

language in the book encourages the reader to engage with the text and also question the validity of official history and the idea of overarching grand narratives. Through his use of poetic language and complex structure Ondaatje explores the idea of power and its inevitable relationship with a sense of identity. Ondaatje attempts to highlight language as an omnipresent power which has the ability to marginalize groups through its exclusionary practice and failures.

Language within Ondaatje's *In The Skin of a Lion* fails on multiple occasions. Language is ultimately political and therefore inseparable from power and those who would abuse their power over the marginalized within society. Language fails Patrick, but ultimately Ondaatje uses language to re-engage those written out of history, and place them back into a national consciousness, in which they were a vital contributor. He does this through a series of micro narratives which centre on relationships. This gives the reader a sense of optimism and also invites the reader to question other grand narratives and the constructed nature of history. It also calls attention to oral histories and their validity.

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