

**CHAPTER V**

**Conclusion**

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After having analyzed the select novels of David Malouf in the contexts of male characters, one can draw certain conclusions. These research findings can be generalized in the context of delineation of male characters in the contemporary Australian novel in English. The traditional male behavioral pattern and the changes noted in it in the select novels reveal that contemporary male behavior is different from its traditional stereotype. The characters analyzed in a dissertation focus these new changes. The novels, in fact, are a good documentation of change in gender roles. Introduction of the dissertation deals with a brief review of contemporary Australian novel. That allows us to place the author in the appropriate literary tradition. It also helps to comprehend the contemporary literary tendencies. A brief review of Australian novel formulates a frame of thoughts that help to comprehend the most probable meaning of select texts. A brief review of life and career of David Malouf help us to relate the significant biographical details of the author with his fiction. These biographical details foreground our understanding of the select novels.

The first chapter entitled 'Male Identity: Theoretical Perspective' draws certain features male identity in the context of psychology, sociology, history and literary criticism. The theoretical perspective of male identity gives certain characteristic features that help us to analyze the select novels. It clearly notes the different social, cultural, political features that contribute to build the new masculine identity are also revealed in brief.

The subsequent chapters deal with the analysis of select novels- *Remembering Babylon* and *An Imaginary Life*. The theoretical frame prepared in the first chapter is frequently referred in the analyses. The textual analysis carried out in these two chapters is foregrounded with the reference of secondary resources. The fourth chapter entitled 'A Comparative perspective' discusses the comparative perspective of male identity in both selected novels, which emerge naturally from the analysis of the selected novels. Thus, in the present chapter certain generalized features will be drawn in the light of the analyses carried out in the dissertation.

The close analyses of both the novels show that male identity is a dominant feature of Malouf's novel. In both novels, there is no important character of a woman. His emphasis is only on the male characters. If we take overview on the Malouf's all novels from the beginning, we come to know that Malouf's all novels explore the male identity which shows, how he loves to draw sketches of male characters. Through the male characters, he elaborated the male identity in the contemporary society, approaches of maleness, characteristic features of the male identity and the aboriginality in his novels.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the representation of the Aboriginal people is totally neglected by white writers. Writers like Prichard and Xavier Herbert broke new ground in their fictional representations of Aboriginal people. Prichard's '*Coonardoo*' and Xavier Herbert's '*Capricornia*' is notable in that representation. In Australian fiction, Aboriginal representation is mainly related with two subjects. One is black/white sexual and emotional relations, and the other is the nature of the Aboriginal relationship to the

land, with its central importance to Aboriginal culture and its implications for the white descendants of a settler culture.

David Malouf also represents the aboriginality through his novels. In *An Imaginary Life*, the barbarians to whose world Ovid is exiled, and the mystical wolf child he captures with their help is beautifully elaborated. In *Remembering Babylon*, Gemmy Fairley lives sixteen years with an Aboriginal tribe.

In the Australian literature, the contemporary society is well reflected in the works of contemporary fiction writers like Patrick White, Thomas Keneally, Christopher Koch, Elizabeth Jolley, Tim Winton and David Malouf. All are notable for their presentation of contemporary issues through their works. Among them, David Malouf is a major writer who also explores the contemporary issues of Australia. All of his novels elaborate the male identity in the contemporary Australian society.

In the *Remembering Babylon*, he explores through Gemmy and Lachlan the encounter between civilization and primitiveness. Although a child, Lachlan Beattie represents the masculine, regulatory power of colonial presence. Pointing a toy gun at Gemmy in a make-believe act, Lachlan strives to police the boundaries of both personal property and community. Malouf creates Gemmy as a symbol of a synthesis between two cultures, forerunner and In-between creature. He breaks cultural barriers and stereotypes. He resists inscribed roles of both the colonists and the Aborigines.

David Malouf also reinforces the theme of the Aborigines and their culture being enigmatic. Malouf keeps Aboriginal characters completely unknowable and distant. Some characters, such as Jock and Janet, take on Aboriginal qualities due to contact with Gemmy. This shows the reader

that the colonial project had the potential to create a utopia, but this was, for the most part, not achieved. When Lachlan holds gun, it shows; power, western values and western culture. Even a make-believe gun in the hands of a small boy has powerful implications. The overtones are not lost on Gemmy, despite Gemmy's being away from European society. This also represents the masculine values. Lachlan feels an obligation to defend, instantly uses the stick to create a symbol of western masculinity. Like this, Malouf presents the male identity in the contemporary society through his works.

Through the analysis of the Malouf's novels, we understand the male identity. In all this approaches, we learn that how male identity develops and how similar themes emerge from different approaches. These themes, describing characteristic features of male identity, include, fear of femininity, status and achievement, emotional inexpressiveness, homophobia, need for power and control, obsession with success, adventure and aggressiveness.

Power control is a very important characteristic feature of the male identity. David Malouf explores this characteristic feature of male identity very beautifully in his novels. In *Remembering Babylon* through the characters of Gemmy, Lachlan and George, he presents the idea of power. Gemmy has the power of intelligence. Through the intellectual power, Gemmy wins the hearts of all people and tries to unite black and white peoples. Lachlan has a physical power. Physical power helps him to control over others. George has an intellectual power. He wants to become a noble person with this power. In *An Imaginary Life*, we see how Ryzak exerts his male power over other people. He wants to hold his power of the headman over to the superstitious person which is the one of the characteristic feature of the male identity.

Protectiveness is a prime characteristic feature of men because they always protect their family which is dependent on them. In *Remembering Babylon* as the head of the McIvor family, Jock has the qualities of protectiveness. Lachlan is ready to protect his cousins after seeing an unknown person. In *An Imaginary Life*, the child, Ovid and Ryzak all are protectors. In the beginning of novel Ryzak was a protector of Ovid in the village after that Ovid becomes the protector of the child in the village and finally the child becomes the protector of the Ovid in the forest. So through these characters Malouf shows that protectiveness is a prime important characteristic feature of the male identity.

The power and control are central to men's self-identity. It is always seen in the patriarchic society that men always control their family especially females and this can be seen in the relationship between Lachlan and Janet. When Lachlan brings Gemmy to the village all the credit for bringing him there was given to Lachlan. Janet is ignored because she is a woman.

Aggression is another characteristic feature of the male identity. Malouf shows the aggression of the child through his animal like behavior. George also asserts aggression on his pupils.

Adventure and toughness are also characteristic features of male identity, which are shown through Lachlan, the child and Ryzak. Though Ryzak was old, he went for hunting with all young men in the village. The child was very much adventurous doing new experiments in the forest and living with an animal. Lachlan is very tough and always ready to do heavy work in the farm.

David Malouf also explores the mankind's fear of the unknown which may be called one of the characteristic features of the male identity. In *An Imaginary Life* the barbarians, who are very strong physically and mentally, get frightened by the unknown. They are frightened by the wild spirit. In *Remembering Babylon* casting the mysterious figure as an obscure and inhuman creature, Malouf explores the fear of unknown creature at the edge of the village.

Thus, it is observed that Malouf has presented different aspects of male identity in the select novels. The novels discussed in this present study are exploration of male identity with reference to aboriginality in Australian literature. Every male character of Malouf presents different masculine traits through his behavior.

Thus, David Malouf is one of the significant contemporary Australian novelists who deal with the important theme of identity in terms of exploring male identity. It is interesting to relate male identity to the very process of colonialism which is symbolic of male identity. Therefore, it becomes inevitable to think of David Malouf as a creative writer in the larger context of postcolonial discourse.