becomes 'nation less'. He tells Hana," I came to hate nations. We are deformed by nation-states Madox died because of nations" (138).

Soon national cultural boundaries dissolve in personal relationship. No longer important that whether they belong to one or other nation

because they are badly broken by the events of war. The Canadian Nurse, Hana, decides to stay with her so called English patient because, " she would but be ordered again or carry out duties for greater good" (14). The fallacy of the "greater good" had penetrated in to her, and yet the war had taught her to nurse the suffering humans irrespective of their nation, culture creed, race. The need for multiculturalism even, internationalism is the positive fallout of war. Hana states, "Here war was over" (51). But with all the experiences confined in her, can she ever be free of war?

V. Conclusion

Michael Ondaatje's, *The English Patient* breaks away from the tyranny of chronology; it moves backward and forward, in bits and pieces like the natural motion of memory. His historical subtext connected with factional renditions, represents the complexity, fragmentation, degradation, and uplifting of human through the life story of four characters fixed in some moment of history. Truth of the characters articulates an imaginative account of past that was not possible except by means of imaginatively constructed, fictive elements. In these cases, Ondaatje uses fictionalized history to reveal the human meaning of war and denied the conventional history. The history of the devastation of people and nature causally treated by the traditional historian. But in this novel, the real and imaginary fuse together to give a vivid sense of the experience of war with all its attendant emotions and scarred relations. And novel, unlike history, provide a vision of history that takes into account these experience and relations.

Juxtaposing history and fictional history is an intentional move by Ondaatje to narrate the human/personal history of Almas, the main character and not the historical fact of his life. The first person narrative of Almas, brings back coherence and chronology to his a speech Caravaggio query, 'what happen in 1942?' is answered by a series of facts about his love life and political life. His history details gradually disappear in the fictional history of his love with Katherine Clifton. Soon,

enough, cultural boundaries dissolve in personal relationship. It is no longer important that he is a Hungarian who had assisted the Germans. For Hana, he is English, and for Kip he is a brother. Self-referentiality with its exclusionary results are negated by Ondaatje. The war is over for the allied and the German forces, but the war ravaged minds and bodies on both sides continue to fight a war that may never come to an end. The explosion of automatic bomb It happen extends the war externally in the cancer stricken generation or in the minds of those whose lost their near and dear one. The historical impact of war may be removing from people's memory by the cultural and emotional devastation may linger forever. It is significant that the English patient is faceless, and that he has lost track of political history. His personal history survives in bits and pieces. Traditional historian is interested in the principal event constructed by thousands of faceless men, but Ondaatje, by fictionally historicizing the truth of Almasy life, has inscribed the history of the characters that often remain buried.

Ondaatje focuses the characters and their emotions. The four shell-shocked human begin to gather the broken pieces of their lives, the process of reconstruction begins after devastation. The bridges between the countries that had collapsed due to political or national reason are rebuilt, kindness, forgiveness and selflessness- the inherent qualities of civilized human surface to rebuild the world. Except the English patient who is likely to die, the other return to their respective worlds, scarred,

broken, but not dead. While it is true that Hana, Caravaggio will be deprived of a fully normal life, time will cement some of the fractured sections of Kip and Hana's life even though their love life is shattered by the dropping of the bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and yet his return to India and bringing up a family reveals a remarkable ability to meet and reconnect with others. Indeed, at the end of the novel Ondaatje depicts the re-emergence of that almost musical connection between Kip and Hana even though they have been separated for four years, Hana living in Canada and Kip in India. The novels on the one hand recreate the destructive impact of wars on human life and society but on the other suggest the possibility of overcoming the evils of brutality, selfishness and dehumanization by the single-minded conviction and dedications of a handful of people.

Unlike more conventional novels, Ondaatje's novel, *The English Patient* does not take as it focuses on the re-presenting of a great historical moment, although World War-II provides the background for the narrative what we might call the public events of this historical moment, those most often recorded in "traditional" history, remain bracketed in this novel. Instead *The English Patient* is a historical novel in different sense. Here, there is no replay of great historical moment populated with recognizably historical figures. The historical personages, those of the desert explorers are themselves only minor figures of history. In this novel Ondaatje reinvents various episodes that have caught his

fancy. The fragmentary memories that populate in narrative resist the novel is cohesive singular narrative. The fragmentary accounts of memory import a vision of the past that resist the linear relationship between past and present.

Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, presents the history of four shell-shocked characters though in the background, the arena of the war remains hilly activated, and yet the human endeavor to reconstruct from the total devastation and chaos is reaffirmed. He subverts the traditional idea of viewing history a records of facts and absolute truth by presenting the fragments of history of the character. He abandons the use of liner time as a basis for the sequencing of events to move away from the governing version of history. *The English Patient* discloses the various truths of the characters that are hidden in traditional history.

Thus, the scene of loss, devastation, trauma are portrayed in the novel. In their memory, the characters recreate the military and political events of 1942 and the years before and after. The war for political supremacy may be etched by historians, but human drama of pain, shattered lives that the war has created, the death of human value and lives is consigned to oblivion because of their penchant for an "objective" kind of truth. Ondaatje opens up the narration especially that of history. The fiction writer becomes the new historical agent to reconstruct history.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. et. al. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Bangalore: Prism Books Pvt. Ltd, 1993.
- Adams, Hazard, *Critical Theory Since Plato*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1992.
- Foucault Michael. "Truth and Power." *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Froth Worth: Horcourt Brace 1992.
- Foucault, Michael. *The Archeology of Knowledge and Discourse of Language*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pentagon Books, 1971.
- Gupta, Arun. *Healing thought on Tender Theory*, Kathmandu: New Hira Books Enterprise, 2004.
- Kyser, Kristina. "Seeking Everything in Different Light. Vision and Revelation." *Kristina University of Toranto*. 2 Col. Vol. 70, Issue 4.
- Leostrass, and Joseph Cropsey. "Friedrich Nietzsche." *History of Political Philosophy*. New York: OUP, 1992, 782-802.
- Mecdonell, Diane. *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction Oxford One*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Marlene, Goldman: *History and Theory: University of Toronto Quarterly*, 00420274., Fall 2001. Vol. 70-96.
- Mchoul, Alec, and Wedy Grace. *A Toucalult Primer: Discourse Power and Subject*. New York: New York U.P., 1997

Minghell, Anthony. "Power Joy in Ondaatze English Patient." 17.1
(1995). Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Use and Abuse of History."
Critical Theory Since Plato. Forth Worth Harcourt Bruce. 1992.

Novak., Amy. "Textual Hunting Narration; Memory and Silence."
"Summer 2004, Vol. 36, Issue 2.

Ondaaje, Michael. *The English Patient*. London. Picador, 2001.

Selden. Rama. *A Readers Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 2nd ed.
Kentucky: The UP of Kentucky, 1985.

Wellek, Rene. *Theory of Literary* New York: Barcourt Brace Jovanovich,
inc, 1970.