

2000

Jack Maggs : A Differend Convict(ion) by Peter Carey

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**Jack Maggs:
A Differend Convict(ion) by Peter Carey.**

by

Timothy D. Langley.

A Thesis submitted as Partial Fulfilment
of the requirements for the Award of

Bachelor of Arts (Honours),
English.

at the Faculty of
Community Services, Education & Social Sciences,
Mt. Lawley Campus,
Edith Cowan University.

Date of Submission: 10th November, 2000.

Abstract.

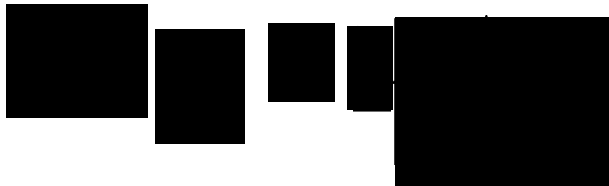
This thesis is an analysis of Peter Carey's novel *Jack Maggs* and its attempt at writing back to Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. I will analyse the (de)construction of language games between *Jack Maggs* and *Great Expectations*; show how Carey as a post-colonial settler writer writes back to the centre, to Dickens' text as a canonical Victorian novel, through intergrating the very notion of the Victorian novel, and in his own terms giving the convict a "history". I will explore how Carey writes competing language games of "science" and "narrative" (as identified by Lyotard) within *Jack Maggs* and how they produce what Lyotard calls a differend within history: Tobias Oates' construction of Jack Maggs' history through the scientific language game of Animal Magnetism, which relies on the notion of a centre and concrete metaphors to make sense, is in competition with Jack Maggs' private history constructed through narrative language games, unrestricted by limiting procedures. I will discuss the aporia of identity for the settler writer, which is *internally* (Slemon, 1997, p.109) inscribed within the text, and within Jack Maggs; how the process of identity is not closed within or outside the text; how Carey's Australian identities are formed without resorting to nationalist notions of closure and purity. The purity of nation state, which is legitimated by a meta-narrative of History, is no longer credible in Carey's postmodern/post colonial *enceinte*. Finally, I will show how Carey moves to cut symbolic ties with England to form an Australian republic, which is acceptant of heterogeneous and fluid notions of identity: of Australian national *identities* without a fixed notion of the nation state; a history of Australia which incorporates its "fictions" and its "truths"; a notion of history which is constructed from narrative language games and scientific language games.

Declaration.

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signed:

A series of black rectangular boxes of varying sizes used to redact the signature.

Date: 12/03/01

Acknowledgement.

Special thanks to Dr Cynthia vanden Driesen for always being “worried”, especially when I was not, and for guiding my wandering narratives into a grand one.

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Introduction: Peter Carey *un accoucheur* postmodern.

*“What got me through that period was conceiving of the history of philosophy as a kind of ass-fuck, or, what amounts to the same thing, an immaculate conception. I imagined myself approaching an author from behind and giving him a child that would indeed be his but would nonetheless be monstrous.”*¹

Peter Carey is a *postmodern settler* writer positioned with/in an Australian postmodern and post-colonial *enceinte*. His texts have been described as postmodern and/or post-colonial, as well as magic realist, but these problematic categories while inadequate seem necessary to describe the achievement of *Jack Maggs*. Postmodernism and post-colonialism are uncomfortable bedfellows²: they are a couple often stuck together in an arranged marriage, who seem to argue and bicker all the time but who also seem to need and *desire* each(’s) Other. Out of this conception comes *writing*, a monstrous child of uncertainty, interrupting the meta-narrative of nation state and the climax to its History.

According to Graham Huggan:

[M]onsters disrupt the genealogical system of continuous inheritance. Carey’s monstrous progeny might appear to follow in the footsteps of their monstrous ancestors.... But monsters have a nasty habit of not conforming to present patterns. (1996, p.10)

In *Jack Maggs* the monstrous child becomes the child of a monster; England’s convict relationship with Australia is seen as an “abusive parent” over the Australian child³. *Jack Maggs* interrogates the way the convict and Australia were written as necessary Others with/in Dickens’ *Great Expectations* and with/in England’s nation state grand narrative. Carey (re)writes the convict from *the Other* into a legitimate part of Australia’s history; he tries to reclaim the Australian convict from within England’s History through *Jack Maggs*’ narrative of histories.

Jack Maggs is a postmodern and post-colonial return to history: as a postmodern text it

disrupts history's status as "scientific" by highlighting the narrative language games history tries to deny; as a post-colonial text it reflects Carey's attempt to "write back to the centre" to break symbolic ties with his inheritance and to define an identity in his own terms.

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. (1997, p.131)

I define *Jack Maggs* as postmodern by Lyotard's notion of the incredulity towards (modern) grand narratives (1984a, p.xxiv). For Lyotard the term modern designates, "any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse... making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative." (1984a, p.xxiii)⁴. In this context the grand narrative is that of the nation state which legitimates Dickens/Oates' history of the convict: the construction of the convict and Australia as the Other in the narrative of (the English) Self. Postmodernism sees this grand narrative disseminated into heterogeneous, competing and incommensurable language games (1984a, p.10); it sees the return of the repressed, *Jack Maggs* (the novel and the character), to Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, reinscribing a history of the convict that breaks the purity of nation state:

The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its *great goal* [my emphasis]. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements – narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and so on. (Lyotard, 1984a, p.xxiv)

In *The Differend* Lyotard abandons the term "language game" for the term "phrase" because, according to him:

‘language games’ implied players that made use of language like a toolbox, thus repeating the constant arrogance of *Western anthropocentrism* [my emphasis]. ‘Phrases’ came to say that the so-called players were on the contrary situated by phrases in the universes those phrases present, ‘before’ any intention. Intention is itself a phrase... (1984b, p.17)

I will use the term language game because, I believe, Carey enters the *Western anthropocentrism* language game of “intention” and uses it against itself, which could be seen as a language game of postmodernism (and post-colonialism). But the “intention” of Carey’s text is purposely placed in the hands of the reader. In *Jack Maggs* Carey metonymically demonstrates this reliance and importance of the reader in playing this game: no matter how much intention Maggs has in writing his history for Phipps, he still has little or no control over it; even when Phipps is given Maggs’ history Phipps refuses to even literally read it, which is directly *against* Maggs’ intention. So one of Carey’s intentions is to re-write the convict Magwitch, but he is also aware that it is up to the reader to play within this postmodern/postcolonial language game; it is up to the reader to participate in what Carey calls a “socially useful act”. Society is important for the postmodern settler writer, a society not predicated on a notion of culture (as culture is too problematic) but one based on what Carey identifies as a socially useful act, an act in which the reader has a responsibility along with the writer. According to Peter Carey:

it is the writer’s responsibility to imagine what it is to be others. It’s an act of empathy, and it’s not only what we do, it’s a *socially useful act* [my emphasis] to imagine oneself to be other than one is. (1997a, p.672)

I define *Jack Maggs* as post-colonial by Stephen Slemon’s notion of the Second-world or settler writer (1997, pp.104-110), and by Simon During’s notion of the texts produced by these writers: “Postcolonialism... is the name for products of the ex-colonies’ need for an identity granted not in terms of the colonial power, but in terms of

themselves.” (1985, p.369) *Jack Maggs* is not directly concerned with the effects of colonialism on indigenous Australian cultures, but with *aporia in identity* within the convict, and the settler writer, caused by English transportation and colonization (directed by its grand narrative nation state). *Jack Maggs* is a “contamination” (Brydon 1997, p.136) and rejection of this English grand narrative through the re-writing of *Great Expectations* almost to the point of deconstruction. Carey adopts this cultural “tool” of imperialism, the novel (to use Edward Said’s notion⁵), to demonstrate the way the English canon and history has constructed the convict and Australia as the Other in the formation of Self.

The intersection within *Jack Maggs* between postmodernism and post-colonialism is reflected through Lyotard’s notion of the differend⁶. According to Lyotard when two (or more) incommensurable language games come into contact a conflict or differend is produced:

As distinguished from a litigation, a differend would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. (1988, p.xi)

Lyotard’s notion of the differend fits easily into postcolonial discourse, as conflicts within colonial countries are settled under the rule of the colonizer over the colonized, this is clearly evident in Australia in relation to what is now known as “the stolen generation”.

Jack Maggs testifies to a specific differend created by *Great Expectations* in its writing of the convict as the Other, which reaffirms the grand narrative of England’s History: History, with a capital H, meaning the grand-narrative, the dialectical process, evolving towards a purity of nation state, and identity. For Chakrabarty, History is legitimated by

the (Modern) meta-narrative of nation state: “‘History’ as a knowledge system is firmly embedded in institutional practices that invoke nation state at every step.” (1997, p.384) The competing language games characterized by *Jack Maggs* (the novel and the character) shows incredulity towards the meta-narrative nation state, and to the Modern notion of linear History, legitimating Dickens/Oates’ writing of the convict as history.

Jack Maggs also testifies to the general differend created in the very act of writing history: history with a small h, as an interpretation through scientific language games, which only accept spiritual (and narrative language games) as long as they fit into empirical notions, which “subordinates these narratives to the rules of evidence and to the secular, linear calendar that the writing of ‘history’ must follow.” (Chakrabarty, 1997, p.384) *Jack Maggs* demonstrates the absolute necessity of narrative language games in the construction of identity in history: to interrogate the silences that are produced by the very act of writing history⁷.

Chapter one: Language games between Carey and Dickens.

"In my fancy, I saw the boat with its convict crew waiting... again saw the wicked Noah's Ark lying out on the black water." (1907, p.215)

*"'Deep,' said Wemmick, 'as Australia.' Pointing with his pen at the office floor, to express that Australia was **understood** [my emphasis], for the purposes of the figure, to be symmetrically on the opposite spot of the globe."* (1907, p.185)

"They had been to Oxford and Cambridge, had grown up with Greek and Latin, with Plato and Aristotle. And if they had admired their guest's novels, they were obviously having great difficulty accepting that this was the same chap who used the English language like a lyre." (1998, p.164)

Jack Maggs represents a specific differend with/in *Great Expectations* construction of the convict. According to Lyotard:

A *differend* [is] the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim.... A case of differend between two parties takes place when the "regulation" of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom. (1988, p.9)

In *Great Expectations* the convict Magwitch is a victim because he is divested of a means to signify his history (or language game) within the law (or idiom) of England. Magwitch is the convict that is not allowed to return – when he does he must be silent or he will be hanged – the wrong he suffers (his unknown past and being constructed as the Other) is not signified through the writing of his history within the English novel. Magwitch is therefore a victim of Dickens' narrative: the silence of the convict's history in the narrative is necessary for the constitution of the Other to work. When Pip finds out his benefactor is Magwitch he is greatly disappointed:

All the truth of my position came flashing upon me; and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds, rushed in in such a multitude that I was borne down by them and had to struggle for every breath I drew. (1907 p.298)

Magwitch's money is inferior to Miss Havisham's because he is a convict with no (childhood) history. As the Other he cannot speak on his own terms, in his own language game; his "character" is written only from the English point of view: he is the

necessary Other not just within Dickens' narrative but also within England's grand narrative of nation state.

In the Victorian period Dickens wasn't the only writer to use the Australian convict as the terrible Other. According to White:

[T]he stereotype of the returned convict, who had known nameless horrors in Australia, and been guilty of nameless crimes, had almost been a convention of English fiction. (1992, p.22)

The crimes of the convicts and the horrors of their past are nameless, cementing their history as silent and unknown. *Great Expectations* is by Lyotard's definition a Modern text because it appeals (unconsciously) to the grand narrative of nation state through the binary distinction between Self and Other, Pip and Magwitch, English gentleman and Australian convict; the English gentleman being the ultimate Idea, which both Pip and Magwitch strive for (Pip being the gentleman Magwitch will live through). But, importantly, these stable positions are not seen as produced by society but seen as *natural*.

Jack Maggs fractures this grand narrative into competing heterogeneous language games (see chapter two); it fractures Dickens' stable signs of identity into unstable protean signifiers. Carey shows incredulity towards the grand narrative of nation state by rewriting the convict, giving him a history, and making him reject the Idea of English identity for the mixed Australian identity of his family. According to Hassall:

The novel's happy ending... manages to reverse cathartically the process of colonization, the colony in a very real sense reclaiming its history from its imperial master. (1997, p.134)

Carey uses a mode of the colonial centre, the Victorian novel of *Great Expectations*, to re-inscribe what it leaves out: the convict Magwitch's history.

According to Carey:

I read the book... and I put it down at once recognizing that I'd read a truly great book – maybe a perfect book. But I was sort of mad with Dickens too.... And so... I entered into re-imagining this book. (1997a, p.667)

Carey has a “dickens” of a time playing *Great Expectations* (and its English language) like a *lyre*; entering its structure like an artful dodger stealing its possession and using them to his own “antipodean” ends. According to Bradley:

Carey has colonized the fictional space of Dickens' novel by appropriating his characters and situation and then using them for quite different ends from those that Dickens might have envisaged. (1997, p.661)

It is *the character* of the returned convict which is most dramatically changed: Carey takes the “witch” metaphorically and literally out of Magwitch. In *Great Expectations* Magwitch first appears as a desperate fugitive, complete with leg irons. Upon his return to England later in the novel he is about sixty, “substantially dressed, but roughly; like a voyager by sea.” (1907, p. 294) In contrast the protagonist Maggs is described as in his forties (p.1) dressed like a gentleman in a red waistcoat (p.2) who commands attention, figuratively: “[H]is fellows on the bench seat had felt the strain of his presence.” And literally: “Now pay attention to me.” (p.2) Magwitch is seen as naturally uncouth: there can be no mistake that his ungentlemanliness *is* his nature, and not formed by society, because his childhood history is silenced: “I’m a heavy grubber... but I always was. If it had been in my *constitution* [my emphasis] to be a lighter grubber, I might ha got into lighter trouble.” (1907, p.307) Carey’s text highlights the irony in this *constitution* of the convict: it is Dickens’ constitution, and not the convicts’, which makes him a “grubber”. Magwitch is such a grubber in *Great Expectations* that he is even below the (English) colonists in Australia (1907, p.308). Maggs, on the Other hand, is seen more as a product of his environment, which only comes to light through

his history: he was an abandoned child (p.93) raised into a life of crime by Ma Britten; it was the conditions of Mother Britain that *defiled* Maggs into a convict.

In *Great Expectations* Pip is literally the central character: *the story of the novel* is known only through his first person narration, while the story of Jack Maggs is known through numerous narratives (see chapter two). Pip is the considerate and caring centre; he feels burdened by the money when he finds out his benefactor is Magwitch: “[T]hink what I owe him already.” (1907, p.318) For Pip’s sincere gentlemanliness the money is a debt: he can never become a gentleman by society’s standards so he considers the convict’s money a loan, which makes him a gentleman *by nature*.

Pip is a victim of a cruel joke by Magwitch, who is only partly to blame – for he cannot help being an (ex)convict and he is too ignorant to know any better: “His ignorance, poor fellow.” (1907, p.419) Miss Havisham is also to blame for making him believe she was the benefactor: “[W]hen I fell into the mistake I have so long remained in, at least you led me on?” (1907, p.335). The innocent Pip is so affected by the “fraud” he breaks down (1907, p.316). Magwitch is the cause of Pip’s pain not just because of the tainted money but also because of the convict’s silent history: “But, sharpest and deepest pain of all – it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes.” (1907, p.302) In *Jack Maggs* Carey inverts the relationship between Pip and Magwitch, and makes Pip/Phipps the cause of Maggs’ pain. This post-colonial game of inversion, which makes Phipps the centre of Maggs’ pain, demonstrates the effect of English centre upon the Other. The violence and control perpetrated by the English centre onto the convict is not just external; the centre also operates internally upon its subjects, which is often unrecognised, but still has material implications – for Maggs the material implication is

an uncontrollable *tic douloureux*.

Despite the pain imposed on Pip from Magwitch's revelation, he still shows sympathy towards the convict: "[W]hat precautions can be taken against your being recognised and seized?" (1907, p.309) The Other (Magwitch) has to change into the image of the centre to be accepted; he must adopt the acceptable English culture to survive. Pip convinces Magwitch to change his, "seafaring slop suit," into more gentlemanly attire, for his own good: "It was with considerable difficulty that I won him over to the assumption of dress more like a prosperous farmer's." (1907, p.311) But Pip's attempts to help Magwitch transform into a gentleman can never be: "The more I dressed him, and the better I dressed him, the more he looked like the slouching fugitive on the marshes." (1907, p.314) No matter what clothes Magwitch wears, he remains the uncivilized ex-convict. Dickens' sign of the convict is stable and "known": the signifier (clothes) has no effect on his signified (nature); the "nature" of the convict remains concrete. In contrast Maggs' sign is not stable: his signified, his nature, is seen a construction of his English childhood, and his treatment in the penal colony, which literally affects his physical behaviour in the form of a *tic*. The notion of "English" is itself just a signifier, which Maggs is able to exploit: "Now, all these long years later, Jack Maggs had become such an Englishman. Dressed in his waistcoat and his tailored tweed..." (p.394) The irony is that Maggs could only be an "Englishman" *after* leaving England and becoming Australian; it is only after his success in Australia that he is able to afford the clothes that makes him an Englishman. In *Jack Maggs* Maggs is able to become a gentleman because: 1. the sign of the "convict" is *literally* produced by culture and not by nature; and 2. the "English gentleman" is an unstable and empty sign, just a signifier easily entered and manipulated. But in *Great Expectations* both the signs

are stable and concrete, so Magwitch can only be a gentleman *through* Pip: “I’ve come to the old country fur to see my gentleman spend his money *like* a gentleman.” (1907, p.308)

Magwitch has little knowledge, he constantly relies on Pip, the English centre, to direct him on how to live: “As to the where and how of living, dear boy, give me your own opinions on it.” (1907, p.310) In *Jack Maggs* the Pip character Phipps is selfish and uncaring, and in the end he becomes the representation of Maggs’ pain in his search for identity in England. In *Great Expectations* Pip considers, after finding out who his benefactor is, enlisting, “for India as a private soldier.” (1907, p.315) In *Jack Maggs* Phipps actually becomes, “a subaltern of the 57th Foot Regiment” (p.357), an emblem of the violent convict system used against its own subjects – a “son” who under English regiment turns against his own “father”. Phipps becomes a “subaltern” with no “voice” so is easily manipulated by Percy Buckle (see chapter three) in their attempt to kill Maggs.

In *Great Expectations* Dickens’ plays with the meaning of the convict’s names, but only in a limited way: for example Magwitch uses the alias Mr Provis, which is similar to proviso – a stipulation, a limit: “Mr Provis (I resolved to call him by that name), who reserved his consent.” (1907, p.310) Carey, on the Other hand, plays with many of Dickens characters’ names: Magwitch/Maggs, Pip/Phipps, Dickens’ Mother Britain/Mary Britten. Carey also plays with the names of his own characters: Mercy – compassion; Buckle – fasten and crumble; Silas – alias; Makepeace (Oates’ lawyer) – make peace between Oates/Dickens and their rival Thackeray (Hassall, 1997, p.130); Constable, whose name *is* his position – officer of the Buckle’s household; and *Jack*

Maggs – named by Ma Britten because he spoke too much (p.93) – a text which symbolically speaks (too much) back to *Great Expectations*.

Carey also parodies Dickens' use of adjectival nouns, but to the extreme: in *Great Expectations* Pip describes Magwitch as, "my terrible patron." (p.310). In *Jack Maggs* Carey describes Maggs as: "the Australian" (pp.109, 202, 345), "the convict" (pp. 224, 225, 308, 314, 316, 374), "the criminal" (p.224), "an Englishman" (p.394), "the seated footman" (p.113), "the absent footman" (p.71), "the murderer" (pp.282, 400), "Wilfred Partridge's murderer" (p.313), "the other man" (p.225), "the wretched man" (p.393), "the ruffian" (p.295), "the scoundrel" (p.224), "a somnambulist" (p.58), "the stranger" (pp. 1,5). In *Jack Maggs* the convict becomes a protean character with many interchangeable descriptive positions.

Carey also inverts the subject positions between the convict and the writer. At the beginning of *Great Expectations* the convict is burdened with, "a great iron on his leg." (1907, p.2) Dickens writes the convict as manacled, but in *Jack Maggs* the convict ties the writer's hands (p.345) into a *hobble*, placing Oates helplessly under his authority: "HER MANACLED HUSBAND [Oates] was helped aboard a coach [by Maggs]." (p.347) The Australian novelist Carey makes the English novelist Dickens a character (Oates) in his novel: Oates practices mesmerism and is a writer for the *Morning Chronicle* (p.223), while Dickens also practiced mesmerism and wrote for the *Morning Chronicle* (Morrison, 1997, p.2) Carey also has Oates' sister-in-law Lizzie die on 7 May 1837, the same day as Dickens' sister-in-law Mary Hogarth died (Hassall, 1997, p.130).

Carey not only "colonizes" Dickens' characters in *Great Expectations*, but also enters

the thieving (under)world of his other novel *Oliver Twist*: the leader of the thieving gang in *Jack Maggs* Silas is similar to Fagin, while the young Maggs' experiences parallel Oliver's. Carey also makes overt allusion to Dickens and this text: "the old dodger... I had a dickens of a time." (p.125) Carey's character Oates is an allusion to Dickens himself: the first chapters of *The Death of Maggs* did not appear until 1860 as a serial (p.401), while *Great Expectations* also appeared as a serial in 1860. (Bradley, 1997, p.660)

There are other intertextual motifs: Jack Maggs destroys the convict character of Oates' manuscripts in a fire (p.374), while in *Great Expectations* Pip, under the light of the fire, imagines the convict: "Out of such remembrances I brought into the light of fire, a half-formed terror." (1907, p.303) The fire brings the convict to life in Pip's imagination, but in *Jack Maggs* the fire sees the death of the convict's *character*. And Pip as a "somnambulist" waits by the fire for Magwitch: "[A]nd so, in a sort of dream or sleep-walking, I found myself sitting by the fire again, waiting for – Him." (1907, p.306) while in *Jack Maggs* Maggs is the somnambulist who holds the phantom inside his mind waiting for "Him" to be removed.

Carey also plays with *Great Expectations* by incorporating *factual* elements: in *Jack Maggs* before the opening page Carey quotes a passage by Armand Marie Jacques de Chastnet, marquis de Puysegur about animal magnetism (quoted from Crabtree 1993, p.40); he includes references to Dr Eliotson (spelt Elliotson in Crabtree, p.302) and to the journal of mesmerism *The Zoist* (1993, p.302). As in *Oscar and Lucinda* Carey, "confuses fiction with apparently real history.... [and] plays with history and fiction in ways which remind us that history too is a storytelling process and something we must

be wary of.” (Woodcock, 1996, p.81) Carey suggests that “fiction” in the form of *Jack Maggs* can reflect a “truth”, that *Great Expectations*’ construction of the convict is limited by the English point of view. The narrative language game of *Jack Maggs* is heterogeneous compared to the singular language game of the convict inscribed in the Dickens’ text.

Jack Maggs has the power to use and manipulate language: when Jack (of all trades) enters the Buckle household his language and accent is “proper” English so he can easily disguise his past subject position. Later in the novel he reverts to using the Australian word “mate”. While at the beginning of *Jack Maggs* Maggs sarcastically said to the unhelpful porter: ““You comprennay-voo?”” (p.2) The French is written in the way it is pronounced, usually by Australians. Dickens’ Victorian England becomes “contaminated” (Brydon, 1997, p.136) by Maggs’ Australian words and accent.

Carey himself plays language games with ironic effect: “[Maggs states] ‘You don’t know what you’re mucking with.’ ‘Language!’ cried Miss Mott.” (p.40) Miss Mott pulls up Maggs for his use of the word “mucking”, not realising that Maggs is also mucking *with* language – the foundation to constructing and understanding English wor(l)ds – *itself*. Carey’s language game is “saying” that Miss Mott and Dickens *literally* do not know what they are “mucking” with; in other words they do not, and cannot, “know” Maggs, the convict or Australia. In *Great Expectations* Magwitch and Dickens are bound to the “English” (with a capital E) language: Magwitch is unable to change his Cockney accent; Dickens is unable to change the English novel with its construction of Self and Other. Magwitch’s accent is a reflection of his *nature* as underclass and uneducated in relation to English⁸. Magwitch’s position is known through his language:

he cannot “muck” around with the English language like Maggs, he can only use his Cockney accent, which separates him from the centre.

In the end the only option left for Magwitch is death: “[I]t was unquestionably best that he should die.” (1907, p.418) Magwitch accepts his fate from the English centre, from God: ““My Lord, I have received my sentence of Death from the Almighty, but I bow to yours.”” (1907, p.428) Magwitch literally and metaphorically bows to the English centre; he concedes to English law and the “Lord’s” ruling: God has “sentenced” him to death, but it is the *higher* power of England to which he “bows”. The sign of the convict closes within the English centre.

In *Jack Maggs* Australia moves beyond just an “antipodean” construction for convicts; it breaks the mode of a necessary placed Other written into *Great Expectations* and England’s grand narrative. *Jack Maggs* (the novel and the character) is openly intertextual and “contaminates” *Great Expectations*: resistance to the closure of the convict’s sign is not through its opposite of non-sign, of radical openness found in Modernism, but through “contamination” found in postmodernism (Brydon, 1997, p.136), through the breaking of boundaries between Self and Other, Englishness and Australianness, *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs*, Magwitch and Maggs, and truth and fiction. Carey and *Jack Maggs* are able to fracture the status of the Dickens’ novel and represent the convict from the settler’s point of view. According to Hassall Australian writers like Carey in their attempt to “create a national repository of their own, uniquely Australian stories... have sought to (re)claim and (re)write those English stories which constituted their first meta-narrative, as well as inventing new ones.... to (re)mythologise Australia in its own terms.” (1997, p.135)

Chapter two: Language games within *Jack Maggs*.

"All thought conceals something of the unthought. We must then take it up, be it at the price of self-contradiction." (Lyotard, 1984b p.16)

"Is that what you imagined? That I was playing games with Jack Maggs." (Tobias Oates in *Jack Maggs*, p.144)

"I am not a going fur to tell you my life, like a song or a story book. But to give it you short and handy, I'll put it at once into a mouthful of English. In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail. There, you've got it." (Magwitch in *Great Expectations*, p.322)

There are numerous narratives (or language games) structuring *Jack Maggs*: Jack Maggs' first person narrative; Tobias Oates' third person narratives, one "truthful", one "false" and one published as *The Death of Maggs*; *Jack Maggs* third person omniscient narrative; and *Jack Maggs* intertextual narrative with *Great Expectations*. The writing of Maggs' history by Oates and Maggs, and the conflict created between their different versions of history, is central to Carey's narrative. The central relationship is no longer between orphan and convict, but between Oates' scientific language game and Maggs' narrative language game. The competing histories between convict and novelist demonstrates the general differend created in the very act of writing history.

Tobias Oates holds a number of different subject positions: he is a scientist of Animal Magnetism, a journalist for the *Morning Chronicle* and *Observer* (p.223), a writer of comic tales such as *Captain Crumley* (p.290), and an actor (p.165). Oates' narratives are written for reasons completely different to those of Maggs. As a novelist Oates wants to write his-story of Maggs to make a "name" for himself: "Tobias Oates stored not only his Evidence, but also experiments, sketches, notes, his workings-up of the *characters* who he hoped would one day make *his name*." [my emphasis] (p.56) Oates' other "intention" is profit: as he informs his wife: "Money will come of it." (p.144) As a novelist Oates' is bound to the tastes of the middle class buying public to be successful;

he creates a story from the truthful and hidden version of Maggs' history to make money and a reputation. The truth to Maggs is transformed into a fiction: "This Jack Maggs was, of course, a fiction, and so *it may not matter* [my emphasis] that Tobias never witnessed the final act of the real convict's search." (p.400) No part of *The Death of Maggs* is narrated in *Jack Maggs*; Oates' final version is unknown to the reader: it could be "fiction" or a "truth"; its meaning is not closed or known. As the narrator of *Jack Maggs* ambivalently points out: it may not *matter*. The phrase of *Jack Maggs* third person narrative could mean it may or may not be significant that Jack Maggs is a fiction and not truth; it could mean it may or may not matter that Oates never witnessed the actual end of Maggs' search – establishment of an Australian identity in his family; or it could mean that the fiction may or may not *be* matter, that it may or may not have material implications. In every sense it is up to the reader to decide which matter to be concerned with.

The writing, description and construction of character is not only made by Oates: Jack Maggs writes his own description of Oates: "So unsettling was this character to Jack Maggs that he later devoted almost one hundred words to describing him." (p.32) *Jack Maggs* third person narrative highlights the intertextual narratives within and between Oates and Maggs' narratives. The subject and object of *Jack Maggs* is not fixed: Maggs is the object of Oates' narrative; Oates is the object of Maggs' narrative; and both characters are subjects and objects of *Jack Maggs* narrative. The distinction between subject and object is seldom clear in Carey's text, even in the first person, as in *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*: "*Me – I* [my emphasis] never doubted what had happened." (1994, p.223)

Oates' language game is not the welfare of his subject, so he writes two versions of Maggs' history, "to hide the true nature of his exploration." (p.112) Oates' notes from the mesmerizing session are placed in a red leather journal, which is devoted to Maggs' hidden history, a history hidden from Maggs himself. Oates' truth about Maggs is hidden by a fabricated second narrative: "There were, as in all crooked businesses, two sets of books, and had Jack Maggs seen the second set he might have recognized scenes." (pp.112-113) In this context the language game of writing is a crooked business because its interests are directed towards profit and away from the truth; while the language game of science is also crooked, in relation to Maggs' narrative language game, because it places and confines its subject within the notion of truth, which does not take into account the need for Maggs to keep the truth hidden from English law.

Oates as a scientist of Animal Magnetism wants to map and understand the mind of the Other; it is this language game of science which tries close and restrict meaning:

There was much of the scientist about Tobias Oates.... There was not a loose piece of anything here, not a nightingale feather or an unbound sheet of paper: *everything was secured in its own place* [my emphasis], tied up with ribbon, or tucked away in labelled envelopes. (p.55)

Security of place, the security of meaning is the game of science, to label and classify referents to specific and un-textual signs (a zero degree of writing), in other words to use denotation as a method of reducing any possible ambiguity in meaning. According to Lyotard the scientific language game operates through denotation: "Scientific knowledge requires that one language game, denotation, be retained and all others excluded." (1984a p.25)⁹

This language game of science relies on a centre (as identified by Derrida, 1993,

pp.278-293) to understand the pain in Jack Maggs; it is this centre, in the form of a phantom, which influences and controls Maggs' behaviour. According to Graham Huggan: "Carey uses science to 'explain' and legitimate an apparently mysterious subject." (1996, p.18) It is the phantom – the representation of his harsh treatment in NSW as a convict – that causes the physical symptom of the *tic douloureux*. It is also a centre which, ironically, ends up being the cause of Maggs' pain and desire for identity: the phantom (as Captain Logan) is the representation of the pain caused by the penal system: transportation, displacement and physical abuse; the phantom (as Phipps) is the representation of the pain caused by the desire for English identity. Oates, as the scientist, is in a double bind: he constructs the centre (the phantom) but tries to exclude it from the (metaphorical) structure he builds in an attempt to cure Maggs' pain. Oates asks Maggs: "'Where is the Phantom?' [...] 'Is he inside or outside the house?'" (p.63) Oates constructs the phantom as a metaphorical representation of Maggs' pain, but it ends up *being* literal when it is drawn out. Maggs believes the phantom was created by scientific language game, as he writes in his narrative:

This creature has been recently introduced into my sleep by Magical Arts. Perhaps you, with your education, will know how he can be drawn out again. (p.290)

The scientific language game does introduce the phantom to Maggs' sleep, but it is only a metaphorical representation of the pain already inside him. It ends up being the reader Buckle and the beneficiary Phipps who draw the phantom out of Maggs' sleep, out of the metaphorical, and into "reality", into the literal.

Oates at the beginning uses Animal Magnetism to cure Maggs of his pain, but when he discovers Maggs' past he uses the science to "map" Maggs' mind, to understand what he already sees as a convict (a convict produced within the law), as he explains to Percy Buckle:

What a puzzle of life exists in the dark little lane-ways of this wretch's soul, what stolen gold lies hidden in the vaults beneath his filthy streets.... It's the Criminal Mind... awaiting its first cartographer. (p.111)

The mapping of the criminal mind uses architectural metaphors: for Oates the truth lies hidden beneath the man-made construction of the city of London, which becomes a metonym for Jack Maggs' unconscious (according to Lacan's notion of the unconscious being structured like language). Oates use of Animal Magnetism demonstrates the constraints of that scientific language game. He tries to map the criminal mind, to name and label his space, to restrict the possible heterogeneity of his thoughts. According to Huggan: "As ways of looking at the world, maps are inevitably distortive: they can neither contain nor explain the reality that they purport to represent." (1996, p.34)

The concept of the map is taken up by both postmodernism and post-colonialism. For Jean Baudrillard the (simulacrum) map is a metaphor for the loss of the referent in hyperreality. For post-colonialism the (modern) map is a European desire for understanding and control over the Other. This mapping of the other is not without violence – the scars on Maggs' back metonymically represent the colonizing system mapping of the Other. According to Young:

By definition the concept 'cannot capture the absolutely-other'; and, to the extent that it must invoke a form of generality, of language itself. Any conventional form of understanding must appropriate the other, in an act of violence and reduction. (1990, p.14)¹⁰

It was the convict system, represented by Captain Logan (and the phantom), which produced the scars upon Maggs' back:

We're going to do a spot of mapping, Sir? But Jack felt the cold empty terror in his gut. There would be no mapping. This is not a bridle. One hundred lashes, cried Captain Logan, and lay them on until I see the bone. (p.137)

The scars from being whipped become a metaphor for maps: the scars written upon the skin of Jack Maggs is the map of his tortured past. The tool of inscription is defined but also open: the “bridle” is both a verb and noun. While Oates as a scientist tries to restrict meaning, Carey as a writer opens it up by linking Oates’ metaphors together: the scars on Maggs back are described as maps, which are linked to the writing of history, which Oates uses as a sign for judgement:

Oates snorted. ‘Did you not see his back, man? He is a scoundrel.’
 ‘Well, we saw a page of his history’ [said Buckle]. (p.108)

The scars are a signifier which Oates uses to construct a sign of Maggs. The signifier is representative of how the map operates: the map is not a closed sign but a signifier, which can never represent the referent, and so should not be used as a sign in judgement, as Buckle tells Oates: “We do ourselves no credit in judging him.” (p.108) Buckle has greater empathy for Maggs because his sister was also transported to Australia. Percy Buckle tells Oates about his sister who was transported to the “same cursed place” as Maggs: “Put yourself in her place – how could she get word to those who loved her? [...] God help us all, that Mother England would do such a thing to one of her own.” (pp.109-110) Carey is critical of the use of one language game, in this case the map, as evidence for judgement. As Huggan argues: “Maps show the power of signs to deceive and misguide the perceivers.” (1996, p.35)

For Maggs the concept of the map is linked to history: history is a form of “mapping” the past. History and maps are undecidable; they are as necessary as they are problematic. There is always violence inflicted upon the referent, leaving it permanently altered and scarred. But for Maggs leaving the map blank makes Phipps fill it with something that is not there. “I blame myself the way I withheld my true history from

you. I left a blank map for you and you have doubtless filled it with your worst imaginings.” (p.290) According to Maggs holding back his history from Phipps has caused a problem. Maggs’ narrative map or history is not secured and limited like scientific language games, so the violence inflicted upon the referent is less severe; the referent Maggs, in his narrative language game, is not bound to a stable sign.

Oates also plays an important role as a journalist in writing about tragic events. The episode of the fire in Brighton underlines the idea that there are numerous stories to the one event. Oates is a passionate journalist and is deeply affected by a fire that kills many children. Unlike other journalists Oates writes about the victims: “While other writers might have begun to report the tragedy from the site of the fire, or from the bedsides of surviving children, Tobias chose to begin his inquiries in a mortuary.” (p.158) There can be no complete coverage; and for Oates the silent victims are most important. The mortuary was a “basement underneath the Town Hall.” The dead children literally reside under the governing system of society; the government is built on silent victims, the “child victims of mill and factory owners.” (p.158) It is the responsibility of the journalist to testify to the differend created by the system: capitalism is an incommensurable language game to the welfare language game of its child workers; to operate in the language game of capitalism is to create victims of its workers.

The different language games Oates participates in are incommensurable: as a journalist he writes the truth for the unknown victims; as a scientist he writes the truth but with no regard for his subject; and as a novelist he constructs “stories” to make money, and a name for himself, with little regard for the truth. But incommensurability of language games relies on the notion of clearly defined language games.¹¹ These distinctions are

unstable when seen in relation to *Jack Maggs* and *Great Expectations*, and its construction of reality and fiction, conscious and unconscious states: "The Phantom had broken the locks and entered his life." (p.395) Jack Maggs as a somnambulist is a sign of undecidability: he does not fit neatly into the binary system of logic; he is neither awake nor asleep but both and neither; Tobias Oates describes Maggs' somnambulist state as: "Asleep but not asleep." It is in this undecidable state that Maggs' pain is identified and his history is expressed. So even in this clearly defined language game of Animal magnetism there is undecidability in definition.

For Jack Maggs an event has occurred that needs to be addressed; the horrors inflicted upon him during his time in New South Wales remain, written within his soul and upon his back, and return through an uncontrollable and painful tic. Maggs writes to Phipps to explain his past, but in doing so risks being *apprehended* (in both senses of the word). To reduce the risk Maggs constructs his story in a way that can only be read by using lemon juice and a mirror. Maggs writes a story of the past to Phipps in a narrative language game; the method he uses: "He did not write these words from left to right, but thus: *sppihP yrneH raeD*. He wrote fluidly, as if long accustomed to that distrustful art." (p.92) Writing for Jack Maggs is a distrustful art because it, ironically, holds *presence*, and is not temporary. Presence for Maggs is a danger as it is evidence of his return to England. Maggs wants his narrative not to have presence:

[Y]ou [Phipps] must BURN EVERYTHING when it is read. Many of the events I tell you are from a long time ago, but I fear they may still be used against me by my Enemies. (p.92)

Carey (like Derrida) inverts the binary between speech and writing. In *Great Expectations* Magwitch narrates a limited history to Pip and Henry through speech, but his speech does not explain his childhood, there is no "presence" in his history even

though he uses speech. In *Jack Maggs* Maggs narrates his history in writing; Maggs' childhood is expanded through writing. But writing also put him in danger of being found out; his history becomes as important as it is dangerous. The very act of writing history becomes undecidable, split into Oates and Maggs' "dual motives for history's composition." (*True History of the Kelly Gang*, 2000, p.293) Carey tries to reclaim history by highlighting the conflict and differend in its composition. Jack Maggs' narrative parallels Carey's text: *Jack Maggs* is a necessary act of re-writing to demonstrate the closure imposed within the truthful notion of history, but in doing so places the very notion of history in question. The undecidability of writing is also expressed in the letters Phipps wrote to Maggs, which gratify both their needs: Phipps wrote the letters to sustain his lifestyle, while the letters, although false, did satisfy Maggs' need to hear about his "son". "If the letters could be called 'lies' they could also be called 'comfort'." (p.397)

Maggs' history is also made up of other people's stories: "I grew up being told these stories, and I never liked them even as a child." (p.95) The history of how Maggs was picked up on the mud of the Thames as a baby comes from Silas' story in Mary's stories because Maggs was too young to remember: "I do not recall this." (p.93)

Maggs return to England is a problem because he is a convict written into the law; he is not allow to return to England to write his history; he is trapped by his subject position. James Bradley writes: "Jack Maggs, like his Dickensian predecessor, finds himself trapped by his past, by the legal description of him as a transportee." (1997, p.664) Jack Maggs places himself in danger when he returns to rewrite the history written into the English records:

To discuss Jack Maggs with a Man of Law seemed, to Mercy, a very dangerous thing. To her, a lawyer was the same species as a judge, and a judge the same genus as a policeman, and a policeman the same thing exactly as Harold Hoban, the hangman at Newgate Prison. (p.153)

Maggs' narrative tells the story of his love Sophina. But Oates' truthful version of Maggs' narrative is also necessary to know what happens to Sophina because Maggs' history leaves it out. Oates' version testifies to the differend that occurs in Sophina's narrative in the public realm of the law. Sophina is a victim of the law's idiom because it recognises only one language game, that of the thief as evidence, and not the thief as nature:

She addressed the Judge in a whisper.

'Again I cannot hear you.'

The young woman spoke in a louder voice. She said that there could be no value in her testimony because she was a thief.

'Do you mean that you are a thief by nature or a thief as evidenced by these charges? If you are a thief by nature, that is not the concern of this court today...' (p. 335)

The judge literally and metaphorically cannot hear Sophina. Sophina was born into a culture that offered her nothing but a life of crime. It is Oates' scientific language game that highlights this public differend, but it is Maggs' version that testifies to the differend that does not occur in the public realm, to the differend hidden outside the system of the law. It is Maggs' narrative language game that highlights the differend against Sophina and Maggs with the forced abortion of their child by Mother/Mary Britten¹².

In *Jack Maggs* the third person omniscient narrative is used to highlight the differend imposed upon Mercy Larkin; the narrative is important because it falls outside Oates' scientific language game and Maggs' narrative language game, but it is a narrative that

must be told. Mercy is forced into prostitution by her mother at a young age: the language games of child welfare and *a* language game of capitalism (the exchange of goods for profit) come into conflict. Mercy's past is described by an unknown omniscient narrator:

What happened then happened, and like a broken plate was soon all pieces, most of them missing in the dark – the pain, the onions cooking in the butter, the smell of pipe tobacco on his whiskers, the wetness on her legs. (p.86)

An event has happened to Mercy that cannot be fully described. Like the trope Carey uses the situation is not a whole but pieces, and of those piece many of them are lost. Carey's use of a simile instead of a metaphor allows for openness but also closure in meaning: the event is *like* a broken plate but, importantly, is *not* a broken plate; the simile opens up meaning, as does a metaphor, but it is tied to the linguistic restraint of "like": it is, in other words, a *restricted openness* of meaning. The figurative use of language highlights the incompleteness in description, even with denotation, but a certain closure of meaning is also necessary to highlight the event: even though the sexual act is not described fully we know it "happened". Carey could be demonstrating that an event can be understood in ways other than just denotation; it opens up ways of understanding concepts within culture, *like* capitalism, that have become so naturalized they are "hidden".

Under a philosophy of absolute heterogeneity how could child prostitution be judged wrong or how could these incommensurable language games be resolved without subjugating one of the games? It would require the imposition of a meta-narrative, a law prohibiting child prostitution that subjugates one language game over another¹³. A law is important to protect against child prostitution but in this case it does not work, the violation of the child's rights are hidden, so there has to be a number of meta-narratives

taken into account, such as morality and repression (of sexual desire), to reduce the effect of the differend.

Jack Maggs is in a seemingly contradictory position between postmodernism and post-colonialism: between a postmodern celebration of absolute heterogeneity of language games, which does not allow for the imposition of any meta-narratives, such as judgement and morality, to control or restrict language games; and a post-colonial desire for meta-narratives of judgement and morality to allow the language games of the Other to be voiced. Carey's text falls short of advocating complete heterogeneity of language games, he does it not by imposing his own meta-narrative of judgement but by a complex recognition of the incompleteness of describing an event and by testifying to the victims of language games. Carey has written the problem of heterogeneity into the text but has left the act of judgement to the readers.

Carey is interested in such notions as morality – but for him they are not stable or closed concepts but are, like all established concepts, legitimating narratives that must involve the use of different (if incommensurable) language games. To accept such concepts as closed, to have morality as a grand narrative, is to create a differend: consensus occurs when Others are silenced. Carey's interest is in questioning these established notions, which have become naturalized within language; these notions, such as morality, are often accepted without question as stable and closed, and are used to build certain views of the world; according to Ashcroft *et al*: construction of the world “rests upon a deep ground of unexamined assumptions. Such assumptions remain unexamined because they enter into language itself.” (1999, p.9) The grand narrative of emancipation does not exist for Peter Carey. The world his texts occupies and describes is in-between, or

undecidable; it is a world constructed out of conflicting language games competing for the right to be the “truth”. Carey shows incredulity towards history as scientific practice; he highlights the silences created by the limiting empirical methods of history, which cannot include all the stories of an event.¹⁴

How can we change things that cannot be adequately described? The question demonstrates the importance of narrative language games – ways of writing about events that cannot enter the discourse of history, but must be said because they are silenced by history. Narrative language games are important because they do not have rigid legitimating rules, there is no set mode for narrative games to follow, in other words they are heterogenous; narrative language games allow for numerous ways of linking one phrase onto another, and, more importantly, allows for new ways of linking that can testify to the differend. Carey demonstrates the importance of narrative language games as both a form of resistance and as a way of testifying to the differend.

According to Lyotard:

The differend is the unstable state and instance of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be.... What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them. (1988, p.13)

Chapter three: *Jack Maggs*' Other language game.

"This story concerns my father who I imagined to be an Englishman, who made such a thing, as long as I knew him, of his Englishness, who never missed a chance to say, "I am an Englishman" or "as an Englishman" that I was surprised to find out he was born in York Street, Warrnambool, the son of a shopkeeper. Yet for all that, I must carry his lie for him [my emphasis]. For he made himself into an Englishman." (Illywhacker, 1985, p.38)¹⁵

Jack Maggs is an attempt to reclaim an Australian identity from its position as the Other; to promote a distinctly Australian identity through its own language games, separate from *Great Expectations* and the English grand narrative; and to show the world, as in *True History of the Kelly Gang*, "what convict blood could do." (2000, p.369)

In terms of identity postmodernism and post-colonialism share a *similarity in difference*: both challenge the notion of a centre and promote voices from the margins (for postmodernism the centre is lost in absolute heterogeneity; for post-colonialism the centre is opposed by centering the margins); both challenge the notions of purity and authenticity (for postmodernism authenticity is lost in simulacra; for post-colonialism authenticity has been a tool of judgment, control and separation of others). Both also de-centre identity in radically different ways. Postmodernism de-centres all identity – it promotes a type of schizophrenic identity – pure heterogeneity not just of culture but also of the subject, while post-colonialism de-centres the imperialist-imposed identity by re-claiming a pre-colonial identity; it tries to form a stable identity in opposition to the illusion of Western identity as universal, but also in opposition to postmodernism's de-centring of *all* identity, which is paradoxically a universalism postmodernism tries to deny¹⁶.

For post-colonialism, re-claiming identity is as important as it is problematic: the

reaffirmation of identity once subjugated by colonial discourse is an important dialectical process towards regaining the political power of self-determination; but establishing a stable identity subjugates diversity within that identity. There is also a danger of inverting the binary between Self and other, a binary it is trying to dismantle; while a stable identity can fall into the static discourse of authenticity, a Western discourse fixed on synchronic placement of culture. It seems there is an appeal by Third-world nations towards the grand narrative of nation state to counter their placement within the European grand narrative. According to Chakrabarty, European imperialism and Third-world nationalism are similar in their different, “universalization[s] of the nation state as the most desirable form of political community.” (1997, p.384)

Carey is in a unique writing position: his post-colonial desire to cut symbolic ties with England is expressed within *Jack Maggs* without appealing to an opposing post-colonial grand narrative of nation state. The settler writer, unlike Third-world writers, cannot appeal to a pre-colonial national identity in its resistance to the (colonial) centre. Carey’s texts seem bound towards a universal national non-identity, towards incredulity of the grand narrative nation state established by postmodern globalisation; but Carey’s texts are highly critical of the neo-imperialist implications of this global “Americanisation” upon Australian cultural identities. *Jack Maggs* is in/between postmodernism and post-colonialism *defining* identities. According to Simon During: “Australian intellectuals possess an urgent need for self-definition not only against the identity given them by their colonial past but also against international postmodernism.” (1985, p.371) Carey’s desire is to reclaim the Australian convict identity from Dickens’ Victorian England, but his desire is also to resist the postmodern denial of any national

identity.

Jack Maggs reflects the aporia in identity for the *postmodern* settler writer, a writer who is part of a colonial system it tries to resist: there is complicity in resistance, which ends up being expressed *internally* within the text, within the character of the text, within *Jack Maggs*. According to Slemon:

[T]he *illusion* of a stable self/other, here/there binary division has *never* been available to Second-World writers, and as a result the sites of figural contestation between oppressor and oppressed, colonizer and colonized, have been taken *inward* and *internalized* in Second-World post-colonial textual practice. (1997, p.109)

Jack Maggs represents this conflict in identity, a conflict Dickens' *Great Expectations* denies: Magwitch's return to England, his silenced history and death within the centre re-enforces the closure of the identity within the (English) meta-narrative nation state. This aporia in identity for Maggs is caused not just by his transportation but also by his desire to retain a stable English identity: he can only remain English as long as he never returns to England. So for Maggs this aporia is already written, internally inscribed within the very notion of identity (the centre to Jack Maggs' search for identity is England, the phantom, which is also the centre to his pain). In the end Maggs' desire and dream to be English becomes a *phantom* nightmare. According to Huggan: "Carey's symbols are often reversible; dreams may turn as quickly to nightmares." (1996, p.15)

The phantom as the centre to identity is not outside the *play within* identity: the sex of the phantom is not clear; it is both male and female. The phantom informs Maggs that he is in, "the 15th Hussies." (p.136) Maggs tries to correct the Phantom's (parapraxis) word usage, but for the phantom the word is correct: there is no slippage in the phantom's language, but there is in the language of "English". "Hussies, insisted the

Phantom, opening a great-coat to reveal a naked female form, a soft bush of hair and such sweet little breasts with soft rosy nipples.” (p.136) The gender of the phantom seems artificial, like a signifier that tries to restrict the unknowable signified. (Carey deals with the skins of gender in his short story “Peeling” 2000, pp. 84-93) But the attempt to get metonymically closer to it makes the phantom disappear. There is a gap between the subject and the centre to identity that cannot be closed; the signified is seen by Maggs but never *apprehended*: “He [Maggs] knew the breasts [of the phantom] would not be there if he reached for them, but might remain if he were still.” (p.136)

The phantom is able to break the distinction between Maggs’ dream and “reality” because of the bourgeois reader Buckle. Buckle forces Phipps into Maggs’ house: “The Phantom had broken the locks and entered his life.” (p.395) It is Oates the writer who constructs the phantom but it is Buckle the reader who brings the phantom into Maggs’ “reality”.

The phantom occupies the ambiguous territory between conscious and unconscious, metaphorical and literal, abstract and material. As Huggan notes: Carey’s texts, “frequently occupy the ambiguous territory between sleep and waking.” (1996, p.15) As the subject of science the somnambulist Maggs also occupies the ambiguous territory between sleep and waking:

the somnambulist, upon waking, loses all memory of the sensation and ideas that he has had in the state of somnambulism. These two states are so *alien to each other* [my emphasis] that the somnambulist and the waking man seem like two different beings. (Crabtree, 1993, p.283)

Jack Maggs, and the character Maggs, reflect a tension between *the subject of* textuality and the materiality *of the subject*. Maggs is a character within Carey’s text and a

character within Tobias Oates' text. *Jack Maggs* demonstrates that the material and the textual are bound together; Maggs has materiality outside Oates' text but has materiality only within Carey's text; so Jack Maggs resides *literally* within the text, as Derrida says: "*There is nothing outside the text* [there is no outside text]; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*." (1978, p.158)¹⁷ Maggs the murderer is the character of Oates' story, a story which Maggs' burns: "It was Jack Maggs, the murderer, who now grew in the flames." (p.400) Oates describes Maggs as a murderer even though there is no evidence he was ever convicted of murder; and Oates description of Maggs as a murderer is written before Maggs kills the Thief-taker Wilfred Partridge in self-defence. This demonstrates the importance of the author in constructing the character of the Other, but also demonstrates that the Other can have agency, in the right circumstances, to take the author's intention and destroy it. Maggs has agency to destroy the closure of Oates' version. Maggs does not die the way Oates wants: in a fire, in England. Although Maggs' intention to have Phipps read his history is not fulfilled he does have the agency to write it down, which enters public record at the end of *Jack Maggs*.

The function of the author is important in *Jack Maggs*. The "authors" of the different narratives within *Jack Maggs* are clearly established, in this sense it opposes the postmodernist ambivalence regarding author function. According to Diana Brydon:

The function of the author, declared dead by post-structuralist theory, resurfaces in post-modernism and in post-modernist text through the concept of ambivalence. The authority of the post-modernist text comes from this ambivalence, this ability to see all sides, to defer judgement and refuse agency.... In effect, then, ambivalence works to maintain the status quo. (1997, p.137)

The function of the author within *Jack Maggs* is not ambivalent; the "authors" of Maggs' history (Oates, Maggs, and Carey) are clearly established. This is important to show how the construction of history by the authors' Dickens and Oates creates a

differend. The writing of two separate histories by Maggs and Oates demonstrates how the Other is produced *by the author*¹⁸. The two versions of Maggs' history give the reader a wider understanding of the convict. But in *Jack Maggs* this closure does not occur – Maggs does return to England but rejects it, and instead of dying there he returns to Australia and forms a “real” family. The author Carey also has agency to (re)write the convict: Carey does not let Maggs/Magwitch die the way Dickens wants – for Dickens there is closure with Magwitch returning to the centre to die. Carey reinscribes the convict identity from Dickens and England; demonstrates that identity is not a fixed, but a fluid text; and highlights the importance of the writer and *reader* in the constitution of the Other identity within the text.

Carey demonstrates that the structure to identity is conditioned by place: in *Jack Maggs* the Dickens/Oates writer can only metaphorically build with the materials within his culture: the structure of the English language, the architectural structure of London, and the teleological structure of closure. Tobias Oates' understanding of Jack Maggs is limited by his view of the world, by his English language; Oates can only describe the mind of Maggs through architectural metaphors: by the streets and roads of London that (literally and metaphorically) structure his English language. Oates' use of language and the architecture of the city intertwine; their boundaries elide to predicate the structure of his understanding and existence within the “Real”. Neither Dickens nor Oates had access to a structure (environment or language) that allowed them apprehend the convict. When Oates has Maggs under the influence of Animal Magnetism he tries to describe a place for Maggs where there is no (conscious) pain from the tic:

If you don't like a prison you can have a blessed fortress. A castle with battlements and flying flags. It can be a house. It does not matter.... A good sturdy house with double walls of London brick. (p.63)

The connection between architecture and language is not a one-way street: it is not just the architecture of the city that produces Oates' language; Oates' language also constructs the city's architecture:

[I]t was Tobias Oates who 'made' the City of London. With a passion he barely understood himself, he named it, mapped it, widened its great streets, narrowed its dingy lanes, framed its scenes... (p.223)

The distinction between the city of London and Maggs' mind is not clear. Jack Maggs, "would begin to build London in his mind.... Constructing piece by piece the place wherein his eyes had first opened, home to which he would one day return." (p.393)

Oates' comprehension of the "Real" is not just predicated by architectural metaphors but also by reasoning and binary logic:

[I]n all of English literature there was nothing like the dark journey he now planned to take inside the Criminal Mind. He began, as he walked, to chisel away at its plot. He charted a course by abstract reasoning, almost algebraically. From Birth to Death, from Light to Dark, from Water to Fire. It was with some irritation that he found the walk had ended, and he must abandon this activity in favour of the real world. (p.219)

In Oates' novel the character "Maggs" falls into the latter binaries: Death (as a murderer), and as the Dark (Other), who dies in Fire. Oates' book is called *The Death of Maggs*, and not the Birth or Life of Maggs. The Cartesian split between Maggs and Oates is a social construction: Maggs could be seen as the physical (body) and Oates the literary (mind); Oates thinks and writes therefore the character Maggs is. In Oates/Dickens system of writing (and publishing) this becomes evident: when Maggs becomes aware his past is known he becomes physically aggressive in defence of his anonymity. But in Maggs' version of his history, which is positioned outside the system of writing used by Oates/Dickens, it becomes evident that Maggs learns a "language" – the sign system of antiques (p.127) – desires to learn Shakespeare but is denied (p.126),

shows love and affection for Sophina, and shows loyalty to Mary Britten even though she treats him badly.

Carey demonstrates the importance of the writer but also the reader in the construction of the text. It is the reader who in the end makes the judgement (in Carey's texts), but the reader has to have access to a plurality of texts, to a heterogeneity of different language games¹⁹. According to Slemon:

The 'Second World'... is at root a *reading position*, and one which is and has been taken up in settler and ex-colonial literature and criticism.... [it is] a critical manoeuvre, a reading and writing action. (1997, p.109)

The Victorian bourgeois reader did not have access to Australian writings so could not take up a post-colonial reading position.

The bourgeois reader Percy Buckle has empathy for Mercy and Maggs but only as long as his inheritance, his house, is not disrupted: "MR BUCKLE LOVED HIS HOUSE, and he celebrated his Great Good Fortune.... He liked his inheritance to shine." (p.213) Buckle's house could be seen as a representation of the Symbolic; he accepts his inheritance, the "Law of the Father", which gives him a privileged position in the house, the Symbolic. Buckle is limited to his world, his house and to the published English Novels; he does not have access to the unpublished writings of Jack Maggs' personal history. When Maggs disrupts the foundations of Buckle's world by nailing his house, Buckle turns against Maggs. The order of the (bourgeois) state, represented by the House, is disrupted so Buckle resorts to the "army", represented by Phipps (the repressive state apparatus), to restore (bourgeois) power, to return the House to the rightful owner of inheritance. Buckle turns the figurative phantom into a material

reality; he forces Phipps to re-claim his house by shooting Maggs. It is the reader who also has a responsibility to construct a text.

For the intertextual narrative of *Jack Maggs* to work the reader must be familiar with *Great Expectations*. To reduce the differend in the notion of “understanding” the Other reading must be both invention and cognition (with invention paradoxically the privileged binary in post-structuralism only because it destabilizes the power within cognition, of knowing the Other, and therefore deconstructing the very binary within it(s) works; as cognition is necessary for invention: one cannot invent without knowledge; so to destabilize that power of cognition invention is privileged, temporarily). Readings believes:

A respect for the singularity of phrases (or little narratives) evokes a redescription of reading as the site of *invention* rather than *cognition* [my emphasis]. Instead of considering reading in terms of its descriptive or constative fidelity, reading must be understood primarily as an event or act, a performance which should be judged in ethical terms. (1991, p.xxiii)

Jack Maggs represents reading as both invention and cognition: Carey’s language game of parody requires “knowledge” of *Great Expectations*; his reinscription of the convict requires “invention”. In the post-colonial context invention is necessary to highlight the convict as the Other; this invention and reinscription of the Other becomes part of Carey’s “socially useful act” – of imaging being other than one is.

Jack Maggs is both radically singular and an intertextual structure, which continually expands rhizomically with each reading ²⁰. Every reading is radically singular – in the sense that it can never be read the same way – but its singularity is, paradoxically, intertextual. The identity of the Other, Jack Maggs and Australia, in post-colonialism is singular, separate from the English centre, but it is also rhizomic, incorporating the

heterogeneous identities within its Self.

Jack Maggs demonstrates that colonialism is (ironically) responsible for its own (de)construction. It literally produces the Other from its Self (from itself), an Other that resides from within, an Other that is cast out and repressed, but, like Jack Maggs, sees the return of the repressed. Carey returns to the past to re-inscribe the history of the convict, to celebrate it as a part of Australia's history, as a legitimate part of Australia's heritage. Carey's text participates in breaking symbolic ties with England without resorting to nationalist grand narratives of identity, but it is up to the reader to participate within this language game of identity.

Conclusion: Jack Maggs' race home.

"[I]n the new town of Wingham where they shortly settled she [Mercy] not only civilized these first two children [of Jack Maggs], but very quickly gave birth to five further members of 'That Race'". (1998, p.401)

"Yet amongst the succeeding generations of Maggs who still live on those fertile river flats, it is Mercy who is now remembered best, not only for the story of how she lost her wedding finger... but also for the very particular library she collected in her middle age." (1998, p.401)

In *Jack Maggs* the English inheritance is rejected: Maggs abandons "home", the English centre, for a new life with his family in Australia. England in relation to the convict Maggs, and Australia, becomes the dark Other, the phantom: England as the centre of definition is displaced. *Jack Maggs* has a happy ending because the convict of Australia's past should be celebrated, not like the colonization of unmapped Australia by the "Church" in *Oscar and Lucinda*, or the (postmodern) "cage" of American cultural imperialism in *Illywhacker*. Australia accepts the outcast and the non-Australian, as during that period Australia was not directed by a grand narrative of nation state²¹.

With Jack Maggs abandoning the English centre for a new life in Australia Carey could be suggesting it is time for Australia to become a republic²² – Australian identities should not be limited by the inheritance of English views of the convict and Australia. It is time to place Australia's English heritage out of the constitution and into Australian histories. Like the burden of Lucinda's inheritance Australia needs to, "slough off the great weight of her inheritance." (1988, p.446) According to Kane:

Carey and others may well be establishing the groundwork for a new sense of Australian identity, and at a time when Australia may be establishing itself politically as a republic. (1993, p.522)

Carey underlines that all histories are stories; the grand narrative of Imperialist histories as "truth" has been displaced. In Australia the numerous histories of Jack Maggs are

part of the public domain, including the history written by Maggs to Phipps. Although Maggs' version did not reach its destination it is still written and not silenced. Unlike the English (bourgeois) reader in Buckle, who only had access to published writings, the Australian reader has access to both the public and private histories of Maggs, which can be found in the Mitchell library. The histories of Jack Maggs have become public; they are an Australian representation of a convict past, a past that *will* contribute to the *Australian* constitution. The convict in *Jack Maggs* is no longer the terrible Other as represented in some past English novels, it is an identity in Australia that makes it unique.

But in the end history has been a form of his-story: in its attempt at closure it has denied the semiotic openness of the feminine²³. Carey could be saying that the masculine behaviour (often celebrated in past settler writings) of the convict Maggs is no longer applicable to contemporary Australian culture; the more feminine Mercy should now be remembered and *adopted*. The "new" Australians, like Mercy, should build a family that accepts what is not (biologically) their own. At the end of *Jack Maggs* there is openness and acceptance of the feminine within the Australian identity, within the family: it is Mercy who convinces Maggs to "recognize the claims of Richard and John to have a father kiss them good night." (1998, p.401) Mercy also accepts Jack Maggs' sons as her own: "[S]he applied herself to being their mother with passion." (p.401) Mercy accepts the children with passion, and not out of profit, like Mary Britten/Mother England. Mary Britten only accepted Maggs as part of her "family" because he was economically valuable, or viable, unlike Maggs and Sophina's unborn child, which Mary Britten does not accept and aborts. In England Mercy was restricted as a servant; Buckle did rescue her from the life of prostitution but he did not give her freedom. But

in Australia Mercy has control over Buckle: the page dedicated to Percy Buckle in each volume of *The Death of Maggs* has been roughly removed (probably by Mercy), the inscription from the page is still noted on each library index card – but the dedication has been removed from *Maggs*' history, from *The Death of Maggs*. In Australia Mercy has control over her family: "She who had always been so impatient of the 'rules' now became a disciplinarian." (p.401) The discipline in rules is necessary to civilize *Maggs*' two sons.

In the end it is Mercy (the feminine) who carries on Jack *Maggs*' memory, carries on his history. Mercy collects seven editions of *The Death of Maggs*:

[S]he owned no fewer than seven copies of the last edition, and each of these is now (together with Jack *Maggs*' letters to Henry Phipps) in the collection of the Mitchell Library in Sydney. (p.402)

Mercy is remembered by the (plural) novels of *Maggs*, and not as a character within the novel. "There was no character like Mercy in *The Death of Maggs*." (p.401) It is through the collection, through the plural of texts, and not the closure of the novel, that Mercy gains meaning and is remembered. There is a *certain* openness in her collection; each edition is the same but the collection of numerous copies makes them different: there is heterogeneity even within the same novel; the novel *Jack Maggs* offers history as a study in intertextuality.

Notes to the text

Introduction: Peter Carey *un accoucheur* postmodern.

1. Peter Carey's relationship to Charles Dickens is somewhat similar to Giles Deleuze's (quoted in Lucy 1998, p.193) relationship to the "great philosophers" of the "Western intellectual tradition"; with each of their bastardised relationships with "great authors" monstrous offsprings are produced, and in the case of Carey that offspring is Jack Maggs.
2. Carey's writing has been described as postmodern and/or postcolonial. For Graham Huggan: "It is one of the marks perhaps of Carey's versatility as a writer that his work seems both postmodern and, at the same time, postcolonial" (1996, p.3); though Simon During states: "post-colonialism is to be viewed quite simply as a resistance to postmodernism." (1985, p.372) Carey's texts have also been described as Magic Realism, but this is an inappropriate description of *Jack Maggs*.
3. Carey believes England's colonial relationship to Australia is like that of a parent and child: "[B]ut [England as] an abusive parent. I mean, if you want to accept my position that we were really shaped by the convict experience, then you have to look at the relationship between the convict and the parent - and that's essentially an abusive relationship." (Powell's Books Interviews [on line] Available WWW: <http://www.powell.com/authors/carey.html>. [2000, 12 June])
4. Importantly Lyotard's grand-narratives are teleological; they are focused, not on a past origin, but on a future Idea: "These aren't myths in the sense that fables would be (not even the Christian narrative). Of course, like myths, they have the goal of legitimating social and political institutions and practices, laws, ethics, ways of thinking. Unlike myths, however, they look for legitimacy not in an original founding act but in a future to be accomplished, that is, in an Idea to be realised." (1992, p.29) A grand narrative is one of regulation and *closure* towards an Idea.
5. In an interview Peter Carey acknowledged the influence Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* had on him in writing *Jack Maggs* (Powell's Books Interviews). In *Tristan Smith* there is evidence that Carey has some knowledge of Said: "He was an intellectual, a Ph. D whose prize-winning thesis had been entitled 'Orientalist Discourses and the Construction of the Arab National State.'" (1994 p.268)
6. For the specific use of the differend in a postcolonial situation see Mishra V. 'Postcolonial Differend: Diasporic Narratives of Salman Rushdie', (1995, pp.39-43); or concerning Australia and a postmodernist reading of the constitution see Everand 'Re: Constituting Australia – the Differend, the (Re)Public, and the Proper Name', in Dobrez (ed.) (1994, pp.137-148); or in relation to the Australian Aborigine and colonial law see Readings 'Pagans, perverts or Primitives? Experimental Justice in the Empire of Capital', in Benjamin (ed) (1992, p 172). For the use of 'language games' in the postcolonial situation see Ashcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back*: (1989, pp165-166).
7. One big difference between postmodernism and post-colonialism is in the use of History: for Jameson the historical past returns as nostalgia, which is one of the (Jamesonian) postmodern aspects Graham Huggan sees in Carey's work: "[T]he conversion of historical past into a patina of nostalgia... seem[s] relevant to the darkly comic world of Carey's fiction." (1996, p.3) But for the postcolonial writer the use of history takes on a political relevance beyond nostalgia; historical pasts are (re)written to include voices of others once silenced by the dominance of Western History. The distinction between a postmodern use of history and a postcolonial one can be summed up by Tristan Smith: "They saw only surfaces. They did not see history lurking in the dark." (1994, p.207)

1. Language games between Carey and Dickens

8. Language is where the distinction and hierarchy between Australian and English is most apparent, especially in accent. In *Illywhacker* Herbert Badgery remembers his father's insistence on using an English accent; Englishness is seen as *literally* the foundation of class distinction: "'Cahstle,' he roared at me, 'not kehstle.'" (p.38)
p.xiv)

2. Language games within *Jack Maggs*.

9. James Williams identifies one of the problems with Lyotard's notion of scientific language games: "[T]hough it addresses the problem of the legitimization of science, *The Postmodern Condition* does not engage directly with the work of philosophers of science such as Popper, Kuhn or Feyerabend. Neither, though, does it undertake an extensive empirical study of contemporary scientific practices." (1998 p.14) But in terms of *Jack Maggs* this is not important because Animal Magnetism is not seen as a legitimate science in relation to contemporary scientific practices.

10. Carey has dealt with this “understanding” of the other and the power of its reduction in relation to gender in *Oscar and Lucinda*. According to Lucinda: “By the way they looked at me, by their perception of me, they would make me into the creature they perceived. I would feel myself becoming a lesser thing. It is the power of men.... [I]t seems I must work within the limits of my character.” (1988, p.146)

11. Williams points out that deconstruction of incommensurable language games undermines (to an extent) Lyotard’s notion of the differend: “In ‘Before the law’, Derrida offers a deconstruction of the notion of well-defined legal categories. The damage such a deconstruction can inflict on Lyotard’s differend is very great because the differend is a conflict between well-defined language games.” (1998 p.135) For language games to be (absolutely) incommensurable, it seems, one needs to have a full understanding and knowledge of them, but for Oscar the combination of (seemingly) incommensurable language games is not a problem: “[Oscar] had wed his father’s scientific methods to the sweating, mud-stained bride of racing.” (1988, p.178)

12. Carey deals with abortion in *Illywhacker* with Herbert Badgery’s wife Phoebe who becomes violently ill after taking a poison to abort, what the “poet” Horace calls, the “foetus”. As Horace informs Herbert: “It is the scientific name of the unborn child.” (1985, p.177) But for Herbert the use of the ‘scientific name’ does not take into account his emotions: “How dare you call my child a foetus.” (p.177) Carey demonstrates the importance of narrative language games in testifying to difficult notions such as abortion. Scientific language games are important in terms of abortion (to regulate safe procedures) but they cannot take into account the rights of the unborn child/foetus and the parent(s) at the same time – this is where narrative language games are important to highlight and testify to the differend science cannot account for.

13. I make a distinction between a grand narrative and a meta-narrative: a grand narrative as seen by Lyotard is one directed towards an Idea; while a meta-narrative, I would argue, is a narrative that regulates a number of language games without a notion of an ultimate Idea. A meta-narrative is a necessary repression of a language game to account for the rights of those who do not have the power to “voice” their own language games.

14. Suspicions of scientific language games are not new within Carey’s texts, for example in *Illywhacker* Herbert Badgery believes that his former lover Leah and her husband Izzie are misguided in their belief in the control, and understanding, of emotion: “Their problem, both of them, was that they believed too much in the scientific and the rational and they thought they could – like Marxists changing the course of rivers – prevent the floods and earthquakes of primitive emotions.” (1985, p.365) And in *Oscar and Lucinda*: “Both lots of tears were salt, I am sure, and were probably within the normal range of salinity, i.e. between one percent and two percent salt, but this is merely to show you the limits of chemistry.” (1988, p. 366)

3. Carey’s *Other* language games with *Jack Maggs*.

15. Growing up Carey thought of himself, “generally as being British, or English. My grandfather, who had been born in Australia, called England home.” (Powell’s Books Interviews [2000, 12 June])

16. Stuart Sim points out that: “[O]ne could query whether an insistence on anti-universalism and anti-foundationalism is not in effect a universalist demand in its own right: in which case Lyotard becomes tripped up by his own critique.” (1996, p.72) And as Williams states along the same lines as Sim: “He [Lyotard] seeks to prove – with as much certainty as possible – that certainty is impossible.” (1998, p.64)

17. Anthony Hassall also uses this notion of Derrida’s in relation to *Bliss*. (1994, pp.70-71)

18. But how does a writer imagine (and translate) what it is to be others? As Young asks: “[H]ow can we know *and* respect the other?” (1990, p.14)

19. But as Roxanna asks in *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*: “‘Why does it have to teach you? [...] Why can’t you just enjoy it?’” (1994, p.168) There is also a risk that the opposite ideology can be destructive, as with Tristan’s mother Felicity and her hatred of (the cultural imperialism embodied within) the Voorstand Sirkus: “[H]er *cultural imperialism*, her *hegemony*, her hatred of the Sirkus, which had guided my hands in its destruction.” (p.170)

20. The rhizome was made famous by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. (1996, pp.1-25). See Ashcroft and Salter’s “‘Australia’: A Rhizomic Text.’ in Dobrez (1994, pp.15-24). In their use of the rhizome: “By engaging in the rhizome metaphor the palimpsest text of ‘Australia’ is able to be ‘read’ in a way that takes all its diversity and heterogeneity into account.” (p.22) Or for a specific definition of the rhizome and how it operates in a postcolonial context see Ashcroft *et al.* (1998, pp.207-208).

Conclusion: Jack Maggs' race home.

21. A grand narrative of nation state did drive Australian immigration policy between 1920-70: "In the 1920s, non-British immigration, like communism, was essentially an external threat; 'undesirable' migrants were kept out by the 'White Australia' policy." (White, 1992, p.160)

22. Carey makes the point that, "the Governor General of Australia is still a representative of the queen of England, who can dismiss the elected government - and did in 1975! So you would have to say that there are certain big unresolved issues, and that there is still a fight going on right now as we speak in Australia as to whether we can really be a republic or not." (Powell's Books Interviews)

23. Tristan Smith makes the allusion between history and masculine sexual desire (for closure and climax): "You see my porpoise [penis, while phonetically similar to purpose] rise, you think you see where this is leading. That is your history, perhaps, not mine. In my history there can be no climax, no conclusion, no cry in the dark, no whispers on the pillow." (1994, p.389) This passage could also be *read* as a metaphor for reading: of the masculine desire for closure of the text. In Carey's text, Tristan's history, and, perhaps, History itself there is no climax or conclusion; as a reader you may "think you see where it is leading", but that can only be *your* history or *your* reading, perhaps.

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