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**CONFLICT OF CULTURES: A MARGINALISED ORPHAN OF THE COLONIAL
DISCOURSE 'DISINTERRED' IN *JACK MAGGS* BY PETER CAREY**

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Jack Maggs (1997) by Peter Carey, the Australian version of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861), challenges the Victorian propaganda about the primacy of a white race, openly opposing the Empire's misdeeds and hypocritical behaviour of its citizens. Carey undermines the colonial discourse in the shape of Dickensian imperialistic England as a motherland concerned with its colonial children, implicitly presented in *Great Expectations* when the British gentleman attends to the Australian convict, Abel Magwitch. The moral corruption of the Victorian society seems particularly reflected in the character of Mary Britten – a ruthless abortionist being an allusion to Victorian Mother Britain in its unstoppable colonial expansion. Mother Britain turns out to be the epitome of bestiality, lust for power and negligence of duties towards its offspring, both domestic and colonial.

In this paper I will demonstrate that Jack seems to epitomise the colonised and marginalised Australia that avenges itself. Maggs ceases to be spoken for as a study of the Eurocentric world, becoming a voice of those silenced and devoid of their land, whose supposedly "inferior" culture was meant to be uprooted by the colonial power dynamics. Despite being a white Englishman, Maggs is seen by Victorian society as the Other from peripheries. Read as a diasporic hybrid of two antagonistic cultures, Maggs seems to be more identified with the

supposedly “inferior” one since he is foreign to the notion of Britishness. Thus his revengeful actions against British citizens can be read in terms of Bhabha’s concepts of mimicry and hybridity, when the Other diminishes the authority of the Eurocentric world and articulates his story (Bhabha 88).

Peter Carey, an Australian laureate of many prestigious awards like the Commonwealth Writers Prize and the Booker Prize, has been acknowledged as the most prominent novelist in his country. In *Jack Maggs*, set in 1837, Carey focuses on the ex-convict Jack Maggs, who illegally returns to London from the Australian penal colony. He wants to find Henry Phipps, an orphaned boy he met twenty four years before in a forge and whom he makes a gentleman thanks to the fortune earned in New South Wales. Jack’s return to imperial London seems to symbolise a conflict of two cultures: the “superior” Eurocentric culture, represented by the British Empire, is unexpectedly confronted with and challenged by the allegedly “inferior” Australian one. At the same time, Carey draws the reader’s attention to some peculiarities and controversial episodes from Charles Dickens’s life elucidated in his fictionalised biography by Peter Ackroyd by introducing the enigmatic novelist and journalist, Tobias Oates.

Employed by Percy Buckle, the heir of a fortune from a long-lost relative, as a footman, Jack Maggs’s primary chore is to serve a festive dinner during which the guest of honour is an eminent writer, Tobias Oates. Unexpectedly, a bout of palsy along with “the pain [that] slapped his face like a clawed cat” (Carey 29), attacks the convict in front of the guests. The first person to help Jack overcome the seizure is Oates, who fervently puts him in a mesmeric state. After learning that, under hypnosis, he mentions some facts concerning his criminal past and deportation to a penal colony in South New Wales, the convict feels insecure, “burgled, plundered” (Carey 32). The reason for this conjuncture is Tobias, the man to whom Jack has a great deal of animosity. Tobias seems oblivious to the fact that his ability to enter Jack’s soul and extricate him from the pain or the demon residing therein heralds the elicitation of the mysteries of his own blemished soul—“For the writer was stumbling through the dark of the convict’s

past, groping in the shadows, describing what was often a mirror held up to his own turbulent and fearful soul” (Carey 91). A glimpse into the soul of the criminal was “as if he entered the guts of a huge and haunted engine” (Carey 130), in which he seems to distinguish the mirror image of his ego. The above quotations resonate as the allusion to Tobias’s latent apprehension of the exposure of his affair with his sister-in-law, Lizzie. It also emerges as a direct analogy to Dickens’s secretive relationship with Ellen Ternan, dexterously camouflaged by the writer for thirteen years. The expression “turbulent and fearful soul” (Carey 91) can also serve as a metaphor of Dickens’s recollection of the time spent in the blacking factory. For Dickens, this experience was so traumatic that he could not expunge it from his memory, where it remained a guarded taboo throughout his whole life (Ackroyd 76-83).

Through the course of the novel, Jack Maggs is often compared to an untamed beast with “eyes [...] wild and black [and] hair most queerly disarrayed” (Carey 57). This comparison becomes even more visible when Tobias hypnotises Jack, making the man appear “truly like a wild animal, and Toby his expert trainer” (Carey 84). The fact that Jack is a convict from New South Wales, who has received corporal punishment as his body reveals “the sea of pain etched upon [his] back, a brooding sea of scars, of ripped and tortured skin” (Carey 86), seems a metaphorical testimony of atrocities taking place in the times of British colonial imperialism. The punishment was “invented in New South Wales” (Carey 88) by a white man, “the double cat” (88), perhaps to breed out any vestiges of corruption inhabiting the convicts’ souls. However, corporal punishment was also administered to the indigenous people, as evidenced in *The Dead Do Not Die: Exterminate All the Brutes and Terra Nullius* (2014) by Sven Lindqvist. Territorial expansion, political subordination and economic exploitation of the overseas colonies found its scientific justification especially in the Victorian era, which was the heyday of British colonialism. Lindqvist refers to dissemination of racist philosophies by Herbert Spencer and Edmund von Hartman, the emergence of the pseudoscientific stance in the form of biological racism by Charles Darwin,

Robert Knox and Josiah C. Knott as well as “survival of the fittest” that seemed to facilitate the colonial power dynamics and promote the belief in white supremacy and inscribed inferiority of the colonised indigenes. The consequence of this dehumanizing approach was the ideological division of the contemporary world in terms of binary oppositions: West—East, “Us”—“Them”, coloniser—colonised, civilised—uncivilised, white—non-white. A native representing the non-Western world—be it Eastern, Asian, African, native-American, or Australian, etc.—was seen as the “Other” in opposition to the Western socio-politics and culture. Thus Aborigines were seen as a hindrance in the way of the colonial pursuit, an obstacle to dispose of since they were bound to become extinct by the force of evolution anyway.

The process of taming Jack Maggs, commenced in the penal colony in New South Wales and then undertaken by Tobias Oates, seems to be a metaphorical reference to taming the so-called “inferior races” in the guise of bringing civilisation, or as Edward Said maintains in *Orientalism* (1978): “Lurking everywhere behind the pacification of the subject race is imperial might” (36). The quotation “taking a lion into [Mr Buckle’s] home” (Carey 89), as Tobias Oates puts it, can be interpreted as the conquest or reverse colonisation of the British world by the person permeated with the culture of the uncivilised “Other”. It has to be emphasised that the concept of “Otherness” also referred to criminals, prostitutes and homosexuals, that is to say, British social outcasts “portrayed by hegemonic discourses as just ‘threatening’ as people of different races and nationalities from the colonies” (Mousoutzanis 325). Jack’s “Otherness” seems to be more intimidating for the British society because it can be read in binary representations: he is both a domestic and colonial “savage” who returns to London “to establish the depravity of the domestic subject” (Malchow 72). Jack makes the colonial reality of New South Wales encroach upon the world of hegemonic culture, wreaking havoc and corruption just like the nineteenth-century British Empire. This reversed mechanism of domination could be regarded as a violation of the national values of the British citizens while the

barbarian practices of the Empire in the overseas territories became the entirely allowable norm. The convict's "Otherness" can also be represented in terms of the Freudian concept of *unheimlich*, "meaning unhomely or uncanny," the opposite to *heimlich* connected with familiarity and the sense of belonging to a family (Peters 19). The uncanny can be defined as "strange, foreign ... demonic and gruesome ... a repulsive fellow" (19). Elaborating on the uncanny, Laura Peters presents a compelling connection between this term and the representation of the orphan figure in Victorian society. The orphan, seen as foreign, unfamiliar, because he or she was "outside the dominant narrative of domesticity", seemed to deconstruct the model of the middle-class Victorian family, thus "occupying the same relationship of the uncanny or *unheimlich* to the *heimlich*" (Peters 19). In this respect, Maggs can be read as such an uncanny orphan, excluded from the society because he poses a threat to the integrity of British national identity. He metaphorically becomes the muted voice of the emerging Australian culture, detracting and destabilising the centre, which loses its paramount stance by being forcibly redefined by another version of the "Other" from the colonial peripheries. Suppressed in Dickens's novel, Carey seems to "disinter" the convict "to destabilize the very basis of fictional authority—and with it linear, filial lines of influence between metropolis and former colony" (Thieme 109).

It is noteworthy that Jack Maggs is not the only person to experience the exile from England in the novel. Having learnt about Jack's past, Percy Buckle recollects his sister's banishment to Botany Bay, wondering how "Mother England would do such a thing to one of her own" (Carey 89). Calling England "Mother" in this situation can be viewed as the country's negligence of parental duties towards its domestic children. The reference to Botany Bay in Australia can also allude to the Empire's offspring in the overseas territories if we read colonial power dynamics as parent-child relations. Colonised communities were seen "as children, as men not fully grown, whose destiny had to be guided by the presumably more advanced states of Europe" (Cohen 427). In other words, the

conquering European empires figuratively became parents responsible for the upbringing process of their colonial children whose maturity could only be attained thanks to the intervention of the Western civilisation. This European parenthood resulted in privation, commercial inequity, spread of diseases, loss of land, national identity and indigenous culture.

Not without reason does Peter Carey introduce the figure of Percy Buckle in the novel. Being an heir of a considerable fortune and not a born gentleman, Mr Buckle embodies the central theme of Dickens's novel *Great Expectations* where an orphaned boy wants to become a gentleman. The issue of being a gentleman becomes a much more layered quandary for Dickens himself, which is thoroughly elaborated on by Peter Ackroyd. Both Dickens and the protagonist of *Great Expectations* are steadily transformed from common labouring boys into gentlemen. It has to be stressed that, throughout his life, Dickens's past concerning Warren's blacking factory remained a deeply rooted secret, which unambiguously resurfaces in Pip's words: "the secret was such an old one now, had so grown into me and became a part of myself, that I could not tear it away" (Dickens 113). Abashed by his status and family, Pip yearns for leaving the forge or, as Ackroyd puts it, he is "the child always in peril of being permanently consigned to the 'low' world from which he wishes to escape" (101). This is another echo of Dickens's being a common and humiliated boy forced to support his insolvent parents. The word "common" was the term towards which Dickens felt a great deal of animosity, the word which looms before the reader in *Great Expectations*, especially in the pathos of Pip's statement: "I knew I was common, and that I wished I was not common, and that the lies had come of it somehow" (66-67). The 'lies' can be seen in the context of Dickens's secrecy about his employment at Warren's blacking factory. Even in the company of his family, Dickens "also told [lies] in order to protect himself" (Ackroyd 104). The notion of being—or not being—a gentleman is also addressed by Carey when Tobias Oates, imitating a doctor, is accused by doctor Grieves of killing an old butler, Mr Spinks, due to his incompetence and lack of proper training. For Tobias, it "was

only another way of saying that he was not a gentleman” (Carey 180). This quotation seems to reveal much about Dickens himself. He feared that when the truth about his juvenile occupation was revealed, it could result in his being slighted and discarded by the British society. However, Dickens unquestionably attempted to face his apprehensions connected with his traumatic past in *Great Expectations*, “a novel in which he is engaged in exorcising the influence of his past by rewriting it” (Ackroyd 930). He seemed to do the same while writing his autobiographical passages of *David Copperfield* (1850). Ackroyd presents a thorough description of Dickens’s exertion to complete the chapter in which David is compulsorily sent to work at Mr. Murdstone’s warehouse. Throughout his life, the writer had to confront his past by looking back again at the times when he was a common “labouring hind” at Warren’s blacking factory:

Dickens fell and somehow managed to injure his left side, the very ‘weak’ side which had disturbed him when he had been a real ‘labouring hind.’ He had inflamed his old injury, had to be cupped and blistered, writhing in agony once more in just the way he had writhed in agony on the floor of the rotting warehouse by the Thames. His childhood condition returned ... (Ackroyd 600)

Carey’s re-writing of *Great Expectations* is especially evident in presenting the stories of Jack, the epitome of Abel Magwitch, and Henry Phipps, being the counterpart of Pip. Sigrun Meinig states that by re-writing of *Great Expectations*, Carey “uses its intertextuality to question the notion of historical genealogy and origin in the story of an Australian convict” (110). Shackled in chains, Jack first met Henry, the orphaned, miserable, four-year old boy, in the forge on “a cold miserable sort of day, with bitter wind blowing low and hard across the marshes” (Carey 262) while being transported to the ship leaving for South New Wales. The moment the boy offers Jack “a pig’s trotter” to eat, the convict makes a sombre promise:

I would come back from my exile and take him from his orphanage, that I would spin him a cocoon of gold and jewels, that I would weave him a nest so strong that no one would ever hurt his goodness. (Carey 264)

In the course of Dickens's novel, Pip, initially the money-minded gentleman, gradually evolves, realising the emptiness of his parasitic existence, which entails rejecting the principles of the upper class society (*Great Expectations*). In addition to this, he provides his secret benefactor with housing and protection, helps Magwitch to get out of the country and, after the failure, he stays with him until his demise in prison. In this way, Pip emerges as a fatherly figure towards Magwitch: "I will never stir from your side, said I, when I am suffered to be near you. Please God, I will be as true to you as you have been to me" (Dickens 408). By depicting Henry Phipps as an ungrateful and corrupted alcoholic rejecting Jack and even ready to slay him, Carey seems to undermine Dickensian colonial discourse. Carey's evident divergence from the depiction of Henry as a version of Pip from Dickens's novel can be scrutinised in the context of colonial power dynamics, or, to be more precise, the British outlook on Australia. Jenni Ramone aptly notes that "Pip is marginalised in the figure of Henry Phipps" (176), which is definitely the aftermath of Carey's conviction that "Dickens's portrayal of Australia and the Australian" (176) is unfair. According to Carey, to an Australian, "*Great Expectations* is a way in which the English have colonised our ways of seeing ourselves" (in Woodcock 122). In Dickens's novel Abel Magwitch emerges as the embodiment of Australians, metaphorically orphaned by the Empire, since "the colonial fatherland that has rejected its colonial 'offspring'" (Ramone 176) created the future generations of postcolonial orphans unable to determine their cultural identity. Carey seems to "disinter" the colonial discourse by deflating the figure of Henry Phipps (Pip's alter ego) and giving the voice to Jack Maggs (Magwitch) who, in contrast to the original, not only takes control of the events in the novel, but is allowed to present his own narrative. It makes Carey's novel a story that, as Colette Selles maintains, reverses "the 'cultural cringe', presents a self-assertive image of the often denigrated former colony" (63). Australia and Abel Magwitch in *Great Expectations* seem silenced, "transparent or invisible" (Spivak 265) while their "relentless recognition" as "the Other [is hidden] by assimilation" (265). In other words, Abel Magwitch and

his antipodean story are verbatim assimilated by the Eurocentric, hegemonic perspective from which the novel is narrated – Pip’s story predominates, Magwitch’s is just episodic. Strangely enough, Dickens’s fiction abounds in those orphaned, impoverished, oppressed and humiliated by the British system the author makes audible, yet he does not dwell upon the stories of those transported to penal colonies as well as remains silent as for the British colonial exploitation. Convicts, regarded as undesirable citizens of Victorian England or a blotch on English morality, were deported to penal colonies in order to serve their sentences. Textually orphaned due to their ties with their motherland being coercively cut and physically displaced from their country and forgotten by the British Empire, the convicts, having completed the sentences, could not afford to return to the country and stayed in the colonies. Being sent to the penal colony in Australia due to being regarded as a pernicious individual not consonant with the British “superior” culture, Jack becomes the “Other” whose “Otherness” is magnified by the fact that he is also bound to experience the culture that is at odds with the British one. Upon arrival in London, Maggs metaphorically emerges as the drowned out voice of the Australian indigenous culture vanquished by the Western hegemony, detracting and destabilising the colonial discourse, the centre, which loses its paramount stance due to being characterised by the “Other” from the colonial peripheries. This reverse role of the centre and peripheries in Carey’s novel alludes to Homi Bhabha’s concept of mimicry which is not only an omnipresent symptom of imperial domination, but can also be treated as a veneer of the colonised who imitates the coloniser’s culture while distorting and ridiculing its dominance. It has to be noted that Jack is not a colonised individual nor does he mimic British culture. He is a diasporic individual practicing his culture in the different geographical context. The reference to Bhabha’s mimicry aims at emphasising the fact that *Great Expectations* is deconstructed and loses its uncontested authority that seems “ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference” (Bhabha 107). In the colonial context,

mimicry was a metonym of resistance of the subaltern subject created by the Western culture through the prism of a stereotype – the subject is no longer silent and devoid of cultural identity, but an individual who can fight against the stereotypical image of the “inferior Other” imposed by the imperial hegemony. Commenting on Bhabha’s notion of mimicry, Sumit Chakrabarti highlights that the colonised mimic man is situated “in the ambivalent position of the hybrid subject who is neither colonizer nor colonized, but something in between” (13). This in-between position means that the subject “who is ‘white, but not quite’ portends the beginning of the counter-gaze that effectively displaces the social control of the power centre” (13). In other words, hybridity, which “is the sign of the productivity of the colonial power” (Bhabha 112), subverts the coloniser’s authority by enabling the emergence and articulation of other histories consciously suppressed by the cultural hegemony of the West. A parallel conjuncture can be noticed in Carey’s novel, where the Western authority seems to be deflated by the ostracised “Other” (Jack Maggs) from New South Wales, a hybrid of polarised cultures that pre-eminently epitomises an audible voice of the “inferior” one. As a non-indigenous inhabitant of the settler colony, Jack is seen as culturally “inferior” due to both lacking British cultural sophistication and staying in contact with other races. Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson note that settler colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States were inhabited by convicts (Australia), “younger sons of downwardly-mobile families ... ‘refugees’ escaping social rejection, religious persecution, or economic hard times” (362, 363). Those Englishmen “were frequently characterized in domestic cultural and political discourses as ungovernable, uncultured: as ‘colonials’ they were second-class” (363).

Abel Magwitch in Dickens’s novel is delineated in the demonic and cannibalistic light “with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied around his head ... smothered in mud” (6), having “a great iron on his leg” (6) with “his ‘shuddering’ body [being] representative of his fragile status in English society” (Ramone 177). Pip becomes Magwitch’s guardian, which exposes “an

imperialistic assumption that the civilised, sensible England fathers the unruly, dangerous and weak child Australia” (Ramone 176). The emphasis put on the superiority of the Western world over the indigenous one can also be read as the fear and danger of being tainted by the non-Western non-white culture. In *Jack Maggs*, Carey’s critical insight into the marginalisation of the British colony seems explicitly discernible in casting entirely different light on the Victorian society. Thus Carey’s London, described by *The Lancet* as a “doomed city” (Ackroyd 405), connotes a place of moral decline with violence, murder, induced abortion, child prostitution or unquenchable sexual desires. Carey skilfully refers to the negligence or even bereavement of the British colony by introducing the character of Mary Britten (called by Jack ‘Ma Britten’) – a thief who sells the misshapen pills triggering miscarriages, being the dishonourable paragon of “the colonial motherland, Mother Britain” (Ramone 178) or, simply, the lining of colonisation. In his diary to Henry Phipps, Jack Maggs recollects his beloved, motherless Sophina, Silas Smith’s daughter, who, together with Jack, is forced to the thieving deeds. Jack and Sophina’s affair results in their conceiving a baby who is forcibly aborted by Mary Britten and thrown into a cesspool: “There lay our son—the poor dead mite was such a tiny thing. I could have held him in my hand. And on his queerly familiar little face, a cruel and dreadful cut” (Carey 241). The bloody imperial project is tellingly reflected in the infamous actions (aimed at eliminating the ‘hindrance,’ or simply an unwanted human being) taken by Mary Britten who, after fulfilling her “duties”, leaves a room “full of blood in quantities enough to frighten any child” (Carey 211). This circumstance can be read as a metaphorical association with the colonial scheme the purpose of which was to get rid of those who stood in the way of the imperial advancement, that is to say, the “inferior” races doomed to extinction. Jack’s recollection of cleaning this room “with soap and scrubbing brush” carries another symbolic overtone – to conceal the inconvenient truth from the civilised Victorian society and to feed the public with the empty imperial cliché of the noble mission of

bringing civilisation. Jenni Ramone states that the British colonial parenthood is exposed to fiasco in Carey's novel:

By portraying the figure who represents Britain as colonial motherland as an abortionist and an uncaring maternal figure, Carey is suggesting that Britain had neglected its parental responsibility to Australia, or that it had no ability to carry out such duties in the first place. (178)

The name 'Ma Britten,' may also bear affinity to 'Little Britain' (Mr Jaggers's office is located therein) from *Great Expectations*. On his first visit there Pip saw for the first time: "a gloomy street ... the shameful place, being all smear with filth and fat and blood and foam" (Dickens 150, 152). Thus the place connotes the emphatic metaphor of the moral decay and hypocrisy of the British society in the Victorian era – "but that is what becomes of us down here in Hell's Doorway. Sitting here, said [Mary], looking at the Devil's thieving ways etc. etc." (Carey 77). Paradoxically, Mother Britain's negligence was not only inflicted upon its colonial areas, but also the poorest citizens of London who, according to Dr Simons, were seen "as a race apart" (Ackroyd 403):

swarms of men and women who have yet to learn that human beings should dwell differently from cattle—swarms to whom personal cleanliness is utterly unknown; swarms by whom delicacy and decency in their social relations are quite unconvinced. (403)

Standing for the denigrated Australian "offspring" of the Empire, Maggs—unlike Magwitch who, when he returns to London, feels like an embattled animal to be eventually slain—does not hide in the shadows: he is the confident, independent, well-dressed and affluent businessman who finally returns to New South Wales, leaving the moral grime of Victorian London behind. He takes care of his two children and lives a prosperous life in the land, "orphaned" in Dickens's novel. This intentional subversion in relation to the hypotext can also be read in parent-child relations. Unlike Dickensian depiction of Magwitch who needs to be nursed by the British citizen, Maggs in Carey's novel becomes a real father "who escapes the infantilization engrained in filial models of the relationship between metropolis and colony" (Thieme 121). It turns out, the supposedly weaker,

inferior child-like Australia can take care of itself whereas the superior “stronger” British Empire should first clean the mess in its own forgotten alleyways before starting to enlighten the world. In Carey’s novel, the reader witnesses the metaphorical retaliation of the colonial inhabitants for the imperialistic invasion, which is undeniably present in the actions of Jack Maggs. He is the one to discredit Percival Buckle, to take control of the course of events in the story; he is regarded as the aggressor incarcerating some of the British citizens and capable of murder to achieve his goals; in a nutshell, he is the epitome of the colonised and denigrated Australia that avenges itself. According to Linda Hutcheon:

After modernism’s ahistorical rejection of the burden of the past, postmodern art has sought self-consciously (and often parodically) to reconstruct its relationship to what came before; similarly, after that imposition of an imperial culture and that truncated indigenous history which colonialism has meant to many nations, post-colonial literatures are also negotiating (often parodically) the once tyrannical weight of colonial history in conjunction with the revalued local past. (131)

Hutcheon later notes that colonialism experienced in Africa, India, or the West Indies cannot be equated with “the white Canadian experience of colonialism” (133), which can also be applied to non-indigenous white Australians. The critic also points out the fact that “the consequences for white (not Native) writers today of that past are different from those for writers in Africa, India, or the Caribbean” (134). In this respect, *Jack Maggs* can be read as the novel having the status of a postmodern text. However, the intersectionality of postcolonialism and postmodernism in the novel seems explicit because “Carey sets up a relation between the two terms, such that Australia, seen in a ‘postcolonial’ sense, and literature, in a ‘postmodern’ sense, converge” (Kane 519). In other words, Carey demonstrates that the influence of the colonial “past—the ‘postcolonial condition’—is transformed into a vision of the future: Australia as a postmodern society” (Kane 522). Maggs ceases to be spoken for as a study object of the Eurocentric world and yearns to define his identity in his own terms

not the Empire's. He becomes a voice of the "inferior" culture and all the victims of the British imperialism – those silenced, devoid of their motherland, emotionally and literally orphaned, whose national identity was meant to be uprooted by colonialism.

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Abstract

Jack Maggs by Peter Carey, being the Australian version of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, challenges the Victorian propaganda about the primacy of a white race, openly opposing the Empire's misdeeds and hypocritical behaviour of its citizens. Carey undermines the colonial discourse in the shape of Dickensian imperialistic England as a motherland concerned with its colonial children, implicitly presented in *Great Expectations* when the British gentleman attends to the Australian convict, Abel Magwitch. The moral corruption of the Victorian society seems particularly reflected in the character of Mary Britten—a ruthless abortionist being an allusion to Victorian Mother Britain in its unstoppable colonial expansionism. In this paper I will show that Jack seems to epitomise the colonised and marginalised Australia that avenges itself. *Maggs* ceases to be spoken for as a study of the Eurocentric world, becoming a voice of those silenced and devoid of their land, whose culture was meant to be uprooted by the colonial power dynamics. Carey's downgrading of the dominant status of the Western culture can be read with respect to Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity when the non-European culture seems to pose a threat to the Western hegemony, diminishing its authority and enabling the emergence and articulation of other histories consciously suppressed by the colonial discourse. *Jack Maggs* metaphorically emerges as the drowned out voice of the culture vanquished by the Western hegemony, detracting and destabilising the centre which loses its paramount stance due to being characterised by the subaltern 'other' from the peripheries. Orphaned by the country representing the 'superior' culture, *Jack Maggs* returns to imperial London to subvert the order of the colonial discourse and narrate his story from the subaltern standpoint.

Powieść *Jack Maggs* Petera Careya to australijska wersja *Wielkich Nadziei* Karola Dickensa. Carey krytykuje wiktoriańską propagandę dotyczącą wyższości rasy białej, otwarcie sprzeciwiając się występkom imperium oraz obłudzie jego obywateli. Autor podważa obraz imperialnej Anglii jako ojczyzny troszczącej się o swoje kolonialne dzieci, jaki pośrednio przedstawia w swojej powieści Dickens, kreując postać Abela Magwichta, skazańca z Australii, który otrzymuje pomoc i opiekę od angielskiego dzentelmena. Moralne zepsucie wiktoriańskiego społeczeństwa jest szczególnie odzwierciedlone w postaci Mary Britten, bezwzględnie abortującej nienarodzone dzieci, co jest aluzją do niepohamowanej ekspansji kolonialnej wiktoriańskiej Brytanii Matki. W niniejszym artykule wskażę, że *Jack Maggs* jest uosobieniem skolonizowanej, osieroconej i marginalizowanej Australii, która mści się za ekspansję brytyjską. *Maggs* nie jest już

przedmiotem badań świata eurocentrycznego, lecz głosem uciszonych i pozbawionych ziemi, których kultura miała być wykorzeniona poprzez dynamikę władzy kolonialnej. Podważenie wyższości kultury Zachodu może być odczytane jako nawiązanie do pojęć mimikry i hybrydyzacji autorstwa Homi'ego Bhabhy, według którego kultura zdominowana umniejsza autorytet władzy kolonialnej, umożliwiając wyłonienie się i artykulację nowych historii, świadomie tłumionych przez dyskurs kolonialny. Jack Maggs, będący głosem kultury zduszonej przez hegemonię Zachodu, destabilizuje centrum, które traci swoją nadrzędną pozycję, ponieważ jest ukazane przez 'innego' z peryferii. Osierocony przez kraj reprezentujący 'lepszą' kulturę, Jack powraca do imperialnego Londynu, aby zburzyć porządek dyskursu kolonialnego i opowiedzieć swoją historię z drugorzędnej pozycji.

Rafał Łyczkowski is a secondary school teacher. His interests include Victorian and postcolonial literature, especially the Dickensian motif of orphanhood that is still used by contemporary writers. He is currently working on a Ph.D. thesis entitled *Reinterpretations of Dickensian Orphanhood in Contemporary Literature of English-speaking Countries* where he will demonstrate that orphanhood as a literary figure does not only mean the condition of being parentless, but, in the field of postcolonialism, it has relevance to those marginalised by the British hegemony.