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Bringing the Margin to the Centre in Peter Carey and Lloyd Jones' Adaptations of Great Expectations

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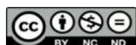

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ABSTRACT

This paper will assess the significance of empire and colonialism in Peter Carey and Lloyd Jones' adaptations of *Great Expectations*. The aforesaid subjects tended to be generally peripheral in nineteenth-century Victorian fiction. Nevertheless, the marginalisation of colonial subjects and the significant gaps that it maintains in Victorian novels are being key targets for most Neo-Victorians who, fed with and inspired by postcolonial culture and discourse, venture to "bring the margin to the centre".[1] Written back to one of the Victorian literary centrepieces, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* and Lloyd Jones' *Mister Pip* provide postcolonial answers to Victorian subaltern colonial themes. While the former revisions *Great Expectations* by giving voice to the silenced colonial convict Magwitch and drawing attention to his relationship with empire, the latter adopts Dickens' text to bring to light the whole theme of colonialism and highlight its political as well as cultural dimensions. Both texts present Neo-Victorian adaptations of Dickens through postcolonial perspective that sheds light on silenced Victorian colonial subjects, validating therefore Edward Said's controversial assumptions about Orientalism and the symbiotic relationship between culture and imperialism. The ultimate aim of this paper is to show how colonial and postcolonial preoccupations feeding in these two novels have given the Neo-Victorian form a living and lively currency that has for ever changed the way we read the Victorians.

Key words: Colonialism; Orientalism; *Great Expectations*; Neo-Victorian rewritings; postcolonial reading.

Introduction

In her article, "Neo-Victorian", Molly Hillard considers the validity of Neo-Victorian literature by positing the following questions:

> [H]ow and why we read and re-read Victorian literature: what it may offer to us in the way of resistance, and how it directs us to a variety of institutional spaces that we in the twenty-first century still inhabit, for better and for worse.[2]

Despite her perceptive questions, Hillard fails to provide an adequate answer as she highlights the importance of this field of study only for intertextuality and for creating what she has called "a community that exists in time rather than space" (781). A more appropriate response to these questions, however, has come from Kate Flint who cogently puts that "the importance of [the Victorian] period lies in the extent to which it is still

[1] Anne Humpherys, "The Afterlife of the Victorian Novels: Novels about Novels". *A companion to the Victorian Novel*, edited by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, pp.443-457, p.446.

[2] Molly Clark Hillard. "Neo-Victorian", *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 46, no. 3-4, 2018, pp. 780-783, p.780, doi: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150318000827 (accessed on 11 October 2023)

contiguous […] with the formation of our own world and in the development […] of a number of different modernities”.[3]

Significantly, in addition to offering fresh insights on gender and social issues, Neo-Victorian authors often address the colonial legacy of the Victorian era, shedding light on issues of imperialism, race, and identity, which remain relevant today and continue to shape global dynamics and discussions. As Said and other postcolonial theorists have shown, the Victorian period played a significant role in the formation of colonial empires, the repercussions of which continue to influence global politics and relationships between nations.

Knowingly, Victorian novels show an incidental engagement with issues related to empire and colonialism, corresponding exactly enough with Karl De Schweinitz's view in his study of the British in India that:

> If one believes that the great Victorian novels reflected the critical problems of the society, one is forced to conclude that interest in imperialism was no-existent. At the most the colonies in that literature were off-stage, a distant world to which the dramatis personae could be banished if it were convenient for the development of the novel. [4]

Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, for instance, provides a good example of the ways in which the colonies feature in nineteenth-century novels where they generally form no more than a marginal presence, and are mentioned or referred to, but never explored in detail. Australia in *Great Expectations*, for instance, figures as only a penal colony to which the convict Abel Magwitch is transported as a way of punishment for his crimes and misconducts. The latter character, despite his importance to the plot and his influence in the development of the protagonist's personality and character, is even silenced and driven to the margin as much as the colony with which he is associated. This paper will show, therefore, how Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* and Lloyd Jones' *Mister Pip* provide postcolonial answers to Victorian subaltern colonial themes. While the former revisions *Great Expectations* by giving voice to the silenced colonial convict Magwitch and drawing attention to his relationship with empire, the latter adopts Dickens' text to bring to light the whole theme of colonialism and highlight its political as well as cultural dimensions. This paper concludes by showing how Carey and Jones' rewritings of *Great Expectations* validate Edward Said's controversial assumptions about Orientalism and the symbiotic relationship between culture and imperialism.

1. *Jack Maggs:* An Attempt to Break Open the Prison

Jack Maggs is Carey's postcolonial answer to the colonial silences and ellipses that are maintained in Victorian novels in general and in *Great Expectations* in particular. In his description of the latter novel, the Australian-born Carey states that it is:

> [A] way in which the English have colonized our ways of seeing ourselves. It is a great novel but is also, in another way, a prison. *Jack Maggs* is an attempt to break open the prison and to imaginatively reconcile with the gaoler. [5]

Carey's endeavour to open the prison in *Jack Maggs* is of course mainly achieved by unlocking the chains that are tying Magwitch up to the margin and bringing him to centre.

Set in 1837 Victorian London, *Jack Maggs* depicts the crucial return of the convict Abel Magwitch, renamed as Jack Maggs, to his beloved, yet unwelcoming, England, and casts light upon his historical experience of transportation in one of the empire's penal colonies, New South Wales. Unlike Dickens, Carey, to quote Humpherys, "gives Magwitch a history" (Humpherys 450). This history critically projects the truth of the colonial enterprise. In some ways Maggs emerges as a metaphor for the relationship between the empire and its colonial progenies. Beverly Taylor has pointed out that Maggs's role as "the unwanted child of the nation" is readily apparent through his relationship with his foster mother, Ma Britten.[6] As her name suggests, the latter allegorically refers to Mother Britain that first rejects Maggs as "rubbish" but raises him when considering the financial profit that can be made through him.[7] Significantly, the first that the wistful Maggs calls on when is returned from colony is Ma Britten for, despite her harsh and unkind attitude towards him, "she is the one I would have wished to claim me as her own" (Carey 92). Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp cogently perceives the image of Ma Britten closing the door on Maggs as "a clear image of brutal mother England casting out her children".[8] In highlighting this aspect, Carey implicitly gives credence to Said's perception that "the prohibition placed on Magwitch's return [in *Great Expectations*] is not only penal but imperial: subjects can be taken to places like Australia, but they cannot be allowed a 'return' to metropolitan space".[9] Indeed, the image of a merciless empire in *Jack Maggs* is further reinforced in the scene in which Percy Buckle, sympathising with Maggs's penal experience and grieving at the memory of his sister's transportation, moans: "I never did forget that day, God help us all, that Mother England would do such thing to one of her own" (Carey 89).

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[4] Karl De Schweinitz. *The Rise and Fall of British India: Imperialism as inequality.* London: Methuen, 1983, p.34.

[5] Peter Carey. "Interview with Peter Carey", cited in Bruce Woodcock. *Peter Carey.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, p.122.

[6] Beverly Taylor. "Discovering New Pasts: Victorian Legacies in the Postcolonial Worlds of *Jack Maggs* and *Mister Pip*". *Victorian Studies, vol.* 52, no. 1, 2009, pp.95-105, p.96.

[7] Peter Carey. *Jack Maggs.* London: Faber and Faber, 1997, p.93.

[8] Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp. "The writing-Back Paradigm Revisited". *Fabulating Beauty: Perspectives on the Fiction of Peter Carey,* edited by Gaile Andreas, New York: Rodopi, 2005, p. 256.

[9] Edward W. Said. *Culture and Imperialism.* London: Vintage, 1994, p.xvii.

Furthermore, the abuses of empire towards its subjects are highlighted in Carey's re-writing through the portrayal of the rigid penal system. In his convict's experience in colonial Australia, Maggs not only suffers the emotional torments of seclusion and isolation, but he also endures physical punishment through whipping and flogging. When Tobias Oates mesmerises Maggs and orders him to remove his shirt, Maggs bears "the hallmarks of new South Wales": "a brooding sea of scars, of ripped and tortured skin" (Carey 87 and 86); his back becomes the representation of "a page of history" (88). Thus, in exposing this phase of the convict's history, Carey tells a truth withheld by Dickens, in Taylor's words, "stripping away the layers of Victorian garb that conceal a "page" recording the horrors of British colonial practices" (Taylor 99). Unlike Dickens, Carey brings to surface the grim realities of the colonial penal system, reassessing therefore the view of imperial history overcast and obscured by Victorian fiction.

Significantly, Carey highlights the fact that although Maggs's flogging may have taken place in Australia, yet it is inflicted by his motherland imperial centre for, as the maid Mercy Larkin later observes, if the punishment was executed by "a soldier of the king", "then it were the king who lashed you" (Carey 318). Thus, not unlike Ma Britten, who at some point is meaningfully described as "the Queen of England" (92), the King of England proves to be cruel and harsh towards Maggs. In fact, the king's whipping in Australia mirrors an earlier punishment by Ma Britten in England when she suspects that she is to lose her little boy-thief to fatherhood (Carey 239). Thus both king and queen, and with them the colonial institutions, abuse the convict Maggs who strikingly emerges as an emblem of colonial exploitation. After considering Maggs's association and identification with the penal colony of Australia, one can come to the assumption that the novel figures the Australian as the son of a Mother Brittain and British King who variously exploit, abuse and exile him. This image is further reinforced by Carey himself in interviews when he frequently draws the analogy of England as an "abusive" parent of an "Australian child".[10]

Pointedly, in spite of the abuses of his motherland England and despite the fact that he only achieves his self-respect and prosperity in the colony of Australia, Maggs rejects his Australian identity and still longs to be restored to his English home. When he expresses to Tobias Oates how his Ma had named "a baddish kind of smell" after him, Maggs mitigates the insult by avowing: "I'd rather be a bad smell here [in England] than a frigging rose in New South Wales" (Carey 229-30). Similarly, later in the novel when he is chided by Mercy for not having care for his tow dark-haired sons in Australia, Maggs replies: "I am not of that race… the Australian race… I am an Englishman" (Carey 312-3). From a postcolonial viewpoint, Maggs's attitude not only can be judged as racial but also imperial. In his rejection of the "Australian race" Maggs reflects one of the ideological beliefs that Western imperialists worked so hard to establish in the world which is the supposed superiority of the coloniser and the putative inferiority of the colonised.

Moreover, the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser in *Jack Maggs* is dramatically and allegorically highlighted through Maggs's relationship with the Somnambulist Tobias Oates. The latter gains access to the former's mind and memories through mesmerism and use them as raw material for his novel. Not unlike typical colonisers, Oates wrests other people's lives to make profit for his own. As Woodcock Bruce puts it: "just as England stole Maggs's birthright by making him a thief, so Tobias Oates colonises Maggs for his own imaginative purposes, stealing Maggs's life for his fiction".[11] Pointedly, throughout his process of mesmerism Oates's approach to Maggs is that of the cruel, imperious master. For instance, he replies to his victim's pleas for mercy by: "you are still my subject, no matter what booty you are carrying" (Carey 184). Oates's patronisation of his subject grows even more explicit when he cries: "Down […] I command you […] Now, you will lie down on your bed. And not raise yourself once my voice commands it" (203). Allegorically, Maggs's pain and his "long and dreadful" "wail" (202) reflect the sadistic relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Colonial sadism has hardly been addressed in postcolonial studies despite its importance in explaining and understanding the driving forces in power relations.[12] Colonialism, as many theorists have shown, is not just an administrative and political machine but also a desiring one.[13] Accordingly, any serious engagement with it should entail an exploration of psychological in addition to historical and political aspects. In psychology, sadism is the obtainment of pleasure by imposing agony on others. In colonial settings, it can refer to the power dynamic where the colonisers, representing a dominant and often oppressive force, subject the colonised populations to brutal and sadistic treatment. This relationship can take many forms, including

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[10] Peter Carey. "Author Interview" with Powells.com, cited in Beverly Taylor. "Discovering New Pasts: Victorian Legacies in the Postcolonial Worlds of *Jack Maggs* and *Mister Pip', Victorian Studies, vol.* 52, no. 1, 2009, pp.95-105, p.97.

[11] Bruce Woodcock. *Peter Carey.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 129.

[12] Only recently Muneerah Ab Razak has fleetingly referred to 'sadistic psychological tendencies' in colonial relationships, in her article, "Can Violence be Moral? Revisiting Fanon on Violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*", *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, 08 Jan. 2018, Can Violence be Moral? Revisiting Fanon on Violence in The Wretched of the Earth | Middle East Centre (lse.ac.uk)

[13] See for example Octave Mannoni in *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization.* London: Methuen, 1956; Albert Memmi in *The Colonizer and he Colonized* .Boston: Beacon, 1967; Robert J. C. Young in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995; and most recently Danilyn Rutherford who wrote about the fantastical relationship between coloniser and colonised in *Living in the Stone Age: Reflections on the Origins of a Colonial Fantasy.* London: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

physical violence, cultural suppression, and especially emotional manipulation as is shown in Jones' adaptation of *Great Expectations*.

2. *Mister Pip*: A Different Strategy of 'Writing Back' to Empire

Lloyd Jones' *Mister Pip* is a similar adaptation of Dickens' *Great Expectations* from a postcolonial perspective. According to Cora Kaplan, *Mister Pip* is just "a different strategy of "writing back" to the heart of Empire, one which highlights the pleasures and dangers of reading Dickens today".[14] Like Carey's *Jack Maggs*, Jones' *Mister Pip* is a revision of Dickens' novel, if in a very different way, that sheds light upon the silenced colonial themes in Victorian fiction. Set in the early 1990s on the war-ravaged South Pacific island of Bougainville, *Mister Pip* tells the story of a local girl Matilda and her kinfolks, enduring the ravages of a blockade imposed by a civil war, with no way of escape except imaginatively through Dickens' fiction that is proposed to them by the white teacher, Mr Watts. when studying the historical relation between Bougainville and its former colonial ruler Australia and relating it to the present connection to the Australian-backed Papua New Guinea's government, we can consider the setting of the novel as a perfect exemplary of the bitter, complex legacies of colonialism. Throughout *Mister Pip*, however, Jones is clear to show us that his treatment of colonialism is not linked to a particular period or geography as much as it is tied to the concept itself: in *Mister Pip* Jones writes about colonialism in its absolute and universal phase, revealing its political as well as cultural aspects.

The former facet of colonialism is of course depicted through the predicament of the blockaded villagers of Bougainville, "an island all but forgotten, where the most unspeakable things happened without once raising the ire of the outside world".[15] Torn between their co-operation with the "redskin" soldiers of the PNG government and their allegiance to their "rambo" kinsmen, the Bougainvillians have come to be colonised by both. The war-inflicted blockade not only causes the island babies to die for want of malaria medicine but also affects the villagers' sense of the continuance of life for, as Matilda states, "[a]long with medicines and our freedom, the blockade stole time from us" (Jones 132). The real effects of the blockade is nowhere more detected however than in the redskins' vulgar raid to the innocent village, committing their untold, cold-blooded brutalities for suspecting a coalition with the rebels. The soldiers not only break the villagers' possessions and burn their houses but they also encroach on their lives through rape and slaughtering. The "rambos" are no less cruel however for they imperiously set in the village and force its inhabitants to provide food and "girls" (Jones 137). Thus Bougaivillians turn out to be slaves for both poles of power, mirroring an unpleasant image of colonial abuses that one would hardly come to believe that still exist in this time of ours.

Along with the political control over people's lives and territories, colonialism in *Mister Pip* is also manifested culturally through dominating over natives' minds and imaginations. The whole plot of *Mister Pip* hinges on the Victorian novel of *Great Expectations* that is adulated by native children of the island and has raised the soldiers' suspicions about an alliance with Mr Pip whom they mistake for a rebel. The latter novel is introduced to the student by Mr Watts, the last white man in the island, who takes up the burden of educating and "civilising" the natives. Being a staunch fan of Mr Dickens, Watts does not fail to pass his infatuation to his students who become increasingly captivated by the Victorian world. As Matilda explains, "Mr Watts had given us kids another world to spend the night in. we could escape to another place. It didn't matter that it was Victorian England. We found we could easily get there" (Jones 20). Through introducing Western culture, therefore, Mr Watts transforms the children into adherents of Dickens world, so to speak, the white world, and in so doing the man emerges as a crude agent of an imperialist ideology. Not unlike most of western imperialists, Mr Watts believes that the civilising mission has to be maintained first and foremost through Western norms and ideals. In fact, in spite of his applauded traits of resolution and self-sacrifice, Watts' colonial attitudes are made apparent in *Mister Pip.* Among the villagers Mr Watts often adopts the culturally determined position of "colonial superior". In considering the white man's manipulative attitude in the classroom, Zoë Norridge has perceived that "the children's thoughts as they grow in intellectual questioning and Matilda's own personal quest to understand her life-changing childhood encounter with literature, are all penned, politically speaking, by a white outsider".[16] Through Mr Watts, Matilda becomes ever more attached to the world of Dickens to the point that it creates a distance between her and mother Dolores. The latter holds in contempt the novel of Dickens and anything related to the white world that had stolen her husband and "were to blame for the mine, and the blockade" (Jones 41) . Dolores does not want her daughter to "go deeper in that other world" because she "worried she would lose her Matilda to Victorian England" (Jones 30); this worry is quite confirmed later when she notices that her daughter appreciates the novel's author, characters, and even storyteller more than she does her own

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[14] Cora Kaplan. "Neo-Victorian Dickens", *Charles Dickens in Context*, edited by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp.81-7, p.85.
[15] Lloyd Jones. *Mister Pip.* London: John Murray, 2007, p.142.
[16] Zoë Norridge. "From Wellington to Bougainville: Migrating Meaning and the Joys of Approximation in Lloyd Jones' *Mister* Pip", *The Journal Commonwealth Literature*, March 2010, pp.57-74, p.62.
From http://jcl.sagepub.com/content/45/1/57.full.pdf

blood relatives (Jones 66). Through a postcolonial lens, Matilda can be seen as being literally colonised by the Victorian fiction and world. This view is in fact reinforced by the author himself when he declares: "I think the Spectator [the Newspaper] reviewer was the one to grasp the point that Matilda, in a sense, is colonized by the book *Great Expectations*".[17] Thus the natives of Bougainville become adherents of the Victorian world by the merest exposure to the culture of British Empire— a culture that was more powerful than colonial weapons in dominating and subjugating the world.

3. Edward Said and the Symbiotic Relationship between Culture and Imperialism

Significantly, in recognising and presenting the novel's colonial effects, Jones shows an understanding of and corroboration with Edward Said's seminal study, *Culture and Imperialism,* which, as the title suggests, focuses chiefly on the relation of culture with imperial practices. In his reading of imperial textuality, Said shows that Victorian novels were made central to the political enterprise of Empire; in his own words, "imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that is impossible […] to read one without in some way dealing with the other" (71). For Said, the nineteenth-century novel was a crucial agent in sustaining the British cultural hegemony and investing overseas dominions (xxiii). This aligns with his ground-breaking thesis of Orientalism which posits that "what is thought, said, or even done about the Orient follows (perhaps occurs within) certain distinct and intellectually knowable lines" (1978 13). In his *Orientalism,* Said argues that Western imperialism operated not just by economic and political subjugation but through intellectual and ideological process, namely through theorising and constructing an inferior "Other" that served to buttress the West's sense of superiority on one hand and justify the colonial rule on the other. Said claims that the Orientalist discourse essentially constructs binary division between the Orient and the Occident, with the latter always depicted as the former's opposite or "contrasting image". [18] This negative classification of the Orient, Said sees, was fundamental in defining the West and in bolstering its strength and domination: "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (3). Consequently, the Orient is often represented in Western literature, media and politics as (among others) weak, decadent, inadequate, culturally retarded and morally degenerate, giving enough evidence of its intriguing inferiority, irreducible otherness and thus for the need of its salvation. Significantly, in creating these derogatory stereotypes about the Orient and perpetuating them, Orientalism justified the propriety of colonialism which already cloaked itself under the banner of "la mission civilatrice". In other words, Orientalism legitimated the colonial settlement by positing the notion that Oriental peoples needed to be civilised and saved from themselves. Thus Orientalism was essentially, as Said argues, a discourse of domination: "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). Significantly, Said has argued that the avoidance of Orientalism particularly during the nineteenth century would be "an intellectual and historical impossibility" due to its alignment with "political imperialism [that] governs an entire field of study, imagination, and scholarly institutions" (14). Said has even proceeded later to infer that such impossibility is caused also by Orientalism's "alliance" with general philosophical and biological theories of the time "which seemed to accentuate the "scientific" validity of the division of races into advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental-African" (207). This, according to Said, has inevitably given rise to what he has called "latent Orientalism", that is the almost "unconscious" feeling of racial, religious and civilisational superiority (206).

Pointedly, the antipodean landscape was a part of the cartographic notion of terra incognita or the unknown land, in other words, the Orient. In his novels, Dickens wrote of Australia as a place where personal transformation might be achieved. However, had the envoys not been deviants, the depiction of Australia as a place of redemption would have utopian reverberations. According to Robert Hughes the displacement of Magwitch's delinquency to the distant colony of Australia rearticulates the centuries-old concept of the perversity associated with the Antipodes[19] and, accordingly, as Said charges, sustains the binarist system that authorises the superiority of England over the colony. Convicts like Magwitch Said explains, quoting Hughes, "were capable of redemption _ as long as they stayed in Australia" (*Culture and Imperialism* xvi; Hughes 586). Inevitably entangled within the discourse of Antipodeanism, Dickens' discursive picturing of Australia cannot help but rearticulate the statement of the deferral of the centre's deviancy to the colony. In this context Elleke Boehmer writes that "in Dickens, Australia in the novel acts to relieve social and sexual embarrassment. While fallen women redeem themselves and Micawber can become magistrate, gender and class proprieties are preserved in Britain" (28). The centre in Dickens' fiction is a place for preserving social propriety while the margin is a place of purgation.

Another important trope of Orientalism is the representation of colonial natives as being feeble, childish and incapable of ruling their own affairs. Natives, according to Orientalists, could not be trusted to run things by themselves. This is the justification that is usually given for British rule in India. The imperial task was often propagandised for as being a paternalistic task. As such, natives had to be treated, and represented, as children. Colonies, as Rudyard Kipling informed a correspondent when the Filipinos started their revolt against the American

[17] Lloyd Jones, Interview with Zoë Norridge cited in Ibid, p.68.
[18] Edward Said. *Orientalism.* London: Penguin Books, 1978; repr. 1995, p. 2.
[19] Robert Hughes. *The Fatal Shore.* London: Harvill, 1987.

colonisation in February 1899, were "like babies […] they are all very aggravating at first but they are worth it."[20] This calls to mind Chamberlain's words at the Colonial Conference of 1897, when he observed that the colonies were "still children, but rapidly approaching manhood."[21] According to imperialists, this "manhood" is of course impossible to attain without their full guidance and control. Significantly, in Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Magwitch is portrayed as a naïve and simple-minded convict, whose image perfectly fits the stereotype of the infantilised "Other". In a physical sense, Pip notices that Magwitch has fewer teeth than before, whereas Maggs has "very good and regular" teeth (Carey 7). In a moral sense, Magwich returns to his previous work in the sheep farm and does not think about self-development while Maggs establishes his brick manufacturing business from "mucky clay" (305), showing himself to be more enterprising and independent. Unlike Dickens, Carey gives the character of Maggs a mature and authoritative identity and, most importantly, gives him a voice, just as Jones does with the Bougainvillians. Perhaps we might have completely misread Dickens' intentions regarding the race issue in his novel, however, one cannot be mistaken in judging his representation or rather lack of representation of the "Other" as negative, if not ideologist and imperialist from a postcolonial point of view. Said has shown in his study of *Orientalism* how silencing the Orientals was one of the first measures that Orientalists had to keep in check in order to fulfil their "job" of depicting and "representing" the "Other" (1978 21). The systematic muteness of the colonised is likewise implied in the famous words of the Indian novelist and political activist, Arundhati Roy, when she said: "there's really no such thing as the "voiceless". There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."[22] What Neo-Victorians like Carey and Jones did was make the voice of the "Other" heard, and for this alone they claim our reverence.

Conclusion

To conclude, colonial tensions are exceptionally evident in both novels of *Jack Maggs* and *Mister Pip*. Both texts present Neo-Victorian rewritings of Dickens through postcolonial perspective that first and foremost sheds light upon the Victorian silenced, and somewhat pushed-to-the-edge, colonial subjects. Through reimagining the story of the convict Magwitch and delving into his life and history, Carey reveals the suppressed truth of empire and unmasks the grim realities of British colonial practices. Similarly, Jones adopts Dickens' novel and transposes it to the war-torn island of Bougainville which endures both political and cultural colonialism. Jones inserts the colonial experience into the imperial narrative and fills Victorian gaps with fully developed postcolonial themes. Importantly, both Carey and Jones' rewritings of *Great Expectations* validate Edward Said's controversial assumptions about Orientalism and the symbiotic relationship between culture and imperialism. Indeed, the colonial and postcolonial preoccupations feeding in these two novels give the Neo-Victorian form a living and lively currency that has for ever changed the way we read the Victorians.

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[20] Kipling to Zogbaum, 6 Feb. 1899 in *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling 1890-99,* 2 vol, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990, p. 344.
[21] Quoted in Andrew Porter, *The Nineteenth Century.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.339-40.
[22] Arundhati Roy. "The 2004 Sydney Peace Prize lecture". Available at http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newsstoryid=279

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