



## DAVID MALOUF'S REMEMBERING BABYLON AND WHITE AUSTRALIANS' SEARCH FOR IDENTITY THROUGH A BLACK WHITE CHILD

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### Abstract

Australian author David Malouf is well known for his works which deal with identity, language and nature in a colonial setting. Similarly, his *Remembering Babylon* (1993) discusses the vulnerability of identity within a British colonial setting in Australia. In the novel, the British colonials feel themselves lost in a foreign environment and they are constantly in a mental fight with the Aborigines. Malouf portrays the indigenous culture via Gemmy, a black white child who was raised by the Aborigines. In fact, Gemmy becomes a symbolic figure whose hybrid presence makes the white settlers question their identity and blurs the distinction between "Us" and "them", the colonial dichotomy. Standing for the unknown, Gemmy first awakens in the settlers the fear of the Aborigines and the return of the oppressed. In fact, Gemmy's presence violates the boundaries of identity categories, and even proves them wrong. To some critics, Gemmy embodies the new Australian identity. Accordingly, later in the novel, the white settlers find their own identity through Gemmy by finding a reconciliation with the landscape and with the colonized. Therefore, this article aims to examine the white settler's finding their identity in a colonial setting through a black white child as depicted in David Malouf's *Remembering Babylon*.

**Keywords:** Australia, David Malouf, Identity, Other, *Remembering Babylon*.

### 1. Introduction

David Malouf was born in 1934 in Brisbane to parents of Lebanese and English descent; he has an international readership and reputation, probably greater than any Australian author. His works are widely read in Australia and many of his works have gained canonical status such as *An Imaginary Life* (1978), *Fly Away Peter* (1982) and *Remembering Babylon* (1993). Malouf graduated from the University of Queensland with an Honours degree in language and literature in 1954 (O'Reilly, 2008, 159) and also began his teaching career at the same university. He left Brisbane for Europe and England in 1959 and worked in England as a secondary school teacher for a number of years before returning to Australia after the death of his father in 1968 (Indyk, 1993, vii). He taught in the English Department at the University of Sydney from 1968 to 1977, when he turned to writing full-time, and for many years thereafter divided his time between Australia and Tuscany, where he owned a home (O'Reilly, 2008, 159). Malouf's main concerns are personal and cultural identity, language, and nature and his works can be analyzed within the frameworks of post-colonialism. Likewise, *Remembering Babylon* (1993) deals with the fragility of identity within the British colonials "who have scratched out a home in the Australian bush. Like the Old Testament's captive Israelites in Babylon, these settlers feel both vulnerable and disoriented" (web. Berne, "Raised by Aborigines"). As its title suggests, *Remembering Babylon* tries to start a remembering, a moral and influential progressions of memory along with a recalling of what has been dissected (Randall, 2007, 125). Throughout the novel, Malouf asserts that to be able to appreciate Australia as a new postcolonial motherland, the left out constituents must be re-explored and renovated. The novel also asks whether Jerusalem or Babylon is a holy land or a place of exclusion, and should one recall the colonial past, and how should one recall it? (Randall, 2007, 125- 126).

### 2. David Malouf and *Remembering Babylon*

David Malouf states that while writing *Remembering Babylon*, "the most difficult part was getting what I wanted without being pretentious or pretending to know something I don't. No white person here understands the aboriginal world enough to write about it" (web. Berne, "Raised by Aborigines"). Malouf continues that anthropologists, journalists and others all have been misinformed by the aborigines, this was partially as the aborigines thought that whites were exceedingly naive, but mainly because according to them, they could protect their culture by saving much of its hidden parts" (web. Berne, "Raised by Aborigines"). In the novel, the absence of the Aborigines from the action suggests a significant commentary on the process of white settlers' making themselves at home in the colonies. The omniscient narrator presents the Aborigines to the reader only through Gemmy. About the non-appearance of the aborigines, in an interview, Malouf expresses that he preferred not to treat the indigenous people thoroughly since he did

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not know them enough to write about them in detail. (Papastergiadis, 1994, 91). For that reason, Malouf portrays the settlers as people who

meet their stereotype of the colonial space and its inhabitants through their encounter with an in-between character who would have been in contact with [ . . . ] (an indigenous) culture and would be able to stand for that but wouldn't be speaking directly for it (Papastergiadis, 1994, 91- 92).

Therefore, in *Remembering Babylon*, Malouf depicts the indigenous culture via Gemmy, the untamed black white child. In fact, Gemmy becomes an emblematic figure whose silence reflects their silence; the silence which does not have its complete place either in history or in fiction (Cabarcos, 1994, 23).

*Remembering Babylon* opens with an impressive visual image of the "stereotypes that the settlers have internalized the essentialist categories that will be tested and transformed by the end of the novel" (Cabarcos, 1994, 28). The novel starts with three children playing on the outskirts of a mid-nineteenth century settlement in Queensland (RB, 1). Their game takes place in a forest in Russia and they are trying to hunt wolves, then the reader is informed that the game is taken from a school book and the children are *not familiar* with this Russian environment and "they had no experience of snow" [*my italics*] (RB 1). The narrator tells that the children come across "something extraordinary" (RB 1). They- at first- think that it must be a black man, the boy Lanchan can see only a "thing" that "was not even, maybe, human" (RB 2) and says "we're being raided by blacks" (RB 2). The opening scene takes place by the boundary fence which separates the settlers' farm from the unconquered land. For Ashcroft, the fence stands for "ownership [ . . . ] Otherness and alienness" (1993, 55). By the physical separation through the fence, the settlers make certain the infallibility of their stereotypes and as the colonizer they distinguish themselves from the indigenous. When the young Lachlan Beattie refers to himself *we* -as the colonizers who are under an attack by *them*, he emphasizes this separation once more.

Indeed, when Gemmy jumps over the fence at the beginning of the novel, he embodies the biggest nightmare of the settlers; in Bhabha's term, this is "the return of the oppressed" (1983, 25). Then the key question for the whites comes "Could you lose it? Not just language, but it. It" (RB 40). With his white black appearance, Gemmy blurs the boundary between the colonizer (we) and colonized (them) and proves that the presence of the colonial hybrid brings about a question of identity between two separate cultures and his existence challenges the autonomy of these two separate cultures. Gemmy's presence not only tests the boundaries of identity categories, but also proves them wrong (Cabarcos, 1994, 37). In other words, reconstructing Gemmy's mysterious past who is neither black nor white, the novel mirrors the fear of the settlers (Egerer, 1997, 141) and depicts their anxiety by Gemmy's troublesome stance on the borders of two cultures.

Gemmy's story is fictional, yet, Malouf states that writing Gemmy's story, he was inspired by the words of Gemmy Morril or Morrell in Queensland, Australia (Egerer, 1997, 141). Gemmy Morrell is a English historical figure raised by the aborigines and walked out of the bush in the 1840s and presented himself to the astonished colonists, saying, "Do not shoot. I am a British object" (Sempruch, 2005, 44). Malouf states that confusing the word "subject" with the word "object", Gemmy gives voice to a reality unwittingly (web. Berne, "Raised by Aborigines"). Similarly, Malouf's Gemmy is a boy who was raised by the aborigines and he is unaware of "traditional British etiquette" (Adams, 1998, 58) and when he was accepted to the McIvor family, "his object always was to make himself agreeable to the girls, to play the pupil when they wanted to be a teacher, the doll when they wanted someone to dress up" (RB 35). As his past, Gemmy's name is also ambiguous- "Jimmy or Gemmy according to how you heard it [...] his other name was Fairley or Farrelly" and "he communicates in a patois of pantomime and grotesquely contorted English (RB 10). His vocabulary consists of a "mere half-dozen words of English [ . . . ] and even those so mismanaged and distorted you could barely guess what he was on about" (RB 10). Actually, language is very significant in the novel, and it is a metaphor in relation to the sense of belonging in the colonial context. In an interview, referring to language- in the colonial context- Malouf states that it is

a sense of dislocation, a sense of one's being outside the garden [ . . . ] It's true that everything about the English language derives from a particular place, a particular landscape. Everything in the language has its origin in a fact of place. That's not true here. We've brought this language here, and we've made it apply to a world which is very different. It makes us more self-conscious about language and the uses of language, and the way language fits, than a speaker in England might need to be. (web. Daniel, "Interview with David Malouf")



Indeed, for Malouf, there is no escape from language, he questions language within a specific postcolonial context as such: “how can imported, foreign words adequately express the reality of a strange new land? Can one write in English about Australia without misrepresenting the ancient continent and doing it violence? Is Australia to remain a closed book to those who speak only non-Indigenous languages?” (Pons, 2004, 100). Ironically, language becomes a burden for a white person in the novel; Pons asserts that Gemmy is a victim of linguistic deprivation:

Adjusting to Australia means learning a new language, much as Gemmy has done. But this carries the risk that they might forget their original tongue. In fact, they will have to adjust their language to their new environment. If language is indeed ‘the shape of the world as we know it’, for Australia to be known as home, not as an alien and repulsive land, then a new language is required, possibly a hybrid language in the way that Gemmy is a cultural hybrid. (2004, 101)

Accordingly, Gemmy believes that language is the key to remembering his life in Britain and if he can retrieve the language, he can bring his British identity into life as reflected in the novel:

He put his shoulder to the rough slabs, believing that if he could only get near enough, the meaning of what was said would come clear to him, he would snatch the words clean out of the speakers’ mouths. If he could get the words inside him, as he had the soaked mush, the creature or spirit or whatever it was, would come up to the surface of him and take them. It was the words he had to get hold of. (RB 32)

With his ambiguous past and broken language, Gemmy enters an ambiguous place where a small community of farmers work on the land with a constant feeling that they are *lost* in a foreign setting. This feeling of foreignness prevails the novel: [ . . . ] an intractable foreignness [...] gave no indication that six hundred miles away, in the Lands Office in Brisbane, this bit of country had a name set against it on a numbered document” (RB 9) and the “nearest named place, Bowen, was twelve miles off” (RB 5).

These farmers- settlers- in the novel mostly come from Britain and they are obsessed with the concept of home “which continuously clashes with their daily experience of living in a foreign environment” (Egerer, 1997, 146). For example, the McIvor family comes from Scotland for a new beginning. Their children have never seen England, but they grew up the images of “the superiority of “hame” (RB 56). For Janet, the oldest daughter- “Scotland, hame, was sacred” (RB 55). Memories of home are passed from the parents to the children and it means something more than the feeling of security or belonging, but it gains a national character and Scotland means home (Egerer, 1997, 147). In the novel, “the unsettling difference within the home” (RB 39) is reflected through Gemmy who is “a parody of white man [ . . . ] [an] imitation gone wrong” (RB 39). The settlers away from home take danger as something that comes from the outside and “the border fence is the line of demarcation between their world and the potential thread of the beyond” (Egerer, 1997, 143). The horror comes from the unknown and it is described as absolute dark. Gemmy- in fact- has done nothing on purpose, but he awakens in the settlers “the fear of Aborigines, the unknown, and anything that is not British” (Adams, 1998, 59) as it is reflected in the novel as such “bad enough if he was what he appeared to be, a poor savage, but if he was a white man it was horrible” (RB 13). The terror that Gemmy brings to the settlement comes not only from his frightening racial ambiguity, his physical appearance as a “black white man” (RB 10), but more importantly, “from the threat posed by his pidgin, stuttering speech, which from the moment he calls himself a B-b-british object!” (RB 3). Actually, this “blackfeller’s arrival among them was to be the start of something” (RB 15). Gemmy’s blackness has become known as “the Malouf controversy” after the publication of the novel in Australia (Rauwerda, 2002, 136). Greer asserts that

Gemmy is an Aborigine thinly disguised as white man so that Malouf can avoid critique but still present a cultural and racial other [ . . . ] aware of the revulsion that would ensue if he were to use a real Aborigine as the butt of his supremacist fantasy, Malouf invents a lay figure, the limping, speechless black white man, Gemmy Farley [sic] whom he need not shrink from calling a savage” (1993, 3).

Indeed, since its publication, *Remembering Babylon* has been the subject of critical interest. In general, the critics have written about the hybrid black white man- Gemmy Fairley- and claimed that Malouf has tried to create a new Australian identity (Ingram, 2001, 159). For example, Ingram argues that “the new Australian identity that Malouf can be seen to invoke here is not one that acknowledges the combined experiences of white and black Australia, but one that explores two versions of white Australianness: the invisible, alienated white and the racialized indigenous white” (2001, 159). About the mentioned Australian identity, Malouf himself states that in order to get rid of the dislocation, Australians must “learn from



indigenous Australians how to get in touch with the spirit of the land" (1988, 32). So that white Australia's own identity will be healed and will give way to a true reconciliation with Aboriginal people since Australia needs a collective indigenous and non-indigenous spiritual understanding.

### 3. Settlers' Loss of Identity in the Colonial Setting

Emphasizing the necessity of reconciliation, Malouf also deals with the alienation of white people and he establishes a direct connection between the settlers' whiteness and their lack of national identity. What is obvious that the white settlers are indeed away from the land and the culture of their newfound home; although they themselves have "imported the culture it seems oddly out of place in this new place" (Ingrim, 2001, 167). The fear of the settlers; however, does not come simply from their physical and social isolation since their whiteness has a role in their alienation. Ingrim asserts that "the settlers lack a sense of national identity not simply because they are white, and the indigenes are not, but because whiteness in its imperial-colonial form is coded as universal and transcendent" (2001, 167). Ingrim adds that although the whites in other countries have completely made use of association, Malouf's novel demonstrates that - besides the economic and social benefits- "such an association has ultimately been harmful for white settlers because for them the universal and transcendent qualities of whiteness are associated with the British upper classes, a category to which many settlers could never belong" (2001, 167). Thereby, Gemmy makes the settler question their racial, social and national identity (Kelly, 2005, 236) and his black-whiteness indicates that the British colonial identity covers its other in itself. According to Rauwerda, Gemmy stands for the black other in the British colonialism's creation of its Britishness. His assertion to be a British discloses the delusion of a British colonial stereotype along with the underprivileged, ostracized Britishnesses within it (2002, 132). Hence, the settlers are terrified by the probability of their own transformation and they insist that Gemmy must be black since if he is white, this might be what could become of all them:

They looked at their children, even the smallest of them chattering away, entirely at home in their tongue, then heard the mere half-dozen words of English this fellow could cough up, and even those so mismanaged and distorted you could barely guess what he was on about, and you had to put to yourself the harder question. Could you lose it? Not just language, but *it*. It. (RB 40).

Therefore, Gemmy turns into a metonym for the colonists' fear of becoming other than themselves, or other than British, that is loss of their identity. Moreover, being white in their new land made the settlers spiritually and genealogically alienated from the land since it was a constant reminder that another group, a nonwhite group, was there before them as Malouf points out in the novel: "tracts of country that no white man had ever entered. It was disturbing, that: to have unknown country behind you as well as in front" (RB 8). Likewise, as Ingrim argues, more than language and culture, it is their "blank whiteness itself is the thing preventing them from knowing, and in knowing, belonging to, the land" (2001, 167). In other words, whiteness stands for the settlers' cultural and spiritual emptiness rather than their privilege or power in the novel. For example, the settlers are represented as "lacking in presence", as "ghostly", "death-like", and "bone-white" (RB 10). Moreover, Malouf employs the metaphor of light to symbolize whiteness, but he changes the connotation and the lightness associated with whiteness becomes "blinding, contaminating, parasitical even, rather than pure or holy" (Ingrim, 2001, 167). Accordingly, when Gemmy washes up on the Australian shore after his shipwreck, before he is adopted by the local aborigines, he is quite strikingly a victim of light. He has "eyelids so puffed with light that no more light struck through them, and what did blinded him" (RB 22). Indeed, Gemmy finds relief in darkness and he has "come back from the dead and [is] only half reborn" (RB 22). When Gemmy is fully reborn, he is reborn not as a black man but as a "black white man" (RB 10), "an in-between creature" (RB 28). When he turns back to the white settlement he has the power to alter whiteness constantly. Gemmy's presence was required for the change and his departure at the end of the novel displays "the inevitability of the failure of the hybrid, but it does not point towards a victory of the white, transcendent English identity (Ingrim, 2001, 170).

With regard to the alienation of the settlers in the Australian landscape, in his interview with Papastergiadis, Malouf states that the early European settlers had difficulties in coping with the landscape since "it had not been shaped by them and so they could not see their humanity in it" [. . .] "What the settlers in this book can't see is that the continent had already been completely humanized by the [indigenous] people [. . .] we have changed our idea of that now; we understand that Australia already had a culture [. . .] but it was one we couldn't recognize" (1994, 85). Therefore, in the novel, even the characters who are empathetic with Gemmy cannot understand the value of the Aboriginal culture; they associate Gemmy with Aborigines and distrust him. With his authoritative position, George Abbot becomes the first who ostracises Gemmy and creates an unfavourable portrait for him in the society (Adams, 1998, 62). Then there appears a



breakdown in the community and the settlers have to support themselves since they are not traitors. For example, as a punishment for his betrayal, an undifferentiated representative from the settlement smears Jack's shed with "filth [. . .] which was spread [. . .] as an insult between them, made public and stinging in the sun" (RB 115). In the end, they take a radical step and decide to kill this in-between creature that violates the boundaries of identity. However- ironically- through Gemmy's presence, the settlers discover the instability of their identity from which they escape by creating a colonial space and separating themselves from the dark and the mysterious.

#### 4. Settlers' Finding Their Identity through A White Black Child

The first adult settler of the white community is Jock McIvors who gets out from his subject position defined by his belonging a settler community through Gemmy and nature (Cabarcos, 1994, 43). When Jock sees a bird in the landscape, he couldn't name or categorize it, he resembles it to a sparrow but says "there were no sparrows here" (RB 107); as Jock's ideas about the landscape changes, he also changes and realizes that he is an individual stance in line with the world around him. Malouf expresses Jock's feelings as such

[i]t was as if he had seen the world till now, not through his own eyes, out of some singular self, but through the eyes of a fellow who was always in company, even when he was alone; a sociable self, wrapped always in a communal warmth that protected it from dark matters and all the blinding lights of things, but also from the knowledge that there was a place out there where the self might stand alone (RB 106-197).

So that Jock- for the first time- realizes that it is necessary to be an individual within a group and "the safe walls of the community in fact have suffocated the individuality of each settler" (Cabarcos, 1994, 44). Jock also understands that culture becomes strangely out of place in the settings in which they find themselves exiled, so there becomes "no need for learnedness in the desolate lands outside human civilization" (Ramsey-Kurz, 2003, 115).

Apart from Jock, other characters in the novel also discover the significance of Gemmy in finding their own identities like George Abbot. Adams argues that the training of teachers in the former British colonies in the long run comprises acceptance and refusal of British imperialism so that the post-colonial theory is essential in appreciating Australian, Canadian, and American novels having teacher characters who try to help their students to form sameness out of their differences from whites (1998, 3,4). Likewise, in *Remembering Babylon*, Malouf's British schoolteacher, George Abbot, is in a colonial setting and first shows reaction to a white child who was brought up like an aborigine and then he fights with the post-colonial concept of the other and tries to compromise with the Australian landscape and the Others. In the novel, the other- Gimmy- is presented as the victim of the British imperialism and he is seen as a threat but he is really harmless. At first, George Abbot does not respond kindly to the other due to his traditional British background and he behaves him bossily, yet in the end as he adjusts to school teaching, he becomes sympathetic (Adams, 1998, 32).

Before accepting the other, George Abbot stands for the British imperialism. When George Abbot is asked to record the facts about Gemmy during the interview; he "resented the role he was being forced to play in this pantomime, and the more so because Mr. Frazer was in his eyes such a fool. He felt his authority was undermined by his being put to use, and in front of his pupils too, as a mere clerk" (RB 18). Similarly, Adams states that George embodies British imperialism due to his extreme anxiety about maintaining the looks of authority and self-control. While taking notes, George makes alterations and inserts his additions to the papers reflecting his need to be dominant and keep things under control. As a colonizer, he does not want to take a secondary position, since his authority depends on the respect of the colonized including Gemmy and the assistance of other colonizers such as the minister- Mr. Fazer (1998, 59, 61).

George has high ideals of indoctrinating in his students the required components of "a good British education including multiplication tables and English literature such as Shelley's "To a Skylark" (RB 45). However, rather than inspiration, he ruthlessly wants compliance which is an imperialist method. When he realizes that he does not have a positive influence on students, he gets angry and punishes them. Through his dress and manner, George also keeps his distance away from Gemmy and Australia; however, in time he is fascinated by Gemmy. When George is introduced to Mrs. Hutchence and Leona Gonzales who live in the only real house in the settlement, he realizes that "even in the colonies, refining living can be created and enjoyed" (Adams, 1998, 64) which changed his point of view to Gemmy and to the aborigines. Now, "he would have liked to break through the silence that kept Gemmy apart from them" (RB 179) and later when he is sitting in the schoolhouse, he thinks about Gemmy as follows: "Grandeur was the word that came to him, and he did not reject it. It did not seem too large for what he saw at times in a man who had been



kicked from one side of the world to the other” (RB 180). The teacher later realizes that “being civilized meant staunchly perpetuating British imperialistic prejudices against Others” (Adams, 1998, 65). Therefore, George Abbot first reacts against and then accepts the other, Gemmy. Through the reconciliation between George and Gemmy, Malouf brings the traditional British school teacher who finally reconciles with the Other and the child who was brought up by the aborigines together to depict the complexities of Australian culture, cultural hybridity and plurality which are the post-colonial concerns. Therefore, the Australian novelist mirrors British imperialism and Australian nationalism and teachers’ role as a mediator in the post-colonial process.

However, Gemmy feels that George has the authority over him as long as he serves as a teacher, and keeps the seven sheets of paper on which George recorded the details of the interview which includes the information about Gemmy’s earlier life. In fact, Mr. Frazer has the original pages, but Gemmy is satisfied when George gives him the pages which actually includes the students’ exercises that the teacher was grading: “Leaving the school house, Gemmy paused a moment, the papers safely in his pocket, and as he looked about him, felt for the first time that he could go anyway he pleased” (RB 180). By asking the transcript of the interview, Gemmy resists against colonialism, and gives up his submission to British authority.

Except for George Abbot, Mr. Frazer and Lachlan are other two characters who are able to reach the aborigines through Gemmy. Mr. Frazer is very interested in nature and in the native names of the plants, so he frequently observes nature and takes notes for example, *Barkabah* refers to “a broad-leafed apple tree with pink and white flowers, the fruit full of seed and tasting a little like dried banana” (RB 128). One day, Gemmy and Mr Frazer get closer to nature together and when Mr. Frazer discovers plants, Gemmy sketches them and tries to say their aboriginal names so that Malouf presents this interplay of boy and man as a process of revelation, as from one culture to another (Tulip, 2009, 70) and taking notes, Mr. Frazer writes:

We have been wrong to see this continent as hostile and infelicitous [ . . . ] I think of our early settlers, starving on these shores in the midst of plenty they did not recognize, in a blessed nature of flesh, fowl, fruit that was all around them and which they could not, with their English eyes, perceive, since the very habit and faculty that makes apprehensible to us what is known and expected dulls our sensitivity to other forms, even the most obvious. We must rub our eyes and look again, clear our minds of what we are looking for to see what it there. (RB 130)

Similarly, Lachlan becomes aware of the significance of Gemmy in finding his own identity in the novel. At the beginning, Lachlan’s attitude towards Gemmy reflects the hero who displays the standard way of an European boy to show his power; a stranger approaches and the hero Lachlan protects the girl- his cousin Janet: “he did what his manhood required him to do [ . . . ] he stepped resolutely in front” (RB 2) to take the stranger prisoner as if he was rehearsing the role of a male colonizer. In time, however, through Gemmy, Lachlan changes as well and he realizes his position in the colonial world and that his power is limited (Cabarcos, 1994, 68). When Lachlan meets Gemmy after his realization: “They just stood a moment, then he moved away [ . . . ] He looked back once and saw that Gemmy too had turned, about sixty yards off, and they faced one another” (RB 154). Lachlan’s eagerness to meet Gemmy shows that he is on the way of reconfiguration of his identity and their contact symbolizes the meeting between the colonial self and incarnation of the other. In fact, Lachlan is not able to fill the gap between himself and Gemmy for the next fifty years which is represented through his “untruthful search for Gemmy and in his eventual defeatist settling for the conviction that Gemmy is one of the dead is a police massacre” (Cabarcos, 1994, 69). Just at the end of the novel, Lachlan reconsiders the past and realizes that “he could afford to admit that it had not ended. Something Gemmy had touched off in them was what they were still living [ . . . ] It would end only when they were ended, and maybe not even then” (RB 107). Thereby, Lachlan understands that Gemmy touched his self and like the other characters and through the awareness of his own nature, he gains an understanding of others, Gemmy, the aborigines (Laigle, 1995, 79).

In the closing scene, besides the characters mentioned before, the middle-aged Janet-this time as Sister Monica- realizes the significance of Gemmy in their lives. Janet is aware that Gemmy’s presence was necessary. Janet “deciphers for herself the mystery of the colonial encounter as being the absence and fear of that “other” that is an opposite to the colonizer, the civilized, and the human, and that is expressed as the aborigine, the uncivilized, and the natural” (Cabarcos, 1994, 72). In the vision of Jock, George and Janet, the novel refutes the colonialist binaries of light and darkness, colonizer and colonized, city and country and civilization and primitivism and underlines the seemingly distance between the two ends of these oppositions. Through the hybrid Gemmy, the settlers reassess their connections to the colony, to the home,



and reevaluate their concept of identity. As Cabarcos claims, at the end of the novel, the settlers “serve to illustrate the process through which the inhabitants of settler colonies such as Australia negotiated their identity as no longer inhabitants of the “mother” country and yet not native to their adopted homeland” (1994, 22). This process also reflects the transformation from the Western environment to the colonial ground.

#### 4. Conclusion

In *Remembering Babylon*, Malouf presents Australia as a latent paradise for the diligent European immigrants and claims that the success of Australia depends not on only exploiting the resources available by ignoring the indigenous people, but on finding a coordination and reconciliation with the landscape and with the colonized. According to Malouf, this hybrid culture symbolizes the ideal ultimate result of the colonial process and the mentioned paradise comes to life through Gemmy Fairley. Moreover, it can be supported that in the novel Malouf teaches or reminds the reader of the fact that one’s most beloved entities-home and language- can be his/her most terrifying nightmare in a foreign environment and culture, and the solution to get rid of this nightmare is the understanding of landscape, the realization of harmony with nature which is very aboriginal in character through which the characters find their identity and realize that matters can be light instead of dark.

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