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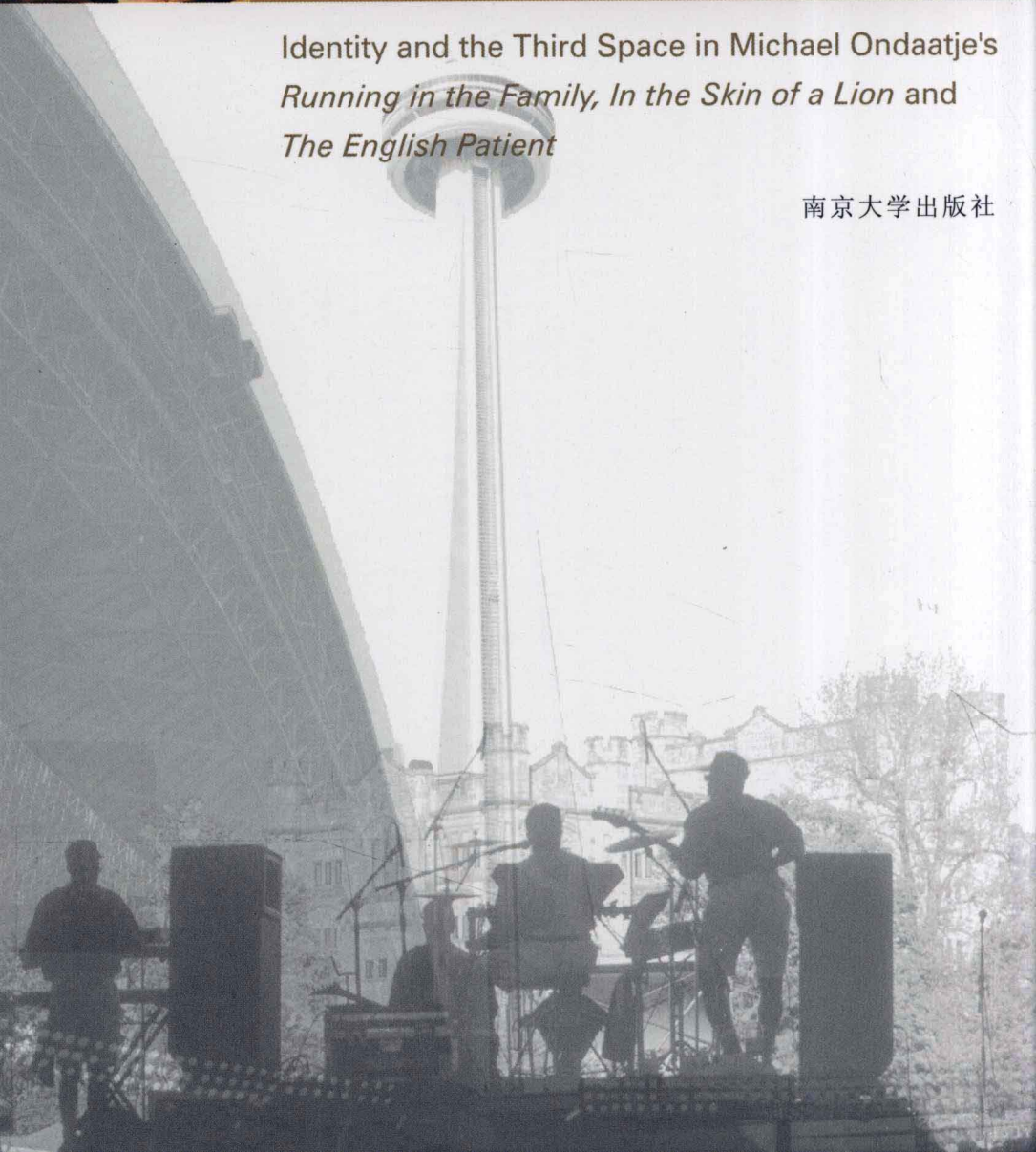


身份与第三空间： 迈克尔·昂达奇作品主题研究

姚媛 著

Identity and the Third Space in Michael Ondaatje's
*Running in the Family, In the Skin of a Lion and
The English Patient*

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总 序

在全球化进程中,文学在民族文化和民族精神形成中起着重要作用。文学作为文化的组成部分,一方面继承和表现民族文化传统,另一方面赋予文化以新的内容和活力。当今世界,“中国发展离不开世界,世界繁荣稳定也离不开中国”,中外文化交流、交融、交锋越来越频繁。为了营造一个和谐的国际环境,需要深入研究世界各国的文化,认识当代外国文学与文化,从深层次上理解中西文化的差异,借鉴人类优秀的文明成果,以促进我国社会主义文化大发展大繁荣,提升国家文化软实力。

南京大学研究外国文学与文化历史悠久,基础厚实,范存忠、陈嘉、何如、张威廉等一批著名学者曾在此任教,奠定学科构架和特色,培育优良的学术传统。早在1979年,教育部正式批准成立南京大学外国文学研究所,1980年创办《当代外国文学》,该刊物现为中文社会科学引文索引(CSSCI)来源期刊。南京大学是全国美国文学研究会的驻所单位,设有多个外国文学与文化研究机构,如中美文化研究中心、中日文化研究中心、中德文化比较研究所、欧洲研究中心、澳大利亚研究中心、爱尔兰研究中心、加拿大研究中心、韩国学术研究中心等,学术资源丰富。一批中青年学者脱颖而出,并形成团队优势。他们立足中国,面向世界,在外国文学体裁(小说、诗歌、戏剧)、国别文学史、文学批评理论、中外文学与文化比较、翻译理论与实践、文化研究等领域默默耕耘,扎实工作,取得了包括四卷本《新编美国文学史》在内的许多高水平研究成果。2009年11月,以南京大学外国语学院各专业研究力量为依托的南京大学当代外国文学与文化研究中心被确立为江苏高校哲学社会科学重点研究基地。

在国外的一流大学,素有进行外国文学与文化研究的传统,覆盖面广,且有相当的深度,对当代学术创新和理论话语建构起着重要作用。20世纪中叶以来,人文社会科学的一个趋势是用多学科的方法开展研

究。进入 21 世纪,文学研究拓展到伦理、种族、性别、生态环境等领域。同时,文学审美研究和经典的回归也是新的动向。南京大学作为一所综合性大学,学科齐全,这一特点为文学与文化的跨学科研究提供了得天独厚的条件。南京大学当代外国文学与文化研究中心发挥学术研究的传统优势,围绕当代外国文学与文化研究的前沿问题、热点问题和基本问题,确定了若干系列研究课题,即“20 世纪 70 年代以来外国文学研究”、“当代西方文学批评理论态势研究”、“诺贝尔文学奖研究”、“文化与全球化研究”。这些课题作为研究基地重大招标项目已获江苏省教育厅批准正式立项。

为了展示南京大学当代外国文学与文化研究中心的学术成就,加强重点研究基地建设和学术队伍建设,促进学术交流,我们决定编辑出版“南京大学当代外国文学与文化研究文库”。编进文库中的论著大多为研究基地重大招标项目子课题的研究成果,在内容上涵盖了当代外国文学与文化研究的主要方面,反映了研究人员活跃的学术思想、独特的学术视角、扎实的学术功底和较高的学术水平。

该文库关注当下外国文学理论发展动向和国别文学研究现状,从全球化和本土视角对 20 世纪 70 年代以来美国、英国、爱尔兰、法国、德国、俄罗斯、西班牙、日本和北欧国家的文学进行系统的阐释,考察 30 多年来的文学创作观念流变和研究状况,同时进一步拓展诺贝尔文学奖研究的广度和深度,对获奖作家作品的思想内涵、审美价值、话语方式进行深入探讨。在作家作品研究的基础上,力求从中国学者的视角出发,审视当代外国文学与文化批评理论,并以“文化与全球化”为主题,分析和阐释当代西方社会的特殊文化现象,着力探讨全球化对东西方社会造成的文化冲击,寻求本民族文化发展的道路。

承担重大科研项目、产出高水平、创新性科研成果是重点研究基地建设的首要任务。编辑出版“南京大学当代外国文学与文化研究文库”是基地建设的一项重要举措。我衷心希望文库越办越好,不断扩大其学术影响,努力打造精品,为提升我国的外国文学与文化研究水平做出贡献。

王守仁

2010 年 10 月于南京大学

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Y. Y.

中文提要

迈克尔·昂达奇(Michael Ondaatje, 1943 -)是加拿大当代重要作家。他出生于锡兰,有欧亚混血血统,11岁赴英国求学,19岁移民加拿大,有丰富的文化经历,其身世对作品创作有重大影响。他在创作中始终表现出对身份问题的关注和为身份非此非彼的人物寻找归属的渴望。本书通过分析昂达奇的《世代相传》(*Running in the Family*, 1982)、《身着狮皮》(*In the Skin of a Lion*, 1987)和《英国病人》(*The English Patient*, 1992)三部作品,指出作品中出现的一系列物质空间具有象征意义,体现了作者为让人物摆脱身份界线的困扰而建构的第三空间。

第三空间是一个非实体性的结构,是无形的、抽象的、比喻的空间。在这个空间,双方或多方相互混合而生成第三方。混合并非同时共存、简单叠加,而是双方或多方在相互影响和作用之下交叉、融合并最终发生转化。其间,各方之间的界线变得模糊,乃至消失。第三空间不是一个闭合的、不变的空间;相反,它具有开放性和流动性,不断吸收新的因素,永远处在变化之中。在昂达奇的作品中,具体有形的物质空间——倾塌的房屋、雨中的丛林、兴建中的城市、远离战争的沙漠和别墅——被赋予象征意义,用来表达第三空间的思想。这些物质空间随着不同身份的人物之间关系的变化而变化,空间的变化又反过来影响人物身份,使之发生改变。空间和身份都变动不居。物质空间与人物身份相互作用,使此处/彼处、里面/外面、中心/边缘等空间界线和不同种族、文化、民族国家之间的身份界线变得模糊不清,第三空间由此而产生。

第三空间对于昂达奇作品中的人物有其存在的必要性。在第三空间,种族的起源难以确定,所谓纯洁的血统不复存在。各种文化相互交融,形成新的杂糅文化。种族混血的后裔和来自不同文化的移民不再因其相异的血统和文化而受到排斥。不仅如此,所谓构成现代民族国家本质的共同疆域和历史也被解构,人物得以摆脱民族国家身份的束缚,形成

没有身份界线的群体,相互治疗民族国家之间差异性导致的战争所带来的肉体 and 心灵的伤害。作品中曾经遭到排斥、受到伤害、被边缘化的人物在第三空间摆脱了身份界线的困扰,找到了归属。

第三空间是昂达奇在文学作品中想象和建构的产物,虽然有其局限性,但是对于作品中的人物有存在的必要性,是被身份界线所困扰的人物的归属空间。昂达奇对第三空间的建构表现了他对身份问题的思考和探索,展示了归属的另一种可能形式。

Abstract

Michael Ondaatje (1943 -) is an important contemporary Canadian writer. His personal experience of being an immigrant has great influence on his writing. In almost all his works he deals with the issue of identity by telling stories of people caught between races, cultures and nations. Through analysis of his three major works—*Running in the Family*, *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient*, this book argues that Ondaatje has constructed third spaces to which his displaced characters can belong.

The third space is an intangible, abstract, metaphorical space with no physical dimension. In the third space, two or more entities mix to create a third, indistinguishable category. This mixing is not juxtaposition of entities with boundaries between them intact, but transformation that results from contact, communication and interaction. During the process, boundaries between entities are blurred, even erased. The third space is not a closed and fixed space, but is open and fluid. It is ready to take in new elements at any time and is always in the process of transformation. In Ondaatje's works, concrete physical spaces—houses in near ruin, jungles in the rain, the city in construction, the desert and the villa away from the war—are assigned symbolic meanings so as to express the writer's idea of the third space. These physical spaces change as the relationship between the characters with different identities changes, and the changes of the spaces in turn bring about changes of the characters' identities. Both space and identity are fluid. The interactions between identities and between identity and space blur the boundaries between here and there, inside and outside, center and

margin as well as the boundaries between races, cultures and nations. From the zones where boundaries are blurred, third spaces emerge.

The third space is necessary for the characters in Ondaatje's works. In the third space, origins of races cannot be traced and racial purity does not exist; cultures interact and a new hybrid culture emerges. Racial hybrids and immigrants are not excluded from the society because of their "differences". Common territory and history which supposedly make up the essence of the nation are deconstructed so that the characters are freed from national ties and are able to form communities with no national divides where they can heal their injuries brought about by nation-sponsored war. The third space offers a space of belonging for the marginalized and injured characters.

The third space is a product of Ondaatje's imagination and construction in literary works. Despite its limitations, it is necessary for the characters puzzled by the boundaries between identities in Ondaatje's works. The three works studied in this book reflect Ondaatje's idea of identity and the third space that becomes more profound and point to an alternative way of belonging.

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Introduction

This book studies the construction of the third space in the Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje's three major works *Running in the Family* (1982), *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987) and *The English Patient* (1992). The third space is an in-between space, or a space of hybridity, that is always in transformation. It challenges essentialism and dualism involved in the understanding of identity and allows new identities to emerge. Living in the third space, the characters who are caught between races, cultures and nations and who are marginalized in the societies they live in do not feel divided by boundaries between identities and spaces, but can make this increasingly hybrid world their new home.

Michael Ondaatje was born in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1943. He immigrated to England at the age of eleven and to Canada at nineteen. He began to publish in 1967 and up to now he has seventeen books to his credit, including poetry and prose. His books of poetry include *The Dainty Monsters* (1967), *The Man with Seven Toes* (1969), *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left Handed Poems* (1970), *Rat Jelly* (1973), *Elimination Dance* (1976), *Claude Glass* (1979), *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do* (1979), *Tin Roof* (1982), *Secular Love* (1984), *The Cinnamon Peeler* (1991) and *Handwriting* (1998). Among these works, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* and *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do* won the Governor General's Award, the most prestigious award for literature and arts in Canada, for Poetry in 1971 and 1980 respectively. His prose works include *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), *Running in the Family* (1982), *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), *The English Patient* (1992), *Anil's Ghost* (2000) and

Divisadero (2007). Though his writing career began with books of poetry, what established him as an important writer in Canada were his prose works, especially *The English Patient*, which won the Governor General's Award for Fiction in 1992, the Booker Prize in 1992 and Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1993. These books not only were bestsellers, but also have been the focus of literary critical interest in Canada.

In the different stories about various characters set in diverse places and times in Ondaatje's works, one topic that recurs is that of identity. Actually, one of the major concerns of almost all the main characters in Ondaatje's works is to know or to shed their identities. Mervyn Ondaatje who has an escape complex, Patrick Lewis who seeks a position in the city of Toronto and the English patient who hopes to erase his family name and the place he is from are only part of a long list of such characters. These characters' identities become problematic for various reasons, but one common reason for the identity problem faced by characters in the three works explored in this book is their position in a society with binary oppositions between races, cultures and nations.

Critics have analyzed the issue of identity in Ondaatje's works from the perspectives of language, race, gender and history.

John A. Thieme proposes that *Running in the Family* "demonstrat[es] a concern with how notions of personal and cultural identity are formed through language" (40). On the one hand, for Ondaatje the narrator in *Running in the Family*, how much he can know his father depends to a large extent on the oral narratives of his relatives and family friends. On the other hand, written records, e. g. the friar's description of Sri Lanka as an island with miraculous things and *Ceylon Sunday Times*' report of the Sinhalese and Tamils' belief that the earth was flat, help shape the country into an "exotic" and "uncivilized" place (43). Gordon Gamlin, in his reading of *In the Skin of a Lion*, notes that "the immigrants' first step towards social consolidation is language acquisition" and the "failure to acquire the new language ... results in the loss of political

power” (72 - 3). He suggests that language barrier is one of the factors that prevent these so-called ethnic minorities to participate in the *writing* of Canada’s official history, in which they occupy a marginalized position. However, the novel’s “emphasis on the tale-telling nature of the story” (68) enables the immigrants to *tell and retell* a number of historical events and helps them secure a position in the social power structure. Christian Bök believes that language, whether as “a metaphorical violence” (118) that can cause social protest in *Running in the Family* or as a means of “social communion” (119) that makes it possible for Patrick to immerse in the environment of the Macedonian immigrants in *In the Skin of a Lion*, helps the characters know who they are in the society.

Writing about the issue of race in *The English Patient*, Lisa Rundle and Elizabeth Kella both believe that Kip’s experiences in this novel make it clear that racial difference is what finally set people apart. Rundle thinks it important for Kip to reclaim his name—Kipal Singh—near the end because it is only then that he knows where he belongs—he belongs to the brown races and should not work for the whites (9). Nothing, not even love or loyalty, can transcend race. Kella agrees with Rundle and points out that it is “racial difference that causes the disintegration of the fragile community of war-traumatized individuals” (81). As the characters die or leave the villa and the community in the villa collapses, the novel “move[s] from cultural hybridity to racial separatism” (99). However, she notices that despite this trend, at the end of the novel there is a “dream of transcendent unity” between Kip the brown soldier and Hana the white nurse when they are miraculously united across geographical spaces, which shows Ondaatje’s ambivalent attitude toward racial difference (111). Glen A. Lowry also believes race is an important issue in Ondaatje’s works. He contends that “Ondaatje’s writing, from *In the Skin of a Lion* on, represents ‘race’ as a complex problem of representation that not only puts into play the

interpolated identities of so-called ‘racialized’ subjects, but of ‘white’ subjects as well” (“The Representation of ‘Race’” 63). Unlike Rundle and Kella, whose understanding of racial identity suggests essentialist thinking, Lowry uses the development of Patrick’s and Caravaggio’s identity in the novel to show that one’s racial identity, whether “colored” or “white”, is a social construct. Lowry’s understanding of Ondaatje’s description of the characters’ racial identity in *The English Patient* is also different from that of Rundle or Kella. According to him, Kip’s response to the bombing of Japan manifests Ondaatje’s “critique of Western racism” (“Between *The English Patients*” 282) rather than emphasizes racial difference.

The issue of identity in Ondaatje’s works is analyzed from the perspective of gender by Lorraine M. York, Susan Ellis and Sharyn Emery. York, after careful study of Ondaatje’s poems and fiction, notices the changing gender politics in these works. In his poems, most women characters are passive victims of male violence, and the only woman poet is a “target for the male poet’s word knives”(York, “Whirling Blindfolded” 74), indicating conflicts, even enmity, between sexes. In *Running in the Family*, the stereotypical women victims are “phased out” (80), and in *In the Skin of a Lion* “women artists come to the fore” (86), acquiring status formerly occupied by men. This change, however, is not linear, and the gender issue has its “complexities and inconsistencies” (74). The complexities and inconsistencies can be detected in Catharine and Almasy’s love story in *The English Patient*. Emery understands their relationship as one of ownership—Catharine is owned by men despite her protest, and dies “because she [is] not identified according to her husband’s last name” (Emery 3), thus she becomes a stereotypical victim. York sees men’s ownership of women in this novel as a metaphor of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized (York, “Whirling Blindfolded” 75).

Similar to that of the female characters, Ondaatje’s portrayal of

male characters undergoes changes, too. In her study of masculinity in Ondaatje's works, Ellis observes a "male core identity" that involves "an insistence on a fixed separateness, a me/not-me distinction, and rigid boundaries between the masculine and the feminine" (2). Billy the Kid as the outlaw artist-killer, Buddy Bolden as the extremist riding the cusp of ultimate spontaneous creativity and self-annihilation, and numerous poet-narrators of his early poems, all display "the masculinist qualities of separateness, individualism, and distance from others" (1). In *Running in the Family*, however, there is evidence of "his awareness of, and struggle with, the masculine exclusionary position" (2). Mervyn's retreat from the world, for example, is pitied rather than celebrated. Ondaatje's next prose works, *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient*, reveal "an important shift in the world view of Ondaatje's works" away from the individualistic masculinity toward the "notion of ... the masculine seen in terms of deep relationship" (9). The male characters in these two novels literally rely on others for survival and/or for understanding of their own identities.

Critical attention has also been paid to the relationship between identity and history in Ondaatje's works. Chelva Kanaganayakam's idea is that since "to be refused a role in history is to be denied the very basis of identity" (34), the identity problem in Ondaatje's works needs to be investigated in relation to history both in the national sense and in the private sense. Ondaatje's view of history in his prose works, from *Coming Through Slaughter* to *Anil's Ghost*, is best explained by Linda Hutcheon, that is, history should not be "accepted as how things actually happened", but must be seen "as a construction, as having been made by historians through a process of selecting, ordering, and narrating" (*The Canadian Postmodern* 14 - 5). Sonia Snelling believes that the absent parents in *Running in the Family* are as elusive as the past (23), and it is only in "the most fictive passages" in which Ondaatje rewrites the past that they are "most accessible" (26). Rocío G. Davis