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Reinterpretations of Dickensian Orphanhood in Contemporary Literature of English-speaking Countries

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Reinterpretacje dickensowskiego motywu sieroctwa we współczesnej literaturze anglojęzycznej

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my first supervisor and mentor, the late Prof. Dorota Filipczak, my parents for giving me unceasing love and support, and my soulmate, Iwona L.

Contents

Introduction

Colonial expansion of economically developed countries entailed claiming and then maintaining political and commercial domination over under-developed countries, extensive exploitation of their natural resources and the process of subjugation and acculturation of their people. Economic and political expansionism was followed by ideological justification of the process of extending the overseas territories by western empires, giving rise to racial discrimination. The main objective of imperial ideology was to bring civilisation and Christianity to the so-called "inferior" races, purportedly rescuing them from their primitive practices and beliefs. In reality it meant imposing the colonisers' culture and language, and "civilising" the indigenous peoples in order to uproot any vestiges of their presumed primitive cultures and savagery. Colonial institutions engaged in a process of acculturation aimed at controlling the mentality of the colonised, ultimately leading them to perceive themselves as inferior and naturally subjugated to their white masters (Stokłosa 62). This belief was driven by inhumane indoctrination, which emphasised the superiority of the white race and Western culture.

Although conquest and territorial expansion were part of all ancient empires, such as Persia, Egypt, India, China, ancient Greece under Alexander the Great's rule, and finally the Roman Empire, colonial expansion in the modern sense begins with the expedition of Christopher Columbus and the establishment of Spanish-controlled overseas territories. It is significant to make a distinction between a steady conquest of neighbouring lands, known as "adjacent colonialism," which is strictly connected with political expansion by the empires

such as Russian, Ottoman, Chinese, or even the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth[1], and colonialism in its western European understanding. Western empires such as Spain, Portugal, Britain, France, or the Netherlands all exerted economic and political dominance over culturally and ethnically diverse and remote overseas territories.

During the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, England embarked on overseas exploration, establishing trading routes and posts in India and Africa, as well as founding its first colonies in North America and the West Indies. These overseas settlements collectively formed what was known as "the Transatlantic community" (Colley xv), a pivotal development that ultimately led to the establishment of the first British Empire. The Act of Union of 1707, which linked Scotland to the Kingdom of England, was the onset of the formation of the concept of Britishness and Britain, seen as "an umbrella, a shelter under which various groupings and identities could plausibly and even advantageously congregate" (Colley xi). By defining themselves as Protestants, the British reinforced their distinctiveness from Catholic Europe (the Other), especially from its greatest rivals, imperial France and Spain. The concept

[1] Established in 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was an empire comprising the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, though the two countries had been in a personal union since 1386. The Commonwealth ceased to exist following the Third Partition of 1795. Many contemporary critics of history, culture and Polish literature read the relations on the eastern borders of the empire from a postcolonial perspective. Krzysztof Zajas, for example, uses the term "Sarmatian Imperialism" to describe the era of political, economic and cultural expansion of the Poles into the territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the Commonwealth. The power dynamics between the Polish landed gentry, known as the *szlachta*, and particularly among magnate families who owned extensive estates, and their serfs – comprising not only ethnic Poles but also various multi-ethnic groups such as present-day Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuanians – are now understood as emblematic of colonial structures. In this framework, Polish culture was portrayed and perceived as a gateway to the Western world, an object of aspiration, and the sole avenue for social advancement for these diverse peoples.
Grażyna Borkowska presents that the empire was involved in colonial policy towards Polesie (part of Eastern Borderlands), the region whose peasants were subjected to the process of inferiorisation by Polish elites due to their cultural, linguistic and religious alienness (50). Borkowska refers to Józef Obrębski who elaborates on the expansion of Polish culture to the Ruthenian ethnic lands and their exploitation, where Polishness was strictly associated with oppression and slavery of Ruthenian peasants (107). Obrębski also maintains that the Borderlands constitute a space of imposed hegemony, both ruthless towards the indigenous people ("primitive" peasants) and predatory towards nature (Borkowska 50).

of Britishness reached its pinnacle during the emergence of the second British Empire. British identity, which was now imperial identity, "was superimposed … in response to contact with the Other, and above all in response to conflict with the Other." In other words, the British saw themselves "as a single people" (Colley 6), superior to the conquered Other from the colonised overseas territories. Until the eighteenth century, the primary objective of the Empire's colonial mechanism was trade. Overseas settlements were seen as a source of commodities such as sugar and tobacco, which were sold in Britain, as well as commercial markets for British produce. The Empire grew strong after a series of wars in the eighteenth century, most notably The Seven Years' War which resulted in driving "the French out of most of their Indian, West African and West Indian possessions … [and tearing] Manila and Havana from the Spanish" (Colley 101). However, Britain's loss of the thirteen American colonies during the American Revolution (1775-1783) "provoked both trauma at home and an unavoidable reappraisal of how Britain could be renovated and its rulers re-legitimise themselves" (Colley xv). This event emerges as a breakthrough in the Empire's colonial history. The end of the eighteenth century witnessed a change in British imperial politics, when "the foundations of not merely the economic, but also the constitutional framework [were laid down to build] the second British Empire" (Bolton 196). British control extended to Australia, New Zealand, the Indian subcontinent, Hong Kong, Shanghai, parts of Africa and various islands of the Pacific. Nineteenth-century British expansionism became more aggressive and not only focused on conquering new territories, but also entailed exploitation of their natural resources, and a direct domination of indigenous populations and their land. It is noteworthy that "settler colonialism in the Americas, Australia, and elsewhere often produced genocides against indigenous populations" (Brantlinger, *Imperialism* 737). In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said explains that despite commercial advantages there was a commitment to imperialism and colonialism,

> a commitment in constant circulation and recirculation, which, on the one hand, allowed decent men and women to accept the notion that distant territories and their native peoples *should* be subjugated, and, on the other, replenished metropolitan energies so that these decent people could think of the *imperium* as a protracted, almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior, or less advanced peoples. (10)

The Empire's political and economic control of its gains went hand in hand with cultural assimilation of the colonised nations. Colonial conquest was then driven by a racist ideology that "gave rise to one of the standard justifications for imperialism, the so-called 'civilizing mission' of the 'white man'" (Brantlinger, *Imperialism* 736). The quintessence of this conjuncture was evidenced, for example, in Rudyard Kipling's poem entitled "The White Man's Burden" (1899), in which the author eulogises the valour and sacrifice of white men in their mission to bring Christian values, education, administration and Western principles to indigenous peoples, and manifests the conviction that "non-whites are childlike innocents in need of white men's protection" (Rieder 30). The main objective of the poem was to prompt the USA to conquer and colonise the Philippines, but also to serve as a vindication of the aggressive colonial expansion which was meant to be seen as a civilising mission for the good of the "barbaric" non-whites.

The scientific justification for territorial expansion, political subordination, and economic exploitation of overseas territories found particular prominence in nineteenth-century Victorian Britain, which marked the heyday of British imperialism. The dissemination of racist philosophies by Herbert Spencer and Edmund von Hartmann, the emergence of the pseudoscientific stance in the form of biological racism by Charles Darwin, Robert Knox and Josiah C. Nott facilitated colonial power dynamics and promoted the belief in white supremacy and inscribed inferiority of the colonised indigenes. Darwin's evolutionary theory underwent intentional misinterpretation and eventual distortion into the framework of Social

Darwinism. Its followers misrepresented and adapted "Darwin's language for their own social, economic, and political explanations" (Oratile, Luan 3). From that moment, the law of natural selection was not merely confined to the biological realm; rather, it was repurposed to address social and subsequently imperial issues. Social Darwinism emphasised the societal importance of the affluent class and propagated the notion of white race supremacy in the world, resulting in the marginalization and devaluation of both impoverished individuals and indigenous populations. Herbert Spencer, the father of Social Darwinism, coined the term "survival of the fittest," which contributed to legitimising racism and colonialism since it was read as an obligation of the "superior" white race to assimilate the indigenous territories. Spencer's doctrine was later extended by Charles Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, who pioneered the eugenics movement in 1868. It advocated for the selective promotion of reproduction solely among the most physically and mentally robust individuals.

In the colonial context, this dehumanising approach resulted in the ideological division of the contemporary world in terms of binary oppositions such as West–East, "Us"–"Them," coloniser–colonised, civilised–uncivilised, and white–non-white. A native representing the non-Western world – be it Eastern, Asian, African, native-American, or Australian, etc. – was seen as the Other in opposition to the Western socio-politics and culture. The concept of "the Other" was characterized by being perceived as inherently different, inferior and in opposition to "Us." The mechanism of Othering the marginalised non-Western nations denied them their individualism and humanity, and classified them as subaltern. Their destiny was subordinated to Western hegemony. Commenting on *The Inheritors* (1901) by Joseph Conrad and Ford M. Heuffer, Patrick Brantlinger notes that Conrad articulated the false idealism of imperialism that was "the lying propaganda used to cover its bloody tracks" (*Rule of Darkness* 259). This ideological violence was supposed to associate Europe with the plenitude of civilisation whereas "the colonised world had to be emptied of meaning" (Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*

15). To be more precise, colonialism "marks the historical process whereby the 'West' attempts systematically to cancel or negate the cultural difference and value of the 'non-West'" (16). The conceptual dichotomy between Western strength and Eastern weakness was reinforced by the Western attitude toward, and in the end distorted representation of, the "exotic" Other. In his seminal study *Orientalism* (1978) Edward Said focused on practices of representation, employing Michel Foucault's discourse analysis to examine Orientalism as a set of assumptions and practices created to comprehend, subjugate, and control the Orient. In Saidean meaning of the term, Orientalism served as a mechanism of colonial ideology, functioning not only in the understanding but also in the representation of the Eastern nations as inherently backward, and the "Oriental Other as sensual, feminine, exotic, and inferior" (Özarslan, Dağli 94) that needs to be taken under the protection of the Western civilisation. It can be concluded that colonial discourses were a driving force of the imperial ideology, and many critics and historians agree "that the very ideas of Englishness and Britishness were generated by and dependent on imperialism" (Knopf 70).

In the era of British imperialism, literary texts written in the language of the imperial core exhibited two categories: those "produced by a literate elite whose primary identification is with the colonising power," and those produced "under imperial license by natives or outcasts" (Ashcroft et al., *The Empire* 5). Thus colonial writing or "the institution of 'Literature'" (6) in colonies seemed to be highly "orientalised" and categorised, with the emphasis put on "metropolitan" over "peripheral." Victorian literature played a significant role in the process of the legitimisation of colonial expansionism, having a twofold objective: to strengthen Western culture and ideologies in the colonies and to exert an energising influence on the citizens living in the imperial metropolis (Stokłosa 63). Edward Said stresses that "politics in the form of imperialism bears upon the production of literature," and that Victorian writers were "extraordinarily well aware of the fact of empire" (*Orientalism* 14), as

evidenced in their oeuvre. British culture had a considerable impact on shaping the mentality of the colonised by introducing the English language, schools, institutions and literature. The cultural influence of the Empire prevailed even after the period of decolonisation, contributing to the emergence and subsequent shaping of postcolonial literature in countries formerly colonised in the era of European imperialism. Postcolonial literature is a response to colonialism and its heritage, it rewrites Western canonical texts and exposes misdeeds of great empires, frequently subverting the authoritative position of a conquering country, and giving voice to the silenced Other. In their seminal theoretical account of postcolonial literature and culture, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define the term "postcolonial" as one that covers "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day" (*The Empire* 2). They elucidate the development of postcolonial literature, the objective of which was "asserting difference from the imperial centre" (4). Robert J. C. Young in his attempt to define the objectives of postcolonialism states that it "offers a way of seeing things differently," and "claims the right of all people on this earth to the same material and cultural well-being" (2), where the privileged position of the Western hegemony becomes upset. Leela Gandhi elaborates on the phenomenon symptomatic of the previously colonised communities' "urge for historical self-invention … to make a new start – to erase painful memories of colonial subordination," what she terms postcolonial amnesia (*Postcolonial Theory* 4). In this respect, postcolonialism should function as "a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath … a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past" (4).

The processes of decolonisation and the surge in postcolonial literature contributed to the emergence of postcolonial theory that critically analyses "the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century" (Elam). As has been said, one of the leading postcolonial theorists

was Edward Said, who "deserves to be called the originator and inspiring patron-saint of postcolonial theory and discourse" (San Juan). In O*rientalism* Said focuses on the practices of representation and the political bipolarity between the West and the East, critiquing the Western cultural hegemony for perpetuating stereotypical and substantially false depictions of Eastern nations over centuries. The critic argues that Orientalism is the Western pseudo-scientific ideology formed in order to strengthen the ungrounded conviction of the subaltern and homogenous status of the non-European Other, and which thereby facilitated the establishment of the superior Self of the Western world: "Orientalism is a discourse that produces the 'Orient' as Europe's Other and in so doing enables Europe to fashion a sense of its own identity. Orientalism therefore not only produces 'the Orient' but also 'Europe' too" (Childs, Fowler 163).

Said understood Orientalism as a "kind of intellectual power" constructed to contain and represent the oriental Other from the position of European superiority (Orientalism, 41). Commenting on Michel Foucault's binary concept of power and knowledge, Said demonstrates that Western intellectuals asserted their authority as reliable sources of knowledge about the Orient, effectively asserting power over it, and consequently, arbitrarily reshaping and controlling its portrayal. The established hegemony of the Western world allows to transmit this knowledge "from generations to generations resulting in an everlasting cultural domination" (Güven 420). According to Said, the Orient remains absent, and the Orientalist always audible, and this relation is a key factor in understanding the imperial ideology and colonialism itself:

> To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental movements of thought and culture, these were perceived either as silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by him, or as a kind of cultural and intellectual proletariat useful for the Orientalist's grander interpretive

> activity, necessary for his performance as superior judge, learned man, powerful cultural will. (*Orientalism* 208)

Another academic who highly contributed to the development of postcolonial thought is the Indian-British theoretician, Homi K. Bhabha. In his most renowned work, *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha formulated some of the most pivotal concepts in postcolonial studies, such as mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity, which can be read as a way of resistance of the colonised peoples against the colonisers' cultural hegemony. Bhabha reads mimicry not only as symptomatic of imperial presence and domination, but also as the menacing ambivalence that is part and parcel of the concept. Colonial mimicry manifests itself "through a panoptical vision of domination" over the indigenous populations (Chakrabarti 13). However, they only become imitators of hegemonic culture, existing as "almost the same, but not quite" (*The Location* 86). Mimicry becomes a colonial strategy focused on the imposition of the coloniser's culture, but it always leaves space for "the ambivalence of splitting, denial, repetition" (114). Ambivalence "opens up a space of interpretation and misappropriation" (*The Location* 95), posing a threat to a colonial discourse that seems to lose its dominant position. Thus Bhabha maintains that "the *menace* of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (88). In addition, Bhabha argues that the idea of ambivalence highlights a division in the identity of the colonised subject, leading to the emergence of hybrids situated in an in-between location, straddling their own culture and that of the coloniser. The concept of cultural hybridity calls into question "the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures" (37) and "homogenous national cultures" (5), allowing "the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective … to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (*The Location* 2). Bhabha's theoretical exploration of racial stereotypes also encompasses the concept of ambivalence. Instead of being enmeshed with the political binaries (West–East) as

observed in Saidean approach, Bhabha defines the stereotype in terms of a psychological representation. Comparing the colonial stereotype to Freudian fetishism that "is always a 'play' or vacillation between the archaic affirmation of wholeness/similarity … and the anxiety associated with lack and difference," Bhabha points out a parallel ambivalence in the case of the stereotype: not "all men have the same skin/race/culture" (*The Location* 74). Thus the fetish becomes "the subject's desire for a pure origin that is always threatened by its division," just like the pure originality of the stereotype in a colonial discourse seems "threatened by the differences of race, colour and culture [of the subject to] be gendered, to be engendered, to be spoken" (*The Location* 75). The stereotype of skin colour emerges as the fetish in colonial discourse, because the colonised Other "is progressively reformable …, however, it effectively displays the 'separation', makes it more visible" (83). In other words, Bhabha emphasises the ambivalence in this 'separation' because the stereotyped black "is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child" (*The Location* 82). Expanding on the concept of ambivalence, Bhabha points out its presence in the discovery of an English book in a colonial location. The English book serves as a metonym for colonial power strategies, yet it is also subject to processes of repetition, translation, misreading and displacement within the colonial reality (102). This way Bhabha stresses the inevitable ambivalence of colonial discourse since, on the one hand, it is "a signifier of colonial desire and discipline," being a scene for "displacement, fantasy, psychic defence, and an 'open' textuality" on the other (*The Location* 102, 108).

Emmanuel Levinas's notion of obscurity of the image, which functions as a method of articulating the concealed or unvoiced narratives, and "seeing inwardness from the outside" (16) is another idea elaborated on in *The Location of Culture*. Used in postcolonial literature, the concept of the conscious obscuring of some of the individual stories from the colonial

past, paradoxically forces the reader to detect and scrutinise them in a much wider spectrum. In his reading of *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison, Bhabha accentuates the fact that the presence of "undecipherable languages" in the house number 124 "of slave memory obscures the historical narrative of infanticide only to articulate the unspoken" (*The Location* 15). Bhabha draws a telling conclusion: "Is it not uncanny that Levinas's metaphors for this unique 'obscurity' of the image should come from those Dickensian unhomely places – those dusty boarding schools, the pale light of London offices, the dark, dank second-hand clothes shops" (*The Location* 22)? In his essay "The World and the Home," Bhabha argues that within the realm of fiction, one can discern "the deep stirrings of the 'unhomely'" (141). This concept, rooted in Freudian *unheimlich*, refers to "everything that ought to have remained … secret and hidden but has come to light" (*The Location* 10), whereas "homely" implies familiarity and a sense of belonging to one's place. In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha points out that "to be unhomed is not to be homeless" (9). The term is mainly associated with postcolonial and migrant societies, and functions as the aftermath of colonial mechanism that caused the eradication of natives from their places of cultural identification or drastic transformations of their familiar land. He further elaborates that "the unhomeliness captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world [and] is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (*The Location* 9). In his reading of Hannah Arendt, Bhabha argues that through the reversal of "things that should be hidden and things that should be shown," it can be discovered "how rich and manifold the hidden can be under conditions of intimacy" (9-10). This conjuncture hints at the above concept of "obscurity" with its intended revelation of the invisible. The "unhomeliness" can be discovered in "the recesses of the domestic site [which] become sites for history's most intricate invasions" (*The Location* 9), and "what is supposedly outside the home seems to be

inhabiting it all along and reappears only with the return of the repressed" in present times (Masgrau-Peya).

The colonial mechanism of conquering new territories by the British Empire not only substantially contributed to the economic growth of its centre, but also meant that the colonised societies literally became its citizens. One of the ways to read power dynamics between the colonisers and the colonised is to view them in terms of parent-child relations. By adopting imperial culture, religion and language, the colonised seemed literally to be assimilated by the Empire, figuratively becoming its offspring in the processes of acculturation. Poor economic and technological development made the colonised communities be seen "as children, as men not fully grown, whose destiny had to be guided by the presumably more advanced states of Europe" (Cohen 427). In this way, the conquering European empires figuratively assumed the role of a parent responsible for the upbringing process of their children whose maturity could only be attained thanks to the intervention of the Western civilisation. Yet, the consequences of European "parenthood" were disastrous not only economically but also physically and emotionally, resulting in privation, commercial inequity, spread of diseases, loss of land, national identities and indigenous cultures. In cultural terms, orphanhood can be read as a manner of representation and as a metaphor of the colonial condition of those marginalised and unwanted by their new "mother" countries. A metaphorical understanding of the British Empire as motherland, "Mother Country," indicates a sense of belonging of the subjugated peoples to the Empire and their dependence on its economy and ideology for their survival and well-being, which was the aftermath of the process of acculturation. The feminisation of the British Empire has two sources. Firstly, it is connected with the female warrior figure, Britannia, used historically to symbolise British imperial ambitions and naval prowess. In the times of the Roman occupation of the British Isles, the name Britannia was used to define the conquered territory. Britannia was personified

not only as a female but also as a goddess, which emphasised the weight of the victory because the Romans believed to have defeated deity. After the decline of the Roman Empire, Britannia, initially associated with submission, transformed into a symbol of national glory and strength (Gay, et al.). It was particularly notable during the reign of Queen Victoria, when Britannia became conflated with the Queen herself, and "played a role in the transitional stages leading to nationalism and the transformation of a state into a nation-state and a nation-state into an Empire," changing the English identity into "the British national character" (Matthews 819, 814). Secondly, the feminisation of the Empire derives from the psychological meaning of the word because a mother has traditionally been seen as responsible for her children's emotional and intellectual development, protection, but also supervision. It seems to be coherent with the Victorian stereotype of the "Perfect Lady," who was responsible for "uniting and morally regenerating the country around the ideology of motherhood, the sexual restraint and moral order of which was believed to have immunised the country from overwhelming civil strife" (Alessio 241, 242). However, the image of the "Perfect Lady" can be understood in a broader context. If "she" was supposed to "ensure the stability of the nation and the continued strength of its industrial and military might," the "Perfect Lady" can also stand for "Mother Britain" whose imperial activity aimed at maintaining a similar stability among "her" new colonial offspring and military strength in the colonial areas (Alessio 242).

Commenting on "a less male-centered, and more domestically orientated" rhetoric of imperialism in Victorian and Edwardian periods, some critics describe the British dominions as "'sister nations' or 'daughter dominions' of the 'mother country,' which, with the help of their 'parent,' had grown up from 'childhood' through 'adolescence' to the 'maturity' of self-government" (Thompson 175). Mridula Chauhan uses a similar metaphor, stating that child upbringing "is done by the mother with her full devotion, similarly to the land as a mother

offers its inhabitants everything required for their growth and maintenance" (1376). By assimilating the overseas territories, British Empire assumed the role of a new "adoptive" mother for the indigenous people inhabiting them. However, bearing in mind the racist philosophies entrenched in colonial history which bolstered the authority of the European white race, it must be stressed that the societies subjugated to colonial rule were never treated as full-fledged citizens of the Empire. Consequently, the Empire's responsibilities, that is to say, its maternal duties towards its colonial subjects can be defined as negligent.

William B. Cohen offers a compelling interpretation of the relations between the British Empire and its colonial offspring, noting parallels between the Victorian society's approach to child-rearing domestically and in the colonies. Cohen underscores the remoteness and lack of strong emotional bonds between parents and children in Victorian families, and observes a similar mechanism of "lack of internal integration" in British colonies where "the distance between the parent and child in British society has its equivalent overseas in the proverbial aloofness which the administrator showed towards his charges" (429-430). However, the notion of distance or self-restraint between the British Empire, symbolised as the mother, and the colonised, represented as children, is far too subtle a euphemism. In reality, it should be recognised as ruthless marginalisation of the non-whites. In the nineteenth-century, discriminatory ideologies often portrayed natives as subhuman or as obstacles to be eliminated, hindering the efficiency of imperial expansion.

As has been said, postcolonial literature emerges as a reaction to colonialism and its legacy, frequently revising Western canonical works and revealing the wrongdoings of powerful empires, thereby challenging the dominant stance of the conquering nations. For the development of postcolonial studies, the transitional period from structuralism to poststructuralism is crucial especially in the field of postcolonial literary theories. While structuralism refers to "objectivity, scientific rigour [and] methodological stability," implying

the autonomous construction of a literary text, poststructuralism foregrounds "uncertainty, indeterminacy, incommunicability, subjectivity, desire, pleasure and play" (Allen 3), depriving a literary text of its autonomous status. Poststructuralist theorists put emphasis on multiple interpretations that can bring new contexts to a given text and, rejecting the idea of its clear and fixed meaning, introduced the concept of intertextuality. The term intertextuality was first coined by Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s, who conceptualised the relation between texts, as follows: "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations … The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity" (66). Stefanie Lethbridge has expanded the concept of intertextuality, providing the following definition: "Intertextual relations replace intersubjective relations between author and reader as well as relations between language and world; all texts refer (only) to a universe of texts" (637). Anneli Mihkelev, on the other hand, scrutinises the medium of intertextuality in global terms and states that intertextuality connects literary texts in the world, which becomes "a network [including] national literatures, i.e. intertextuality creates world literature" (73). Graham Allen stresses that the concept of intertextuality remains in close relation with postcolonial writing, where a postcolonial writer "exists as a 'split' subject whose utterances are always 'double-voiced', their own and yet replete with 'otherness'" (165). A similar dichotomy seems to take place when a language, in this case English, imposed by a dominant culture paradoxically becomes a tool in the writer's discursive resistance to the hegemonic tradition. In other words, when a postcolonial writer emerges as a voice of the repressed culture, having to employ the oppressor's language to reach a larger audience. Such ambivalence or the "split" position of a postcolonial writer appears to be an explicit reference to Bhabha's hybridity of "a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality" (*The Location* 13). A Nigerian postcolonial writer, China Achebe comments on his use of the English language in his novels as follows: "[For] me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it" (qtd.

in Tyson 422). For many postcolonial communities the English language also becomes a way to "[facilitate] the emergence of those nations into global politics and economics" (422).

In his analysis of the notion of intertextuality, Graham Allen refers to a phenomenon termed *hypertextuality* by a French theorist, Gérard Genette. According to Genette "Hypertextuality refers to any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (Genette 5). In this respect, the *hypotext* emerges as "a major source of signification for a text," especially in "forms of literature which are intentionally inter-textual" (Allen 108). Genette notes that if the reader lacks knowledge of the *hypotext*, he cannot understand the meaning of the hypertextual work. In such a case, "the hypertext becomes merely a text, a non-relational, non-transformational work" (qtd. in Allen 112).

As has been said, from the perspective of British colonialism, Victorian era was a period of most extensive colonial expansion when the British Empire was at its greatest. As a contemporary reaction and a need to reexamine this period, the literary and cultural movement known as neo-Victorianism emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Neo-Victorian works involve reimagining and often critiquing the Victorian era, incorporating elements of its literature, history, and culture. These works may revisit characters, settings, and themes from the Victorian era, interpreting them through a modern lens that blends nostalgia for and criticism of the Victorian period and its principles, reflecting contemporary concerns, ideologies, and literary techniques. Neo-Victorianism is defined by Marie-Luise Kohlke as "the afterlife of the nineteenth century in the cultural imaginary" (1). Most neo-Victorian novels emphasise social hypocrisy, undermine Victorian morality and godly, disciplined life derived from the Puritan tradition. They explicitly address the issues of slavery, homosexuality, an infamous depiction of imperial London as the city of double morality, a symbol of debauchery, lust, prostitution, violence and money, where the

"righteous" Victorians appear as those actually fixated on sex and sexuality. Similarly, Michel Foucault highlighted Victorian sexual hypocrisy with the following words:

> Sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule. The couple imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth, and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy. (3)

In their seminal study, Marie-Luise Kholke and Christian Gutleben explore "neo-Victorian biofiction," a hybridised literary genre which incorporates "actual nineteenth-century lives and [particularises] history through individual existences, promising writers, artists, and audiences a sort of direct entrée into once lived, now vicariously relieved past time" (*Neo-Victorian Biofiction* 2). By meditating and revisiting the past, neo-Victorian biofiction becomes a basis for rethinking and "[recouping] the period's discourses, traumas, and ideological conflicts that formed and continue to form the modern globalised world" (11).

By rewriting nineteenth-century Britain, many postcolonial writers articulate the colonial heritage Victorian era cannot extricate itself from, a manoeuvre which from a critical standpoint merges postcolonial and neo-Victorian standpoints. These contemporary postcolonial novels set in Victorian period have a more telling undertow because "their reconstructions of Victorian colonial locations mediate the questionable boundaries between Western pride and the guilt experienced when thinking about colonialism's material and immaterial cost" (van Dam 30).

As has been indicated, the acculturation process of the natives in British colonies involved the replacement of their indigenous lifestyles with the culture, language and religion of the Empire. The educational system in colonised territories was based on English literature, considered an ally "to support [colonial administrators] in maintaining control of the natives

under the guise of a liberal education" (qtd. in Ashcroft et al., *The Empire* 3). Its consequences can be noticed in the burgeoning tendency of postcolonial writers to revert in their fiction to literary texts of the source, of "mother Britannia," to the canonical texts of British literature which formed the basis of their colonial education, and use them as points of reference and intertextual groundwork for their contemporary, often neo-Victorian, literature. For instance, one of the first most prominent examples of this revisionist revival is Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), a prequel to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) written from a postcolonial perspective. Rhys presents a life story of Antoinette Cosway, the countertype of Jane Eyre from Brontë's novel. A Creole heiress, Antoinette lives in Jamaica before she marries an Englishman, Mr Rochester who, because of her alleged madness, locks her in the attic of his mansion.

Although there are numerous examples of rewritings, prequels and sequels to Victorian novels, especially those by authors such as the Brontë sisters and Jane Austen[2], it is Charles Dickens whose oeuvre and controversial life episodes have been of particular interest to many postcolonial writers and film producers. Postcolonial reading of Dickens's often marginal comments on British colonies offers a potential avenue for revising and reinterpreting his depiction of the Victorian world. The fascination with Dickens, who can be considered a culture text and visual template, is also likely to stem from the assumption that the writer

[2] Sarah Shoemaker revisits Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in *Mr Rochester* (2017). The story is retold from the perspective of the enigmatic Mr Rochester, presenting the events of his unhappy childhood, his stay in Jamaica, marriage to Bertha and his return to Thornfield Hall. Another example of rewriting of a classical text is *Changing Heaven* (1990) by Jane Urquhart. Being a tribute to Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the novel tells a story of Ann, Emily Brontë scholar, who moves to Yorkshire moors to write a book. Urquhart takes the reader to Venice, Toronto and English moors that convey the magical atmosphere from Brontë's novel.
There are also modern novels that emerge as reworkings of Jane Austen's fiction, for instance, *Emma: A Modern Retelling* (2014) by Alexander McCall Smith, *Sense & Sensibility* (2014) by Joanna Trollope, *Northanger Abbey* (2015) by Val McDermid, or *Eligible: A modern retelling of Pride and Prejudice* (2017) by Curtis Sittenfeld.

"has been particularly well suited to portraying the fantastic incongruities of colonial and postcolonial life" (Jordan 498). In a similar vein, John Thieme argues that postcolonial writers find it "easier to identify with the cultural and social politics of [Dickens's] reformist fiction than the work of many of his more middle-class contemporaries" (103).

For postcolonial writers, Dickens seems to occupy "a central role in the canon and as an outsider who could be a trenchant critic of the dominant social codes of his day" (Thieme 102). According to Catherine Lanone, as the embodiment of England and Englishness, Dickens seems to bring "Britain to distant readers and [arouses] in them the desire to become a writer too" (20). It can be noticed, for example, in *The Enigma of Arrival* (1988) by V. S. Naipaul, where the narrator develops his vision of London through a lens of Dickens's novels: "The London I knew or imaginatively possessed was the London I had got from Dickens. It was Dickens – and his illustrators – who gave me the illusion of knowing the city" (133). John O. Jordan provides a griping account of Dickens's global and cultural heritage in postcolonial writing and film in the works of Wole Soyinka, Shiv K. Kumar, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and V.S. Naipaul. Using the example of these authors' first childhood encounters with Dickensian fiction, Jordan emphasises the fact that these experiences occurred in locations such as Nigeria, India, Kenya, and Trinidad (487). In his essay, "Jasmine" Naipaul provides the account of his boyhood struggling to transfer the Dickensian world into the reality of Trinidad.

> All Dickens's descriptions of London I rejected; and though I might retain Mr Micawber and the others in the clothes the illustrator gave them, I gave them the faces and voices of people I knew and set them in buildings and streets I knew. ... Dickens's rain and drizzle I turned into tropical downpours; the snow and the fog I accepted as conventions of books. (*Overcrowded Barracoon* 24)

These early endeavours show Naipaul's strong fascination with the Victorian writer, which later translates to his own writing. Dickens's influence on Naipaul's oeuvre is particularly evident in *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), where Dickensian themes provide solace to the eponymous protagonist as he grapples with humiliations inflicted by his wife's family in Trinidad. There have also been rewritings of *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* in the postcolonial Australian understanding, for example *Magwitch* (1982) by an Australian writer Michael Noonan. Pip, the narrator of the story, recounts his adventures in Australia where he searches for information about Magwitch's 15-year stay in New South Wales and a hidden fortune that amassed for Dickens's protagonist. Among the postcolonial works by Australian writers influenced by Dickens are also *Modest Expectations* (1990), a play by David Allen, and *The Bluebird Café* (1990) by Carmel Bird. Allen's play takes place in 1868 and follows Dickens during one of his reading tours in Australia, accompanied by Ellen Ternan. Carmel Bird's novel is set in the village called Copperfield and presents an anorexic girl who aspires to become a novelist and is preoccupied with writing letters to the long-deceased Dickens.

Most recent examples of the use of Dickensian motifs in the postcolonial context can also be seen for example in *Dottie* (1990) by the Zanzibarian winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature 2021, Abdulrazak Gurnah. Although Dickens's *David Copperfield* physically appears in Gurnah's novel, there are also unobvious and implicit intertextual references to *Great Expectations* (1861).

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of neo-Victorian film adaptations, with filmmakers drawing inspiration from the works of Charles Dickens. These adaptations reimagine Dickensian themes and characters through a modern lens, often exploring contemporary issues within the framework of Victorian society. For example, television series directed by Tim Burstall, *Great Expectations: The Untold Story* (1987), uncovers Magwitch's

story during the time spent in Australia. According to Jordan, the series is "a full-scale re-telling" of Dickens's canonical text, combining two narratives: Pip's juvenescence and Magwitch's experience in the colony (492). Another example is a feature film entitled *A Boy called Twist* (2004), by Tim Greene who not only situates Dickens's canonical text, *Oliver Twist* (1838), within the postcolonial reality of South Africa, but also embodies Dickens's spirit to highlight current problems within the setting. Apart from featuring exploitative child labour and the mistreatment of orphaned children, the film addresses modern-day challenges such as child slavery, teenage prostitution and the widespread orphanhood caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

It must be remembered that as a charitable proponent of hearth and home, associated with social criticism in the Victorian period, Dickens mostly made a name for himself as a fervent advocate of the underprivileged, orphans, paupers and the aggrieved. He was engaged in charitable activities and strived for the improvement of working and living conditions for the impoverished. Anthony Trollope called Dickens "a hearty man, a large-hearted man …, perhaps the largest-hearted man I ever knew" (qtd. in Rosen 145).

The motif of orphanhood is closely associated with Dickens for many reasons. Orphaned children in his fiction were depicted in the context of his criticism of child neglect, child labour, the marginalisation of the poor, workhouses and the Poor Laws of 1834. This is evident in works such as *Oliver Twist* (1838), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1852), *Little Dorrit* (1857), and *Great Expectations* (1861). By condemning the gross injustices of Victorian society through the lens of its weakest members, children and orphans, Dickens effectively influenced public sentiment and established his position as a sensitive and moralistic writer. Furthermore, orphanhood, or, more precisely, emotional orphanhood, is also deeply intertwined with Dickens's own traumatic childhood. At the age of twelve, he became the sole breadwinner of his family when

he had to stick labels to bottles of shoe polish at Warren's Blacking Factory, after his father had been incarcerated for debts. Even after his father's release from prison, Dickens's mother insisted that her son continue working in the factory. Peter Ackroyd states that Dickens's childhood "ended so suddenly that it did not gradually fade and disappear as most childhoods do" (73). In this respect, Dickens's own orphanhood can be read as a sense of spiritual abandonment by his parents and a loss of parental care. Not only did this experience have a lasting effect on his later life when he strived to form emotional and financial security, but it also impinged upon his fiction, which reveals him as empathetic especially towards orphaned and abandoned children.

In *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire* (2000), Laura Peters presents a compelling study of the significant role the orphan played in Victorian culture and mindset. For the burgeoning middle-class, the family was of great value, and the orphan figure was seen in binary representations: as both a poison, embodying "the loss of family," a disturbance "[of] the structure of home, identity, nation and discourse," and as a promise, enabling the family to "[reaffirm] itself through the expulsion of this threatening difference" (Peters L. 19, 2). This twofold reading of the orphan in Victorian period seems to have extended into the socio-political sphere. The state considered orphaned children as a potential threat to society because they were perceived to be at greater risk of becoming paupers and criminals. Thus, to prevent it, institutions such as the Board of Guardians and the prisonlike workhouses were established as supervisory bodies aimed at ensuring that the orphans would be given due upbringing and education (9-10). It also generated hope because the orphans residing in the workhouses could be shaped by the state and become "both obedient citizens and a constant supply of respectable and dutiful servants" of the country (Peters L. 8). If seen as "inferior" subjects without rights, coercively subjugated to and shaped by the country that took the role of a parent, Victorian orphans, when examined in the context of colonial reality,

serve as a metaphorical representation of a parallel insight into the indigenous populations of the Empire's overseas territories. As has been said, discriminatory ideologies created a false portrait of the non-white Other, who was forced to be taken under the "parental" care of the Western civilisation, and subsequently reshaped in the process of cultural assimilation to serve the interests of the white man. It can be said that the Other evoked a similar ambivalence of both threat and promise as the Victorian orphan. In Bhabha's analysis, the Other posed a threat to the supposed purity of the colonial stereotype by challenging the constructed differences of "race, colour and culture," thereby becoming visible. The colonial discourse strived for the purity of the stereotype and rejected any possible divisions to reaffirm its colonial authority. In addition to this, the culture of the Other embodied "the threat of chaos" (*The Location* 133) that had to be prevented "by those [promising] moralistic and normative ideologies of amelioration as the Civilizing Mission or the White Man's Burden" (83). This metaphorical conflation of the domestic orphans and the natives requires an emphatic predication – in both cases, the Empire failed as a parent.

Contemporary criticism of postcolonial literature does not seem to pay enough attention to Dickensian motif of orphanhood in the colonial context. Despite the fact that there is a myriad of critical papers examining a trend of rewriting and revisiting Dickens's works in neo-Victorian and postcolonial literatures, the portrayal of Dickensian orphans that can be transposed into colonial reality seems to be overlooked. The purpose of this dissertation is to fill the gap in criticism and focus on postcolonial novels which use the motif of orphanhood with direct or implied reference to Dickens as a metaphor of parent-child relations between imperial Mother Britain and its overseas colonial offspring. The novels selected for analysis in this study are *When We Were Orphans* (2000) by Kazuo Ishiguro, *Wanting* (2008) by Richard Flanagan, *Jack Maggs* (1997) by Peter Carey, and *Mister Pip* (2006) by Lloyd Jones. If we read Dickensian orphanhood as a means to censure Victorian society for its greed and

indifference and Victorian institutions for their inefficiency, the motif can also be applied to a critical interrogation and reexamination of literary representation of power dynamics in British colonies. In this respect, postcolonial theory is an appropriate methodological tool that allows assessing the Empire's cultural impact on its colonial children. The novels I am going to discuss in my thesis use the motif of orphanhood to address the problem of loss of a sense of belonging and identity, consequences of acculturation, dislocation, broken physical and emotional bonds with one's community and home, oppression of the indigenous peoples by allegedly superior culture. Orphanhood as a literary figure does not only mean the condition of being parentless. When seen from a postcolonial lens, it has relevance to those subjected to the process of inferiorisation by the colonial discourse, to the "orphaned" colonial societies seen as "marginal" in the process of cultural denigration. Similarly to Dickensian orphans – and the writer himself – who were victims of the uncaring Victorian system and society, the indigenous people and non-indigenous individuals in the settler colonies in British-controlled regions appear to have fallen victim to the Empire's inhumane politics of exploitation. Displacement resulting from the discriminatory practices of the colonisers' neglect and abandonment seem to be most explicitly connected with a sense of orphanhood that reverberates in the postcolonial novels explored in my discussion below. In addition to indirect or overt intertextual references to either Dickens's fiction or his life – often both – the authors of the analysed novels appear to make Dickens's influence visible in their texts because of his propensity to expose societal injustices and his well-known desire to improve the world and enhance the quality of life. Such optimism can especially be seen in *Oliver Twist*, *Christmas Carol*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, or *Great Expectations* were the oppressed individuals finally find repose. It must be remembered that the term "Dickensian" is read as "opprobrium for any disagreeable aspects of the century" (Ackroyd 903). It can be argued that the broken world depicted in the analysed novels definitely needs

to be repaired, yet Dickens's hopeful vision of betterment is only discernible in the final chapters of *Jack Maggs* and *Mister Pip*.

The discussed postcolonial novels revisit the colonial heritage and power relations, becoming part of postcolonial criticism that "force[s] a radical rethinking and re-formulation of forms of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination" (Prakash 8). The intertextual connections with Dickens, either directly or indirectly mentioned in the analysed novels, refers to Genette's concept of *hypertextuality*. In other words, the novels can be read as the *hypertexts* "grafted" onto and evoking the Dickensian *hypotexts*.

The first chapter of the thesis addresses the novel *When We Were Orphans* by Kazuo Ishiguro, in which Christopher Banks embarks on a utopian mission of finding his parents who once disappeared in Shanghai (the International Settlement). In this chapter I will refer to the archetypes formulated by Carol S. Pearson, especially the transition from *Innocent* to *Orphan*. This transition becomes evident in Ishiguro's novel when the orphans, abruptly deprived of Eden they experienced in their childhood, encroach the *Orphan* state mentally and literally. Although "obscured," the postcolonial backdrop in Ishiguro's novel comes to the foreground in the depiction of the consequences of opium trade in Shanghai, developed by Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The main character's mother's condemnation of the opium trade in China presents an ethical paradox. On the one hand, she owes her material status to the company involved in the opium trade her husband works for, which makes her part of British imperial machinery. On the other hand, her efforts to civilize and uphold Victorian morality can be interpreted as genuine expressions of righteousness. The sentencing of Diana Banks to repetitive sexual and physical abuse can be read as a metaphorical critique of British greed hidden behind a veneer of Victorian propriety.

I will demonstrate that the presence of orphans in Ishiguro's novel and Christopher Banks's childhood trauma parallel Charles Dickens's childhood experiences when he was forced to enter *Orphan* state much too soon while working at Warren's Blacking Factory. Most importantly, however, orphanhood is featured in Ishiguro's novel as a metaphor for the postcolonial situation to demonstrate the consequences of British imperialism. I intend to draw an analogy between the citizens of the International Settlement and Victorian Londoners, both of whom exhibit complete indifference to British imperial practices.

Moreover, certain motifs explored in *When We Were Orphans* make implicit intertextual references to Dickens's *Great Expectations*. For example, Ishiguro employs the theme of an orphaned boy stepping into the world of an advantaged society, reminiscent of Pip's journey in Dickens's novel. Additionally, both Pip and Christopher Banks benefit from the exploitative labour of others: Pip from Abel Magwitch's work in a penal colony in Australia, and Christopher from both his father's involvement in the opium trade in China and his mother's servitude to Wang Ku. This makes both characters unintentional beneficiaries of British imperialism.

In the second chapter, I will discuss Richard Flanagan's *Wanting* as a neo-Victorian postcolonial novel, which interweaves episodes from the lives of Charles Dickens and John Franklin's governorship in Van Damien's Land. The endeavour to civilise an orphaned Aboriginal girl, Mathinna, by the Franklins becomes a literal reflection of inhumane imperial exploitation of the colonies. Since Mathinna is taken under "the [parental] protective umbrella" by the Franklins, the representatives of the hegemonic culture, she epitomises the Aboriginal people "dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves" (Said, *Orientalism* 35). Mathinna is subjected to an experiment called "civilisation" while "trying to preserve [her] own recognisable forms of identity" (Young 12). Through the adaptation of the coloniser's culture, Mathinna emerges as a hybrid, who, by

mimicking the hegemonic culture, becomes a threat to the certainty of colonial authority. Hybridity, understood as "the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (Bhabha, *The Location* 112), creates a "fissure" in both the dominant culture's control of the colonised subject and the fixity of the colonial stereotype that categorises "the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin" (70). The process of hybridisation makes the stereotype – defined by Bhabha as "a knowledge that is arrested and fetishistic and circulates through colonial discourse as that limited form of otherness" (*The Location* 77-78) – ambivalent. The knowledge that requires "disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences" is faced with "other 'denied' knowledges [entering] upon the dominant discourse" that recognises these differences (Bhabha, *The Location* 70, 114). In this respect, the hybridised colonial subject is not seen in the discriminatory categories of the stereotypical Other but becomes "a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (*The Location* 70-71).

Wanting intertwines Mathinna's story with that of Charles Dickens. During the heyday of his writing career, Dickens played a pivotal role in exonerating Sir John Franklin from the ignoble allegations of resorting to cannibalism during his unsuccessful Arctic expedition. Dickens's glorification of Franklin and Britishness echoes the hypocrisy of the Victorians, who, convinced of the necessity of bringing civilisation to the lands they colonised, in reality indulged their wildest lusts, wreaking havoc in the territories inhabited by indigenous people. The writer, seen as a guardian of the familial hearth, an advocate of the persecuted, like most Victorians, evinced a complete detachment from the consequences of British presence in remote parts of the globe, or the plight of their indigenous inhabitants. In her analysis of *Wanting*, Bożena Kucała explores the inner conflict experienced by these two reputable Englishmen, Charles Dickens and Sir John Franklin. Specifically, she delves into their struggle to reconcile Victorian morals with their inner dark yearnings. The critic aptly states

that the Victorians and Dickens are shown in the novel as "driven by conflicting impulses … failing to achieve a balance between social respectability and personal fulfilment. As a result, they appear misguided and lost rather than intentionally hypocritical" (163). Kucała stresses the fact that Flanagan's *Wanting* shows the blurred "distinction between the notions of civilisation and savagery" (161) reflected in Lady Jane's, John Franklin's and Charles Dickens's wanting "to find an equilibrium between private passions and public norms" (173).

In the third chapter of this thesis I am going to analyse the novel *Jack Maggs* by an Australian writer, Peter Carey, who, by offering "complementary visions of cultural disruption and racial disharmony in the aftermath of empire," is called a "post-colonial pessimist" (Strongman 130). I will present that the novel, which functions as a counter-discourse to and a deconstruction of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, can be read as the articulation of the narratives of the Empire's abandoned children, both domestic and colonial. Unlike Dickensian Pip depicted as a fatherly figure, a metaphor of protective Great Britain that takes care of the Australian convict, Abel Magwitch, Carey portrays Pip's counterpart, Henry Phipps, as an egregious rioter willing to murder his benefactor, a convict returning from South New Wales to London, Jack Maggs. I will show that Maggs becomes a voice of colonised Australia, metaphorically seen as a child of the Empire. Timothy D. Langley contends that Carey "(re)writes the convict from *the Other* into a legitimate part of Australia's history [trying] to reclaim the Australian convict from within England's History through Jack Maggs' narrative of histories" (1), in other words, "to break symbolic ties with his inheritance and to define an identity in his own terms" (2). In the same vein, Nathalie Martinière purports that "Carey offers Australian literature a myth of transgression … that symbolically enfranchises it from its English parent while acknowledging the filiation, and that asserts its right to autonomy" (248).

In Chapter Three I will also demonstrate that the notion of "Otherness" that refers to Maggs, can be read in a binary relation: as a criminal, Maggs is a social outcast and, as a settler in the Australian colony, he seems to be tainted by the "inferior" culture. He emerges as a hybrid of two polarised cultures, subverting the dominant status of the Western culture by articulating the narrative from the peripheral standpoint.

Carey implicitly points out the Empire's parental duties through the lens of the abortionist, Mary Britten, who serves as an analogy to imperial Mother Britain. The children aborted by Mary Britten in Carey's novel are depicted as symbolic of the colonisation process or a parallel to the indigenous inhabitants of overseas territories, treated by the Empire as obstacles to the dissemination of Western culture. Simon Joyce raises an issue of blind loyalty to England in *Jack Maggs*, exemplified by Tobias Oates's glorification of his country, Jack's fidelity to Ma Britten and Percy Buckle's unwavering allegiance to England as Mother Britain. These portrayals reflect the Victorians' blind faith in the "noble" imperialistic project.

Chapter Four will be devoted to the analysis of the novel *Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones, which tells the story of Matilda, a thirteen-year-old girl who lives in the centre of a bloody conflict between the separatist groups of the blockaded island of Bougainville and the mainland Papuan army. Unexpectedly, Matilda finds salvation in Dickens's aesthetic canon and develops a deep fascination with *Great Expectations* thanks to her self-appointed teacher, Mr Watts, the last white man on the island. Matilda's strong identification with Dickensian Pip and her fertile imagination help her escape from the world of oppression to, finally, as a diasporic individual, reunite with her father in Australia. The presence of the English novel on the tropical island can be read as an explicit reference to Bhabha's concept of the ambivalence of colonial authority. The act of a white man reading *Great Expectations* to "black" children becomes an emblem of colonial strategy to assert Western presence and power. However, its simplification of the text by the teacher and its subsequent recreation,

that is interpretation by the children can be read as a form of postcolonial retelling and a way of undermining its authority.

Escaping to a different world created by Matilda's imagination to avoid the brutal reality she lives in bears close affinity to a passage in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) when Saleem Sinai, born exactly at an hour of the Declaration of the Independence of India, entering the new, unsettling reality, states: "I learned: the first lesson of my life: nobody can face the world with his eyes open all the time" (171). It can refer to all the once colonised and subjugated nations for whom independence and the new reality seem only a veneer that "barely disguises the foundational economic, cultural and political damage inflicted by colonial occupation" (Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 7). Throughout the story, Matilda becomes gradually colonised by the world of a white man, especially Pip and Victorian London. I will demonstrate that Jones portrays the white man not solely as a symbol of colonialism but also as a figure who presents Matilda with a story that arouses expectations for a better future, and who can thus be regarded as an illustration of Dickensian gentleman.

Caterina Colomba interprets *Mister Pip* as "a modern female *Bildungsroman*" (275), maintaining that "Pip turns out to be instrumental in the novel in problematising the concept of 'home' and the act of 'returning' as well as in exploring the process of construction of one's identity" (276). For Barbara Klonowska, the novel emerges as an example of the text in which *Great Expectations* "is not only preserved intact in the collective memory but is also variously 'reread,' i.e. revisited and transformed by its users" (222). The critic elucidates the differences in the processes of appropriation (rewriting and hybridisation). She refers to Monica Latham who states that *Mister Pip* seems a paradigm of a perfect hybridity in which both themes (Dickensian and the present-day) are equally substantial, which "undermines the supremacy, authority, authenticity, and unicity of canonical texts" ("The Battle" 89). Latham also explicates diverse transformations of the canonical text, *Great Expectations*:

> On Dickens's original story, numerous variations have been grafted by different characters and authors who integrate their own material and adorn the Victorian classic with fragments from their personal stories. In Jones's novel, the different levels of hypertexts, more or less faithful to the original, are combinations of personal and mythical stories, new and ancestral, written and oral. They make *Mister Pip* an intricate postmodernist and postcolonial piece of fiction ("Bringing Newness" 29).

The sequence of analysis and the arrangement of individual chapters in my thesis are nonchronological. With each chapter, the explicitness in articulating the history and Dickensian motifs intensify. Starting with *When We Were Orphans*, I introduce a world where the analogies to the Dickensian motif of orphanhood, the atrocity of imperialism, and intertextual connections with Dickens's fiction and life are least apparent. Also the representation of British colonialism is, especially in comparison with later analysed novels, "obscured" by the prevailing and utopian mission undertaken by Christopher Banks who remains blind to real evil. Flanagan's *Wanting* constitutes a more explicit exposure of the representation of an orphan as a victim of colonialism, British colonial violence and its consequences and the hypocrisy of Victorian people metaphorically exemplified by Charles Dickens's affair with Ellen Ternan. The third chapter addresses Peter Carey's novel *Jack Maggs* which in a radical way deals with moral corruption and vices of the Victorians. It serves as a straightforward metaphor for features accompanying the colonial pursuit of the Empire, particularly evidenced by the introduction of Mary Britten. Finally, in *Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones, the violence inflicted by the aggressors on the black, subjugated community reaches a crescendo in depiction of the course of the civil war and the tragic consequences of any subordinating hegemony over the weaker nations.

At the beginning of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, the author puts the inscription "Sixty million and more" (1), which, at first sight, seems to be unclear or even "obscured," to use

Levinas's and Bhabha's words. It is deciphered by Morrison herself: this horrifying number refers to the fatalities of the international slave trade whose stories were never told and tragedies never came to light. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak mentioned the articulation of those silenced in colonial history during an interview she gave in 1986. Asked "to give some specific examples of problems in the Australian context," Spivak recounted a poem by a Turkish poet, Nihat Ziyalan, hanging casually among clothes in a shop window, which was "one of the few ways [for the author] that he can get heard-of making his work accessible to whoever is passing by" (Harasym 63-64). That story resonates in the postcolonial global context, especially for the "subaltern" and silenced, whose histories were overwritten by the hegemonic West, where "always there is this sense of voices in the wilderness, that are never going to get heard, not through the regular channels, be it the Australia Council, be it SBS" (64). In the interview with Leon de Kock, Spivak elaborates on the notion of "subaltern" and says that the term "is not just a classy word for oppressed" (de Kock 45). In postcolonial terms, "everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern– a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern" (45). For Spivak, "the subaltern cannot speak" "when they are spoken for by those in positions of power, specifically people who lack the access to listen to the ones they are speaking for" (Widdowson). It seems to be reflected in the analysed novels because they have not been written by native authors. The "subaltern" subjects in the novels are not given a voice of their own, as it is a white author that creates the narration for them. In other words, the Chinese population victimised by the British opium trade, Mathinna, the representative of the exterminated Aboriginal population, colonised Australia in *Jack Maggs*, and Matilda, who symbolises the indifference of the world to the suffering of the subjugated community, are all the "subaltern" "[inserted] into the circuit of hegemony" (de Kock 46).

They seem to always remain "in the margins … [those] who never [qualify] as the norm, the [people] who [are] not authorized to speak" (Young 1).

The postcolonial status of the analysed novels is evident in the authors' engagement with the politics of imperialism and their efforts to negotiate "the once tyrannical weight of colonial history in conjunction with the revalued local past" (Hutcheon 131). However, it is essential to recognize that "the consequences for white (not Native) writers today of that past are different from those for writers in Africa, India, or the Caribbean" (134). Linda Hutcheon also notes that colonialism experienced in Africa, India, or the West Indies cannot be equated with "the white Canadian experience of colonialism" (133), a perspective that also applies to non-indigenous white Australian and New Zealand writers, such as Flanagan, Carey, and Jones.

Chapter One:

Trauma, Utopian Mission, and Dickensian Portrait of the Orphan in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*

Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1954. At the age of five, he moved with his parents to London. He has won some of the most prestigious British literary awards, including the Whitbread Prize in 1986 and the Booker Prize in 1989. In 1995, he received the Order of the British Empire for his merits in literature. Most notably, Ishiguro was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017.

When We Were Orphans, published in 2000, is the author's fifth novel. It tells the story of Christopher Banks, a British boy raised in the British and American enclaves of the Shanghai International Settlement, who is orphaned at the age of nine when his parents mysteriously disappear. He is sent back to England, where he later becomes an eminent detective. Christopher decides to return to Shanghai in 1937 during the Second Sino-Japanese War to find his missing parents.

The novel explores the theme of British presence in China in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, primarily motivated by the demand for Chinese commodities, including tea, porcelain and silk, which had devastating social and economic consequences for China. British outposts exercised control over this trade, which operated on a barter system: Chinese goods were exchanged for opium imported from India. This exploitative practice contributed to the widespread addiction and social instability among the Chinese population. Ishiguro

addresses the colonial imperialism of the British, highlighting their aggressive attempts to dominate trade in China by inducing addiction to opium, thereby rendering the Chinese population incapable of making rational decisions and more susceptible to annexation by imperial powers. The Sino-Japanese war presented in the novel emerges as the aftermath of the British presence in China, which made the economically weakened and "opium stupefied" country vulnerable to the much more developed Japan (Mickalites 118). To gain profit, millions of Chinese were poisoned by greedy British capitalists and Americans who, in turn, transported the drug from China and Turkey. Between 1795 and 1838 the British imported 27 million kilos of opium to China. Formal prohibition against the opium trade in 1800 contributed to a large-scale smuggling of the drug to China by the British and Americans. The destruction of the opium contraband by the Chinese authorities in Canton in 1839 was a direct cause of the First Opium War. After British victory, the Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842, which was the first unequal treaty in a history of China. Five Chinese ports – Shanghai, Canton, Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Ningbo – were established open to the British trade and settlement. Under the complementary treaty in 1843, the British were given a title to extraterritoriality, that is to say, the exemption from Chinese jurisdiction and a right to establish self-managing settlements. In 1844, the USA and France imposed their own unequal treaties on China: Americans obtained the same rights as the British, and the French could pursue the missionary propaganda in China (Brodzianka 85-88).

In 1854, capitalist countries such as Great Britain, France and the USA, wanted to transform China into a colony, claiming their right to a no-limit trade on the whole Chinese territory. In 1856, Great Britain declared the Second Opium War on China, and in 1857, France joined the warfare. Under the First Convention of Peking of 1860, the opium trade was legalised, and the capitalist powers could penetrate inner Chinese provinces and subordinate the government in Beijing (Brodzianka 99-103).

It should be noted that *When We Were Orphans* does not conform to the typical postcolonial narrative. Ishiguro focuses on individual history narrated from the perspective of an Englishman, representing the coloniser's viewpoint. However, by virtue of his age, Christopher Banks is depicted not as a conscious and immediate beneficiary of colonial processes, but rather as a victim. His orphanhood can be interpreted as a symbolic punishment for and a consequence of British presence in Shanghai. It is not without reason that orphanhood afflicts many characters of the novel, because, it can metaphorically be seen as a literary representation or a means of demonstrating the enduring postcolonial pain that is, in a sense, "self-inflicted."

1.1. Childhood Trauma and the Portraits of Orphans in Ishiguro's Novel

The first noticeable theme of the novel is that of orphanhood presented literally. It affects the main character and narrator of the novel, Christopher Banks, but also other characters closest to him. Christopher Banks, as an adult man recounts the story of his recurring childhood affliction connected with the inexplicable disappearance of parents and his unsuccessful exertions to find them. In the opening chapters of the novel, he is a successful detective in London, whose main focus is "the task of rooting out evil in its most devious forms, often just when it is about to go unchecked" (Ishiguro 18). It is his calling and obligation since, as he says: "those of us whose duty is to combat evil, we are like the twine that holds together the slats of a wooden blind. Should we fail to hold strong, then everything will scatter" (80). Christopher's life becomes intensely overshadowed by a sense of a mission "to combat evil," but also by his obsession with gaining people's appreciation through his actions.

It is noteworthy that the pervasive thread of Christopher Banks's utopian mission seems to "obscure" the real image of the British infamous legacy in exploited China whose inhabitants, invisible by the Western world, are confronted by the Japanese invasion. Referring to Homi Bhabha, uncovering the "obscured" signs allows for the emergence of other narrations or the enunciation of the subject's history. Elaborating on the essence of "a 'wordling' of literature," Bhabha states that it perhaps "lies in a critical act that attempts to grasp the sleight of hand with which literature conjures with historical specificity, using the medium of psychic uncertainty, aesthetic distancing, or the obscure signs of the spirit-world, the sublime and the subliminal" (*The Location* 12). By "obscuring" the image of British imperialism, Ishiguro simultaneously captures "the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present" (12) in *When We Were Orphans*. The articulation of "the unspoken," which is to say, "the [obscured] historical narrative" of colonial exploitative policy that visits the present will be particularly explicit while analysing the story of Christopher's mother, Diana Banks. Another example of Bhabha's concept of "obscurity" will be seen in the implicit intertextual relation between *When We Were Orphans* and Dickens's *Great Expectations.* As has been said, explaining the essence of "obscurity," Bhabha refers to the "unhomely," dark and dusty places in Dickens's fiction. It seems that the recesses of these places frequently turn out to be a site of voicing the stories not supposed to see the light of the day. These very places serve as the focal point of Dickens's criticism of the faults of Victorian society, including child labour, child neglect, appalling working conditions and the increasing number of paupers.

Dickens was a great writer of the city. In *Bleak House*, for instance, there are numerous passages in which he depicts the urban darkness of London or "the great wilderness of London" (Ackroyd 680). London of the 1840s was a city swathed in dirt, mist and mud, where "the living breathe on all sides an atmosphere impregnated with the odour of the dead.

The soil was saturated, absolutely saturated, with human putrescence" (Ackroyd 405). The emergence of themes centred around decay and darkness that pervade *Bleak House* suggests the novelist's deliberate intention to depict the gradual dissolution of its setting. Dickens sums up this situation in a very eloquent way − the picture of the city in *Bleak House,* concealed from the public, imbued with corruption and the harm inflicted on its aggrieved citizens becomes "a shameful testimony of future ages, how civilisation and barbarism walked this boastful island together" (139). Perhaps Dickens employs the terms "civilisation and barbarism" in an unintentional yet implicit manner, drawing a parallel with the imagery of colonised territories where the civilisation of the whites juxtaposes the perceived barbarity of the natives.

A discrepancy between British splendour and its hidden atrocities is overtly depicted in *Bleak House.* Tom-all-Alone's is a place imbued with squalor, decay and degradation where, "in truth it might be better for the national glory even that the sun should sometimes set upon the British dominions, than that it should ever rise upon so vile a wonder as Tom" (Dickens, *Bleak House* 576). It must be noted that in his gloomy descriptions of London, Dickens frequently resorts to references to the greatness of the Empire, Britishness and "national glory." This disjuncture suggests Dickens's broader intention to demonstrate that the pervading decay is not limited to the confines of London space, but contagiously spreads to all territories influenced by the Empire's perceived glory. In this respect, *Bleak House* can be read as a cultural testimony of civilisation, because, as Walter Benjamin puts it, "there is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (256). In the same vein, Elaine Freedgood notes that such novels haunt us with "the cultural work … [they] have performed" (38-39). For Dickens, the recesses of London space seem to have been treated as literality whereas, for his contemporary readers, they appear as "non-literality," a metaphor of poverty. In other words, Dickens is conversant with "the darker side of London

life" and visits the locations where "poverty, misery and vice were the only fates visited upon those who lived there," the "sad and dismal metropolitan neighbourhoods" (Ackroyd 1105, 921). However, his London readers remain oblivious to their existence, a point especially evident in Dickens's description of Tom-all-Alone's in *Bleak House*:

> It is a black, dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people; where the crazy houses were seized upon, when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants, who, after establishing their own possession, took to letting them out in lodgings. Now, these tumbling tenants contain, by night, a swarm of misery. As, on the ruined human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coil itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in. (202)

This place is "obscured" because it is not visited by "all decent" Londoners, yet simultaneously becomes a display of the social decay of Victorian England. It is just one of the examples that demonstrates Dickens's inclination to make these "obscured," hidden places in London visible in his writing, a practice tantamount to articulating the unspoken.

A parallel conjuncture can be observed in *When We Were Orphans,* where Ishiguro uncovers the space outside the International Settlement that is unfamiliar and "non-literal" to Banks and the British elites inhabiting the protected zone. This area resembles "the open gutter … [where] the sound of gunfire in the distance [makes people hurry] back to the safety of their houses and shelters" (Ishiguro 136). This "obscured" territory becomes a space of enunciation of the colonial history, which is to say, the consequences of the greedy British politics in China.

The narration of Ishiguro's novel interweaves two time spans: Christopher's present and his past. His adulthood in England and subsequent return to Shanghai in the late 1930s form one thread, while his recollections of childhood, spent with his parents and his next-door

friend of Japanese origin, Akira, in the International Settlement in Shanghai, comprise the other. The narrator's relentless ambition to solve the case of the disappearance of his parents in Shanghai can be read as a reaction to a succession of traumatic childhood incidents. Aris Mousoutzanis also posits the notion that Banks's venture in the International Settlement "seems to be propelled by his attempt to recover from [his childhood] trauma as it is revealed to be one of a return, a return to his [parents'] land" (319). Banks's return and dedication to his mission in his adult life can also be read in terms of "belatedness" of the traumatic event that "is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known," revisiting the protagonist "to haunt [him] later on" (Caruth 4).

The main protagonist's symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, which afflict him in his adult life and determine his life decisions, are the aftermath of his childhood experiences that instilled a fear of abandonment. In *The body remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*, Babette Rothschild accentuates the fact that excessive stimulation (increased activity) is one of the four chief symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). From a psychological perspective, the phenomenon caused by childhood loss can be defined as a fear of abandonment. This implies that events experienced early in life may evoke a fear of being abandoned by those closest in one's adult life. People who once suffered from trauma keep a latent memory of traumatic experience in their bodies and brains so that a traumatic event "continues to intrude with visual, auditory, and/or other somatic reality on the lives of its victims" (Rothschild 6).

Sensitive to the fate of orphaned children, Christopher Banks adopts an orphan, Jennifer, whose parents drowned in Cornwall. In spite of experiencing the trauma of losing her parents at the age of ten, with the help of Christopher, Jennifer is capable of overcoming her fears and bravely faces the future. In her view, "you have to look forward in life" and in this aspect she is depicted as an opposite to Christopher, who remains haunted by the ghosts

of his past and nurtures the illusion of being able to save the world and his mother, which makes him unable to move forward (Ishiguro 78). Nan Ge aptly defines Christopher Banks as "likely to retreat into his childhood memories [persisting] in his mission to find his mother" (13). Unlike Christopher, Jennifer is not portrayed in the novel as a victim; quite the opposite, she appears as a level-headed and composed young person who "did have a remarkably assured manner, and in particular a capacity to make light of setbacks which might have brought other girls her age to tears" (Ishiguro 77). However, it seems that the discrepancy between Jennifer and Christopher is deceptive. On the one hand, the girl seems to be a completely down-to-earth person who skilfully faces the new reality into which she is forcedly introduced. On the other hand, she is completely preoccupied with Banks's blind and utopian mission to eradicate evil in the world. In a sense, his mission also becomes her harboured yearning, especially when, despite her young age, she offers Christopher help in untangling the enigma from the past, as if further validating the sense of his undertaking:

> Uncle Christopher, I realise I'm not very good at anything. But that's because I'm rather young still. Once I'm older, and it might not be so long now, I'll be able to help you. I'll be able to help you, I promise you I will. So while you're away, would you please remember? Remember that I'm here, in England, and that I'll help you when you come back? (Ishiguro 129)

Christopher tries to develop a wholesome relationship with Jennifer, but he seems to fail. From a psychological perspective, it can be read as another fundamental consequence of having been affected by the trauma of childhood abandonment and a subsequent fear of being abandoned. At the end of the novel, another similarity between Jennifer and Christopher comes to surface, namely, her inability to find peace and fulfilment in life. Jennifer does not start a family, putting Christopher's mission above her own happiness. Her strong need to contribute to repairing the world seems to stem from a sense of abandonment and

orphanhood. This constant pursuit of an unattainable goal is a bond that links Jennifer and Christopher or, perhaps, all orphans. Christopher concludes:

> But for those like us, our fate is to face the world as orphans, chasing through long years the shadows of vanished parents. There is nothing for it, but to try and see through our missions to the end, as best we can, for until we do so, we will be permitted no calm. (Ishiguro 193)

He is consumed with a sense of guilt towards Jennifer due to his unceasing mission of finding his parents and ultimately eradicating evil in the world. As a consequence, he experiences a kind of a "displacement" of his fear of abandonment to Jennifer. The thought of neglecting and deserting her causes him much affliction and despondency. Banks endeavours to give Jennifer sufficient emotional and physical care, of which he was bereft in his childhood after his parents' disappearance. Aware of her childhood suffering and vividly remembering his own past, Christopher aims at protecting his adoptive daughter from experiencing another loss of the closest family member. However, in his futile mission, he involuntarily becomes negligent towards Jennifer. This echoes the sense of abandonment that he once experienced. As a result, Christopher becomes alienated from Jennifer, rejects her support and is unable to create a healthy father-daughter relationship. On the one hand, in his yearning to protect her, Christopher's fear of abandonment seems to be projected onto Jennifer, on the other hand, his recurring trauma and a self-inflicted ordeal of finding his parents make him completely indifferent to her feelings. Finally, Banks confesses to his foster daughter: "When you were growing up. I should have been there with you more. But I was too busy, trying to solve the world's problems. I should have done a lot more for you than I did. I'm sorry. There. Always meant to say it" (Ishiguro 190).

Throughout the novel Christopher cannot extricate himself from the past and childhood trauma. Not only is it visible in his lifelong pursuit of his utopian mission, but also in his

encounter with other orphans, especially with Sarah Hemmings, who emerges as an embodiment of Christopher's unresolved past. She appears as a shadow, a mirror, a picture of his childhood memories, making them more vivid, especially when she recalls her own trauma after her parents' death. Orphaned at the age of ten, Sarah Hemmings confides in Christopher the memories of her happiest times when she used to go with her mother on bus rides around London. Interpreting Sarah's words that her "[m]other must already have been in a lot of pain. She wasn't strong enough to do other things with me" (Ishiguro 40), the reader may assume that Sarah's mother suffered from a terminal disease. It is clear that Sarah, similarly to Christopher, experienced traumatic events as a child that must have left a mark on her adult life. She seems to seek patriarchal and financial protection, as evidenced by her marriage to an elderly political leader, Sir Cecil Medhurst.

In her study entitled *The Hero Within,* Carol S. Pearson defines six heroic archetypes that "inhabit" a human's mind, *Innocent, Orphan, Wanderer*, *Warrior, Martyr* and *Magician* (xxvii). The term archetype was first coined by a Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung. Pearson, however, points out that the archetypes she identifies "are not typical ones usually included by Jungians as critical to the individuation process" and stresses that her main objective "is to explore the archetypes active in our *conscious* lives" (xxvii). Pearson explains that archetypes "are numerous" (xxv), and "most do not have the influence on our development that these six do" (xxvi). The archetypes useful in the understanding the life choices of Christopher Banks and other orphaned characters in Ishiguro's novel are the *Innocent* and the *Orphan*. Of particular significance is the transition from one archetype to the other, wherein individuals move from a state of blissful childhood to the harsh realities of adulthood to discover that the world is fraught with cruelty and insecurity. Nan Ge aptly posits that Christopher Banks and other characters in the novel who, after the "bubble" of security bursts, "find themselves abandoned to a state of 'orphanage' in which they lack essential protection" (4), also having

to confront the reality that shatters their hopes and forces them to "secure a better existence" (Wong 89). It must be noted that the *Orphan* state does not only pertain to orphans, but applies to all adults as well. In Ishiguro's novel this transition is enhanced by the fact that all three characters, Christopher Banks, Jennifer and Sarah Hemmings, enter the *Orphan* state both emotionally and literally. Ishiguro's understanding of orphanhood and his conscious application of this state to the characters in *When We Were Orphans* seem to legitimise Pearson's theory for the analysis of the novel. In *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro* by Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong, the author explains that:

> for me, 'orphans' is just a metaphor for that condition of coming out of that bubble in an unprotected way … . You leave that protected world and then you suddenly find yourself alone in this harsher world. So in my new novel, I've taken characters who are literally orphans to exaggerate that point. (168)

Following the theory of six heroic archetypes developed and formulated by Carol S. Pearson, the orphans presented in the novel are abruptly deprived of Eden phase of blissful childhood and prematurely encounter the transition from *Innocent* to *Orphan* state. In this case, Eden should be read as "a state of great delight, happiness, or contentment; bliss" ("Eden"). All these children who experience Eden in their early childhood are afflicted by the childhood trauma caused by the loss of parents. They prematurely enter a cruel world, and as a consequence all become disappointed idealists sticking to their illusions of attaining ideal reality. It is especially evident in Banks's mission to find his parents, as if he was unable to extricate himself from the nostalgic childhood memory of his life before being orphaned. However, Banks's feeling of nostalgia for his childhood days does not have to be perceived in negative terms. Ishiguro says: "We're remembering, yes, more naive, more innocent days; but perhaps at the same time nostalgia is a way of imaging the possibility of a world that is actually purer, one less flawed than the one we know we must inhabit" (Shaffer, Wong 166-167).

A fundamental characteristic of the *Orphan* archetype is a profound dread of hopelessness and abandonment, leading to a perpetual search for security and a need to return to a primal state of childhood innocence, which is experienced by those who make a transition to this state. If Banks had not had such a strong bond with his parents, probably, he would not have become a detective who devoted his whole life to the attempts to find them and regain what was once his Eden. Carol S. Pearson concludes:

> *The Orphans*' story is about a felt powerlessness, about a yearning for a return to a primal kind of innocence, an innocence that is fully childlike, where their every need is cared for by an all-loving mother or father figure. This yearning is juxtaposed against a sense of abandonment, a sense that somehow we are supposed to live in a garden, safe and cared for, and instead are dumped out, orphans, into the wilderness, prey to villains and monsters. (28)

In addition, the *Orphan* archetype is associated with loss of hope and support, which is also evidenced in the novel. Banks fails in his mission, he has to face the brutal reality that dissipates his illusion to repair the world, and, as a result, the myth he has cultivated himself falls.

Also Sarah's experience of abandonment renders her a classic example of the *Orphan* archetype whose existence becomes a continual quest for security and recovery of the idyllic times spent with her mother. One crucial affinity between Sarah Hemmings and Christopher Banks is their utopian desire to fight against evil, which can be read as the consequence of traumatic events in their childhood. Yet, Sarah's engagement in the mission to change the world into a place of the-once-lost Eden of blissful childhood is different from Christopher's – she longs to find a notable man who will be able to fulfil her ardent ambitions, and, at the same time, become her protector. For Sarah love is merely peripheral.

> When I marry, it will be to someone who'll really contribute. I mean to humanity, to a better world. Is that such an awful ambition? I don't come to places like this in search of

> famous men, Christopher. I come in search of distinguished ones. … I won't accept it's my fate to waste my life on some pleasant, polite, morally worthless man. (Ishiguro 30)

Sarah attempts to fulfil her utopian ambition marrying Sir Cecil Medhurst, the founder of The League of Nations after World War I, whose exertions and futile efforts to re-establish order in Shanghai turn out to be another unattainable ambition. Ishiguro explicitly stresses Sir Cecil's decline by turning him into an alcohol addict and a gambler, who confesses to Christopher that the burden of the mission in Shanghai was "too deep by far" for him (101). It can be said that Sir Cecil epitomises the colonial dogma of the British Empire. As a renowned emissary of the Empire, he is bound to be driven by the imperial ambition to bring order, progress and civilisation to places that seem in contrast to the British world view. I suggest that the depiction of Sir Cecil's fall can be seen through a postcolonial lens, because it emerges as a metaphorical reflection of the failure of the civilising/enlightening mission undertaken by the Empire. It must be added that Sir Cecil also becomes a victim of the colonial mechanism. His abandonment by Sarah and his loneliness in his addictions overtly evoke the feeling of orphanhood. As has been said, this can be read both as a punishment for his presence in Shanghai and as a manifestation of the "self-inflicted" long-lasting postcolonial pain.

1.2. Diana Banks as a Paragon of Colonial Indoctrination

Christopher's mother, Diana Banks, whose mysterious disappearance turns her son, Christopher, into an orphan, embodies conflicting roles within the colonial context. On the

one hand, she benefits colonial ideology, while on the other, she is an ardent advocate of the anti-opium campaign, fully committed to her principles. Diana's life is overshadowed by a sense of a mission to fight against a trade of opium widespread in Shanghai, which "had brought untold misery and degradation to a whole nation" (Ishiguro 36), by being part of the community organising campaigns against the illegal distribution of the drug in China.

Banks's childhood memories seem to be devoid of clarity. It is particularly noticeable when he mentions a conversation between his mother and a health inspector: "while I am fairly sure I have remembered its essence accurately enough, turning it over in my mind again, I find myself less certain about some of the details" (Ishiguro 41). Banks's blurry memory of the essence of the conversation, which is definitely the repulsive opium trade, emerges as a telling, though obscured, metaphor of British expansion. As Carey Mickalites notices, Bank's unsound memory of the colonial opium trade "underscores his partial and hazy comprehension of imperial exploitation" (116). Brought up in the secure International Settlement perceived as "a site of English authority and colonial stability" (Mickalites 116), the protagonist develops a distorted image of imperial Englishness and, in addition, "a microcosm of global trade, uneven development, and exploitation … in Bank's memory they remain bracketed off from both an ideal of Englishness and the forces of historical change, evident in his nostalgic attachment to the International Settlement" (116). It can be said that he balances between reality and fabulism, "inadvertently [manipulating] and [distorting] the facts" (Drąg 333). Banks's nostalgia for and his blindness to the effects of imperialism seem to reflect a feeling of "postcolonial melancholia" or "imperial nostalgia," as termed by Paul Gilroy. According to Gilroy, it is not an uncommon phenomenon that "the trancelike moods of contemporary consumer culture" are disturbed by memories of brutal colonialism, but when the memories are revealed, "they have usually been whitewashed in order to promote imperial nostalgia or sanctified so that they endorse the novel forms of

colonial rule" (3). From Gilroy's standpoint, postcolonial literature forces the reader "to step back audaciously into the past" and to see "untapped heteorological and imperial histories" (141). It can be argued that *When We Were Orphans* operates in a similar manner.

This distorted image of the colonial British Empire bears a close affinity to Victorian society's blind faith in its nation's flawless morality. British colonial expansion was regarded as a noble mission and a godly obligation, undertaken to eradicate the primitivity of the so called "inferior races" and enlighten them with the "glow" of Western civilisation, as proposed in Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden." The elites inhabiting the protected zone of the International Settlement out of the reach of war become a mirror reflection of the citizens of London, the imperial core. Their indifference to the Japanese aggression of "orphaned" China is evident during the extravagant gathering of Shanghai's elite in the Penthouse of the Palace Hotel. The sound of the far-off gunfire and the battle that overshadows the party becomes nothing more but a spectacular phenomenon or, as one of the guests tells Christopher: "the shells actually arc over us and land over across the creek. After dark, it's quite a sight. Rather like watching shooting stars" (Ishiguro 194). The exotic Orient becomes a backdrop to the activities of the Westerners, here, brutal war is reduced to a series of pleasant-looking explosions which attractively light up the sky somewhere in the background. The West is privileged to rule, judge and survey the non-white world, which becomes a stage on which a spectacle of Western hegemony is performed: "The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behaviour" (Said, *Orientalism* 109). Representatives of the West, in this case the elites of the International Settlement become the invisible judges of the imperial expansion of "the perfidious Chinese", who, after all, are "not quite as human as we [the West] are" (*Orientalism* 108). Commenting on Said's critical concept of Orientalism, Irina Toma argues that *When We Were Orphans* "oscillates between England, the old center of the empire, and

Shanghai, where the Occident meets the Orient, itself the product of a hegemonic Western discourse," adding that "China is an infant in need of Western protection" (64). What is more, the blindness to Japanese aggression in Ishiguro's novel seems to reflect a broader myopic attitude towards the realities of colonialism prevalent among the Victorians. Sven Lindqvist comments on this as follows: "the men representing civilization out in the colonies were 'invisible' not only in the sense that their guns killed at a distance, but also in that no one at home really knew what they were doing" (85). A parallel situation occurs in Ishiguro's novel where, as Carey Mickalites notices, China is plunged into "the chaos of a war that, like the commercially exploitative opium trade, takes place outside the reach of the international law" (118). In other words, the activities of the imperial powers become invisible for the world. The International Settlement is literally secluded from the brutal reality of the local people dying by the hundreds just outside its borders. The indifference to and marginalisation of the subaltern in *When We Were Orphans* has also been noticed by Karen Oshima, who argues that "as children of powerful, imperialistic nations, [Christopher and Akira] are thought by their parents to consider themselves English and Japanese respectively and they are kept at a distance from the Chinese population" (57-58). Similarly, citizens of London appeared profoundly detached from the genocides happening in the British colonies and occupied territories. I suggest that the phrase "invisible whites" can also be applied to Diana's husband and to others like him. He works for the British company involved in imports of opium to China, and Diana probably learns about his secret occupation in the International Settlement.

In *When We Were Orphans* Ishiguro explicitly provides the reader with the appalling image of "the plight of refugees, the orphans of colonial capitalism and imperial war," the nameless orphans of "an economically weakened China," the consequence of the opium trade, becoming increasingly susceptible to Japanese imperial aggression (Mickalites 118). They are

seen when Banks and his school friend Morgan drive through the French Concession of Shanghai:

> Once we went down a side-street on both sides of which the pavements were filled with huddled figures. I could see them in the lamplight, sitting, squatting, some curled up asleep on the ground, squeezed one upon the other … . They were of every age - I could see babies asleep in mothers 'arms - and their belongings were all around them; ragged bundles, bird-cages, the occasional wheelbarrow piled high with possessions. […] The faces were mostly Chinese … . (Ishiguro 108)

Ishiguro's depiction of the opium trade and the backdrop of the Sino-Japanese war in the novel is the author's measure to articulate one telling, though "obscured" issue: Japanese invasion of China as the implicit consequence of colonial expansion which "stems from colonial exploitation and uneven economic development" (Mickalites 112). According to Brian Finney, the novel depicts "a vivid confrontation with the death and destruction produced by the commercialism and imperialism of the industrial nations prior to the War, death that inevitably adds heavily to the number of children left orphaned" (26).

The motif of weakening the underprivileged nations by the use of mind-numbing substances is described by Sven Lindqvist in *The Dead Do Not Die: Exterminate All the Brutes and Terra Nullius*, which deals with colonial exploitation and genocide of the natives by the colonial powers in the nineteenth century. Lindqvist demonstrates that addiction, such as alcoholism, not violence, was an ultimate way to get rid of the indigenous inhabitants and create a no one's land, that is land which can be easily conquered by the Europeans: "The whites don't shoot us any longer, they poison us with liquor. They've always wanted to be rid of us. Alcohol is just the latest ploy for achieving a *terra nullius*" (236). Lindqvist provides an example of Tennant Creek, a sacred place formerly called Junkurrarkur. In 1872, a telegraph station was built by European settlers, and white sheep farmers expropriated the area. The

remaining small land was demarcated as a reservation for the Aborigines in 1892. When gold was discovered in 1932 in the area, "a locust swarm of white prospectors had drained the waterhole dry, destroyed the hunting and gazing grounds, and made the 'reservation' a joke" (Lindqvist 235). The Aborigines were displaced twice, to Manga Manda and twenty years later to Ali Curung, because "the reason for these repeated moves was the need to evict the Aborigines from land that had become valuable" (236). After a decline of gold mining, the population in Tennant Creek fell from 9,000 to 3,500. To save their businesses, pub owners started to offer the first drink for free, and sell alcohol on credit, plunging the whole territory into the plague of alcoholism. The Aboriginal Julalikari Council launched an anti-alcohol campaign in the 1990s, arguing that the unregulated provisions regarding alcohol sale in Tennant Creek is "a state sanctioned act of genocide against Aboriginal people" (Lindqvist 236). The practice of systemic alcoholisation and subordination of the indigenous populations by the European settlers in Australia mirrors the exploitative nature of the opium trade in China depicted in Ishiguro's novel.

Diana Banks's anti-opium campaign reflects a Victorian notion of repairing and enlightening the world. She epitomises Victorian values such as idealism, Puritanism, Christianity and charity towards the impoverished. As a representative of the Victorian moral code, Diana cannot accept any form of crime; she firmly believes in honesty and upholds a strong sense of moral duty. Yet, her endeavours are repressed by a warlord Wang Ku, who, once offended by Diana, kidnaps her with a view to taming her, compelling her to submissiveness and concubinage. Wang Ku treats Diana and forces her to submission "as he would a wild mare" (Ishiguro 179); he "regularly whipped [her] in front of his dinner guests. Taming the white woman, he called it" (181).

I suggest the way Diana Banks is delineated in Ishiguro's novel has some parallels with the depiction of Estella's mother, Molly, in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. These

parallels are not strikingly obvious, quite the contrary, but discerning them reveals Dickens's subtle reference to the mechanism of British colonialism. In *Great Expectations* Dickens also explored the motif of taming a woman by means of a similarly discriminatory practice. Mr Jaggers's servant Molly, who, it is revealed is Estella's mother, is described by Mr Wemmick as "a wild beast tamed" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 186). After being acquitted by Mr Jaggers's of the charge of murdering another woman, Molly becomes the lawyer's debased servant or a slave with a "face to bear a curious expression of suddenness and flutter" (195). Mr Wemmick's comment that the taming process "depends on the original wildness of the beast" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 186) encourages us to extend the metaphor to the colonial reality of taming the "inferior" indigenes. In the eyes of the colonisers, the wildness of the indigenous inhabitants of the colonised territories could be compared to that of untamed animals; therefore, exertion had to be harsh. I suggest Dickens's intention to underscore the mechanism of the violent process of intimidation of the weaker – in this case powerful men use their position to subject a socially disadvantaged woman in London, right in the heart of the Empire – is reflected in Ishiguro's depiction of the mechanisms of colonisation and then subversively mirrored in his portrayal of the treatment Diana Banks received from Wang Ku. In all cases the main tool of subordination was violence and dehumanisation carried out by people who "are seized with a kind of madness when they take to violence" (Lindqvist 30). Lindqvist quotes a Swedish missionary, Edward Wilhelm Sjöblom, who describes corporal punishments administered by Europeans to the indigenous people in Congo. According to Sjöblom, during colonisation, the white settlers assented to one matter: "only the whip can civilize the black" (qtd. in Lindqvist 30).

Many authors in the past explored the topic of the moral duty of colonial expansion. In 1872, Anthony Trollope wrote about the mission of implementing civilisation to other peoples, or the so called "inferior races" – "We are called upon to rule, not for our glory but

for their happiness" (qtd. in Cody). The sense of white race superiority is also manifested in Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden," where the author regarded the colonial mission as "an ethical imperative" (qtd. in Lindqvist 77). In his work and life, Kipling extolled Britain, which he viewed as "an island of security in a chaotic world," able to "maintain stability, order, and peace amongst the heathen, to relieve famine, provide medical assistance, to abolish slavery, to construct the physical and the psychological groundwork for civilization" (Cody). Agitators of colonialism, especially those descending from intellectual circles, disseminated Kipling's manifesto, believing that the Europeans' duty is to "take up the *White Man's Burden*" (Pajewski 37), that is to govern for the good of the world.

The truth behind colonialism was vividly depicted by Joseph Conrad in his anti-imperial novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899). The author illustrates how upon arriving in the colonies, a white man regressed into barbarism, rejecting all moral values. To become the natives' master, the coloniser had to remove the constraints of civilisation. Conrad illustrates the mechanisms of dehumanising and enslaving within imperial systems in the name of laudable yet corrupt and deceptive ideas that eclipse the use of brutal reality. In the novella, Marlow references earlier conquests and recounts the Roman conquest of new territories and people in Britannia. Similarly to colonisers invading new lands, the Romans had to face darkness first. Describing the true mechanism of colonialism, Marlow says:

> They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force–nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind–as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. (Conrad, *Heart of Darkness 7*)

In *When We Were Orphans*, Diana Banks seems to follow and literally embrace Kipling's manifesto and attempts to assume and bear this burden on her own. That is, she naively and idealistically "considers the building of the British Empire as an essentially civilizing activity" (Webley 189). Although she is ashamed of her husband's complicity with the company connected with the opium trade, and although she is genuinely driven by Christian values, she has to face the unpleasant truth that her family's financial status is owed "to such ungodly wealth" (Ishiguro 37), or, as Wai-chew Sim puts it, "the tainted wealth" (321). Diana is contra-volitionally drawn to the sinful practices of the company, part of the infamous British economic expansion. Alyn Webley aptly accentuates the fact that Diana becomes "part of the machinery of empire … a machinery dedicated to the continuance of European rule, the exploitation of natural resources, and the spread of European cultures as an accompaniment to the continued subordination of native peoples" (189). However, apart from the ideals of "happiness" of the natives Anthony Trollope spoke about, in reality there was much more behind colonial expansion – its purpose was the exercise of power and accumulation of capital. European countries needed colonies as areas of mineral resources, commercial outlets and military bases (Pajewski 34). The Industrial Revolution that began an era of economic growth of capitalist economies caused a number of modifications in the realm of manufacturing, agriculture, production and transportation, all of which had a great impact on the cultural and socio-economic situation in Great Britain. Rapid economic expansion, political stability, and accumulation of wealth led the Victorians to believe that it was their duty to serve the growing Empire and contribute to its considerable prosperity.

The economic and technological changes which took place in the Victorian era entailed the development of utilitarianism by Jeremy Bentham, which focused on profit and the pursuit of a more affluent society. In addition, the Victorians' strong desire to create a richer and more comfortable society undoubtedly followed from the spiritual power elicited by

Evangelical precepts. Victorians believed that property was holy, possession of material wealth was one of the chief values in human life and the Bible was an ultimate guide to conduct. Industry and the ethic of work were considered as the absolute way of fulfilling one's secular destiny. Both utilitarianism and Evangelicalism became the entrenched forces in the Victorian line of thought – the weekday worker, focused on multiplying the capital and making profit, was the Sunday Evangelical. According to Lindqvist the British believed that their achievements were "due to the grace and favour of Almighty God" (22). Robert Young states that on account of imperial expansion in the nineteenth century "nine-tenths of the entire land surface of the globe was controlled by European, or European-derived, powers" (2), whereas Edward Said adds that "by the end of World War I Europe had colonized 85 percent of the earth" (*Orientalism* 123). In his report, Sven Lindqvist describes a commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne when "the greatest empire in the history of the world celebrated itself with unequalled arrogance" (22):

> The British nation seemed deliberately to determine to regard its vast power, its colonising success, its vital unity, its world-wide territory, and to glory in them. We were never so strong, the shouts meant. Let all the world realise that we mean to be not less so in the future. (23)

Seen from this perspective, Diana Banks's story subverts colonial practices by showing a white woman as a victim of the very systems enforced by Europeans. Wang Ku's "taming process" is a reversal of the dehumanising colonial practices that deprived the natives of their identity, dignity and hope, leaving nothing but despair. In *When We Were Orphans*, Ishiguro illustrates another reason for trauma, the fall of Victorian values, and the failure of the woman with unusual aspirations and expectations, who ends up in a mental hospital. Diana's example illustrates the dual nature of colonialism. In other words, her tragedy mirrors the experiences

of the local Chinese families: fractured family ties, sense of orphanhood, mental breakdown, and the dehumanization of individuals.

However, despite such degrading and traumatic experiences, Diana has never erased Christopher from her memory, becoming a paradigm of a genuine mother-son relationship.

> What I mean is, I realized she'd never ceased to love me, not through any of it. All she'd ever wanted was for me to have a good life. And all the rest of it, all my trying to find her, trying to save the world from ruin, that wouldn't have made any difference either way. Her feelings for me, they were always just there, they didn't depend on anything. I suppose that might not seem so very surprising. But it took me all that time to realize it. (Ishiguro 188)

On the one hand, Ishiguro portrays Diana Banks as a model of Victorian moral values, serving as quintessential Victorian mother figure, a model Victorian who believes that by trying to hamper the opium trade, she can contribute to the "happiness" of the locals. On the other hand, however, she becomes a fallen woman, doomed to face a despicable fate of becoming a victim of repetitive sexual and physical abuse. She is the one who gets punished because "her sense of religious mission supplements the establishment and preservation of colonial power" (Webley 189). In this manoeuvre Ishiguro openly condemns the colonial Eurocentric ideology aimed at civilising and Christianising the non-European world, and, by subverting it, ridicules and annuls Kipling's manifesto of "The White Man's Burden" and Victorian "morality." Similarly to Joseph Conrad who shows true colours of colonial expansion, proving that corruption and horror of the natives are inevitable results of seizing power over other human beings, Ishiguro expresses his unflattering view of the consequences of European hegemony.

The intertwining stories of Christopher Banks, his mother Diana, Sarah Hemmings and her husband Sir Cecil Medhurst have one thing in common – all the characters suffer utter

defeat in their pursuits to fight evil. Through these characters' actions, Ishiguro, an outsider in the English world, attacks the colonial values established in the Victorian era which permeated the society well into the twentieth century and the so-called "eminent statesmen" described in the novel as "greedy and self-seeking, lacking any idealism or sense of public duty" (Ishiguro 8). I suggest that the author expresses his strong disapproval of the actions of the opium-based European trading companies regarded as "un-Christian and un-British" or the narcissistic European ideals focused on redeeming the world in colonial times. The failure of the missions presented in the novel, especially Banks's and his mother's, seems an intentional measure Ishiguro employed as a metaphor of ridiculing the notion of Kipling's manifesto so deeply ingrained in the colonisers' minds.

1.3. Dickens's Abandonment Trauma Reflected in his Fiction

Traumatic childhood experiences are elements that connect Kazuo Ishiguro's novel with Charles Dickens's life and oeuvre. There are also discernible, though "obscured" parallels between the life of Dickens which emerge from Peter Ackroyd's biography, *Dickens* (1991), and Ishiguro's fictitious protagonist, Christopher Banks. *When We Were Orphans* is imbued with the theme of orphaning, thus referring implicitly to the Dickensian portrait of an abandoned child as well as to Dickens's early life experiences. Just as Christopher, Dickens was affected by his past, unable to eradicate the haunting memories of abandonment from childhood, which became an intrinsic part of his life. It is a well-known fact that, as a consequence of his father's debts and incarceration in the Marshalsea Prison, the

twelve-year-old Charles Dickens had to make a living at a rat-infested Warren's Blacking Factory (Ackroyd 81). Becoming a common "labouring hind" (85), and a part of a working-class community in the blacking factory, young Dickens must have been imbued with the feeling of abandonment and the experience of emotional orphanhood. His blacking factory "career" happened at a time when Dickens had only started his early education, which had to be abruptly interrupted. His feeling of degradation was amplified by the fact that his sister Fanny was enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music. This experience was yet another trauma, another insuperable feeling of abandonment and betrayal he experienced in his early years. Dickens's prospects of success seemed morbid in comparison to Fanny's, especially when she was awarded a silver medal in recognition of her achievements at the Academy. Young Dickens described his calamity, as follows: "The tears ran down my face. I felt as if my heart were rent. I prayed, when I went to bed that night, to be lifted out of the humiliation and neglect in which I was. I never had suffered so much before. There was no envy in this" (Ackroyd 93). After being released from prison and notwithstanding the pecuniary problems, Dickens's father, John Dickens, wanted his son to return to school and regain his lost ambitions and expectations. However, his mother insisted on keeping her son in the blacking factory. This fact sank deep into Dickens's memory, impinging upon his later life, especially on the relationships with women and his children. "I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back" (Ackroyd 102).

Dominick LaCapra defines that the traumatic experience "relates to the past that has not passed away–a past that intrusively invades the present," adding that the "so-called traumatic memory carries the experience into the present and future in that the events are compulsively relived or reexperienced as if there were no distance or difference between past and present" (55-56). In addition to this, when traumatic event or events occur at the given moment, they "are not fully grasped …, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other

repetitive phenomena" (Caruth 91). This definitely befell Dickens, and the recurring experience and memory of the blacking factory were reflected both in his fiction – where he exhibited empathy towards forsaken and aggrieved children, denouncing social injustice – and in reality, where his yearning for love, emotional security, and financial stability was never fully satisfied. In *David Copperfield* and *Great* Expectations, the novels containing the most autobiographical elements, haunted by his own traumatic childhood memories, Dickens seems to return to a state of emotional orphanhood he experienced in the factory, attempting to "rewrite the world … to make it a more vivid and yet more secure place … so that the child himself can be remade and thus redeemed" (Ackroyd 87). The past that invaded his life, the traumatic experience and memory of an abused, spurned, usually orphaned child found its way in his novels, such as *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield, Bleak House, Little Dorrit*, or *Great Expectations*. Dickens was considered a moralist uncovering the evils of the Victorian era or, as Walter Bagehot called him, a "sentimental radical" (Ackroyd 145), whose fiction expresses his disapproval of social constraints, vices and individual suffering of his times. In his fictionalised biography of Dickens, Ackroyd presents the writer's strong exigency of a mission for humanity to reveal misdeeds of the Victorian society, to repair the world since the actual existence is the "battle of life" (338). The fact that Dickens remained strongly empathetic to the fate of abandoned children not only resulted in emergence of one of the most dominant themes on the pages of his fiction with the signature image of the Victorian "insecure, maltreated, starved, frail, sickly, oppressed, guilty, small" child (Ackroyd 106), but also affected his entire life. The writer showed his genuine compassion for the poor and orphaned while visiting the "ragged" schools in England "set up by Evangelicals primarily to reclaim the souls of the errant young," which he called "profound ignorance and perfect barbarism" (427). Feeling appalled by their sight, Dickens felt the need of a mission to reveal evils and deficiencies of Victorian

social and legal systems and to attack in order to change them. Dickens's fiction exemplifies his retributive tone when he censures child labour, child neglect and parlous living conditions, especially those of orphans. In his life there were numerous examples of philanthropy and charity, such as grants to hospitals, donations to benevolent funds, setting up Urania Cottage or supporting the distressed (Ackroyd 562). These acts of generosity reveal the fact that Dickens's own traumatic experience as an abused child made him give the aggrieved some makeshift of security and normal life, acts which were meant to remedy the social wrongdoings as he did in his novels.

Similarly to Christopher Banks and Sarah Hemmings, the orphaned characters from Ishiguro's novel, haunted by their childhood traumas of orphanhood and incapable of forming a wholesome relationship with others, Dickens struggled to establish and maintain steady relationships with other people. It might have been caused by his constant fear of experiencing rejection, an echo of the feeling of abandonment he experienced as a child forced by his parents to work in the blacking factory. It is apparent in Dickens's first infatuation with Maria Beadnell, when he was "intensely in love but still holding himself back, frightened of some shock running through his blood and terrified of a rebuff. Tense. Anxious" (Ackroyd 139). Such an attitude gives evidence to the writer's restraint and diffidence in expressing his true emotions in real life, but it can also be read as his fear of experiencing the pain of being rejected, a fear of a rerun of his childhood abandonment. Dickens's rebuff by Maria Beadnell dealt a devastating blow to the aspiring writer's future.

Dickens's yearning for the carefree years of early childhood before experiencing the feeling of abandonment comparable to orphanhood was reflected in his attitude to his children when, after marrying Catherine, he became a caring and affectionate father. The writer's fatherly approach to his children before their adolescence, when he "could retrieve his own early happy childhood" (Ackroyd 477), as well as in his novels and public readings, which

marked him out as an embodiment of familial unison and domestic hearth can be read as expression of his need to return to the state of *Innocence*. However, when his children became older, he developed an increasing reserve and emotional coldness towards them, making him more sensitive to his fictional characters. His son Henry sensed this detachment and described later Dickens's "heavy moods of deep depression, of intense nervous irritability, when he was silent and oppressed" (Ackroyd 478). The writer's childhood trauma was still so powerful and unceasing that, as his biographer suggests, it impaired his relationships with his own children. As for Dickens's marriage, it may be concluded that for 22 years his wife felt completely overpowered by her eminent husband. After their legal separation, Dickens, who ceaselessly relied on his audience for approval and pleaded not guilty for the breakdown of his marriage, published the "violated letter" in which he charged his wife with all anguish and referred to her mental disorder (859-860). It seems there were still latent feelings of abandonment and hurt which perpetually thwarted Dickens's spontaneous feelings towards women, especially his wife, Catherine, given that, as Ackroyd concludes, "Dickens's memory of his closest female relatives was one of neglect and betrayal" (808).

Dickens's later general health decline, his nervous exhaustion, spasms, seizures, stomach and facial pains, vascular disorder, rheumatism, and finally a stroke, resulted from years of his hyperactivity, which is one of the four symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. It can be evidenced in Ackroyd's emphasis that Dickens "was trying at all costs to keep *busy*, to fill his days, to cultivate forgetfulness" (920), which is to say, to forget his lost childhood. However, his body remembered because he seemed to be permeated with "in equal measure the susceptibility of the anxious child. The dread. The fear of being abandoned. The fear of being unloved" (Ackroyd 875). This is particularly evident in 1859, the year when Ackroyd describes Dickens as a man "hunted by the ghosts of his childhood innocence" (921). In other words, his attempts to forget were futile, as his childhood suffering continued to resurface.

1.4. Orphaned Beneficiaries of Colonial History

Ishiguro's reference to the theme of a mysterious benefactor demonstrates a significant, though not explicit, intertextual relationship with Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Abel Magwitch, condemned by Victorian society and deported to a penal colony in Australia, is presented as one metaphorically orphaned and forgotten by his mother-country. Bracketed off from the imperial core and used in the exploitative labour camps in the colonies, Magwitch almost evokes the image of the faceless, Chinese people in Ishiguro's novel, similarly abused and exploited by the British Empire. These forsaken, nameless "huddled figures" in the streets of Shanghai, the victims of British and then Japanese colonial imperialism, bear close affinity to the image of sick Magwitch, imprisoned after returning to England, a social outcast, abandoned and sentenced to death by the Empire he helps to build.

The pervasive atmosphere of ominous darkness in Dickens's depiction of Magwitch's arrival in London can be interpreted as a metaphor for the colonial darkness the convict brings with him to the city. In the novel, the text reads as follows: "Day after day, a vast heavy veil had been driving over London from the East, and it drove still, as if in the East there were an eternity of cloud and wind" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 287). The darkness from the East seems to symbolise the land of the penal colony from which Magwitch comes, leaving us unaware of the true cost at which he acquired the money dedicated to Pip's life and education. In the scene of Magwitch's arrival in London, the capital city of the "Empire over which the sun never sets," depicted as swathed in darkness, can be seen as a parallel to the imperial relations in the colonies.

"The thick black darkness" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 298) that accompanies Pip when he discovers who his benefactor is, finds its reflection in Ishiguro's novel when

Christopher's uncle, Philip, exposes the truth about the source of money he owes his social status to. Christopher describes the moment in the following words: "As I leant towards him into the glare of the lamp, an odd feeling came over me that behind my back the darkness had grown, so that now a vast black space had opened up there" (Ishiguro 179). Christopher finds out that Wang Ku, who has kidnapped and abused his mother, is actually his benefactor: "Your schooling. Your place in London society. The fact that you made of yourself what you have. You owe it to Wang Ku" (181). In Dickens's *Great Expectations*, Pip's education and gentility is similarly fully credited to a criminal, Abel Magwitch. Pip's expectations for a better future are suddenly dashed, mirroring Christopher's ambition to find his parents and eradicate evil from the world, which is similarly thwarted. Both characters collide with the brutal reality or, they literally encroach on the state of the *Orphan*.

Describing the feelings that accompany Pip after his expectations shatter, Dickens uses compelling metaphors that need further consideration. Dickens writes as follows:

> That I had a fever and was avoided, that I suffered greatly, that I often lost my reason, that the time seemed interminable, that I confounded impossible existences with my own identity; that I was a brick in the house wall, and yet entreating to be released from the giddy place where the builders had set me; that I was a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf, and yet that I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off. (*Great Expectations* 422)

Apart from associations with orphaning and alienation, Pip's confession is permeated with allusions to British colonial power dynamics. The "vast engine" can stand for the Empire in its unstoppable imperial pursuit whereas its inhabitants, both domestic and colonial, can be read in the excerpt as nonsignificant clogs in its huge mechanism. Similarly to Pip, Christopher, forlorn of his delusions, realises that he is unable to control life since he is a mere pawn trapped in the machinery of political games with an international dimension.

Elaborating on the relationships Christopher-Wang Ku and Pip-Magwitch, one can conclude that they are depicted differently by Ishiguro and by Dickens. The main difference lies in the fact that Banks's secret benefactor is portrayed as a villain, an embodiment of lascivious desires, whereas Abel Magwitch, initially presented as a hardened criminal, paradoxically emerges as a model of honour and benevolence. Pip and Magwitch's first encounter is filled with a feeling of dread and guilt, yet, later, a strong emotional bond develops between them. In the case of Christopher, no such relationship will ever be possible with his benefactor, Wan Ku, a man who once became a source of his childhood trauma and brutal prolonged humiliation of his mother. Moreover, Magwitch makes his fortune through hard work, thus acting in accordance with Victorian protestant values of multiplying the capital. It is a complete opposite to Wang Ku for whom illicit trade and seizing opium shipments is a source of profit. In Dickens's novel Victorian society gets rid of Magwitch and regards him as an undesirable citizen whose behaviour is contrary to the norms of accepted morality, which is hypocritical in view of their own treatment of the poor within their own society and the indigenous non-whites in territories controlled overseas. The same hypocrisy seems to be reflected in Ishiguro's novel when Diana's opposition to her own people's involvement in the opium trade reveals that they are actually not a bit morally better than their Chinese accomplice Wang Ku.

A question arises: why did Ishiguro relate to *Great Expectations* as an intertextual reference and evoke the figure of a secret benefactor, an ex-convict? I suggest that in this way Ishiguro implicitly alludes to the imperial politics of the Victorian period, while simultaneously pointing out its tragic consequences. Another reason may be depiction of the motif of a boy stepping into the world of the privileged society. Both Pip from Dickens's novel and Christopher Banks from Ishiguro's are presented as orphaned beneficiaries of British colonial aggression in the Victorian era. Pip's education and prosperous life as

a gentleman are at the cost of Magwitch's exploitative labour in the Australian penal colony, while Christopher Banks's advancement is possible due to his mother's enslavement and the money from the opium trade. Brian Finney comments that:

> protected childhood was bought at the price of his mother's servitude to a Chinese warlord, so the protected and privileged existence of the wealthy community living in the International Settlement was bought at the cost of widespread opium addiction and poverty among the Chinese population.

Sven Lindqvist refers to the same mechanism which characterised the position of Swedish society during WWII. He admits that he owes his prosperous life to his "own country's cowardly appeasement policy" and "takes [his] share of the booty … [and] of the responsibility, too," involuntarily becoming "the heir to an undamaged society and a fully functioning economy" (200). The conjuncture presented by Lindqvist seems to be a parallel to the experiences of Christopher Banks from Ishiguro's novel and Pip from *Great Expectations*. To be more precise, they can both live in a safe bubble unaware of the atrocities happening in China and Australia.

The character of Sarah Hemmings is another feature that alludes to *Great Expectations*. She is presented as a manipulative "snob of a new resort" who moves in the upper-class circles and does not "consider a person worthy of respect unless he or she possessed a celebrated name" (Ishiguro 12). This characteristic renders Sarah a reflection of Dickens's Estella. Also the initial relationship between Banks and Sarah appears to be reminiscent of the one from Dickens's novel: both Christopher and Pip seem too common to live up to Sarah's and Estella's expectations. Banks's lack of high social rank makes him too average to be noticed by Sarah. Their first encounter offers a parallel to an episode when Estella criticises Pip for being "a common labouring-boy!" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 57).

> Indeed, I sometimes got the impression she was unable properly to breathe anything other than the air surrounding the most distinguished persons. […] In any case, by this point, it had become abundantly clear to me what the silver-haired man had meant when he had declared there was little point in a 'chap like me' pursuing Miss Hemmings. (Ishiguro 12)

Banks's inferiority complex as well as aspirations to become part of the snobbish community make him similar to Pip from *Great Expectations*. After leaving the world of childhood innocence, both characters are presented with new expectations, creating their own ambitions which are bound to fail − Christopher's ambition to become an celebrated detective to combat evil can be compared with Pip's strong yearning to become a gentleman. To achieve their goals, these protagonists dwell in the worlds of delusions, rejecting people who really care for them, Pip rejects Joe and Biddy, Christopher rejects Jennifer. Yet, Sarah's restraint and coldness towards Christopher is only a mask since, unlike Estella who keeps Pip in the world he does not belong to, Miss Hemmings becomes for Banks the only chance to renounce his obsessive pursuit of the mission and leave his past behind. She persuades Christopher to escape with her to another country.

> Indeed, for a second or two I experienced the sort of giddiness one might when coming suddenly out into the light and fresh air after being trapped a long time in some dark chamber. It was as though this suggestion of hers - which for all I knew she had thrown out on an impulse - carried with it a huge authority, something that brought me a kind of dispensation I had never dared hope for. (Ishiguro 126)

Christopher Banks is unable to free himself from his past and childhood trauma, especially from the image of a "dark chamber" that stands for the prison of his subconscious. At the end of the novel, the protagonist cannot extricate himself from the nagging past and seems to remain "a perpetual exile and orphan who has no home except childhood memories"

(Ringrose 182). Moreover, having been brought up in Shanghai, Christopher seems to feel like a recluse when he is forced out of the city to settle in England where he feels he is "not enough Englishman" to be part of London's high society Sarah is so well acquainted with (Ishiguro 44). The disappearance of Christopher's parents results in the emergence of his disturbed sense of national identity and lack of well connectedness. It is seen when Christopher recollects years at St Dustan boarding school and a conversation with his schoolmate, Osbourne:

> It was on this occasion, I am sure, that I asked Osbourne about his 'well connectedness'. Osbourne, who for all his exuberance, had a modest nature, tried to change the subject. But I persisted until he said eventually: 'Oh, do knock it off, Banks. It's all just nonsense, there's nothing to analyse. One simply knows people. One has parents, uncles, family friends. I don't know what there is to be so puzzled about.' (4)

Christopher lacks this obvious "well-connectedness" because he is parentless. The feeling of being an outsider and orphan at the school seems to be strengthened by the fact that he has experienced spatial displacement and has been detached from his home and culture. It seems to be another parallel to the orphaned and relocated Pip who definitely lacks the "well-connectedness," and feels like "a common labouring-boy" in the London society. For Catherine Lanone, "'Pip' freezes his progress towards stable identity, and it may be argued that, instead of occupying a stable position at the centre, he is, very much like Magwitch, the victim of 'othering'" (21). It should be noted that Pip's desire to attain a stable central position, in other words, to become a gentleman, is shattered after Magwitch's arrival in London. In the same vein, Christopher's ambition to occupy a central position of a famous detective who is able to solve any mystery and repair the world falls apart after the failure in his mission of finding his parents. Commenting on the issue of diasporic experience, Franziska Quebeck reads it not only in the political or geographical sense, but the one that

"has social, personal and psychological ramifications" (149). Banks's dislocation and perpetual search for identity can be read as the conspicuous allusion to the autochthones uprooted by the turbulent force of the imperial invasion. When viewed from the perspective of his lack of a sense of belonging, Banks's mission acquires a more profound meaning – he seeks to reclaim his lost identity after moving to England as an orphaned child, a theme implicitly depicted in the novel as a legacy of British imperialism.

Chapter Two:

Representations of the Past: Exploring the Empire's Parenthood in *Wanting* by Richard Flanagan

2.1. The Colonial Backdrop in *Wanting*

Richard Miller Flanagan, born in Tasmania in 1961, is considered one of the most eminent Australian novelists of his generation. He was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (2002), Tasmania Book Prize (2011), and Man Booker Prize in 2014 for *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Published in 2008, Flanagan's novel *Wanting* is a reflection of British colonial brutality of the nineteenth century aimed at indigenous inhabitants of Australia and Van Diemen's Land.

1606 is the official date of the first European presence in Australia by a Dutch navigator, Willem Janszoon, who reached the western coast of Cape York Peninsula in what is now Queensland. In 1616, Dirck Hart landed on the western coast of Australia, and over the years of the seventeenth century, Dutch sailors significantly contributed to the European knowledge of Australia by exploring various parts of the continent, including the southern, northern and western regions. The first European expedition that reached Van Diemen's Land (officially Tasmania since 1856) was undertaken in 1642 by a Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman. His second voyage of 1644 resulted in naming the northern Australian land New Holland.

("History of Australia"). It is important to note that the Dutch, more interested in exploration, did not colonise Australia. It was the British presence in the continent that commenced the period of colonisation of Australia.

In 1770, British Captain James Cook reached the southeastern coast of Australia, which he named South New Wales. The year 1788 is marked as the beginning of British colonisation of South New Wales. It was during this time that the first convicts were transported to a penal colony established in the eastern part of the continent. The establishment of the penal colony is seen as the main reason of the British colonisation of Australia, especially after the loss of the American colonies, which had previously served as a destination for transported criminals. However, some historians argue that the British presence in Australia was primarily driven by the need to establish a bastion for the Empire's military power in the eastern seas whereas others claim that it was driven by economic exploitation of the territory. The scheme of the British government involved introducing convict labour that was supposed to lead to the economic development of the region ("History of Australia"). British expansion gradually spread across the Australian continent where new settlements were established.

The first colonisers landed on Tasmania in 1803 – "twenty-four prisoners, eight soldiers, and a dozen volunteers, of whom six were women" (Lindqvist 124). Since then, British imperialism inflicted a bloody toll on the indigenous inhabitants of the land. The first major massacre took place in 1804, when "the bushrangers, escaped prisoners, had a free hand, killing kangaroos and natives" (124). The influx of white immigrants to Van Diemen's Land coincided with widespread violence against the indigenous population, resulting in the death of many who were "hunted down like wild beasts and destroyed" (Lindqvist 125). The remaining autochthones were to be captured in order to undergo "a therapy" and become civilised in accordance with European standards. The man who sought to bring the light of civilisation by introducing market economy and Christianity was George Augustus Robinson.

Robinson's determination to save the indigenous people resulted in the incarceration of two hundred natives at a camp on Flinders Island, known as Wybalenna. Located northeast of mainland Van Diemen's Island, the site was intended to provide a safe territory where the natives could live without fear of being hunted down, anticipating their return to the Tasmanian mainland. Due to the rapid decline in their population, the natives were relocated to the slums near Hobart Town, where they "quickly died out from alcoholism." Merely nine women of the captured indigenes were still alive in 1859, and by 1876 they were all deceased (Lindqvist 126).

Richard Flanagan's novel is composed of two intertwined stories, united by the themes of desire for freedom and the suppression of true emotions imposed by Victorian societal norms. While set in different time periods and locations within the nineteenth century, colonialism serves as the central theme that brings together the two parts of Richard Flanagan's novel. The novel incorporates historical characters like George Augustus Robinson, Sir John Franklin, Lady Jane Franklin, Charles Dickens, and his mistress Ellen Ternan.

The first story centres on the life of Charles Dickens, and starts at the time when he learns about the death of his infant daughter, Dora. It is also a moment in the narrative when Lady Jane Franklin, widowed by the famous Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, visits Dickens in 1854. She seeks his assistance in defending her husband against speculations that, following their failed attempt to reach the Northwest Passage, Franklin and his crew resorted to cannibalism in order to survive.

The other story takes place before Sir John's expedition. It presents the story of Mathinna, an Aboriginal orphan girl adopted by Sir John Franklin, then the governor of Van Diemen's Land, and Lady Jane Franklin, who arrive at an Aboriginal camp at Wybalenna. The Franklins, especially Lady Jane, want to transform Mathinna into a "civilised" person. The process of Mathinna's acculturation, or cultural denigration at the hands of

representatives of Western culture, emerges as a reflection of imperial ideology that stresses white racial supremacy. In his neo-Victorian biofictional representations of Dickens, the Franklins, Robinson and Mathinna, Flanagan revisits the British colonial past, exposing the ideological bipolarity between the Western and non-Western worlds as well as traumas of the colonised indigenous populations. Marie-Luise Kholke and Christian Gutleben aptly note that "biofictions of revered and mythologised cultural icons can provide corrective critical reassessments of these subjects' complex, often contradictory characters and dubious self-serving agendas, belatedly acknowledging the harmful ramifications of their actions on others" (*Neo-Victorian Biofiction* 12). When seen through a lens of Flanagan's *Wanting*, "the harmful ramifications" explicitly refer to Robinson's actions on Van Diemonian indigenes, the Franklins' on Mathinna, and Dickens's on Ellen Ternan.

Sven Lindqvist describes the quintessence of the European imperial thought as follows: "It says nothing about Europe as the original home on earth of humanism, democracy and welfare. It says nothing about everything we are quite proud of. It simply tells the truth we prefer to forget" (14). *Wanting* by Flanagan encapsulates this theme, permeated with racist views not only towards the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land but also towards all races considered "inferior" by the Western world.

As has been said in the Introduction, British imperialism was largely driven by ideological motivations. One influential figure shaping British imperialism was Herbert Spencer. In *Social Statics* (1851), Spencer argues that imperialism greatly facilitated the advancement of civilisation by removing what he perceived as "inferior" races from the globe: "The forces which are working out the great scheme of perfect happiness, taking no account of incidental suffering, exterminate such sections of mankind as stand in their way. Be he human or be he brute–the hindrance must be got rid of" (416).

In a similar vein, Darwin claimed that the inferior, wild races are bound to become extinct and replaced by the civilised ones, which is a natural stage of the evolutionary process, thus "imperialism is a biologically necessary process that, according to the laws of nature, leads to the inevitable destruction of the lower racers" (Lindqvist 178).

These nineteenth-century racist views were presented in a more radical way by Eduard von Hartmann. Although Hartmann may not have directly contributed to the development of British imperial thought, his outlook on non-European races aligns closely with those of Spencer and Darwin. According to Hartmann, the extermination of the inferior races is thought to be an act of mercy by white people, as it hastens the inevitable extinction of indigenous nations, which he believed to be predetermined by nature. In the thesis "Philosophie des Unbewussten, Versuch einer Weltanschauung," Hartmann concludes:

> As little as a favour is done the dog whose tail is to be cut off, when one cuts it off gradually inch by inch, so little is their humanity in artificially prolonging the death struggles of savages who are on the verge of extinction. (qtd. in Lindqvist 19)

The perpetuation of misguided perceptions regarding non-European races has been discussed by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*. Bhabha argues that "An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness" (66). In other words, Bhabha accentuates the significance of the colonial stereotype

> [vacillating] between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated … the force of ambivalence gives [the colonial stereotype] its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability. (66)

Bhabha's statement suggests that irrespective of the geographical location under Western hegemony, the white man's attitude to and treatment of native communities remain consistent.

It has to be underlined that the brutality of colonisation was effectively hidden from the outside European world, rendering the colonisers invisible in the darkness of their actions. The concept of "invisible whites" can be found in Joseph Conrad's novel *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), in which the author provides the reader with the quintessence of the European nations' strategy of conquering overseas territories: "First they came, the invisible whites, and dealt death from afar" (193). This term has already been used while exploring *When We Were Orphans,* which is to say, the imperial practices and opium trade seem out of reach of the "civilised" world. A parallel conjuncture can be noticed in Flanagan's novel, when the tragic consequences of the civilising mission undertaken by Augustus Robinson and the Franklins become invisible for the Western world.

By exposing Robinson's deadly camp, which caused the extinction of the natives there, Flanagan foregrounds the notion of white man's civilising mission and casts light on a broader process, whose representatives were "driven by a lack of understanding, certain sadistic impulses, the prospect of promotion and a blind belief in religious phrases" (Liewald 41). Flanagan vividly depicts Robinson's camp as a place of death for the natives, illustrating explicitly the same destructive power of "the white man's presence," which gradually eroded the autochthons' their national identity and extinguished their lives:

> the more they took to English blankets and heavy English clothes, abandoning their licentious nakedness, the more they coughed and spluttered and died. And the more they died, the more they wanted to cast off their English clothes and stop eating their English food and move out of their English homes, which they said were filled with the Devil. (Flanagan 2-3)

Lady Jane knows that "while [Dickens] lived, his opinion could move the government. As long as he continued to draw breath, he was the best ally she could hope to make" (Flanagan 21). Lady Jane and a significant part of Victorian public are confident about Englishmen's ability "to survive anywhere and to triumph over any adversity through faith, scientific objectivity, and superior spirit" (17). Dickens himself "remained faithful to the broad beliefs of the typical mid-nineteenth-century gentleman" (Ackroyd 534), and, as a result of Lady Franklin's influence, he decides to defend Sir John's good name and starts to prepare a fierce rebuttal against the speculations surrounding Franklin's and his crew's alleged cannibalistic acts during the expedition.

Flanagan transposes the Dickensian motif of orphanhood into the colonial context, where it can be construed as a metaphor for the subaltern's experience of exploitation under British power dynamics, as evidenced in the depiction of the Aboriginal girl. Due to her background, the girl becomes a victim, consciously stigmatised by the members of the Western culture, thus fitting into the pattern of orphans depicted in Dickens's fiction. Their underprivileged social status often made them undesirable outcasts of Victorian society. Orphanhood in Dickens's fiction extends beyond its literal form; it is underscored by the complete ostracism experienced by his orphan characters from British society. They are seen as undesirable elements and a blemish on the Victorian moral code. A parallel phenomenon can be observed in Flanagan's novel when the orphaned girl, unable to conform to Western cultural standards, becomes an obstacle that must be erased from British history. Similarly to Dickens, Flanagan exposes the vices of the same oppressive structure and its representatives.

Wanting not only presents the moment of crisis in Dickens's life but also calls into question the stable Victorian identity represented by Dickens, Sir John Franklin and Lady Jane Franklin. As a result, the novel explicitly "[undermines] the humanist notion of 'The Great White Man'" (Steveker 70). The humanism displayed by Dickens and the Franklins, initially

evident in their desire to become foster parents for Ellen and Mathinna respectively, turns out to be false, because behind its veneer lies wanting of domination.

2.2. Charles Dickens: a Model of Britishness and a Victim of his "Undisciplined Heart"

In his biography by Peter Ackroyd, Dickens, the guardian of familial hearth, domestic harmony and benevolence, is depicted as very critical of the missionaries sent abroad in order to convert the natives to Christianity: "missionaries were always one of Dickens's pet hates, principally because he had no very high opinion of the 'savages' of Africa or the West India whom they were trying to convert" (572). He also expressed an unfavourable opinion on the autochthons from America who "must fade out of the States very fast" (Ackroyd 573). A man who so fervently cherished the spirit of Christmas, stood up for the wretched and the aggrieved, despised the unjust and corrupted, remained completely indifferent to the fate of the colonised peoples overseas. Yet, his views shifted when it came to the persecution of European races, which is evident, for example in his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). While Dickens seemed to be a great opponent of any revolutionary movements, he profoundly sympathised with the French oppressed by the state. In *A Tale of Two Cities* Dr. Alexandre Manette records in his prison diary the words of a dying boy, describing the callous behaviour of the Evremonde twins towards the misery of French citizens: "we were so robbed, and hunted, and were made so poor, that our father told us it was a dreadful thing to bring a child into the world, and that what we should most pray for was that women might be barren

and our miserable race die out" (Dickens 319). It can be argued that this quotation demonstrates a similar degree of degradation, humiliation and dehumanisation when applied to colonial reality. However, it also shows that Dickens's sympathy appears to extend only to oppressed white citizens of Europe. The colonised societies are depicted as outside the reach of his compassion and acts of mercy.

Expanding on Kurtz's handwritten postscript *exterminate all the brutes*, a similar sentiment can also be found in *A Tale of Two Cities.* Dickens creates a character of Madame Defarge, a bloodthirsty, merciless woman whose main objective is the "extermination" of all the members of the Marquis's race. Throughout the novel, she is constantly preoccupied with knitting, in which she encodes the names of aristocrats she wishes to exterminate. Conrad similarly used the symbol of knitting in *Heart of Darkness*, where he introduces two old women, knitting in the Company's offices Marlow visits before departing to Africa. The women, just like Dickens's Madame Defarge, stand for something dark and devilish, making an allusion to the mythical Greek Fates or the Moirai, "three old women who spin, measure, and then cut thread" (Notari), which denotes one's demise. *A Tale of Two Cities* constitutes Dickens's strong manifesto against unstoppable fury, undisciplined emotions or "the horrible massacre, days and nights long, which, within a few rounds of the clock, was to set a great mark of blood upon the blessed garnering time of harvest" (252). Although the same unrestrained ferocity, described by Conrad and Lindqvist, filled colonisers' minds, it was out of the question to ascribe such features to the European race since "we all have appetites and desires. But only the savage agrees to sate them" (Flanagan 79).

I suggest that both themes – extermination and control of one's life – are reflected in *Wanting*. By introducing Augustus Robinson's "rescue" camp to the novel, Flanagan overtly refers to the time when the Van Diemonian indigenes were gradually exterminated by the whites. After the British invasion, it was a white man who made decisions concerning their

fate and could simply “cut the thread.” Even at the camp the natives remained under the supervision of the colonising power. A similar conjunction can be observed when analysing Mathinna’s storyline, wherein the girl is submit to the authoritative stance of the Franklins, whose measures seem to seal her tragic fate.

Being a flesh and blood Victorian, and part of the period whose “energy ran through him and his language,” Dickens shared the pride and vanity of the British nation as well as its strong belief in “the march of civilisation and the great progress of the country” (Ackroyd 698, 665). He demonstrated his British loyalty when he learnt about a rebellion of indigenous people against the British community during the Indian Mutiny (1857-1858). He even went so far as to make a radical statement to his friend Miss Burdett-Coutts: “I should do my utmost [if he were Commander-in-chief in India] to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested ... with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the Earth” (Ackroyd 844).

Dickens came to the defence of the British race while writing an article in his periodical *Household Words* (1850-1859), in which he reprobated Dr John Rae’s conviction that Sir John Franklin and his crew could have resorted to cannibalism. The very idea of cannibalism stirred negative emotions in the Western world, as it was a taboo that demarcated civilisation from barbarism and evoked terror in explorers fearful of being devoured by indigenous people, or, as Jeff Berglund puts it, “literally [incorporated] through cannibalistic destruction” (11). It must be noted that the idea of the cannibalistic inclinations of native tribes was often integral to colonial ideology, which emphasised the “inferiority” and “savagery” of the Other. Simultaneously, it served as a vindication of “the twin civilizing strategies of imperialism and Christian missions” (Berglund 12).

As an Arctic explorer, John Rea took part in Canadian Arctic expeditions, making friends with the Inuit, using “Aglooka,” the Inuit survival techniques (“Blue Plaques”). His

stance can be categorised as an "affective cosmopolitanism," a term defined by Leela Gandhi as "the ethico-political practice of a desiring self inexorably drawn toward difference" (*Affective Communities* 17). Gandhi defines it as an ethical attitude of an individual who befriends those outside his community or against the community's applicable norms. His friendly relations with the supposedly "inferior" Inuit peoples, or his "having gone native" must have been regarded with suspicion by contemporary British society ("Blue Plaques"). Rea's expedition of 1853-1854 aimed to uncover the truth about Franklin's doomed expedition. His appalling findings report, presented to the Admiralty and based on the Inuit's testimony, was not initially accepted by Victorians in London. However, later forensic examinations carried out on Franklin's expedition confirmed Rea's unwelcome statement.

Franklin's defenders believed that it must have been the natives who actually preyed on the captain and his crew. In his article, Dickens attacked the non-white races as follows: "we believe every savage to be in his heart covetous, treacherous, and cruel" (Ackroyd 750). As has been said, cannibalism was considered an act of disgrace ascribed only to the uncivilised "savages." That is why in this pro-British atmosphere, Dickens eagerly agreed to support Lady Franklin in her defence of the honour of her husband and his crew, and firmly denied that "any of the members [of the Franklin expedition] prolonged their existence by the dreadful expedient of eating the bodies of their dead companions" (750). This firm faith in Britishness can be observed in Flanagan's novel when Dickens ironically asserts that "if Sir John Franklin had perished, it would have been nobly, gloriously, heroically; not as a goggle-eyed barbarian" (71). As Bożena Kucała has noticed, Dickens's "rebuttal of Rae's assertions is grounded in the presumed existence of an unbridgeable divide between a civilised man and a savage" (166). In a similar vein, Salhia Ben-Messahel emphasises that "Dickens's defence of Sir John Franklin appears as a near-racist tract claiming that it was physically and morally impossible for brave, civilised white man to descend to the level of

savages" (22). Jen Hill stresses the fact that Dickens's persistence in unyielding questioning of Rae's findings about Franklin's expedition emerges as "reaffirmation of the social code" but also of "a stable, masculine national character," that is a defence of the stainless British identity (137, 143). Traces of Dickens's determination to defend the threatened national identity against the colonial world can also be found in *Great Expectations*, where the money from the penal colony becomes the cause of Pip's moral decline, and its direct source, Abel Magwitch, a convict, is ultimately eradicated at the end of the novel. Dickens seems to have succeeded in achieving the "identity-stabilizing" effect, as Pip is given a chance to redeem himself, thereby affirming a stable structure of the British character (Hill 142).

The real dispute between Rea and Dickens served as a catalyst for the latter to encourage his friend, Willkie Collins, to write a play based on Franklin's Arctic expedition, entitled *The Frozen Deep* (1856), which became a turning point in Dickens's life. The play is a metaphorical rendition of the lost Arctic expedition in which Dickens plays the part of a tragic hero Richard Wardour, who manages to suppress his basic survival instincts, sacrifices his life to save his rival in love, Aldersley, and emerges as a paragon of nobility and courage, displaying desirable attributes of complete Britishness. Richard Wardour becomes the embodiment of gentility. Playing the role of Wardour seemed to embody the novelist's desire for spirited actions and a departure from his "frozen existence." *The Frozen Deep* mirrors Dickens's sense of emptiness, symbolised by the ice that entrapped him. It reflects his intense longing for true, passionate love, especially as his marriage to Catherine was on the verge of a breakup, when the writer was acutely aware of his own ageing and impending demise:

> And the ice and the cold and keening wind were all him and he was at the same time buried within it; for twenty years, had not his marriage been a Northwest Passage, mythical, unknowable, undiscoverable, an iced-up channel to love, always before him and yet through which no passageway was possible? (Flanagan 35)

The symbol of ice employed in *Wanting* finds its reflection in Dickens's "frozen existence." It can be said that ice gradually envelops him, much like a drifting floe squeezing ships in the Arctic regions. After learning about Sir Franklin's fate, Dickens "kept seeing the cold whiteness of the Northwest Passage, and he kept feeling himself trapped in it with Sir John's corpse" (Flanagan 73). Ice and coldness metaphorically stand for all the painful experiences of rejection from his childhood and adolescence. The sense of abandonment, lack of protection and love that he experienced from his parents, as previously mentioned, resembles a state of emotional orphanhood. The same sense of coldness and imprisonment can also be applied to his marriage and his relationships with his children. In his fiction, respectable female characters often embody the typical Victorian Angels in the House archetype – plain and devoid of passion. Coldness and reserve were considered virtues of the Victorian British mentality. It was believed that qualities such as restraint, self-control and logic distinguish a civilised person from savages, yet, as Bożena Kucała underlines, "the repression [of instincts] which makes civilisation possible generates frustration, neurosis and unhappiness in individuals" (170). Parts of *Wanting* which depict Dickens's private life illustrate his hidden hunger for affection and spontaneity, his eagerness to love and be loved, and his desire to free himself from the stiff constraints of Victorian respectability. During his travels to the continent and his stays in France and Genoa, Dickens changed his appearance, grew a beard and moustache, which may suggest that he "enjoyed even the physical act of changing his English identity when he was staying on the continent," "cutting through the complex and insidious bond of Victorian etiquette" (Ackroyd 708). It can be said that his passing protest against Britishness had to be quenched since, as a public figure, Dickens could not indulge in unrestrained fantasies that would thwart his reputation. His subtle detachment from British bonds was most evident when he was abroad or in his fiction, where he openly criticised British snobbism and nationalism.

In his last finished novel, *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), Dickens voiced his opposition to British pomposity by introducing the character of Mr John Podsnap, who serves as an illustration of British mentality in the Victorian era. Mr Podsnap is a jingoistic snob from the upper middle class, fully satisfied with himself and proud of his Englishness:

> I would say … 'that there is in the Englishman a combination of qualities, a modesty, an independence, a responsibility, a response, combined with an absence of everything calculated to call a blush into the cheek of a young person, which one would seek in vain among the Nations of the Earth.' (Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* 120)

The qualities of this character gave rise to the creation of the term *podsnappery*, defined as "an attitude toward life marked by complacency and a refusal to recognise unpleasant facts" ("Podsnappery"). Mr Podsnap considers "other countries, with that important reservation, a mistake, and of their manners and customs would conclusively observe, 'Not English!'" (Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* 116). It can be said that Mr Podsnap echoes the voice of his social class and emerges as a representative of Victorian society, embodying its "respectability that Dickens himself satirized in his writing" (Peters C. 51). Mr Podsnap's wish to "put the rest of Europe, and the whole Asia, Africa, and America, nowhere" (Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* 120) may indicate Dickens's awareness, but not necessarily approval of the merciless imperial practices of his era. Mr Podsnap's indifference to the fate of not only colonies but also other countries represents British superiority and ignorance of the truth about colonial realities.

In Dickens's earlier novel, *Bleak House,* the character of Harold Skimpole exhibits similar features of disregard for the infirm and indifference to the inferior, as evidenced in his attitude towards Jo, a crossing sweeper and a social outcast. When the boy falls seriously ill, Mr Skimpole's advice given to Mr Jarndyce is to "[turn] him out before he gets still worse" (Dickens, *Bleak House* 399), that is to get rid of the problem and erase the disagreeable

element that may tarnish the vision of picture-perfect British reality. In a straightforward manner Dickens depicted Jo's dehumanisation resulting from his social deprivation, poignantly making readers realise the home-grown nature of his destitution:

> he is not a genuine foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary home-made article. Dirty, ugly, disagreeable to all these senses, in body a common creature of the common streets, only in soul a heathen. Homely filth begrimes him, homely parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on him: native ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal nature lower than the beasts that perish. (*Bleak House* 588)

Although this passage does not offer direct criticism of colonial practices, by presenting this vocal account of Joe's plight, Dickens reveals a telling paradox: while the British Empire was fixated on eradicating any vestiges of barbarity and wilderness rooted in the natives, it turned a blind eye to, or even cultivated, "savagery" among its poor on its own land. Jo is aware of and accepts the fact that by the standards of Victorian society, he is deemed less than human. Once he emphatically states: "I'm scarcely human ... . To see the horses, dogs, and cattle, go by me, and to know that in ignorance I belong to them, and not to the superior beings in my shape" (Dickens, *Bleak House* 203). Dickens experienced poverty in his own childhood, later in life he had numerous encounters with the "outcasts of London ... sad and suffering in their horrid abodes [where] the raw air almost cut one to the bone" (Ackroyd 678), that is with the orphans abandoned by their own country. Dickens's depiction of domestic social ostracism, placing individuals in subhuman categories, can be extended beyond the London space to British colonies. Especially the phrase "the superior beings" can be interpreted as an implicit reference to Western culture, while those described as "scarcely human" may correspond to the colonised. It is important to note that Mother Britain's attitude towards the "inferior" – whether domestic or colonial – looked similar.

While embodying the character of Richard Wardour in *The Frozen Deep*, Dickens in Flanagan's novel is portrayed as having the only chance in his life to express his latent and genuine feelings, to be himself without pretence. It becomes evident that he is "divided into the external Dickens − the successful author − and an internal Dickens who was full of self-doubts and despair" (Steveker 73). It can be argued that Dickens's external self, entirely influenced by Victorian imperatives, serves as a censor that controls and suppresses his affectionate self. The role of Wardour becomes an opportunity for him to "[reconcile] his internal and his external selves, and thus [overcome] his repression" (Steveker 74). The role he plays becomes a catalyst which allows him to experience passion, and to reach for emotional fulfilment which is missing in his life. Dickens's genuine identity on the stage would not have resurfaced but for the writer's self-negation which was "inherent in the creative process of playing another person on stage, of 'inhabiting' that character" (Kay 209). When the play was scheduled to be performed at the Manchester Free Trade Hall to raise funds for the widow of Dickens's friend, Douglas Jerrold, Dickens's amateur actress daughters, Kate and Mary, had to be replaced by professionals, among whom were three daughters of Mrs Eleanor Ternan. Ellen Ternan, the youngest of the Ternan sisters, was only eighteen when she first met Dickens. She was a half-orphan, as her father had died when she was five years old. Like numerous characters from Dickens's fiction, Ellen endured poverty and humiliation. Considering this and a substantial age difference between the two, Dickens's attitude to Nelly initially must have been fatherly. The facts that Nelly was born in the writer's beloved city, Rochester, and was the same age as his daughter, Kate, may explain Dickens's affection to the young actress (Ackroyd 831).

She began her adult acting career at the age of eighteen when she was offered a job at the Haymarket (Tomalin 63). Mrs Eleanor Ternan and her three daughters were actresses

without any financial support, following a profession considered public prostitution in Victorian England. In *The Invisible Woman,* Claire Tomalin contends:

> And Nelly had no father and no brothers to take the mystery out of the male sex. Living in a house of women, it was easy for her to divide men into two distinct categories, on the one hand the brutes and ogres, on the other idealized distant figures, her lost father among them. In the audience and in the streets she faced ogres every night, while the ideal replacement for her father had yet to materialize. Still further away was the possibility that he [Dickens] too might turn into an ogre. (65)

In the nineteenth century, the theatre "existed outside the world of Victorian values of careful self-respect and dignified self-improvement" (Tomalin 24). However, these four ladies made a great impression on Dickens, especially the youngest, Ellen (Nelly), a name Dickens could have been sentimental about because of its association with a homeless orphaned heroine from *The Old Curiosity Shop*. He decided to enlist professional actresses to replace some of the women in the cast of *The Frozen Deep*.

In his novel, Flanagan uses the term "undisciplined heart" (48) as Dickens becomes more and more attracted to Nelly. The same expression appeared for the first time in *David Copperfield*, and it also featured as an autobiographical allusion to Dickens's infatuation with Maria Beadnell presented by Ackroyd. In Flanagan's novel "undisciplined heart" refers explicitly to desires that have to be kept under control, desires that "only the savage agrees to sate" (Flanagan 79). This term can also be read in terms of neo-Victorianism which, as reinterpretation, as revision of Victorians, encourages writers to call into question the Victorian moral code. In the early stages of the novel, Dickens's life is fully subordinated to the demands of public opinion and the standards expected of a noble Englishman. This is why Dickens is convinced that "the mark of wisdom and civilisation was the capacity to conquer desire, to deny it and crush it" (Flanagan 47). However, as the story progresses and it becomes

clear that Dickens's marriage is dramatically deteriorating, when Nelly replaces her sick sister Maria in the role of Wardour's beloved, Clara Burnham, she manages to bring Dickens's strongest hidden emotions to the surface. In one scene on stage, as she cradles the dying Wardour played by Dickens in her lap, the author feels that he is ready to break all rigid social conventions and allow his heart to become "undisciplined" – "He could feel her things beneath his neck as she cradled him, he could feel the white light envelop them at last as she wrapped him in her arms, and he wanted to stay that way, in her arms and in that light, forever" (Flanagan 237). At this point, the whole range of "undisciplined" emotions pours out of Dickens who starts speaking for himself, not on behalf of Wardour. In intimate proximity with Nelly on stage, the novelist is transformed into "a terrible being [with] eyes glaring like a wild animal's" (235), giving himself up to uncontrolled desires which, in his day and age, were reserved for animals and the uncivilised indigenous others. Characters who yield to unguarded emotions are compared in Dickens's fiction to wild animals, for example in *Our Mutual Friend* when Bradley Headstone is depicted as one changing into a beast to kill his love rival, Eugene Wryaburn. His yearning to do so in order to possess Lizzie Hexam is depicted as follows: "The state of the man was murderous, and he knew it. More; he irritated it with a kind of perverse pleasure akin to that which a sick man sometimes has in irritating a wound upon his body. ... [Headstone] broke loose at night like an ill-tamed wild animal" (Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* 491).

Unexpectedly, the British coldness rooted in Dickens's mentality and his belief in the Englishman's unquestionable ability to remain resistant to untamed desires become empty clichés, making the novelist appear a hypocrite even in his own eyes. Nelly seems to stimulate his suppressed sexual desires, even though, as has been said, Dickens's attitude to the young actress can also be interpreted as a father-daughter relationship. In *The Invisible Woman*, Claire Tomalin notices:

> Just as it was no accident that Dickens fell in love with an actress, so it was no accident that the fatherless child responded to a lover who could also play the father and offer her the pleasures she had missed as a girl, as well as a way out of what was sometimes demeaning and depressing work. (266)

As has been said in the first chapter, in his childhood Dickens experienced what would now be called a posttraumatic stress disorder and fear of abandonment as a result of his experiences as a young boy in the blacking warehouse. These traumatic events were his life mystery "even to those who knew and loved him best" (Ackroyd 1117). In this light, Dickens's relationship with Nelly can be read as the displacement of his fear of abandonment onto a hopeless girl, who, in turn, needed someone who could replace her deceased father. Edmund Wilson, among many literary critics, suggests that Ellen Ternan can be seen as reminiscent of the mercenary and cold-hearted heroine from *Great Expectations*, Estella (Tomalin 130), while Dickens seems to embody the orphaned boy, Pip, who "loved [Estella] against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, and against all discouragement that could be" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 213). However, Estella can also be read as a literal representation of the duplicitous British society, whose cold, unfeeling hearts bear an affinity to the ice from *The Frozen Deep*. Yet, in his life, Dickens remained attracted to coldness, reserve, glory and pride − just like Pip to Estella. Seen as "a child of his age" (Ackroyd 903), Dickens regarded himself as "public property" (901), which likely hindered his ability to simply break bonds with his Britishness and the publicity he seemed to prioritise. Flanagan captures this dilemma in the following way: "'Yet how often it is', continued Dickens, 'that we have to do violence to our feelings, and hide our hearts in carrying on this fight of life, so we can bravely discharge our duties and responsibilities'"(Flanagan 7). Dickens devoted himself to serving the public with his writing and engagements, such as public speaking, remaining faithful to his nation and its emphasis

on abstinence for the rest of his life. After his legal separation with Catherine, he skilfully concealed his alleged sexual affair with Nelly, which lasted for thirteen years.

Cross-class unions featured also in his novels, for example in *Our Mutual Friend*, Mr Podsnap represents the generally-accepted views in Victorian England, which include a condemnation of marrying across class lines. However, Dickens seemed to censure this notion by allowing Eugene Wrayburn and Lizzie Hexam to join in holy matrimony despite the public opposition. In the fictional world Dickens seemed far more courageous and even provocative when it came to breaking the socially accepted rules. Nonetheless, in his life, he lacked such audacity and remained a prisoner of Victorian prudery. His fear of being condemned by public opinion is especially evident in the "violated letter" aimed at humiliating his wife Catherine and protecting his reputation. As Ackroyd writes, in the letter, Dickens "exculpated himself and implicitly blamed his wife for all the woes of their marriage," even referring to her "mental disorder" (860). The reverberations of this attitude can be seen in *Dombey and Son*, where Mr Dombey, even after becoming a bankrupt, remains concerned about public opinion, mirroring Dickens's own concern after his legal separation with his wife Catherine: "The world. What the world thinks of him, how it looks at him, what it sees in him − this is the haunting demon of his mind" (Dickens, *Dombey and Son* 744).

Dickens's attachment to the importance of positive public opinion and to the tenets of Victorian era is also depicted in *Wanting*. It is evident, for example in his statement about Sir John Franklin's doomed expedition. This distorted truth is convenient for the public "thus did Dickens ally his name with the salving of an empire's anguish, and no one was ungrateful" (Flanagan 71). When Dickens accentuates a real Englishman's dignity even in the most critical conditions, the narrator in Flanagan's novel is ironic: "Rather than countenance the thought of cannibalism, Sir John had eaten his own boots. Dickens felt cheered. That was an Englishman. Stout, stewed boots, decency dressed up as diet" (46). The quotation and the life

episodes of Dickens portrayed by Ackroyd seem to confirm his deep-rooted sense of belonging to the British nation. Fictitious portrayal of Dickens in Flanagan's novel seems to be "filtered" by our understanding of Victorian era, our attitude to colonialism, and our knowledge about Dickens. It also serves as an expression of audacious depiction of life aspects that were not mentioned for a long time. Dickens's clandestine affair, driven by the yearnings of his "undisciplined heart," required meticulous secrecy, as he was reluctant to relinquish his Britishness, a theme recurrently criticised in his fiction.

2.3. Orphanhood as a Metaphor for British Colonialism

The story of Dickens's support for the widowed Lady Franklin, the staging of his play and the eruption of his feelings for the young actress Ellen Ternan are in Flanagan's novel intertwined with the story of an indigenous Tasmanian orphan girl, Mathinna. Her orphanhood is used in the story to reflect the colonial condition, as she becomes the epitome of a victim of cultural denigration in a social experiment implemented by Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin under the guise of civilisation. Mathinna's orphanhood can be read as a metaphor for the ignominious consequences of the processes of colonisation, and this part of Flanagan's novel is "a tale of a child (comparable with Dickens's portrayals) coupled with victimisation through imperialist cultural arrogance" (Kucała 165). Western arrogance towards the indigenes inhabiting Australia and Van Diemen's Land seems to be intensified by the fact that, from the geographical perspective, this remote part of the globe was considered "the end of the world if something else − probably: Europe − is its origin" (Crane 158). In this sense Aboriginal population, sequestered from the civilized world and treated as its absolute

countertype, was viewed as subhuman and imbued with wilderness that had to be uprooted. In the novel this attitude is reflected in Mathinna's strict acculturation process aimed at eradicating "other imaginations of the world, other understandings or epistemologies" (Crane 158). By foregrounding the destructive dominion of a white man, representing "a culture that was confident of its own superior 'civilised' status" (Montero and Kelly 85), Flanagan's novel emerges as a graphic account of the Van Diemen's Land Aborigines shaped by privileged British elites and their ideologies. This includes various discourses on race relations, ranging from "Romanticism and the idea of the 'Noble savage', Aboriginal people as vermin, Social Darwinism, doomed race theories, protection, the 'civilizing mission', assimilation, self-determination and reconciliation" (Elder 20-21). These ideas bring the white discourse to the forefront in establishing social structure in Australia and Van Diemen's Land, diminishing the importance of the non-whites and stigmatising them, which is explicitly depicted in *Wanting*. Orphanhood, or "the juxtaposition of innocence and vulnerability [which] … exercised a particular fascination for Dickens" (Tomalin 47) was used by him to portray victims of gross deficiencies of social British system. Flanagan employs the same metaphor of orphanhood consistently throughout his work. His portrayal of Mathinna, an orphaned Aboriginal girl who undergoes physical and psychological displacement as she is assimilated into British culture, serves as a poignant representation of all victims of British colonial exploitation. Mathinna becomes a representative of the colonised and discriminated peoples who were never treated as fully-fledged "children" of Mother Britain.

Commenting on the origin of the novel, Ron Charles explains that as a young man Flanagan visited the Hobart Museum and noticed "a watercolour of a child in a pretty red dress" which became the inspiration for the novel. It depicted Mathinna, the Aboriginal girl adopted by the Franklins with a view to being transformed from a "savage" into a civilised person. Thomas Bock, an English-Australian artist sentenced to transportation to Australia, on commission of

Lady Jane Franklin, painted Mathinna and portraits of other Tasmanian Aborigines. The frames of the painting intently hid the bare, black feet of the girl in order to cover up any vestiges of her link with the Aboriginal community. This deliberate act serves to highlight the beginning of her cultural assimilation, which bespeaks the plight of the orphans of colonialism who are deprived of their land, relatives and identity.[3] When first introduced in the novel, Mathinna is seven years old and lives on Flinders Island, specifically at Wybalenna. This territory serves as a resettlement area for the remaining Aborigines from Van Diemen's Land, where they are pressured by the British to resettle to a colony based on European standards. From the very beginning of the novel, Flanagan exposes what the noble notion of bringing the light of civilisation really means, showing the disastrous outcome of a clash of two cultures. Despite his ardent efforts to be the saviour of the savages, the Protector of the island, Augustus Robinson, feels that the people "whom he had brought to God's light were yet dying in some strange way, in consequence of him," and is confident that "this rotting stench [of the dead bodies] related to him, to his actions, his beliefs" (Flanagan 11). In such situations, the Protector resorts to the power of words and endeavours to search for the most appropriate ones "that might act as a covering strip for some inexplicable yet shameful error. But words only amplified the darkness he felt" (13). Kerstin Knopf notes that "Robinsons' inability to recount and explain the deaths of the Natives here participates in the British Empire's discursive erasure of such dreadful facts" (96). Abandoned by authorities and isolated from the outside world, Robinson knows that no matter how hard he tries, the colony he is in charge of is a pathetic imitation of

[3]It echoes the fates of the orphans of the Stolen Generation, a phrase used to refer to indigenous children of Australia and Canada, forcedly taken from their parents to be adapted to the white community. In Australia, between 1910 and 1970, the scheme was aimed at children born from relationships between Aboriginal women and white men. According to the originator of the idea, A. O. Neville, those children were to be biologically absorbed into white society to "breed out the [black] color" (Knightley), while pure-blood Aboriginal children were expected to fade away. In Canada, Aboriginal children of Indian and Eskimo (Inuit) origin were put in residential schools whose main objective was to "uproot [the children] from [their] former 'inferior' cultures" (Carpenter) in the process of Christianisation and Europeanisation.

England. The recurring feeling of entrapment and loneliness harasses him. Natives on the island keep dying and Robinson, aware of the failure of his noble mission, begins to long for "their dances and songs, the beauty of their villages, the sound of their rivers, the memory of their tenderness" (Flanagan 19). His colonial life "surrounded by corpses, skulls, autopsy reports, plans for the chapel and cemetery" (19), which directly alludes to the scientific racism inherent in colonial practices, ultimately becomes too overwhelming. It shows the colonial dystopia and the unwarranted conviction of Western hegemony, principally evident in the scientific experiments conducted on the natives, which has also been accentuated in *Wanting*. Flanagan explicitly undermines the "scientific racism" of Western nations, exposing "such studies [phrenology, craniometry, anthropometry] as unfounded pseudoscientific experiments that were conducted in the name of Western cultural supremacy" (Knopf 97). The Protector wants to be unchained from British society, who "all practiced closing down themselves and everything around" (Flanagan 61). Persuaded by the natives, he takes off his clothes, surrendering his body to participate in a lascivious dance.

> He was momentarily beset by the terrifying idea that this was what he truly desired in life. Naked, he found himself leaping, stamping, flying, lost in a strange abandon beneath the southern lights. Was this his true reward, rather than the money he would be given if he brought all the natives in? (Flanagan 60)

The last sentence reveals Robinson's real reason behind his mission to civilise the indigenous community. Beneath the façade of being a "saviour" (Flanagan 11) of Van Diemonian Aborigines lies a money-driven servant of the Empire. At the same time, this telling episode calls into question Robinson's coloniser's identity and dignity. Giving himself up to the momentary bodily ecstasy, he discovers "ideation that unduly inhabits his imagination" (Deyo 103), and, for a moment, is capable of obviating the imperatives of his race, reason and Christianity.

When the Governor, Sir John Franklin, and his wife Lady Jane arrive in Wybalenna in order to assess the progress of civilizing this remote corner of the Empire, they decide to adopt Mathinna. Sir John nobly declares, "if we shine the Divine light on lost souls, then they can be no less than we. But first they must be taken out of the darkness and its barbarous influence" (Flanagan 69). Although Mathinna belongs to the so-called "dying race" and is prone to exhibit her wildness, she retains self-possession almost equal to the British while watching her father's death. Robinson takes delight in his civilising work when he observes Mathinna's silence and gravity sitting by King Romeo's body. This situation makes the Protector believe that "she might be more amenable to a civilising influence" (18). Mathinna's orphanhood after she loses her father in dramatic circumstances seems a pivotal "precondition for narrative development [where] the protagonist [assumes] the role of the hero" (Bainbridge 9). However, assuming the role of a hero after her father's death may also imply her acknowledgement or acceptance of enduring a similarly tragic fate, or even facing a premature death largely caused by the presence of colonists.

Mathinna's orphanhood has double meaning: she is literally orphaned after the loss of her parents, but her ties with her Aboriginal tribe are also brutally severed, underscoring the undermining of her identity by the representatives of the British Empire. Mathinna's resistance to being taken to the Franklins' crumbling Government House in Hobart Town, manifested in her crying, disappearances and attempts to escape, is finally suppressed by Robinson. A ring-tailed albino opossum, tamed by Mathinna at the camp, accompanies her during the journey to the Franklins' house. The opossum seems to be her only ties with her past and the only companion of her plight. Flanagan's choice of the animal is not accidental − its prevalent white colour dominates over the darkness of her skin. Its immaculate whiteness corresponds with the whiteness of the skin of the colonisers, symbolising the assumed immaculateness of their moral standards and the righteousness of their intentions. Ironically,

however, it becomes a perverse symbol of the subordination of Aborigines to British authority, serving as a harbinger of Mathinna's clash with the supposed "civilising light" of the Franklins. Upon arrival, the girl is instantly subjected to the civilising process which "is marked by her subsequent acculturation and fall" (Ben-Messahel 25). Lady Jane, Mathinna's educator, is a staunch proponent of the Evangelical principle in relation to education. She states that "The distance between savagery and civilization is measured by our control of our basest instincts. And the road travelled to civilization is, I intend to show, enlightened education" (Flanagan 126). The woman is portrayed as an iron-willed and fanatic person, whose craving for domination and fierce determination become the real reason for Mathinna's inevitable demise. It is worth noting that Evangelicalism promoted a particularly harsh code of children's upbringing, "the Evangelical's anxious eye was forever fixed upon the 'eternal microscope' which searched for every moral blemish and reported every motion of the soul" (Altick 188). In his novels, such as *Oliver Twist, David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations,* where the Evangelical doctrine is pursued for the sake of orphaned children, Dickens vehemently reprobated this pedagogy. It is especially evident in *David Copperfield*, where the dictatorial Murdstone siblings do their best to tame David's "undisciplined heart," which is manifested in Mr Murdstone's ill-treatment and even physical abuse of the boy. In Flanagan's *Wanting*, Mathinna's "undisciplined heart" is supposed to be subdued by the endeavours of Lady Jane Franklin, who believes that diligence, intellectual discipline and moral upbringing will suppress the girl's frivolous desires. To pour the light of civilisation on Mathinna's blemished soul, Lady Jane finds a tutor, Francis Lazaretto, whose curriculum and determination to teach the girl make Lady Franklin enchanted. In this aspect of Mathinna's education, parallels with Dickens's writing can once again be observed. For instance, in the novel *Dombey and Son*, Dickens critiques the pedagogy based on the Evangelical doctrine by introducing Mr Pipchin, a widowed and authoritarian keeper of a boarding school in Brighton,

where Paul Dombey Jr. is sent to improve his health. It should be stressed that Lady Jane's educational approach is nothing but an explicit analogy to Mrs Pipchin's Evangelical views on child upbringing – aiming to eradicate what is perceived as evil or, in Mathinna's case, the Aboriginal culture that is seen to stain the child's soul. This approach involves implementing the characteristics that the model Englishman of the nineteenth century was expected to possess − pride, reserve, and emotional coldness, with no room for any surges of the "undisciplined heart."

> It being a part of Mrs Pipchin's system not to encourage a child's mind to develop and expand itself like a young flower, but to open it by force like an oyster, the moral of these lessons was usually of a violent and stunning character the hero − a naughty boy – seldom, in the mildest catastrophe, being finished off anything less than a lion, or a bear. (Dickens, *Dombey and Son* 105)

This approach aimed at suppressing genuine love, which is essential for making people real human beings. Without love, individuals become savages who, without any scruples, blindly resort to acts of barbarity in the name of philosophies such as those of Darwin, Spencer, or Hartmann.

Lady Jane's pedagogy starts with the obligation imposed on Mathinna to wear shoes, which becomes emblematic of the shackles of slavery inflicted by the British upon the Aborigines. Just as Mathinna's comrades endeavour to defend their identity, the girl opposes the notion of wearing shoes, seeing them as a restriction on her freedom of movement. In a broader context, wearing shoes may be considered by Mathinna as a symbol of betrayal of her own culture and willingness to forget about her real identity. The concept of enslavement in Flanagan's novel brings to mind the Dickensian character from *Great Expectations*, Abel Magwitch. When Pip encounters the fugitive convict in the marshes, he has "a great iron on

his leg" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 6). Similarly to Mathinna, Magwitch can be seen as an individual subjected to British colonial authority.

Lady Franklin believes she is, and is perceived by respectable English society as, "the very finest flowers of England, disciplined in habit, religious in thought, scientific in outlook − a woman who seemed to be the worthy consort of a man celebrated as one of the greatest names in the annals of heroic endurance, and that man himself" (Flanagan 111). Nevertheless, this picture-perfect image of Lady Jane and Sir John Franklin is a superficial façade which covers up their inhuman and hideous selves, as revealed throughout the novel.

The moment Mathinna's education begins, the mountain beyond the city "grew iron-grey with snow cloud" (Flanagan 128), which may function as a telling trope of the coldness and reserve to be imposed on the girl. In considering Mathinna's education, Lazaretto himself "found he had no heart for any of it. It was, he realised, pointless" (128), which demonstrates the futility of Lady Jane's experiment from its inception. As a consequence, the Aboriginal girl starts to spend more time dancing and playing with her parrot, demonstrating her reluctance to become a lady. At the same time, as she begins to move away from the educational programme, she gradually returns to her Tasmanian roots. At this point in the story, however, Sir John Franklin, whose life has been entirely controlled by his wife, and who "felt imprisoned in his desires and dreams of others" (Flanagan 175), becomes captivated by Mathinna's dark eyes and her playful behaviour. Entering her world, the governor can at last do ordinary, simple things, forgetting about his everyday duties. In her presence, Sir John can be himself and secretly relish "those few stolen moments with the child, as opposed to the interminable fantasy world of colonial government, which he increasingly lived in only as a shell" (Flanagan 137). Paradoxically then, it is Mathinna's "undisciplined heart" that manages to tame Lazaretto and even Sir John, the embodiment of English virtues. When this happens, Lady Jane withdraws her interest in Mathinna, she becomes fearful of the girl's

smell, described as “that wild, dangerous, dog smell of children” (Flanagan 134). It becomes apparent that Lady Jane’s primary aim is to eradicate Mathinna’s genuine affection and authenticity at any expense.

Lady Jane’s authoritative stance towards Mathinna can be can be interpreted through the lens of Bhabha’s concept of ambivalence of the colonial stereotype. The fixity of the stereotype aims to reinforce the notion that the colonised are inherently different from and in opposition to the colonisers’ culture, positioning them as the Other. The stereotype serves to help the colonisers normalise and control the perceived “Otherness” of the conquered peoples (Branach-Kallas 25). Driven by racial bias, Lady Jane categorises Mathinna in terms of inferiority, savagery and dirtiness. Thus her strict and principled approach towards the girl allows her to suppress the feeling of fear and uncertainty that the colonised could appear more human while, paradoxically, the coloniser could become more foreign (Branach-Kallas 25), which can be applied to Lady Jane. The ambivalence of the stereotype causes the coloniser’s anxiety and identity crisis, “[t]he stereotype produces on the part of the colonizer both power and pleasure and also anxiety and defensiveness” (McRobbie 110). The stereotype always carries the burden of “*both* an aggressive expression of domination over the other *and* evidence of narcissistic anxiety about the self” (Huddart 29). From Bhabha’s standpoint, the coloniser’s narcissistic feeling of superiority that “reminds [him] of his inherent difference from [the Other]” is threatened by “his aggressivity [that] masks this difference in terms of the politics of identity with the colonized” (Chakrabarti 11). Lady Jane’s behaviour aligns with the concept of ambivalence because her unremitting authoritative stance can be read as a latent anxiety about being tainted by the culture of the Other, and consequently losing her Self and dominance over the girl. As David Huddart says, Bhabha puts emphasis on “unexpected anxieties that plagued the colonizer despite his apparent mastery” (5). In a similar vein, Brett C. Mcinelly reads Robinson Crusoe’s encounter with Friday as a moment

when the white man, in order to overcome his fear of the Other, has to assert control over the Other (18). Crusoe maintains his authority by positioning himself "as 'master,' in control of himself as well as the native Other" (18). A similar situation appears in *Wanting*, where Lady Jane suppresses her own "undisciplined heart" and the discomfort of forming a parental bond with Mathinna, thereby exerting control over herself and the Other.

> But so long accustomed to suppress emotion, and keep down reality; so long schooled for her own purposes, in that destructive school which shuts up the natural feeling of the heart, like flies in amber, and spreads one uniform and dreary gloss over the good and bad, the feeling and the unfeeling, the sensible and the senseless. (Flanagan 126)

Lady Jane's treatment of Mathinna can also be analysed through the lens of Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and ambivalence. Mathinna's attempts to adopt British cultural norms inevitably lead to her being perceived as the Other. Such ambivalence, described by Bhabha as colonial mimicry, results in Mathinna's – the colonised subject – "partial presence", which also "produces a fragmentary vision of the colonist's own identity" (Mcinelly 17). In other words, Mathinna's efforts to emulate the coloniser, the Franklins, fail to provide an accurate reflection of their identity, simultaneously disfiguring their fixed "self-image by casting back an unfamiliar and, at times, unidentifiable image" (Mcinelly 17). Commenting on Lacan's "technique of camouflage" (*The Location* 85) as a metonym of mimicry, Bhabha considers it implicit in colonial discourse – "mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically" (90). Reflecting on the notion of colonial mimicry, it can be said that Mathinna also "revalues the normative knowledges of the priority of race, writing, history" imposed by the British hegemony, "[rearticulating] presence in terms of [her] 'otherness'" (*The Location* 91). In this respect, the Franklins' "desire for mimicry" (Chakrabarti 15), namely, their desire to civilise the girl, seems to be subverted, with the girl

assuming agency. In other words, Mathinna's position changes from disadvantaged to threatening. As has been said, mimicry, recognised as an integral part of colonial hegemony, also carries the "menace" of disrupting colonial authority. This intersection seems to be reflected in *Wanting*. The experiment of civilising the Aboriginal girl turns out to be disastrous not only for Mathinna but also for the Franklins. Both Van Diemen's Land, intended to be an imitation of England, and Mathinna, intended to mimic its culture, overwhelm the Franklins, who leave the island defended. They both lose their authoritative stance: Sir John Franklin can no longer bear the office of a governor because he is unable to deal with the matters on the island, whereas Lady Jane leaves not as Mathinna's mother, but merely as the girl's foster guardian.

The Franklins' attempts to culturally assimilate Mathinna can also be interpreted through the lens of the colonised subject whose identity is split. Mathinna embodies Homi Bhabha's notion of "hybridity" because she appears to inhabit a space in-between, she is drawn to the memory of her indigenous culture and wants to mimic the culture of the colonisers. If read as a hybrid of two cultures, Mathinna emblematically represents a threat to the notion of "the inherent purity of cultures" (*The Location* 58) and the unquestionable originality of the stereotype in the colonial discourse. The existence of cultural hybrids questions cultural homogeneity because "the difference of cultures can no longer be identified or evaluated as objects of epistemological or moral contemplation: cultural differences are not simply there to be seen or appropriated" (114). Mathinna directly threatens the notion of binary oppositions between the Western and non-Western worlds "[breaking] down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside" (*The Location* 116).

The governor desires the child's warmth and touch, but his communion with Mathinna awakes his hidden instincts, especially when the girl performs the dance of a black swan. The swan provides a symbolic connection between the Aboriginal and the European worlds. For

the Aboriginal people of Van Diemen's Land, black swans were their staple food, while to Europeans, swans represented rarity rather than a dietary component. Additionally, the narrator refers also to its mythological significance, noting that Zeus takes the form of a swan to seduce and possess a young woman called Leda, who shares her name with Mathinna. The costume of a black swan that Sir John wears at the fancy dress party aboard the expedition ships *Erebus* and *Terror* epitomises his indomitable desire to possess Mathinna. This pursuit reaches its the climax when Mathinna collapses after her uninhibited dance performance in front of the guests. Sir John, placing the half-conscious girl on a cabin bed and "looking down on Mathinna, her diminutive body, her exposed black ankles, her dirty little feet, the suggestive valley of her red dress between her thin legs, felt thrilled", but after venting his revolting yearning, he "was thrilled no more" (Flanagan 152). The unspeakable act of violence he commits appears to echo Kurtz's "unspeakable rites" in Conrad's novella, which, when viewed more broadly, exposes the truth about the barbarity inherent in the actions of white colonisers. However, Franklin's behaviour can also be viewed in terms of his British identity. As seen in Dickens's and Robinson's manifestations to free themselves from the confines of Britishness, Franklin also manages to momentarily forget his identity, echoing their struggles.

Sir John's desire for Mathinna can also be read symbolically in the context of colonial ambivalence, where the stereotype's originality is always at risk of division. Mathinna embodies the colonised Other, classified by colonial discourse as "mystical, primitive, simple-minded" (*The Location* 82), yet she paradoxically emerges as an object of sexual desire for the coloniser. Lady Jane's attitude toward Mathinna can also be interpreted within the framework of such ambivalence, where the colonial stereotype seems to be fractured, serving as a space for both hate and desire. In other words, as a proponent of imperial ideologies that shape the pure stereotype of the subaltern Other, Lady Jane harbours both hatred and fear

towards the Aboriginal child who, at the same time, stimulates her longing for motherhood. In this respect, the Franklins seem to symbolise "both British colonial violence and imperial paranoia about supposed 'native' savagery" (Major).

Lady Jane's yearning, associated with her civilising mission, is to establish a glyptotech in Hobart Town, a peculiar temple imitating the culture of antiquity, given that "from birth children must breathe in the fresh air of civilisation, not the stinking miasma of forests" (Flanagan 129). Thus the ancient myth of Zeus and Leda is literally transformed into the colonial reality − the masquerade on *Erebus* serves as an artistic setting that overshadows the act of sexual violence on the Aboriginal orphaned girl and foreshadows her final fall. Just like Lady Jane's glyptotech, art turns out to be a meaningless façade, a disguise for real crimes.

In the parallel sections of the novel concerning Dickens, particularly during the writer's and Ellen's visit to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, Flanagan returns to the symbol of the swan. There they look at a painting of a subservient swan in the arms of a young naked woman. It is possible that in the painting Dickens and Ellen see a reflection of themselves. Powerful Zeus who has taken the form of a harmless swan to satisfy his sexual desires can be read as an echo of Dickens's intentions for Ellen. His seemingly innocent and fatherly affection toward the young woman soon evolves into an affair. It seems that this situation presented in *Wanting* implicitly heralds the collapse of Dickens's philosophy of reason in favour of the triumph of his forbidden love towards Miss Ternan. The fact that Dickens, who could be Ellen's father, becomes her secret lover, may be analogous to the relationship between Mathinna and Franklin, who, instead of treating her in a fatherly way, turns out to be her oppressor and rapist. The illicit sexual overtone is a factor that links these two relationships. Tammy Ho Lai-Ming acutely underlines the fact that Franklin's and Dickens's "improper desires for [Mathinna and Nelly] mark them as the cynical savages within the novel," and adds that "the girlhoods of Mathinna and, to a smaller extent, Ellen Ternan are

cannibalised" (14, 32). Separating Ellen from the outside world on his own terms and turning her into a typical Victorian "doll in the doll's house" gave Dickens a sense of security and control until his death. Ellen was his prisoner and a victim of emotional, even if unintentional, abuse. Metaphorically, Ellen's situation mirrors that of Mathinna's, who is framed within the colonial discourse as the possession of the Franklins, a circumstance that figuratively cripples her, much like her portrait with the invisible feet. There are other parallels between Ellen and Mathinna. Both endured the whole range of traumatic events: the loss of their fathers, disreputable professions due to circumstances, seclusion, and experiencing another orphaning after Dickens's premature demise. Just as Ellen, Mathinna, too, becomes an orphan twice, first when King Romeo, her real father, dies, and then when Sir John Franklin abuses and abandons her. Yet, here the comparison between these two characters ends because the scale of mental and psychological wrongdoings Mathinna experiences exceeds all limits. After Dickens's death, Ellen regains her life and starts a family, while Mathinna's traumatic experiences in the colonial reality lead to her ultimate death. Unlike most orphans from Dickens's novels who finally find repose and a chance for a better future, Mathinna is doomed by the colonial condition to extinction, and becomes one of its inevitable and tragic victims. Flanagan considers the contrast between the natives in Van Diemen's Land and Victorian self-control as superficial. Both Dickens and Franklin, who could have served as father figures towards young women – Ellen Ternan and Mathinna respectively – instead use them and turn out to be symbols of oppression through either emotional or sexual violence, "[using] personal power to destabilise the objects of their desire" (Lynch 240). I concur with Margaret Harris's insightful comment on the origin of *Wanting*: "the moral compass that is set by the Aboriginal girl Mathinna goes beyond rebuke of the wilful self-delusion of the Franklins and Dickens, to condemnation of paternalistic European colonialism and misguided Enlightenment aspirations" (137). In this respect, the Franklins' attempts to civilise the girl

can be read as the manifestation of the British imperial project, which regarded non-Western populations as subaltern and weak, in need of Western guidance and supervision.

Both Dickens and Franklin are presented in Richard Flanagan's novel as those afflicted with a recurring sense of captivity in the icy frames of Britishness which suppress any manifestations of spontaneity and passion. Flanagan's biofictional Dickens resorts to superficial salvation found on the stage while performing with Ellen in Wilkie Collins's play, whereas Franklin, trapped in "bastard imitation of England" (Flanagan 58) as well as in his wife's web of sick ambitions, may only find respite in the inaccessible territory of the Northwest Passage, on the opposite side of the globe, the furthest away from Van Diemen's Land as he can get. In the cabin of the ice-bound *Erebus* where Mathinna is raped, Franklin experiences "an intolerable mist full of the moist black stench of gangrene spread from beyond his cabin into midships" (176), which overtly hints at the reek of the rotting bodies Augustus Robinson is exposed to in Van Diemen's Land. The naturalistic depiction of Franklin's agony can be read as a reflection of his and the Empire's moral corruption. Metaphorically, Franklin and the whole façade of the Empire appear to be plagued with gangrene.

In *Heart of Darkness* Joseph Conrad refers to Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Franklin as "knights all, titled and untitled − the great knights-errant of the sea" (4), whose noble efforts of spreading civilisation serve as a veiled critique of imperial pursuits, conquest and subsequent enslavement of the natives in the name of progress. However, Conrad's novella also depicts "progress" which the colonisers achieve in relation to their imperial practices. The "unspeakable rites" that Kurtz takes part in parallel the activities of the British on Van Diemen's land: Robinson's contribution to the decimation of the natives, his autopsies of the Aboriginal bodies and exhibiting King Romeo's skull, or the revolting sexual act that Sir John Franklin commits on the innocent child he has adopted under his roof. Driven by carnal

desires, Sir John Franklin lacks compassion, imposes his will and body on her, and is unable to understand or share Mathinna's emotions. He regresses to barbarism, defined as a disregard for moral rules, and unleashes his suppressed brutal instincts, rendering him akin to Joseph Conrad's Kurtz, especially in view of the later suspicion of cannibalism. Tammy Ho Lai-Ming acutely underlines the fact that "Flanagan's evocation of cannibalism [is] to comment on and critique the British Empire's treatment and exploitation of the land and its people" (14). The depiction of Franklin's violence against Mathinna authenticates the subsequent charges against him. In this respect, aligning with the neo-Victorian inclination to unearth the tabooed facets of Victorian era, Flanagan exposes Franklin's dark side, stressing that once a despicable act is committed, it is likely to happen again. Harassed by a sense of guilt in a place he considers "a weird land predating time, with its vulgar rainbow colours, its vile huge forests and bizarre animals that seemed to have been lost since Adam's exile" (Flanagan 172), like Kurtz, cut off from civilisation, he discovers darkness within. Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist* uses a similar metaphor: "Men who look on nature, and their fellowmen, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the sombre colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. The real hues are delicate, and need a clear vision" (313). Sir John's eyes and his heart become "jaundiced," he loses the clarity of vision to notice the "delicacy" about Mathinna's existence, the fragility of her position. Franklin has a choice to remain a "civilised" man who controls his wild instincts towards the girl, not letting his heart become "jaundiced." However, the act of cannibalism he and his crew are accused of resorting to during his polar expedition on *Erebus* is not solely a matter of his will. It arises from a situation in which primal instincts of survival emerge, hence, he cannot be unequivocally condemned for overstepping the limits in such extreme circumstances. In addition, the infamous *Erebus* and *Terror*, both mentioned by Conrad in the opening passages of *Heart of Darkness*, become salient symbols in Flanagan's novel. The name of Erebus

comes from Greek mythology and means the primordial god of darkness who personified the deepest and the darkest realm of the underworld, where the deceased resided (Kapach). In addition, a mountain discovered by Sir James Clark Ross on 27 January 1841, the highest and most active volcano of Antarctica, was named Erebus ("Mount Erebus"). These mythological and geographical undertones of "Erebus" as well as the literal meaning of "Terror" perfectly reflect the nature not only of Tasmanian reality, but also of all the conquered territories. Colonial imperialism can be compared to a volcano, wreaking havoc and terror, changing the conquered territories into wasteland and forcing the survivors to escape. The condition of the indigenous people is one of being orphaned, forced to sever their ties with their homeland and their loved ones. Moreover, "Erebus" can be read as a metaphor for the eruption Sir John Franklin's lust, which destroys Mathinna's innocence. Flanagan focuses on Van Diemen's Land and Australia in the far south, and then on Canada's north for a reason. By tracing the footsteps of the British in their imperial pursuits, his vision encompasses remote corners of the globe, stressing that the entire colonial enterprise in the regions appropriated by the British Empire runs counter to the moral values so eagerly fostered therein.

Flanagan highlights Lady Jane's cool and indifferent attitude towards Mathinna, which makes her nothing but a version of the cold and ruthless Miss Havisham from Dickens's *Great Expectations*. They are both deprived of maternal feelings and treat the adopted orphans, Estella and Mathinna, like indispensable tools to fulfil their insane ambitions. Similarly, in *Dombey and Son*, Mrs Skiuten in her attitude towards her daughter Edith Granger, emerges as another parallel to Miss Havisham. Edith Granger, married to Mr Paul Dombey, is depicted as a proud woman devoid of any vestiges of love, who accuses her mother of making her an "artful, designing, mercenary, laying snares for men, [who] have never known what it is to have an honest heart, and love" (Dickens, *Dombey and Son* 418). Flanagan's neo-Victorian novel, set in Tasmania, features intensification of white people's

latent violence surfacing without regard for moral code. This situation definitely involves Sir John Franklin as well as Lady Jane. Unlike Miss Havisham and Mrs Skiuten, Lady Jane rebuffs her adopted daughter upon realising her failure to civilise the Aboriginal child. After sending Mathinna to revolting St John's orphanage in Hobart Town, Lady Jane, who "was motivated partly by wounded pride, by a measure − real but not large − of appropriate concern" (Flanagan 189), decides to visit her protégé. Flanagan's account of the conditions in the orphanage and the state of its abused children reflects Dickens's depiction of wronged children living in similarly deplorable conditions in the heart of the Empire. In his biography of Dickens, Ackroyd maintains that, in Victorian period, these children were victims of the so called "baby farming." It meant that "the parish and local authorities gave the orphaned or the abandoned into the care of minders who were paid a certain amount each week per head of child," which Dickens termed simply "a trade" (Ackroyd 586). The novelist openly called for the improvement of the dire living conditions in workhouses and asylums for pauper children, objecting to "the systematic starvation and mistreatment of children who were emaciated, covered in boils, unable to eat, and who ran the risk of being horse-whipped if they complained of their treatment" (586). By exposing and bringing to light the fate of children, especially orphans, Dickens criticised in his novels the deficiencies of the Victorian social system and the indifference of society.

Flanagan's novel reveals that the same inhumane system is replicated in British colonial territories. In fact, Flanagan's depiction of St John's orphanage in Hobart Town is analogous to the institutions in Victorian England so vividly delineated by Dickens, especially in *Oliver Twist:*

> The children slunk away from lady Jane like animals, one part fearful and two parts desperate for food and life; Their faces were subdued and empty, their skin chapped and often scabby, their expressions expressionless. The children seemed too exhausted to do much more than cough and hack and scratch, beset with everything from consumption

> to chilblains, the tormented wounds of which scabbed their arms with bloodied buttercups. (190-191)

The orphanage in *Wanting* is saturated with a stench, identified by Lady Jane "as that of decay" (Flanagan 191), which parallels the fetor of Augustus Robinson's colony on the island and later Sir John Franklin at the quietus of his life. The fact that this unpleasant sensation haunts the English and comes as if full circle in the novel can be read as a metaphorical outcome of the civilising mission, an implication that there is something rotten at its core. Lady Jane's visit to the orphanage becomes a turning point in the novel, revealing the true impact of efforts to "enlighten" this and other Aboriginal children. Despite seeing Mathinna, "already scabby, shaven-headed in a drab cassock who sat alone and unmoving in the dirt below" (192), Lady Jane manages to tame her own "undisciplined heart" which still possesses vestiges of affection and compassion towards the protégé, understanding that her experiment turns out to be an ignominious defeat − Mathinna returns to her primal roots. Driven by her imperial superiority and lack of conscience, Lady Franklin abandons the idea of taking the girl back home, which becomes the beginning of Mathinna's decline.

However, Lady Jane's demeanour changes when, at Dickens's invitation, she decides to watch the play *The Frozen Deep.* Observing the novelist's emotional acting when the script is "describing his soul," the woman realises that "perhaps one exists in those who love you," and hurriedly leaves the theatre (Flanagan 237, 240). At this point in the novel, her frozen heart, faithful to the iron imperial beliefs, again becomes "undisciplined" and begins to long for the rejected Aboriginal girl, who she now knows truly loved her and simply wanted to be loved. The gloomy and grimy ambience of London as Lady Jane steps outside the theatre may be interpreted as a reflection of her state of heart and mind. Her inner life mirrors, in miniature, the colonial mission, which demanded heartlessness and resulted in disastrous outcomes. Flanagan explicitly delineates the consequences of the Franklins' social experiment − from

a witty and charming child, Mathinna changes into an alcoholic and a prostitute who ends up in the Aboriginal community at Oyster Cove, brutally raped and killed by her corrupted companion, Walter Talba Bruney: "The back of [her] body, ragged clothes partly torn away, was crawling with so many lice it more resembled an insect nest than a human being. Several bloody holes gored the exposed flesh where forest ravens had eaten, their unreadable footprints in the mud around" (Flanagan 250). Due to the failure of the Franklins' experiment, Mathinna plunges into a moral abyss, becoming an object of condemnation and derision. One final view of her depicts her lifeless body lying like a discarded carcass, "beyond, life went on as it always had, oblivious to tragedy or joy" (251). This passage may be read as a commentary on the human condition, but also as a reflection on social indifference. It also serves as a commentary on the colonial condition because it points to the indifference of the civilised world to the suffering of colonial victims and orphans.

Mathinna's story lucidly alludes to Bhabha's full spectrum of the concept of "unhomeliness," which, in Bhabha's view, is also a facet of hybridity. A hybrid, whose cultural identity is split, becomes equivalent to an unhomely identity when the subject experiences the emotional state of being located between two cultures. As has been said, the feeling of "unhomeliness" occurs as a result of "extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations," which explicitly emerges in the novel. Mathinna's relocation from the land of her ethnic identification to the Franklins' Government House to be assimilated to the Western culture, and then to the orphanage, seems to fully convey the meaning of the concept when "the borders between home and world become confused" (*The Location* 9). In the same vein, Lois Tyson suggests that "unhomeliness" is the result of "the trauma of the cultural displacement," when the forced migration of the indigenous populations "scattered large numbers of peoples around the globe, and large populations of their descendants have remained in the diaspora, or separated from their original homeland" (421). In addition to this,

Mathinna's story, which revisits and articulates Aboriginal colonial history, overtly alludes to Bhabha's predication that "the unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence" (*The Location* 11). Her tragic life can be read as "the unhomely moment" representing a repetition, or rather a foreshadowing, of the history of genocide of indigenous Australians during British colonial conquest, as well as the later cultural assimilation of children called the Stolen Generation. The notion of "unhomeliness" also refers to the drastic transformation of the indigenous land, as evidenced in the novel when the land Mathinna's native community used to inhabit, renamed Robinson's camp, is supposed to achieve and mimic European standards. The practice of transforming and renaming the colonised territories overtly relates to *Terra Nullius,* a legal term used in the nineteenth century and most commonly referred to "legitimizing the British invasion and its accompanying acts of dispossession and the destruction of indigenous society" in Australia (Lindqvist 193). Salhia Ben-Messahel refers to the term *Terra Nullius*, conceptualising how "The legal doctrine of *Terra Nullius* consequently justified Britain's appropriation of place and Eurocentric approach of naming and renaming at a time when the Western world endeavoured to conquer what was thought to be untamed and uninhabited territories" (21).

One of the definitions of civilisation says that it is "the state of having an advanced level of social organization and a comfortable way of life" ("Civilization"). The same dictionary provides several definitions of the word "orphan," one of which says that an orphan is a person "without protective affiliation" ("Orphan"), where "affiliation" can be interpreted in direct relation to the victims of colonialism who become "unaffiliated," torn from their roots and never recognized as full members of the newly-formed colonies. "The comfortable way of life" was the condition that the colonisers wanted to achieve for themselves at the cost of the colonised. Mathinna becomes an embodiment of colonial orphanhood. Deprived of

homeland and brutally cut off from her roots, she is excluded from colonial history, deemed unworthy of being remembered. Yet, in Flanagan's neo-Victorian interpretation of colonial history, she is given new life, flesh, and voice. Mathinna symbolises "the disenfranchised, the marginalized, the unhomed" (Tyson 428), representing the Aboriginal colonial condition. In other words, her fate serves as a metaphor for the genocide of the indigenous peoples in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) during the nineteenth century. It should be noted that Flanagan, like other neo-Victorian writers, rewrites, or maybe restores marginalised identities back to Victorian past, allowing people of colour and the enslaved to be brought to the centre of stories. In this respect, Flanagan "reconfigures and renames history by exposing the wanting elements in colonial discourse" (Ben-Messahel 21).

Ho Lai-Ming notices that Flanagan "questions and undermines the masculinized imperialistic project, especially as the characters are meant to be read as representatives of Britain and the Empire" (14). The gendering of the imperialistic project discussed by the author brings to mind Edward Said's postcolonial discourse on the semiotics of Orientalism. According to Said, the binary typology of the weak feminine East and the authoritative masculine West seems evident in the scholarly exploration of the Orient, which is to say, "a learned Westerner [surveyed] … the passive, seminal, feminine, even silent and supine East … making the Orient deliver up its secrets under the learned authority of a philologist" (*Orientalism* 138). Said also argues that the European process of feminising the Orient, as evidenced in the above features, is counterposed with Western masculinity "on which larger national and imperial projects relied" (Hill 7-8), and they, in turn, resulted from "institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient" (*Orientalism* 67). Thus the Orient became *orientalised* by the Orientalists, who forced "the uninitiated Western reader to accept Orientalist codifications as the *true* Orient" (67). Similarly, "the colony of Tasmania [in *Wanting*] is described through the colonial perception of the settlers and ruling parties"

(Ben-Messahel 25). British colonisers create both the "reality" of Australian antipodes and its people and the narratives about them to suit their own interests. British colonial expansion in the "effeminate" tropical areas seems to be contrasted with Franklin's project of Arctic exploration that accentuated British masculinity and sturdiness. Jen Hill stresses that the Arctic expanse, a wild, uncivilised and inaccessible territory that became Sir John Franklin's aim of conquest, "could provide a counter to the troubling moral questions raised by domestic economy reliance on slavery and other forms of colonial exploitation, an ultimate space of white masculine self-reliance" (6). In this respect, if successful, Franklin's expedition could have strengthened the Empire's pioneering position and served as a form of distraction from the burdens of British colonialism, because "the Arctic was a landscape on which assertions and critiques of nation and empire could unroll at a literal safe distance" (Hill 4-5). In her article analysing the shifting cultural perceptions of Franklin's Arctic exploration, Agnieszka Izdebska sees Flanagan's *Wanting* as a comment on Hill's arguments (70), suggesting that they offer similar interpretations of the motives behind the expedition. In Flanagan's portrayal of Franklin, the Arctic becomes a realm free from colonial compilations, akin to Hill's notion of "safe distance" from the complex imperial issues (Izdebska 70).

This chapter would be incomplete without reference to Conrad's seminal articulation of colonial imperialism. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad writes as follows:

> The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental presence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea−something you can set up, and blow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. (7)

Colonialism required an idea, which is vital, as Edward Said puts it, "to dignify simple conquest" (*Orientalism* 216), an idea of taking the uncivilised world under the protective

umbrella of the Western civilisation, an idea of being a privileged white man who carries a white man's burden, as Kipling put it. Finally, it is an idea that drives Lady Jane Franklin in her futile endeavour to civilise "benighted" Mathinna. However, the Franklins' failure to fulfil their parental duties towards the native child seems parallel to Mother Britain's defeat in extending protective parenthood over the "uncivilised" world.

Chapter Three:

Revisiting the Victorians and "The Other" in *Jack Maggs* by Peter Carey

A laureate of many prestigious awards, like the Booker Prizes for Fiction in 1988 and 2001, as well as the Commonwealth Writers Prizes in 1998 and 2001, Peter Carey is a world-renowned Australian writer. Published in 1997, his sixth novel *Jack Maggs,* is a rewriting of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. It seems noteworthy that in writing against Dickens's novel, Carey does not resign from orphanhood, a motif closely associated with Dickensian fiction. As Alan Gordon notes, "Carey's extensive use of orphaned and partially orphaned characters rivals even that of the writer who inspired *Jack Maggs,* Charles Dickens." Examining the novel from a postcolonial perspective, Susan Onega and Christian Gutleben notice that Carey "writes back against a canonized Victorian text … [and] undermines the values taken for granted by the once dominant Anglo-centric discourse of the Imperial epicentre" (124). In a similar vein, Beverly Taylor remarks that by revisiting and articulating a history of the Australian convict, Carey "tells the truth withheld by Dickens, stripping away the layers of Victorian garb that conceal a 'page' recording the horrors of British colonial practices" (95). At the same time, introducing the enigmatic novelist and journalist, Tobias Oates, Carey draws the reader's attention to some peculiarities and controversial episodes from Charles Dickens's life. In this way, the novel, on the one hand, "opens up the gaps and silences of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861) to present

a post-colonial perspective on the Victorian classic" (Hadley 158). On the other hand, as Sign Meinig notices, "Elements which evoke the literary criticism on Dickens's work and his biography, especially the character constellation with his wife and her sister, but also characteristics like 'vulgar' waistcoats, the interest in mesmerism, or the author's fastidiousness, are integrated in this fictional portrayal" (*Witnessing* 115).

Set in 1837, Carey's novel focuses on Jack Maggs, an orphan and ex-convict who illegally returns to London after twenty four years spent in a penal colony in New South Wales. Maggs arrives in London to find Henry Phipps, the orphan he had met in a forge and whom he had made a gentleman thanks to the fortune earned in New South Wales. When he does not find Henry at 7 Great Queen Street, he accepts a post of a footman in Mr Percy Buckle's household next door. There he meets a young and famous writer Tobias Oates who offers Jack to help him find Henry in return for mesmeric sessions he is supposed to undergo. In the course of the novel, Maggs writes letters to Henry in which he recounts a story of his tragic childhood spent with an abortionist, Mary Britten, and a thief, Silas Smith. Brought up by Mary Britten, Jack is taught to rob rich people's houses. After being arrested, he is banished from England to a penal colony in New South Wales for twenty four years.

3.1. Jack Maggs: a Marginalised Orphan of the Colonial Discourse "Disinterred"

Employed by Percy Buckle, the heir of a fortune from a long-lost relative, Jack Maggs is to serve a festive dinner whose guest of honour is Tobias Oates. Unexpectedly, a bout of palsy along with "the pain [that] slapped his face like a clawed cat" attacks the convict in

front of the guests (Carey 29). The first person to help Jack overcome the seizure is Tobias Oates, who fervently puts him in a mesmeric state. Under hypnosis, he mentions some facts concerning his criminal past and deportation to a penal colony in New South Wales. The convict feels insecure, "burgled, plundered" (32). It turns out Tobias is the man to whom Jack has a great deal of animosity, but he seems oblivious to the fact that his ability to enter Jack's soul and extricate him from the pain or the demon residing within heralds the elicitation of the mysteries of his own blemished soul: "For the writer was stumbling through the dark of the convict's past, groping in the shadows, describing what was often a mirror held up to his own turbulent and fearful soul" (Carey 91). A glimpse into the soul of the criminal mind is "as if he entered the guts of a huge and haunted engine" (130), in which he seems to distinguish the mirror image of his own ego. These images bring to mind Tobias's own latent apprehension of the exposure of his affair with his sister-in-law.

Throughout the course of the novel, Maggs is often compared to an untamed beast with "eyes … wild and black [and] hair most queerly disarrayed" (Carey 57). This comparison becomes even more visible when Tobias hypnotises Jack, making the convict appear "truly like a wild animal, and Tobias his expert trainer" (84). The fact that Jack is the convict who has received corporal punishment as his body has revealed "the sea of pain etched upon [his] back, a brooding sea of scars, of ripped and tortured skin" (Carey 86), is a metaphorical testimony of colonial atrocities inflicted on the Empire's own social outcasts. The punishment was "invented in New South Wales" by a white man to breed out any vestiges of corruption inhabiting the convicts' souls (Carey 88).

The process of taming Maggs, commenced in the penal colony in New South Wales and then undertaken by Tobias, is parallel to the process of taming the so-called "inferior races" in the guise of bringing civilisation, or as Edward Said puts it: "Lurking everywhere behind the pacification of the subject race is imperial might" (*Orientalism* 36). Jack's behaviour poses

a threat to the stability of the centre as he is a person permeated with the culture of the uncivilised Other. Jack makes the brutality of the colonial reality of New South Wales encroach upon the world of hegemonic culture, wreaking havoc and disruption, comparable to the havoc wreaked by the nineteenth-century empires. Carey exposes a paradox in this situation: such behaviour was regarded as a departure from British values, a violation of the civilized norms, while at the same time, the barbarian practices of colonialists in the overseas territories were considered common and desirable within the accepted ethical norms. Maggs is not the only convict to experience exile from England in the novel. Having learnt about Jack's past, Percy Buckle recollects his sister's banishment to Botany Bay, wondering how it was possible that "Mother England would do such a thing to one of her own" (Carey 89). Clearly "Mother" England neglected her parental duties not only towards her adopted indigenous children, the Empire's offspring in the overseas territories, but also towards her own domestic children.

Not without a reason does Carey introduce the figure of Percy Buckle in the novel. Being an heir of a considerable fortune and not a born gentleman, Mr Buckle embodies the central theme from Dickens's *Great Expectations*: what it means to be a gentleman. Dickens himself grapples with the complexity and ambiguity surrounding the notion of being a gentleman. The author unquestionably attempted to face his own fears connected with his traumatic past in *Great Expectations*, "a novel in which he is engaged in exorcising the influence of his past by rewriting it" (Ackroyd 930). Although Dickens was a gentleman by birth, his past in Warren's blacking factory remained his closely guarded hidden secret. It unambiguously resurfaces in Pip's recollections of his childhood encounter with Magwitch, who epitomises the "lowness" of the criminal world: "the secret was such an old one now, had so grown into me and became a part of myself, that I could not tear it away" (*Great Expectations* 113). "Lowness" is the word which actually keeps appearing in Pip's memories of Magwitch. Feeling embarrassed by his social status and family background, Pip yearns to

leave the forge and the "low" life it stands for, echoing Dickens's own need to distance himself from the humiliating experience of his past. The word "common" was the word towards which Dickens felt a great deal of animosity, the word which looms over Pip in *Great Expectations*: "I knew I was common, and that I wished I was not common, and that the lies had come of it somehow" (66-67). The "lies" can be understood within the context of Dickens's secrecy about his shameful occupation in the factory. Even in the company of his family, Dickens "also told [lies] in order to protect himself" (Ackroyd 104). The notion of being or not being a gentleman is also addressed by Carey when Tobias, pretending to be a doctor, is accused by doctor Grieves of killing an old butler, Mr Spinks, due to his incompetence and lack of proper training. For Tobias, it "was only another way of saying that he was not a gentleman" (Carey 180).

Carey's rewriting of *Great Expectations* is especially evident in the stories of Jack, the epitome of Abel Magwitch, and Henry Phipps, the counterpart of Pip. By rewriting of *Great Expectations*, Carey "uses its intertextuality to question the notion of historical genealogy and origin in the story of an Australian convict" (Meinig, *Witnessing* 110). Shackled in chains, Jack first meets Henry, the orphaned, miserable, four-year old boy on "a cold miserable sort of day, with bitter wind blowing low and hard across the marshes" (Carey 262), in the forge while being transported to the ship leaving for New South Wales. The moment the boy offers Jack "a pig's trotter" to eat, the convict makes a sombre promise: "I would come back from my exile and take him from his orphanage, that I would spin him a cocoon of gold and jewels, that I would weave him a nest so strong that no one would ever hurt his goodness" (Carey 264). While in Dickens's original story, Magwitch does not meet Pip in a forge but in the marshes, similarly to Maggs, he decides to ensure Henry's prosperous future. However, in *Great Expectations*, it can be observed that the roles reverse when Magwitch arrives in London. Realising the emptiness of his parasitic existence, which involves rejecting the

principles of upper-class society, Pip offers Magwitch housing and protection, assists him in leaving the country, and, following their plan's failure, remains with him until his demise in prison. In this way, Pip transforms into a true gentleman truly grateful to Magwitch: "I will never stir from your side, said I, when I am suffered to be near you. Please God, I will be as true to you as you have been to me" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 408). Carey's evident departure from portraying Henry Phipps as a version of Pip from Dickens's novel can be seen in the context of colonial dynamics, particularly from the British perspective on Australia. By depicting Henry Phipps as an ungrateful and corrupted alcoholic rejecting and even ready to slay Jack Maggs, Carey seems to undermine Dickensian colonial discourse. Jenni Ramone argues that "Pip is marginalised in the figure of Henry Phipps," which is definitely the aftermath of Carey's conviction that "Dickens's portrayal of Australia and the Australian" is unfair (176). Carey notes that "*Great Expectations* is a way in which the English have colonised our ways of seeing ourselves" (Carey in Woodcock 122). Yet Woodcock's statement does not have to refer to the way of seeing Australians. It can demonstrate that through a lens of *Great Expectations,* the English seem to have adopted the Dickensian means of seeing themselves. Pip appears to become an idealised representation of England that is protective, self-sufficient and successful.

In Dickens's novel, Magwitch emerges as the embodiment of Australians, metaphorically orphaned by the Empire, since "the colonial fatherland that has rejected its colonial 'offspring'" created the future generations of postcolonial orphans unable to determine their cultural identity (Ramone 176). Carey seems to "disinter" *Great Expectations* by diminishing the importance of Henry Phipps and granting agency to Jack Maggs, a reworking of Magwitch. In contrast to Dickens's original, Maggs not only takes control over the events in Carey's novel, but also is allowed to present his own narrative. It makes Carey's novel a story that, as Colette Selles suggests, reverses "the 'cultural cringe', presents

a self-assertive image of the often denigrated former colony" (63). Australia and Abel Magwitch in *Great Expectations* are both silenced and, like other colonial territories, are rendered "transparent or invisible" with their "relentless recognition of the Other [hidden] by assimilation" (Spivak, "Subaltern" 265). Abel Magwitch and his antipodean story are assimilated into the Eurocentric, hegemonic perspective from which the novel is narrated − Pip's story predominates, while Magwitch's is an episodic, veiled backdrop to the tale of the making of a gentleman.

Convicts, regarded as the undesirable and marginalised citizens of Victorian England, were considered a stain on the impeccable façade of English morality and were thus deported to penal colonies in order to serve their sentences. Orphaned by being coercively and physically displaced from their motherland, unwanted and then forgotten by the British Empire, the convicts, having completed the sentences, could not afford to return to the country and thus peopled the colonies. This is the story of Jack Maggs, who has been sent to the penal colony in Australia. Like other convicts, he is regarded as a pernicious individual incompatible with the British "superior" culture. Although he has English blood in his veins, Maggs, a convict and a social outcast, falls into the category of "Otherness" that was pivotal to the ideology of British superiority. Yet Maggs is not a typical Other. He can be labelled as such because he has experienced and is immersed in the indigenous culture, which contrasts sharply with British norms. Apart from "Otherness," as formulated in colonial discourse, this category also referred to homebred others, criminals, prostitutes and homosexuals living in imperial London, social outcasts "portrayed by hegemonic discourses as just 'threatening' as people of different races and nationalities from the colonies" (Mousoutzanis 325). In the case of Jack, his "Otherness" seems to be even more intimidating. He emerges both as domestic and colonial "savage," who returns to London "to establish the depravity of the domestic subject" (Malchow 72), to reenact his own story, making his colonial past "constantly

reimagined by the present" (Gelder, Salzman 103). Maggs's "Otherness" can be represented in terms of the Freudian concept of *unheimlich*, "meaning unhomely or uncanny," defined as "strange, foreign … demonic and gruesome," the opposite to *heimlich* connected with familiarity and a sense of belonging to a family (Peters L. 19). Elaborating on the concept uncanny, Laura Peters presents a compelling connection between this term and the portrayal of the orphan figure in Victorian society. The orphan, seen as foreign, unfamiliar, because he or she was "outside the dominant narrative of domesticity," seemed to deconstruct the model of the middle-class Victorian family, thus "occupying the same relationship of the uncanny or *unheimlich* to the *heimlich*" (Peters L. 19). In this respect, Maggs can be read as such an uncanny orphan, excluded from the society because he poses a threat to the integrity of British national identity.

Maggs metaphorically emerges as the muted voice of the emerging Australian culture, detracting and destabilising the centre, which loses its paramount stance by being forcibly redefined by another version of the Other from the colonial peripheries. Suppressed in Dickens's novel, Carey seems to "disinter" the convict "to destabilize the very basis of fictional authority – and with it linear, filial lines of influence between metropolis and former colony" (Thieme 109).

This reverse role of the centre and peripheries in Carey's novel can be read through the lens of Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry. It refers not only to an omnipresent symptom of imperial domination, but can also be treated as a veneer of the colonised who imitates the coloniser's culture with the effect of distorting and ridiculing its dominance. As has been said, Jack is not a colonised individual, so it would seem he does not need to mimic British culture. He is a diasporic individual living by his culture in a different geographical and distant cultural context. However, the essence of Britishness seems as alien to him as it is to Mathinna from Flanagan's *Wanting*. In the colonial context, mimicry served as a metonym for

resistance of the subaltern subject created by the Western culture through the prism of stereotypes − the subject is no longer silent and devoid of cultural identity, but an individual capable of challenging the stereotypical image of the "inferior Other" imposed by the dominant culture. Commenting on Bhabha's notion of mimicry, Sumit Chakrabarti suggests that the colonised mimic man is situated "in the ambivalent position of the hybrid subject who is neither coloniser nor colonised, but something in between" (13). This in-between position means that the subject "who is 'white, but not quite' pretends the beginning of the counter-gaze that effectively displaces the social control of the power centre" (13). In other words, hybridity, which "is the sign of the productivity of the colonial power" (*The Location* 112), subverts the coloniser's authority by enabling the emergence and articulation of other histories consciously suppressed by colonisers. A parallel conjuncture can be noticed in Carey's novel, where the colonial discourse seems to be deflated by the hybrid from the colonial periphery that is both the Empire's "monstrous progeny and enemy" (Mousoutzanis 327). This hybrid of two versions of polarised cultures preeminently epitomises an audible voice of the subaltern, one to subvert the "superior" culture from within. As the non-indigenous inhabitant of the settler colony, Maggs is seen as culturally "inferior" due to both lacking British cultural sophistication and staying in contact with other races. Settler colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and earlier also the United States were inhabited by convicts and "younger sons of downwardly mobile families … 'refuges' escaping social rejection, religious persecution, or economic hard times" (Johnston, Lawson 362-3). Those Englishmen "were frequently characterized in domestic cultural and political discourses as ungovernable, uncultured: as 'colonials' they were second-class" (363).

Dickens's Magwitch is delineated in the demonic and cannibalistic light "with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied around his head ... smothered in mud," having "a great iron on his leg" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 6) with "his 'shuddering' body [being] representative

of his fragile status in English society" (Ramone 177). Pip later becomes Magwitch's guardian, a fact which exposes "an imperialistic assumption that the civilised, sensible England fathers the unruly, dangerous and weak child Australia" (Ramone 176).

Carey skilfully refers to the negligence of the motherland towards the colony and the bereavement experienced by its offspring by introducing the character of Mary Britten, called by Jack "Ma Britten." She is a thief who sells the misshapen pills triggering miscarriages, and becomes the dishonourable paragon of "the colonial motherland, Mother Britain" (Ramone 178). Mary's pathos can be seen as parallel to Jack's – she is a marginalised social outcast. Her illegal practices aimed at killing the unborn members of Victorian society can be read in terms of revengeful representation. Similarly to Jack, Mary destabilises and depraves the society she is rejected by.

In his diary to Henry Phipps, Jack Maggs recollects his beloved, motherless Sophina, Silas Smith's daughter who, together with Jack, is used in the thieving deeds. Jack and Sophina's sexual affair results in their conceiving a baby who is forcibly aborted by Mary Britten and thrown into a cesspool: "There lay our son – the poor dead mite was such a tiny thing. I could have held him in my hand. And on his queerly familiar little face, a cruel and dreadful cut" (Carey 241). The brutality of the bloody imperial dynamics is as if reenacted in Mary's infamous actions, similarly aimed at eliminating the "hindrance." This circumstance evokes a metaphorical association with the colonial scheme the purpose of which was to get rid of those who stood in the way of the imperial advancement, the "inferior" races doomed to extinction. Jack's recollection of cleaning this room – which was "full of blood in quantities enough to frighten any child" (Carey 211) – "with soap and scrubbing brush," carries another symbolic overtone: to conceal the inconvenient truth from morally advanced Victorian society about the daily brutalities performed by the civilised colonisers and to feed the public with the empty imperial cliché of the advancement of the noble colonial mission. Jenni Ramone states

that the British colonial parenthood is portrayed as a failure in Carey's novel: "By portraying the figure who represents Britain as colonial motherland as an abortionist and an uncaring maternal figure, Carey is suggesting that Britain had neglected its 'parental' responsibility to Australia, or that it had no ability to carry out such duties in the first place" (Ramone 178).

If the name "Ma Britten" epitomises something sinister in *Jack Maggs*, then its infamous equivalent, "Little Britain," can also be found in *Great Expectations*. This is a place where Mr Jaggers's office is located. When Pip goes there for the first time, he sees: "a gloomy street" (Dickens, *Great Expectations* 150), "the shameful place, being all smear with filth and fat and blood and foam" (152). The place stands for decay right in the heart of imperial London. A parallel scene in Carey's novel features Mary Britten making comments: "but that is what becomes of us down here in Hell's Doorway. Sitting here, said [Mary], looking at the Devil's thieving ways etc. etc." (Carey 77). This quotation can be read as an implicit allusion to the degrading and devilish practices of the British in the colonial areas that must have been regarded by the colonisers as the "Hell's Doorway." However, this term, similarly to Dickens's unfavourable depiction of London, is more likely to refer to evil of imperial London. It seems that in both cases, London becomes a reflection of corruption of the British nation. Paradoxically, Mother Britain's "parental" negligence was not only inflicted upon its colonial areas, but also the poorest citizens of London who, according to Dr Simons, were seen "as a race apart" (Ackroyd 403): "swarms of men and women who have yet to learn that human beings should dwell differently from cattle – swarms to whom personal cleanliness is utterly unknown; swarms by whom delicacy and decency in their social relations are quite unconvinced" (403).

Standing for the denigrated Australian "offspring" of the Empire, Maggs – unlike Magwitch who, when he returns to London, feels like an embattled animal to be eventually slain – does not hide in the shadows: he is a confident, independent, well-dressed and affluent

businessman who finally returns to New South Wales, leaving the moral grime of Victorian London behind. He takes care of his two children and lives a prosperous life in the land, "orphaned" in Dickens's novel. This intentional subversion in relation to the hypotext can also be read in parent-child relations. Unlike Dickensian depiction of Magwitch who needs to be nursed by the British citizen, Maggs in Carey's novel becomes a real father "who escapes the infantilization engrained in filial models of the relationship between metropolis and colony" (Thieme 121). It turns out, the supposedly weaker, inferior child-like Australia can take care of itself whereas the superior "stronger" British Empire should first clean the mess in its own forgotten alleyways before starting to enlighten the world.

Carey demonstrates a metaphorical retaliation of the colonial inhabitants for the imperial invasion in the actions of Jack. He is the one to discredit Percival Buckle, to take control of the course of events in the story; he is regarded as the aggressor incarcerating some of the British citizens and he is capable of murder to achieve his goals; in other words, he is the epitome of the colonised and denigrated Australia that avenges itself. I suggest that Maggs yearns to define his identity in his own terms not in relation to the Empire. He becomes a voice of those silenced, neglected, devoid of their motherland, thus emotionally and literally orphaned, whose origins, culture and history were uprooted by the colonial project. According to Linda Hutcheon:

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

Jack Maggs can be read as a postmodern novel because in its pejorative rewriting of G*reat Expectations*, the novel becomes a pastiche of representation of the Victorian culture. The intersectionality of postcolonialism and postmodernism is explicit because "Carey sets up a relation between the two terms, such that *Australia*, seen in a 'postcolonial' sense, and *literature*, in a 'postmodern' sense, converge" (Kane 519). Carey demonstrates that the influence of the colonial "past – the 'postcolonial condition' – is transformed into a vision of the future: Australia as a postmodern society" (522).

3.2. Tobias Oates as Carey's Neo-Victorian Image of Dickens

The parallels to Dickens's life in *Jack Maggs* seem to be more explicit than in the other analysed novels. The parallels refer to the method of creating the represented world and characters in the novel, since Carey also reveals the life episodes and secrets of the writer.

It has to be noted that similarly to Flanagan's *Wanting*, in *Jack Maggs*, there are also allusions to the most shameful and controversial parts of Dickens's biography, which makes both novels testimonies of Victorian hypocrisy.

In *Jack Maggs* there are many parallels between Carey's protagonist and Dickens. Apart from Tobias's physical features that resemble Dickens, there are correlations with Dickens's biography by Ackroyd that pertain to his intimate sphere of life.

Tobias's physiognomy bears affinity to Charles Dickens's portrait created by Samuel Laurence in 1838, showing "a more fleshy and sensual Dickens [with his] large eyes and

penetrating glance" (Ackroyd 304), the portrait Dickens "endured rather than enjoyed" (263). The word "sensual" in the description of Dickens seems pivotal, as this characteristic appears to have become more prominent in his later life, during his affair with Ellen Ternan. Tobias Oates's study "was ordered methodically" where "everything was secured in its own place" (Carey 44), which is another peculiarity in the characteristics of Dickens. In his biography Ackroyd accentuates Dickens's penchant for order, explaining that the novelist "had a nervous habit of placing chairs and tables in precisely the right position," adding that he "could not bear anything to be out of place" (Ackroyd 235). In *Jack Maggs*, Tobias's prevailing feature is his craving for fame and recognition, "constantly confirming his position in the world" (26) to become a novelist that "might topple Thackeray himself" (44) and glow "within the enclosure of [the public's] love" (135), having the mirrors installed in his house, seemingly "desired for their light" (Carey 37), which, however, might be seen as a hallmark of his self-idolatry. This fact is another parallel with Dickens, whose vanity and sense of self-esteem can be seen in the fact that he "installed mirrors in whichever house he occupied" or in his imperious character, particularly "at times when he believe[d] his own worth [was] being slighted or his reputation assaulted" (Ackroyd 215). The fear of breaking down, the fear of being ridiculed, the fear of being laughed at were combined with Dickens's vulnerability to slights and his concern about public opinion (874).

Ackroyd mentions that Thackeray was Dickens's greatest rival and later his enemy, after spreading rumours that the main cause of Dickens's separation from his wife was an affair with Ellen Ternan, which he dexterously camouflaged for thirteen years. In *Jack Maggs,* Carey aptly evokes Oates's greatest apprehensions: a spectre of his tarnished reputation after the exposure of his affair with Lizzie, when Tobias imagines himself as a "reviled creature who could never hold his head up again; he would be poor, and hated" (198). The fear of poverty and public rebuff emerge as an explicit parallel to Dickens's life,

which was similarly permeated with his frantic fear of losing all the eminence and being "cast back into the state of childhood" (Ackroyd 439). It was the period when he felt emotionally orphaned by his parents and when his "early experiences in the Marshalsea Prison and the blacking factory provoked an anxiety which only the assurance of financial well-being could assuage" (197). Tobias's craving for capital and financial stability certainly mirrors Dickens's "fear of ruin, of being thrust down again into poverty, to go the way of his father into a debtors' prison" (Ackroyd 439) but it also illustrates his allegiance to the philosophy of Utilitarianism and the Victorian *laisser-faire* doctrine. Also the theme of incarceration looms large in *Jack Maggs*: as a five-year-old boy, Tobias witnesses his father's imprisonment on charges of murder, the episode that definitely "made its impressions on the little boy" (Carey 196). Carey's reference to this episode from Dickens's childhood is an echo of the trauma that stayed with Dickens forever and accounted for his fear of financial insecurity in his adult life. Carey reflects this motif in his novel, endowing Tobias with a nagging paranoia of financial instability and thoughts which occupy his mind "with the question of money, with how to get it and get it quickly" (192). Tobias's father, a man of "the diminutive size" (Carey 196), is indicted for killing a brutal and bulky man named Judd, which appears to be an implicit parallel to an episode from *Great Expectations* concerning Estella's mother, Molly, who murdered "a woman, a good ten years older, very much larger, and very much stronger" (Dickens 359). I suggest this disproportion between the assailants and the deceased, the "disparity in strength" (Carey 196) presented by Dickens and then rewritten by Carey can be seen as a metaphor for Dickens's own "battle of life": this literally short man yearned to overcome mounting anxieties connected with the humiliating occupation and his father's incarceration for debts. "The susceptibility of the anxious child. The dread. The fear of being abandoned. The fear of being unloved" were the phantoms that always pervaded Dickens's

life (Ackroyd 875). It seems that Carey accurately picks up on the notion of tackling one's fears or misgivings, unambiguously exposing it in the following scene:

> John Oates believed that you must meet with what was frightening you. If it was a dark corner, you entered it. If it was a bucking horse, you mounted it. If it was a storm, you walked through it. And Tobias, who was almost exactly his father's height, also inherited his habit of confronting what he feared. (197)

Like Dickens, Tobias Oates "feared poverty; he wrote passionately about the poor" (Carey 192). The above latent fear definitely stems from his childhood recollections and relationship with his parents − Dickens "rejected both of his parents when he recreated himself in language. In the act of composition he was in a sense divesting himself of origins and claiming a kind of imaginative orphanhood," which, as Ackroyd has put it, was the "filial betrayal" (876-877). In *Great Expectations* Pip utters meaningful words: "it is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home" (Dickens 100), which echo Dickens's own reminiscence of home and childhood. Dickens's craving for inner security is mirrored in *Jack Maggs* in the account of Tobias's family, his wife and a three-month old son, John: "Having come from no proper family himself, or none that he could remember without great bitterness, he had for all his short, determined life carried with him a mighty passion to create that safe and warm world he had been denied" (Carey 36). In addition to this, Tobias is obsessed with the criminal minds and murders, keeping records from the Parisian morgue, a thief's hand and the post-mortem mask of John Sheppard hanged in 1724. These examples are a nod to Dickens's taste for attending public executions, depicted in some of his novels and reconstructed during the public readings, his visits to the Parisian morgue, or his night walks through the most hideous districts of London. Ackroyd reminds us that:

> It is this fascination, this 'invisible force,' that links Dickens so closely to the murders in his fiction. Of Tulkinghorn. Of Drood. In a very real sense the act of killing evokes

> for him a kind of poetry of suffering, a poetry of violence. Bill Sikes's murder of Nancy which he repeated endlessly in his public readings, Jonas Chuzzlewit's murder of Montague Tigg, all the butcheries in *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Barnaby Rudge*, are part of this terrible threnody. (546)

Another parallel to Dickens, who was a consummate observer of "the small nervous habits, the professional gestures, the unconscious movements" (Ackroyd 422), becomes especially discernible in Tobias's process of creation and alteration of his fictional characters.

> Toby had always had a great affection for characters, reflected Lizzie Warriner: dustmen, jugglers, coasters, pick-pockets. He thought nothing of engaging the most gruesome types in Shepherd Market and writing down their histories in his chap book. The subject of his Mesmeric Exhibition did not know it, but he was likely to appear, much modified, in Toby's next novel. (Carey 81)

In the course of the novel, Tobias attempts to create the outline of his next novel. This includes the stories concerning the "sweeper boy" and the "canary woman," parallels to Dickens's two significant characters from *Bleak House*: Joe, a crossing sweeper, and Miss Flite, the owner of a great number of little birds to be released upon the completion of the ancient *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* lawsuit. The choice of these two particular characters from Dickens's novel is not accidental. In *Bleak House*, the caged birds are a metaphor for the inept British legal system, its injustice, negligence towards the citizens as well as its camouflaged wrongdoings. In *Jack Maggs*, however, Carey's use of the symbol of the birds can be interpreted through a postcolonial lens. It can be read as a metaphor for the indigenous inhabitants enslaved and oppressed by the British Empire. Carey implicitly criticises British vices, injustices, or bestiality towards the indigenous peoples. On the biographical level, the symbol of caged birds can also stand for the relationship between Dickens and Ellen − the

woman blindly reliant on her great protector, literally incarcerated in the golden cage of his self-adoration.

The "sweeper boy" is one in a collection of Dickensian orphans who live in abject poverty and are oppressed by the inhumane system. He is depicted as one of the victims of the state that is negligent towards parentless children, and can be read as a metaphor for negligence of the country's "parental" duties towards its most vulnerable citizens. I suggest that a similar interpretation can be transferred into colonial reality, where the colonised, seen as the new "offspring" of the Empire, were never regarded as its rightful citizens. The metaphor of the "sweeper boy" in Carey's novel indicates Dickens's "locking" in the domestic sphere while portraying the suffering children of the Empire. In his fiction and life, Dickens was a brutally honest advocate of the orphaned children, yet his defence never crossed the border of the domestic affairs. In his severe criticism of Britain and its failure to fulfil its "parental" duties, he seemed to exclude the Empire's children and their misery in colonial territories. By avoiding critique, instead of being a critic, he can actually be seen as a spokesman and advocate for the Empire, who concentrates on domestic matters while turning a blind eye to far more complex concerns. This theme was one of the areas explored by neo-Victorian authors, like Carey, in their postcolonial reinterpretations of Dickens's novels.

As has been said, Dickens had a penchant for observing the minutiae of the lives of the people he encountered in real life, who later served as inspiration for his fictional creations, such as Mrs Micawber, Harold Skimpole, Lawrence Boythorn, Miss Mowcher. He modified these real-life characters and filtered them through the lens of his own imagination:

> Dickens might begin with the appearance or behavior of a certain individual but, as he writes, the character takes on the novelist's own feeling and expression far more than it copies the eccentricities of any presumed original. … all the thousands of characters in

> Dickens's world may be seen as emanations from the amorphous personality of the novelist himself. (Ackroyd 423)

They became fully-fledged characters through the process called by the novelist an "unfathomable mystery" (422). The autonomous characters seemed to live their own lives or, as Dickens confessed himself, "the character took possession of me and made me do exactly the contrary to what I had originally intended" (Ackroyd 423). The expressions such as "taking possession" of an individual unquestionably applies to the relationship between Tobias Oates and Jack Maggs, which develops unexpectedly throughout the novel, during their mesmeric séances.

At the beginning of *Jack Maggs*, we learn that Tobias yearns to write down Jack's story under the guise of controlling the criminal's irksome facial seizures. Tobias believes he is powerful enough to tame Jack, a wild beast from New South Wales. However, in the course of the novel, Tobias becomes increasingly obsessed not only with a character he wants to include in his next novel but also with a supernatural force that makes Tobias "the jerky little writer … invisible. A glaring demon had taken his place, and this being took Jack's jaw in its dry square hands" (Carey 146). This emerges as the abrupt role reversal when Tobias "had become the captivate of someone whose powers were greater than he had the wit to ever understand" (147). This situation evokes a broader context; it can be interpreted in terms of the relationship between the Empire and Australia. Carey demonstrates that Australia ceases to be a suppressed topic in Victorian culture and is no longer seen in the inferior position. Australia resurfaces and is strong enough to overpower the culture convinced of its superior status.

In *Jack Maggs*, the reader witnesses Tobias Oates's sexual affair with his wife's younger sister, Lizzie, aged eighteen, which can be read as an allusion to Dickens's relationship with his wife's sister, Georgina Hogarth. However, Tobias's affair may also allude to Dickens's relationship with his mistress, Ellen Ternan, who was the same age as Lizzie when Dickens first

met her. In the novel, there is an episode where, due to Tobias's financial insufficiency, Lizzie is forced to give the necklace she inherited from her grandmother to a doctor as payment for the medical examination of Tobias's son. The piece of jewellery can be associated with a brooch Miss Ternan was given by her protector in 1857, the year before his separation with Catherine. In Dickens's biography Ackroyd mentions the fact that "in some accounts Dickens presented [Miss Ternan] with a brooch which contained his portrait or his initials; in other accounts he gave her a bracelet" (853). The echo of Dickens's affair may also be perceived in the symbolic emergence of Herb Robert, or simply geranium, the scent of which is described in the novel as "another baddish kind of smell" (Carey 229). The unpleasant whiff of geranium, which Mary Britten, Maggs's mother, associates with her foster son, calling it "Jack in the Hedge" (229), appears in Carey's novel after the protagonist recalls the time spent as an expatriate in New South Wales. Thus geranium becomes a trigger that evokes Jack Maggs's great longing for his mother and for England, both of whom rejected their child, "it was not hard to see the boy in him, to imagine the orphan's hunger for affection" He "would rather be a bad smell here than a frigging rose in New South Wales" (Carey 230). At this point of the novel, Peter Carey seems to relate to Dickens's latent yearning for maternal love or to his fear of being rebuffed by his reading public if his sexual affair with Ellen came to light. The symbol of geranium is also a direct link with Dickens because geraniums were his favourite flowers. In *The Invisible Woman* Clare Tomalin gives an account of a Christmas ball organised by Anthony Trollope, whose guests, among others, were Ellen Ternan and her sister Fanny, both wearing "the scarlet geranium in their hair," the flowers that "may not have been altogether easy to come by in mid-winter" (155). The choice of the flower suggests that Ellen Ternan's intention was to please Dickens, but the scarlet colour of the flower may symbolise courage, passion, yearning for emotions, and her "undisciplined heart," the features that, after all, pervaded Dickens himself.

While the symbols of the piece of jewellery and geranium in *Jack Maggs* may initially appear irrelevant to the analysis, they harbour implicit or "obscured" allusions to Dickens's concealed personal struggles, lending themselves to interpretation from a neo-Victorian perspective. Such symbols underscore one of the critical aspects of neo-Victorian texts: the exploration of the darker facets of Victorian society. In *Jack Maggs,* the repellent stench of geranium can be read as an echo of Tobias and Lizzie's false pretences towards Mary in the aftermath of their unacceptable sexual ecstasy. In the course of the novel, their disgracing affair comes to light when it turns out that Lizzie is pregnant. I suggest that Carey makes use of this unfortunate condition with a view to exposing the alleged two pregnancies of Ellen Ternan, which are revealed in Dickens's biography, *The Invisible Woman*. According to Tomalin, the first could have happened in 1862 or 1863 during Ternan's presumed stay in France, the period in which the actress "disappears from view completely, conjured into the air. For four years she remains invisible. Her name does not figure in any surviving letters" (135). Gladys Storey, a close confidante of Kate Perugini née Dickens, who was instructed by the latter to publish a book entitled *Dickens and Daughter* after her death, unveils a passage which "states categorically that Ellen Ternan and Charles Dickens had a son who died in infancy" (qtd. in Tomalin 143). Tomalin also points out that this fact is based on both Kate Perugini's and Sir Henry Dickens's unpublished confessions of 1923 and 1928 respectively (143). The assumption concerning Miss Ternan's second pregnancy is based on entries in Dickens's pocket diary, which "escaped destruction, the annual fate of Dickens's pocket books, only because it was lost or stolen, and someone thought it worth preserving" (Tomalin 167). They were made in April 1867 and may designate "the birth and death of a child": "The month of April is the most enigmatic in the diary, with its entry '(N. ill latter part of this month)' across the bottom of the page and its mysteriously prominent word 'Arrival' on

Saturday, 13 April, followed by another large, square-bracketed word 'Loss' a week later" (Tomalin 173).

In Carey's novel, Lizzie may also be identified with Mary Hogarth, Dickens's sister-in-law, who died at the age of seventeen. The parental affection Dickens developed towards Mary was so powerful that she became the inspiration for a few characters in his fiction: Rose Maylie in *Oliver Twist* and Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Mary Hogarth was believed to bear a resemblance to nineteen-year-old Christina Weller, a pianist from Liverpool to whom Dickens was later attracted. Elaborating on Dickens's affection towards Ms Weller, Ackroyd notes as follows: "Clearly all the thwarted yearning of Dickens's nature became attached to this young woman, that endless appetite for love and affection once more aroused by the sight of a girl who looked so much like Mary Hogarth" (Ackroyd 442).

Jack Maggs is permeated not only with numerous, yet subtle and often indirect allusions to various facts and conjectures from Dickens's life but also with allusions to his wife, Catherine Dickens. After many pregnancies, she gained weight and "looked middle-aged … heavy in her manners and conversation … slower in action and reaction" (Ackroyd 607). Ackroyd mentions Dickens's amusement with the last words of Harriet Beecher Stowe's comment on his wife of 1853, who described her as "a good specimen of a truly English woman; tall, large and well-developed" (704). From reports of their contemporaries, Catherine emerges as "plain and courteous in her manner, but rather taciturn, leaving the burden of conversation to fall upon her gifted husband," a quiet woman enduring his quick temper and restlessness (Ackroyd 368). Carey seems to recreate a mirror image of Catherine Hogarth when Mary Oates, similarly overshadowed by her famous husband, is described as "the slow and famously dim-witted creature who was commonly thought not to understand half of what her famous husband said" (Carey 315), living with "a terror of being wrong, especially in [Tobias's] company" (221-223). She is depicted as a plump, awkward woman,

clumsily taking care of her child, with "no natural sense for how to clothe a body, even her own," who prefers "a palette of grey and white and black in order to avoid the worst embarrassments" (Carey 234-235). Carey's use of inconspicuous colours in Mary's outfits can be read as an intentional choice to stress another meaningful gap that separates Mary and Tobias. Called by Maggs "the Knight of the Rainbow," Tobias "wore a waistcoat like a common busker, or a book-maker, bright green and shot through with lines of blue and yellow" (Carey 26). Carey explicitly contrasts Tobias's "edgy, almost pugnacious" air with Mary's plainness and self-composure to emphasise their incompatibility of temper, thus making another reference to the differing peculiarities between Charles and Catherine Dickens that Ackroyd reveals in his book.

However, apart from subtle and often implied allusions to facts in Dickens's biography, the concept of mesmerism employed in *Jack Maggs* serves as an overt reference to Dickens and becomes a central thread of the story, leading inevitably to an unanticipated chain of unpleasant events. Ackroyd demonstrates Dickens's quaint penchant for mesmerism and his regular attendance at the mesmeric sessions performed by a clinical medicine professor at University College Hospital in London, John Elliston. Professor Elliston's surname bears a close affinity to Doctor Elioston in *Jack Maggs*, who intends to write an essay concerning the magnetic practices of Wilfred Partridge, known as a "Thief-taker" capable of tracking down a certain person thanks to his mesmeric powers. Ackroyd gives various accounts when Dickens mesmerised his family members and friends, "sending people into a strange sleep," having confidence in being "an extraordinarily powerful magnetizer" (259). The curative powers were the main assumption of mesmerism and the belief that "the human body could be conducted and controlled by an invisible fluid, and that by the careful management of this mesmeric fluid the sick human subject could be cured or revived," the hidden "energies and powers within the human body which could be harnessed by the human will and employed

efficaciously" (Ackroyd 258). Yet, Dickens was particularly astounded at "the more sensational aspects of its effects in inducing apparently prophetic or intuitive states as well as provoking various kinds of extraordinary behaviour" (258) when the mesmerised could be seen to have clairvoyant abilities. Mesmerism was directly associated with the nineteenth century's interest in exploring the hitherto elusive powers of nature: Faraday's research of electromagnetism, the theories of light, velocity, electricity, all of which enabled the development of a dynamic and industrial society (258). During the mesmeric trances he conducted on others, never being mesmerised himself, Dickens adopted a very authoritative stance. It allowed him to "to control, to dominate, to manipulate" everyone (Ackroyd 259), which can be seen as the prevailing features of his personality. In addition to this, Dickens laid great store on "the eyes of the mesmeriser" and invariably "emphasized the force and power of his own Visual Ray," apparently demanding "Keep your eyes on me" (259). He desired to control the people around him: to magnetise the public with his fiction, to establish an eye contact with the audience during the public readings – to master everything happening around him.

Looking at Dickens's portraits by Samuel Laurence, Daniel Maclise or even William Powell Frith (painted eleven years before Dickens's demise), one thing that seems particularly conspicuous are his large, piercing eyes, scrutinising the invisible spheres of human nature. Ackroyd presents a peculiar episode from Dickens's life that occurred during the novelist's sojourn in Genoa, Italy. Dickens had an opportunity to use his magnetic powers on Augusta de la Rue who "suffered from a pronounced and disagreeable nervous 'tic' or spasm on her face" (Ackroyd 473). Dickens learnt that the woman believed she was haunted by "a phantom who appeared in her dreams and would not let her rest" (473-4). He felt confident and powerful enough to defeat the phantom. Indeed, after several hypnotic sessions performed by Dickens, Madame de la Rue "began to sleep at night, a feat which seems previously to have

eluded her, and her appearance improved" (Ackroyd 473). Such an ardent need to bring relief to the woman suggests that Dickens could have identified the phantom with his own recurring afflictions connected with the childhood recollections and traumas he attempted to overcome once and for all. For Dickens, the traumatic experiences of his childhood seemed to emerge throughout his life "rather like a ghost, a hunting presence of another time in our time" (Luckhurst 41).

3.3. Dysfunction and Degeneration in the British Empire

The postcolonial backdrop permeates *Jack Maggs*, exemplified by the motif of darkness employed by the author to symbolise the deprivation of the characters or their insatiable sexual desires. "The odours of dark and dirt had always had libidinous associations" (Carey 149) can suggest the literal darkness that always accompanies Tobias during his intercourse with Lizzie, the darkness that swathes Mr Buckle's sealed house during the pestilence invented by Tobias himself. Darkness pervades the blemished souls of Tobias, Jack, Percy Buckle and Mary Oates, each determined to go to any lengths to achieve their goals, hence exposing their primitive instincts which were, especially in a colonial context, ascribed to the indigenous peoples. The metaphors of darkness in the novel can be read as an expression of "negative imperial imaginary" (Bulfin 16), particularly considering that the territories they evoke were once part of the Empire on which "the sun never sets". Tobias Oates's moral decline culminates when, in a bid to preserve his "spotless reputation," he persuades Lizzie to terminate her pregnancy by giving her abortion pills, "the excrement of something

abominable and verminous" (Carey 304). Mary Oates demonstrates unexpected insight when she discerns her sister's pregnancy and, perhaps to cover up the truth and protect her husband's reputation, she intoxicates Lizzie with an infusion containing the same ingredients. The results of Toby's and Mary's interventions prove disastrous, bringing about Lizzie's exsanguination and premature death. Percy Buckle, the English gentleman driven by the unquenchable lust of taking revenge on Maggs, is transformed into a "hissing, dark-shelled incubus" (Carey 324), waking up the beast residing in his heart.

It must be remembered that Victorian era was the period when the stereotype of a perfect gentleman and lady was born, the time characterised by rigorous standards of morality, flawless manners, self-restraint and social stiffness. Nevertheless, beneath the veneer of high moral principles, impeccable facial expressions adeptly camouflaged genuine emotions that often contradicted the unattainable standards of a strict ethical code. The instincts and evils suppressed by and concealed beneath the façade of propriety often manifested in ways ordinary Victorians were unaware of, such as rampant imperialism resulting in bestiality towards indigenous peoples, and in aspects they were most ashamed of, such as unquenchable sexual urges. The duplicity portrayed in Carey's depiction of the respected citizens directly parallels Robert Louis Stevenson's novella, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) in which the noble and amicable elderly man, Dr Jekyll, after drinking a mysterious potion, transforms into the ferocious and degenerate misanthrope, Edward Hyde, unleashing his uncontrollable emotions. Similarly to *Jack Maggs*, Stevenson's work can be read as a critical manifesto exposing the hypocrisy of Victorian society, whose moral standards often diverged from reality. All the negative emotions and instincts accumulated for a long time behind a mask of factitiousness erupt and destroy a man who ultimately resorts to extremes. This can be seen as a metaphorical representation of the double standards prevalent in Victorian society. A man like Dickens, a self-made literary celebrity,

repressed his feelings and tamed his "undisciplined heart" by adopting a pose of the protector of family values. However, in truth, in his later life, he became a tyrant who forcedly sent most of his sons to work abroad, vilified his wife in "the violated letter," and had a sexual affair with an actress.

The darkness that seemingly pervades Jack Maggs's soul, symbolised by the ghost residing inside him, is paradoxically not the aftermath of his communion with Australian culture in New South Wales, but rather stems from the presence and wicked actions of the British. It is not the influence of the natives, but that of his own people that renders Jack a barbarian. If we read ghosts as "a common trope for denoting trauma" (Mousoutzanis 319), the presence of the ghost in *Jack Maggs* can also be seen as a representation of colonial trauma experienced both by Jack and the colonised native Australians. It seems that the recurring bouts of palsy caused by the ghost inside Jack can be interpreted as Carey's indirect articulation of "colonial horror that repeatedly [returns] to haunt and terrorise the postcolonial text" (Procter, Smith 96). Similarly, Jenni Ramone suggests that darkness in *Jack Maggs* "originates not in the colonies but in the heart of imperialist London itself," while the moral decay of Mary Britten, Tobias Oates and his wife bespeaks and "exposes the violence beneath the colonial illusion" (178). Accordingly, the rotten core of the British Empire is responsible for Jack's corruption and brutality. It all starts when Jack, at the age of three days, is "discovered lying in the mud flats 'neath London Bridge" by Silas Smith (Carey 75). The depiction of Mary Britten's (Mother Britain's) daemonic practices connected with infanticide seem to obscure, but simultaneously articulate and repeat the violent history of the genocide of the Aboriginal race in Australia. According to Bruce Woodcock, such a blatant depiction of Mother Britain "which eats its own offspring" (124) in the shape of barbaric Marry Britten can be seen as a measure to underscore the Empire's parental responsibilities towards its own

citizens, orphaned like Jack Maggs or Percy Buckle's sister, and abandoned like many aggrieved and parentless characters in Dickensian novels.

The other story within Carey's novel, in which Jack Maggs provides the reader with the account of his childhood experiences described for Henry Phipps, resurfaces as a rewriting of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. Raised by Mary Britten and instructed by Silas Smith, who serves as a version of Fagin, Jack, like Oliver, becomes a thief at the age of six. Jack's narration echoes some of the issues taken up by Dickens in his novels: orphanhood, child labour, isolation, oppression or squalor. The Dickensian theme of an orphaned, neglected child searching for acceptance and love echoes the novelist's "wish to revert to some primal place, some Eden of remembrance, some innocent state" (Ackroyd 244). It definitely recurs in *Oliver Twist*, where the themes such as "Home. Death. Childhood" (Ackroyd 244) come to the fore. Dickens's own traumatic childhood experiences "had been a fall into the centre of [London] … leaving him always vulnerable, always aware, of that 'suffered experience' which created London" (274-275). In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens openly addresses the un-Christian aspects of the New Poor Law, particularly its exploitative child labour practices and the ill-treatment of innocent children forced to be brutally shaped by the workhouse system. The term "The Other Nation," as depicted in *Jack Maggs*, along with social outcasts like Oliver Twist, Joe from *Bleak House*, and other wretched characters depicted in Dickensian fiction, seem to reflect the principles of Spencer's Social Darwinism. These individuals are "outside the legitimate system of Victorian society," and simply are told by Nature "to be gone" (Ackroyd 464). The term "The Other Nation" is an allusion to Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1845), where the author shows growing poverty of the working classes in rapidly developing English industrial cities. Disraeli demonstrates the country's division into the rich and the poor in the following passage:

> "Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws." "You speak of "said Egremont, hesitantly. " THE RICH AND THE POOR." (66)

The analogy to "The Other Nation," as something unbecoming of the Victorian frame of mind can also be noticed in *Jack Maggs*, when, in the closing chapter of the novel, Mercy Larkin marries Jack, and "[gives] birth to five further members of 'That Race'" (Carey 327). "The Other Nation" or "That Race" in the Empire's domestic and imperial policy and discourse was simply the hindrance that had to be eliminated.

The imagery in the novel suggests that Jack brings darkness from the penal colony, which spreads like an infection among the civilised British citizens. In fact, upon arriving in London, it is Jack who steps into the darkness of the morally corrupted Victorian society represented by Tobias Oates. His penchant for experimenting with the criminal mind, or as Anthony J. Hassall puts it, "The burgling of Jack's soul" (201), his craving for domination and unblemished public opinion significantly contributes to the brutal events unfolding throughout the course of the novel. Hence, it is Tobias, another representative of "the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (Said, *Orientalism* 39), who becomes the source of darkness, the reason for Jack's violent behaviour, and Lizzie's death. He seems to be the invisible, small white man whose misdeeds remain undetected by justice. This emerges as an implicit allusion to the European colonisers who "were beyond the King's sight. Not even God Himself could see into that pit" (Carey 318).

The act of mesmerism undertaken by Tobias with a view to taming, or even purifying the criminal's blemished soul can also be read through a postcolonial lens. As has been said, Maggs is seen by Victorian society as the Other because he is a criminal and an individual

tainted by the "inferior" Australian culture. Although not an indigene, he emerges as an excluded subject who is "outside the boundaries of European society, 'our' world" (Said, *Orientalism* 67). His becoming the object of the white man's analysis also signifies a direct parallel to the pseudoscientific studies carried out in the nineteenth century to validate the superiority of Western culture over the cultures of the Other.

Jörg Heinke points out to another telling trope of Jack's "enslavement" by the Western society. Jack's "Otherness" becomes pronounced when he is required to wear the uniform and shoes of the previous footman and follow the rules imposed in Percy Buckle's house: "the embrace of the English class system via manners, social status, and professional position physically restricts the individual's freedom of movement" (Heinke 208). It overtly demonstrates the significance of semblance, façade, and social conformity within Victorian society. By being employed as a footman and submitted to Tobias Oates's mesmeric hypnosis, Maggs is simply placed "in a hierarchically inferior position and [defined] as an object of legal, social, scientific, and imperial discourses" (Heinke 210). In addition to this, Carey sheds light on the fact that a coloniser does not have to be surrounded by the jungle-dwelling natives, as evidenced in Kurtz's behaviour, to reveal their sinister impulses. Even in the core of the British Empire, superior attitude towards the Other can turn the white man to become the epitome of lust, vengeance and moral corruption. In the shade of the English colonial burden, the author of *Jack Maggs* vividly refers to Kurtz's "moral cannibalism" in his violation of human dignity, craving for domination, murder of the innocent, the traces of which are visible in the actions of the Englishmen in Carey's novel. His novel undermines the uniqueness of Britishness so fervently extolled by Mr Gregsbury in Dickens's *Nicolas Nickleby*: "Thank Heaven, I am a Briton! My form dilates, my eye glistens, my breast heaves, my heart swells, my bosom burns, when I call to mind her greatness and

her glory" (202-3). It emerges as an element of neo-Victorian texts that aims at subverting the certainties and convictions of the Victorian era.

It is significant that Carey implicitly breaks the taboo of homosexuality in *Jack Maggs*. Carey presents the conspicuous account of Henry Phipps's sexual affair with Mr Buckle's footman Constable, who "had been flattered and led astray by that gentleman ... had been drunk with Henry Phipps, dreamed of Henry Phipps, had been reamed, rogued, ploughed by Henry Phipps so he could barely walk straight to the table" (Carey 167). Homosexuality was strictly forbidden, and, under The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, males engaging in acts of indecency with males faced imprisonment. Homosexuality in the Victorian Era was considered a taboo due to its perceived potential to disrupt the stability of society, posing a threat to the moral values of the period and the traditional family structure. By breaking this taboo, Carey highlights the hypocrisy of the Victorians, who espoused high moral values yet simultaneously acted as oppressors through colonial pursuits abroad and the exploitation of child labour and dehumanising workhouses at home. Once more, the true colours of the Victorian era's can only be fully depicted through the lens of neo-Victorian subversion. Elizabeth Ho notes that neo-Victorianism emerges as "a site within which the memory of empire and its surrounding discourses and strategies of representation can be replayed and played out" (*Neo-Victorianism* 5).

Tobias Oates's influence on others hints at Charles Dickens himself. The Victorian novelist took advantage of his fame, magnetising the public with his image of a pillar of familial values, while violating ethical norms and imposing his own conveniently acceptable reality. In his neo-Victorian novel, Carey advertently exposes controversial themes of sexuality, brutality, abortion, and murder, topics considered highly inconvenient within British society during that era. In doing so, he effectively unveils the false piety and moral corruption that permeated Victorian society.

3.4. The Orphaned in Reality and Fiction

Jack Maggs teems with the themes of orphanhood and the paucity of the distressed, the motifs so willingly raised by Dickens in his fiction. Having spent one year in the boys' orphanage in Shropshire at the age of four, Tobias Oates recollects the distressing relationships with his father and mother, who "was most loudly inconvenienced by his presence" (Carey 182). This quotation can be seen as an implicit reference to Dickens's unhappy childhood. Although he did not experience the reality of growing up in an orphanage, the childhood trauma he endured, the emotional abandonment he suffered, and a pervasive sense of injustice are the elements that link Dickens to Tobias. Ackroyd evokes an episode when Dickens leaves the blacking factory and starts his two-year education at Wellington House Academy. In this schoolboy "we can discern the lineaments of the mature Dickens," who "changed from the passive, suffering 'labouring hind' [and came through] the experiences which had so secretly scarred him; he was in that sense self-created" (Ackroyd 113). This particular circumstance resurfaces in *Jack Maggs* when young Tobias realises that he had to "make his own way … to find his feet in a city that would as soon have trampled him into the mud" (Carey 182).

Dickens was unquestionably a sorcerer, taking advantage of his acting gifts, a real illusionist who could literally hypnotise the audience with his fiction, especially during his public readings, eliciting "a direct and immediate appeal" (Ackroyd 301). In addition to this, Dickens created a strong bond with his fictional characters, paradoxically not with his parents, "often miming their features in the mirror before he wrote" (286). In *Jack Maggs*, Tobias Oates evinces similar characteristics − "he had a great talent for all kinds of dialects and voices, tricks, conjuring, disappearing cards, pantomime performances" (Carey 83). Tobias,

relentlessly beset by “his habit of confronting the things he feared the most” (130), decides on a dismal visit to a mortuary in Brighton to see the infant victims of the orphanage fire “where a chap-jack builder had laid a gas line to murderous effect” (130). The gruesome sight of “achingly small coffins, spaced at regular intervals on the uneven brick floor” (Carey 131) evokes in Tobias the insuppressible felling of rage, bringing back the traumatic recollections from his own childhood: “For Tobias had been a poor child too, and he was fiercely protective of abused children, famously earnest in defence of the child victims of mill and factory owners” (130).

The above quotation definitely relates to Dickens’s vehement condemnation of workhouses and child neglect. He fervently praised the inventions and progress of the Victorian era, being “a man of his period, and he never ceased to attack those who endorsed the myth of ‘the good old days’” (Ackroyd 666). However, during the Great Exhibition of 1851, which marked the English primacy over the rest of the world, Dickens detested that self-congratulatory tone, maintaining that it was a year of “Crime, Disease, Poverty and Ignorance” (666). He consistently showed concern for the fate of the impoverished, and even four months before his demise, he told Bulwer-Lytton that “our system fails” (Ackroyd 1125), seeing modern England “as a huge workhouse presided over by Bumble, a vast and terrifying school administered by Squeers” (1125). Dickens’s firm criticism of Social Darwinism emerges again in a novella *The Chimes*, where he creates a character of Alderman Cute, who is a parody of Sir Peter Laurie, a Middlesex Magistrate and Lord Mayor of London famous for his appalling campaign of 1841. As Barbara T. Gates explains, this campaign aimed at lowering “the number of suicides in London by insuring punishment of surviving ‘offenders’ against the law that made suicide a misdemeanor” (98). The goal was to remove hindrances in the way of creating an affluent British society, as seen in the book entitled *Dickens’s Christmas Spirits: A Christmas Carol and Other Tales:*

> I am resolved to Put all wandering mothers Down. All young mothers, of all sorts and kinds, it's my determination to Put Down. Don't plead illness as an excuse with me; or babies as an excuse with me; for all sick persons and young children I am determined to Put Down. (234)

The above quotation, especially the verb "Put down," is nothing but the echo of Spencer and Hartmann's philosophies regarding the extermination of the subaltern races in the overseas colonial territories. Significantly, the sight of the dead children or unnatural "human being, wet, bubbled, like meat, the blue-white bones broken through the charred and blistered skin" (Carey 132) during Tobias's visit to the mortuary can be read as a metaphor for the colonial genocide of the innocent autochthons in the Victorian era. Perhaps the symbol of the charred skin of the dead is intentionally applied by Carey and serves as a hidden analogy to the Aboriginal race slaughtered during the colonial pursuit. Tobias's exclamation "Dear Lord forgive them all" (Carey 132) can be seen as an echo of Dickens's unyielding pleading addressed in his fiction to the governing bodies to wake up to the harm done to the innocent in the country or perhaps abroad. Richard Flanagan also depicts in *Wanting* a similar, ghastly sight of a girl in St John's orphanage in Hobart town, who survives a house fire and resembles "red and yellow flesh that lay in a rude cot in a corner, wrapped in lint and greased like a cold roast potato" (191).

Carey draws the reader's attention to another important character in the novel, Mercy Larkin, a half-orphan saved and employed by Mr Buckle as a maid, hoping to marry him one day. At the age of thirteen, Mercy's father has an accident at the Woodwell pickle factory in Wapping: "it was only a broken bone, yet what a woe it brought, all so quickly: gangrene and death, penury and eviction" (Carey 67). Contending with the squalor and hopelessness of the situation, Mercy's mother decides that her daughter should become a prostitute. Mercy recollects her first intercourse with a stranger as follows:

> She felt the air upon her skin. She did not know what to do. 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 butte, the smell of pipe tobacco on his whiskers, the wetness on her legs. (Carey 70)

In the course of the novel, we witness Mercy's unquenchable yearning to feel secure by the side of a powerful protector. Before encountering Jack Maggs, it is a father figure of Mr Buckle's, according to Mercy, "the kindest, most decent man in all the world" (Carey 71), who offers her shelter and comfort. Then, Jack, a sexually attractive, literate and powerful Australian convict who is capable of going to any lengths to reach the ultimate goal, enters Mercy's life and skilfully manages to discredit Mr Buckle. According to Meinig, Mercy Larkin: "is not only, like Jack Maggs, inferior because of her class; rather, she is doubly powerless because she is also female. As a woman in Victorian society, she can only hope for social status and power from association with a man" (305). Victorian women were in a disadvantageous position, without the right to litigate, vote or own property. They were expected to assume the role of a model wife and mother alongside more socially-privileged men. It can be noticed that Carey's portrayal of Mercy Larkin as a half-orphaned, stranded young woman looking for an authoritative guardian is likely to be seen as an implicit analogy to Dickens's "caged" mistress, Ellen Ternan.

When the convict's secret has been exposed during the magnetic sessions by Tobias Oates, Mercy, among others, becomes Jack's hostage, incarcerated in Mr Buckle's house during the fictitious pestilence. It becomes a direct analogy to the theme of imprisonment, not only raised by Dickens in his novels, but also personally experienced during the time of his father's incarceration. Later, as has been said, Ellen Ternan became a literal prisoner of his "undisciplined heart."

Throughout the novel, Mercy evolves, and is no longer afraid to confront Maggs with his vices, thus "shifting her position from a relative to a defining creature" (Meinig, "Literary Lessons" 305). Regardless of her underprivileged social position and the fact of being a woman, Mercy finally settles with Jack in Australia, marries him and becomes a powerful female figure, who "civilizes [his children] so that she who had always been so impatient with rules now became a disciplinarian" (Carey 305). It can be read as Carey's neo-Victorian rewriting of another taboo from the era of Queen Victoria, namely the taboo surrounding strong women. *Great Expectations* seems to lack strong and wise female characters, as demonstrated by Dickens's portrayal of characters like the mentally unstable Miss Havisham, or Pip's despotic sister. Subversively, Mercy undergoes a transformation from her lowly origins, no longer relegated to being the subject spoken for. Through a postcolonial lens, this can be seen as a metaphorical parallel to "orphaned" Australia. In this respect, such a depiction of Mercy seems to reflect the hope that Australia, the land of convicts, will be born again as a strong country untainted by the stigma of its colonial past.

It seems that Mercy's new authoritative stance can also be read in relation to Ellen Ternan. After Dickens's death, not "enslaved" any more, she married George Wharton Robinson, gave birth to two children, and, according to some accounts by her contemporaries, transformed into, an authoritarian woman with her "moods, her tyranny over husband and daughter … her bouts of furious temper and nerve storms" (Tomalin 242). These features of character bring to mind Dickens himself. However, the feature that connects them most was a constant "battle of life":

> *The Battle of Life* was a phrase which meant a great deal to mid-Victorian Englishmen: was even something of a truism in a world for which struggle and domination were the twin commandments, where the worship of energy and the pursuit of power were the

> two single most significant activities, where there was a constant belief in will, in collision, in progress. (Ackroyd 541)

Similarly to Dickens, who was the unquestionable epitome of the self-made Victorian man who struggled with the demons of his shameful background by creating his public persona, "the plotting of Nelly's life [after her protector's demise] was her own personal achievement" (Tomalin 267), doing "almost nothing except for her survival, using the weapons she had been taught to use and doing her best to bend circumstances to her will" (267), as if trying to camouflage the disgrace of her past, her affair with Dickens.

Peter Carey's concept of revisiting the Dickensian world by shifting the novelist's canonical text to the frames of postcolonial literature is defined by Sigrun Meinig as "an expression of a particular – Victorian and colonial – frame of mind which can be expected to be contested in the Australian novel" (*Witnessing* 112). Carey challenges the Victorian propaganda promoting the primacy and righteousness of the white Anglo-Saxon race, openly exposing the Empire's misdeeds and unacceptable behaviour of its citizens. He undermines the colonial discourse embodied in Dickens's imperialistic vision of England as the motherland concerned with its colonial children, as depicted in *Great Expectations* when the British gentleman attends to the Australian convict, Abel Magwitch. In reality, Mother Britain metaphorically shown by Carey turns out to be the epitome of bestiality, lust for power and negligence of duties towards its offspring, domestic and colonial. The prevailing themes of parenthood, abandonment and orphaning in the novel "are to be understood literally and as metaphors for the responsibilities of society as a parent to its children" (Woodcock 124). Despite being an Englishman, Jack becomes a metaphorical reflection of the colonial condition of native Australians: marginalised, stigmatised, and advertently removed from colonial history. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said adopts an unfavourable stance towards Dickens's canonical novel as the work that implicitly underscores British hegemony

and treats antipodean Australia in the subaltern, inferior categories, as a world apart in comparison with imperial Britain. After all, Magwitch, who is finally reconciled with Pip, is unable to find home in the British metropolis and succeed as he had done before, in Australia, since he is deemed unworthy of being called a true Briton and can only be seen as part of the "inferior" culture. Said notes as follows:

> The prohibition placed on Magwitch's return is not only penal but imperial: subjects can be taken to places like Australia, but they cannot be allowed a 'return' to metropolitan space, which, as all Dickens's fiction testifies, is meticulously charted, spoken for, inhabited by hierarchy of metropolitan personages. (*Culture and Imperialism* xvi)

Robert Hughes adopts a similar approach:

> Dickens knotted several strands in the English perception of convicts in Australia at the end of transportation. They could succeed, but they could hardly, in the real sense, return. They could expiate their crimes in a technical, legal sense, but what they suffered there warped them into permanent outsiders. And yet they were capable of redemption – as long as they stayed in Australia. (586)

In *Jack Maggs*, Jack, who represents Australian identity, appears as a self-confident, dominant (even brutal), and affluent gentleman, not at all at the mercy of the Empire. He finally leads a happy life, embraces his "warped" experience and turns it into something constructive. He finally abandons the idea of being the father of his British "surrogate" son, and takes care of his real sons in Australia, Richard and John.

Creating the character of Tobias Oates, whose appearance is reminiscent of young Charles Dickens, Carey seems to censure his vices, skewing his Victorian image as the guardian of the familial hearth. *Jack Maggs* addresses the infamous episode from Dickens's life, not only his affair with a young actress, but also its outcome, two alleged pregnancies.

The allusion to Dickens's inclination for magnetic hypnosis reveals the novelist's characteristic traits, such as his insatiable desire for control and his inclination to wield absolute power over others. Such an attitude captures the Victorian spirit of domination and, by extension, overtly alludes to the imperial exploitation of the British colonies. This theme is reflected in the mesmeric practices on Jack by Tobias who, to release his desired book *The Death of Maggs*, the novel that is supposed to be *Great Expectations*, goes to any lengths to achieve his goal.

Commenting on the process of rewriting "as re-creation," Ankhi Mukherjee argues that it "dislocates the hierarchical relationship between the original and the replica, the donor and the receiver of forms" (131). In rewriting, the critic sees a repetition "of what is missed (cognitively)" (Mukherjee 128). This can be observed in *Jack Maggs*, where, by "disinterring" the Dickensian convict, Carey strives to capture and articulate what is "missed" in the original, namely, the colonial history. However, according to Mukherjee, repetition "is a lost cause" (128) since the reenacting of the "unconscious and repressed material in the pre-cursor texts" is the repetition of what "was never experienced" (131).

In the compelling study entitled "Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* and the Trauma of Convictism," Elizabeth Ho notices that the publication of *Jack Maggs* coincided with the time when Australia was plunged into identity crisis. The onus of the past that connects Australians with "convictism" and their colonial ancestors seen as "unique racial despoliators" (Dixon 121) has led to Australians' "overwhelming sense of self-hatred and guilt" (Ho, "Trauma of Convictism" 125). The first Reconciliation Convention of 1997 when the Prime Minister, John Howard, was expected to apologise to the Aboriginal population for their dispossession by white settlers was the step towards Australia's official multiculturalism policy (Ho, "Trauma of Convictism" 125). However, the formal apology to the indigenes and the Stolen Generation was delivered by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, in 2008. Yet Carey's return to

"convictism" as a moment that marked the foundation of Australia, and "the novel's celebration of 'Anglo-Celtic,' 'Anglo-Australian,' 'mainstream,' 'white' Australia" can be read as an opposition to the multiculturalism policy ("Trauma of Convictism" 125). It can be said that by telling the story from the hegemonic settler outlook, Carey seems to fudge the issue of the dispossession of Australian Aborigines. For instance, Martin John Staniforth argues that *Jack Maggs* "hymns the convict experience as crucial to the formation of Australian identity, and which eliminates the Aborigines from view" (208). However, in her defence of *Jack Maggs*, Ho states that "the novel's solution to the problems of national and personal identity … is citizenship … rather than nationhood" ("Trauma of Convictism" 131). Maggs severs his ties with England, his mother country, and becomes a respected citizen in Australia – "He was twice president of the shire and was still the president of the Cricket Club" (Carey 327) – with his wife and seven children (five children with Mercy). According to Elizabeth Ho, the legacy of Maggs should be read in term of "reimagined" "Old" Australia "as healthy and more importantly, as uninfected by its traumatic encounter with England" ("Trauma of Convictism" 132).

Elaborating on the convict past that forms the foundation of the history of Australia, Grant Rodwell refers to some historical novels in which Australian writers "reflected their own sensitivities to the place of convictism in Australian history" (190). In presenting Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* as one of such examples, Rodwell references the words of Jean-François Vernay, thereby aligning with the thematic framework of my thesis. Vernay asserts that *Jack Maggs* is depicted as "an orphan driven to the brink of criminality by a merciless British system" (qtd. in Rodwell 190). However, it has to be added that Maggs's orphanhood transcends literal representation and should not be merely confined to domestic British sphere; rather, it serves as a metaphor for the manner in which Mother Britain's purported "care" for its Australian offspring is portrayed.

Chapter Four:

Literature that Saves: Matilda as a Reader

of *Great Expectations* in *Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones

Lloyd Jones, who was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2007 and the Kiriyama Prize in 2008 for his novel *Mister Pip*, is one of New Zealand's most distinct and accomplished contemporary writers. In *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature* Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie describe the writer's distinctive style: "Lloyd Jones is a fiction writer drawn to a sympathetic portrayal of ordinary middle-class life, a suburban realist who simultaneously challenges realism, subverts fictional norms, defies categories and writes narratives which are challenging, original and in some cases controversial" (272). From the critical perspective, Lloyd Jones successfully portrays the New Zealand community in which he was brought up, combining its realistic portrait "with elements of the bizarre, the absurd and the fantastic" (O'Reilly).

Internationally acclaimed, *Mister Pip* is set on the South Pacific island of Bougainville in the eastern part of New Guinea. The novel intertwines the events connected with the civil war on the island with the story of Matilda, who becomes captivated by Dickens's *Great Expectations*. By placing the Dickensian world in the exotic reality of *Mister Pip,* Jones engages in a debate with the Victorian masterpiece and offers a contemporary take on the novel's significance in a postcolonial setting. One of the novel's reviewers, Olivia Laing,

notices that "Jones has created a microcosm of post-colonial literature, hybridising the narratives of black and white races to create a new and resonant fable." Another reviewer, Lindy Burleigh, states that "Lloyd Jones gives the tired post-colonial themes of self-reinvention and the reinterpretation of classic texts a fresh, ingenious twist but his real achievement is in bringing life and depth to his characters." In her study on the importance of sensation in Lloyd's novel, Sue Kossew explains that *Mister Pip* is not only a rewriting of *Great Expectations*, but "a celebration of the transnational potential of Dickens's novel … its power to move its readers, and its enduring legacy of hope" (281). Monica Latham examines the subject of a hybrid literary work based on a canonical novel and suggests that Jones, following the Dickensian style, also creates a social story, "combining old material with new inventive writing" (88).

The island of Bougainville is haunted by the government troops, redskin soldiers, in search of the rebels. Terrified Bougainville inhabitants face the brutality of the civil war as their houses and properties are burnt down, people are killed, and their bodies chopped into pieces and thrown to pigs to be eaten. The main protagonist and the narrator of the story is a teenage girl, Matilda, who lives on the island with her mother, Dolores, while her father works in Australia. When the only white man on the island, Mr Watts, decides to become a teacher of Bougainville children in a dilapidated classroom, Matilda's fascination with the Dickensian world begins through him. Shadowed by the brutal military conflict, the children are introduced to Dickens and his masterpiece, *Great Expectations* read aloud by the teacher.

In the late nineteenth century the north-eastern half of New-Guinea, including Bougainville, was ruled by imperial Germany, while the south-eastern territory was annexed by the British Empire. In 1906 British New Guinea was under Australian formal administration as a colony of Papua. At the beginning of World War I Australia took control of the north-eastern region of the country and after the war Australia was empowered by the

League of Nations to administer the territory. Following full independence from Australia in 1975, Papua New Guinea annexed the island of Bougainville, which became part of the new state with the status of a Commonwealth realm (Jackson, Standish). The island's prosperous copper mine, the revenue of which was unfairly shared, was the main cause of the insurgence in 1988. As a result, teenage boys were forced to join the guerrilla soldiers who controlled the island and the mine until 1991, before the Papuan government sent troops to regain authority. It is estimated that the number of lives claimed during the conflict fluctuates between 7 000 and 15 000 (Jackson, Standish).

In his novel depicting Matilda's story amidst the civil war, Lloyd Jones intertwines seemingly contradictory themes: the oppression inflicted by an inhuman and unpredictable system, and the solace found in literature, particularly in Dickens's *Great Expectations*, a novel written from the perspective of Western culture. Jones demonstrates that literary texts, regardless of their origin, can influence and change the readers' perception of reality. Using the phrase "singularity of literature," Derek Attridge points out that in times of crisis, literary texts cannot serve as a source of personal and social changes and suggests that:

> literature, understood in its difference from other kinds of writing (and other kinds of reading), solves no problems and saves no souls, nevertheless, as will become clear, I do insist that it is effective even if its effects are not predictable enough to serve a political or moral program. (4)

Mister Pip demonstrates that literature is not only effective but also capable of saving an individual, its main character, the teenage girl, Matilda, from psychological disintegration. The child's first-person narration brings to mind Dickens's strategy used in *Great Expectations*, where a child's account is "retrospective but resistant to an orderly presentation of setting and circumstances in a logical manner" (Fludernik 121). Matilda can be described as a half-orphan since her father works far away in Australia, leaving her to be raised by her

strict, god-fearing mother. The war exposes Matilda to the darkest and most savage aspects of human nature. Desiring a soulmate and a dependable companion to navigate the unfamiliar realities of life, she longs for someone to guide her. Matilda finds her salvation, both metaphorically and literally, in her escape from the island, the place of oppression. This salvation comes in the form of the only white man on the island, Mr Tom Watts, affectionately called "Pop Eye." Matilda's observation that Mr Watts remains "invisible for most of the time" (Jones 9) can be interpreted as a direct analogy to white colonisers, whose actions remained unnoticed by the "civilised" world, leaving the oppressed in complete isolation and a state of emotional orphanhood. The colonial undertone resurfaces throughout the novel, especially, when the reason for the author's employment of the symbolic connotation of white and black colours is disclosed. The blackness of the classroom in which the children are supposed to resume their education is lightened by the white figure of Mr Watts, symbolising the white man's endeavours of enlightening the races living outside the "civilised" western world. However, in this postcolonial novel, the author does not present whiteness in negative terms; on the contrary, it emerges as a gleam of hope for the better future. It is only through the actions of white people that the island's inhabitants can be liberated from poverty and oppression. As Matilda reflects, "we had grown up believing white to be the colour of all the important things" (Jones 4).

4.1. *Great Expectations* as "Signs Taken for Wonder"

Despite his lack of experience in educating children, Mr Watts makes a decision to work as a teacher in a small, single-room school. His absorption in literature makes him

determined to introduce Charles Dickens to the children. Mr Watts believes that the Victorian author can offer them a glimpse into another world, providing an escape from the grim and precarious reality in which they are forced to live: "I will be honest with you. I have no wisdom, none at all. The truest thing I can tell you is that whatever we have between us is all we've got. Oh, and of course Mr Dickens" (Jones 16). Unaware of the existence of the most distinguished author of the Victorian era, the children believe that "Mr Dickens" will provide their blockaded island with the generator fuel, anti-malaria medicines and kerosene. However, by introducing his pupils to Dickens's *Great Expectations*, Mr Watts gives them hope and reassurance, which they soon find out are more indispensable than fuel and medicine.

The presence of the English book in a non-European world, among the oppressed "black" society, can be viewed through the lens of Homi Bhabha's analysis of its emblematic significance. As the theorist maintains, it becomes "an insignia of colonial authority and a signifier of colonial desire and discipline" (*The Location* 102). The English book emerges as the glorification of the fastness of the imperial authority. In the case of *Mister Pip*, *Great Expectations* can be interpreted as "signs taken for wonders" (*The Location* 102) for the children on the island, yet it is far from being the source of coercive dominance of the Western culture. By that logic, I agree with Janet Wilson, who claims that *Great Expectations* emerges in Jones's novel "as vital cultural capital for the subaltern subject who suffers in the traumatic present moment" (221). Bhabha's proposal that "the presence of the book [is made] wondrous to the extent to which it is repeated, translated, misread, displaced" (*The Location* 102) seems compelling with respect to the misreading and recreation of Dickens's novel on the tropical island. Barbara Klonowska suggests that "a canonical text is not only preserved intact in the collective memory but is also 'reared,' i.e. revisited and transformed by its users" (222). From the standpoint of Bhabha, the English book seems to lose its "authoritative representations by the uncanny forces of race, sexuality, violence, cultural and even climatic

differences" (*The Location* 113). If the book, in this case *Great Expectations*, "is read as a production of colonial hybridity, then it no longer simply commands authority" (*The Location* 113). The repetition of *Great Expectations* together with its modifications creates the ambivalence of the book, weakening its authority that is definitely "split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (*The Location* 107). It is evidenced when Mr Watts simplifies the complexity of the plot to be comprehensible to the children, when the story is later retold in the children's huts, and when the novel gets lost, and the children have to recreate it from memory. In addition, during the seven-night meeting with the rebel soldiers, Mr Watts recounts his life story, combining Pip's vicissitudes with his own experiences. However, the split and hybridised positioning of Dickens's novel does not diminish the significance of the colonial discourse nor does it emerge as "the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions" (*The Location* 112). Quite the opposite, the Western cultural heritage represented by white men, in this case Dickens and Watts, is strengthened to such a positive extent that paradoxically it enables the "black," orphaned girl Matilda to escape from the carnage on the island and survive. The aim of *Great Expectations* in Lloyd Jones's novel is not to emphasise the dissimilarity between Western and non-Western worlds, but, as Catherine Lanone demonstrates, the novel emerges as "the world the children can claim as their own, as if Dickens remained the repository of the last values of humanism allowing to survive" (23). The presence of Dickens's novel in the hands of the white man on a tropical island is not "to conquer colonised people's consciousness, while also legitimating and consolidating imperial power," in this case, as the critic later maintains, such interpretation "is soon undermined" (Colomba 179). Dickens's masterpiece could symbolise the authority of the Western culture that would overshadow other narratives in the novel, yet Jones not only gives voice to the "black" girl as the novel's narrator, but also to other indigenous characters. Mr Watts's

classes do not aim to prove to the natives the superiority of the Western culture. Instead, the white man manages to bridge the divide between these cultures, allowing the children's parents and relatives to tell their stories in the classroom. This approach "restor[es] dignity and respectability to non-European civilisations, once excluded from or marginalised within master narratives" (Colomba 279), revealing their uniqueness rather than their stereotypical inferiority to the European world. In this respect, Mr Watts's classroom becomes Homi Bhabha's "Third Space" or the space "in-between," where seemingly conflicting actions and knowledges can be depicted anew. As Bhabha maintains, Third Space "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (*The Location* 37). Third Space also emerges as "the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference" (38), which becomes tangible in the novel when the black inhabitants of the island can articulate their "Otherness" by presenting their local traditions, myths or parables, eluding "the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves" (*The Location* 39). The idea of mimicry and imitation, so widely employed in *Mister Pip*, evinces itself as the author's attempt to stress the influence of the colonising culture on the colonised one, thus demonstrating the colonial discourse being imitated by the subaltern:

> This is a form of mimicry, a popular concept in postcolonial theory in which the colonized group takes over practices and ideas from the colonizer in order to be more like them, and to be more accepted … . Of course they do not succeed, because they will always be savages in the eyes of the colonizer (Joosten 11).

It is Matilda who becomes Mr Watts's translator while telling the stories to the rebel soldiers, and it is Matilda, as we discover at the end of *Mister Pip*, who is the writer of the novel. The above seem to emerge as an apparent contradiction to Gayatri Spivak's theory of

colonial literature, which maintains that "the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" ("Subaltern" 287). Commenting on Spivak's conjecture, Hamza Salih explains that "the subaltern's actions are inscribed and read in term of dominant codes of colonial imperialism and nationalistic eliticism," adding that it is imperialism that "has constructed narratives of history, gender, and class of the hegemonized subjects according to a single axis of differentiation (the centrality of Western history and Man)" (213). For Modjtaba Sadria, the phrase "the subaltern cannot speak" "connotes, in a sense, the infinite affirmation of the subjectivity of the subaltern, for no matter how strong and acute the desire to control the oppressed through knowledge, subalternity is, by definition, outside or beyond the hegemony of the particular discursive formation" (61).

In *Mister Pip*, the subaltern seem to transcend this "axis of differentiation," they are not hegemonized, silenced or culturally denigrated by the authority and domination of a white man. Jones provides the subaltern with Bhabha's "space of enunciation," that is to say, makes all voices in the novel audible and valid (Bakhtin's polyphony), voices of those forsaken or even orphaned by the world, whose narrations are later written down by the "black" Matilda, subaltern by definition. In a similar vein, Barbara Klonowska states that "the postcolonial gesture of this novel consists … in its assertion that the native culture is vital enough to absorb and transform material provided by the seemingly dominant centre" (231). Daly and Torre add that "rather than aiding the disintegration and disempowerment of the islanders and their culture, the narrative empowers their sense of identity and culture" (43). However, the question of the voice of the subaltern in *Mister Pip* is not as positively unambiguous as it appears to be. After all, on the cover of the novel, we will not find an indigenous name, a Matilda Laimo, but Lloyd Jones, a white male author who gives her voice and makes her and the island's community audible.

Jones's choice of this particular novel from Dickens's rich oeuvre plays an important role in my thesis because of its subject matter, orphanhood. In his interview for *The Observer*, Jones explains his choice of *Great Expectations* as a canonical hypotext for *Mister Pip*, showing that orphanhood can convey a state of mind, and is not limited to being literally devoid of parents. I suggest that, when analysed through a postcolonial lens, orphanhood connotes the coercive severance of both physical and emotional bonds with one's homeland caused by colonisation, which for the colonised meant deprivation of their dignity, loss of national identity, and imposition of a hegemonic culture. Orphanhood can also be associated with a sense of abandonment and desolation, which becomes tangible in *Mister Pip* when the outside world remains blind to the atrocities happening on the island. Jones comments: "If you are from the migrant society, it's easy to see the orphan and the migrant as interchangeable. For both, the past is at best a fading photograph" (Bedell 2007).

The above parallelism between orphans and migrants, so poignantly emphasised in Dickens's fiction, is the centrepiece of *Mister Pip*; both Mr Watts and Matilda, leave behind the traumatic events from the past and migrate in order to start a new life. Yui Nakatsuma notices that Lloyd Jones,

> connects the past of orphans, who do not have a memory of [their] identified place to go back to, and the sense of instability of migrants, who have lost strong attachment to their homelands. Yet, while he brings a background of migrants in his novel, he consciously refers to the pastness of orphans and migrants, too. (117)

The overtone of the above quotation becomes more potent when read through the perspective of Dickens's Pip and his fading attachment to his home after his migration to London to become a gentleman. Although Pip owes the happiest moments of his childhood to Joe, his recollection of the family home is unfavourable; it becomes only a place reminiscent of the cruelty of his strict sister, the hard labour in the forge, and the perceived crudeness of Joe

– a place he is unquestionably ashamed of to ever decide to return to. Matilda shares Pip's emotions in this respect, explicitly concurring that:

> To this day I cannot read Pip's confession−*It is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home*-without feeling the same of my island. I was still a frightened black kid suffering from shock trauma when I'd looked down at the green of Honiara from the aeroplane, but I'd also known from that moment there would be no return. (Jones 196)

The above parallelism between Pip's and Matilda's attitude to home brings to mind Dickens himself whose shameful past was similarly painstakingly concealed throughout his whole adult life. Only at the very end of his life was he able to 'revisit' his childhood memories in conversations with his biographer. Similarly, after her migration to Australia, Matilda finally decides to return home at the end of the novel.

The "sense of instability of migrants" is evident in Mr Watts, a white migrant, who settles with his wife after the death of their infant daughter, Sarah, on the Pacific island, a place he knows he does not belong to, triggering a great deal of suspicion among the black inhabitants. In Matilda's case, her migration to Australia to reunite with her father is definitely the aftermath of her mother's death, however, it can be said that her orphaning emerges in the novel as a far more layered process. The first stage of Matilda's bereavement begins after her father's departure to Australia, which becomes the main reason for the development of such a strong attachment to the Dickensian orphan, Pip − they both do not know their fathers. Another phase of Matilda's sense of being orphaned happens during the redskin soldiers' invasion of the island. Together with other inhabitants she experiences a sense of hopelessness and abandonment by the rest of the world: "By now it was also clear that the white world had forgotten us" (Jones 42). Finally, Matilda's orphaning reaches a crescendo the moment her mother is brutally raped and murdered by the redskin soldiers.

The daily reading of *Great Expectations* at school makes Matilda entirely captivated by the book and its main protagonist, Pip. She is fascinated with the world and characters she has never met before: "It was always a relief to return to *Great Expectations*. It contained a world that was whole and made sense, unlike ours" (Jones 58). The most incomprehensible fact for Matilda is that one can find salvation in a book, in unknown Victorian England with rain, frost, marshes and gloom. Frederica Uggla points out that *Mister Pip* is "to a great extent about identification, living through a text and melting into it" (7). The fact that the characters from Dickens's novel take possession of Matilda, can be read from a colonial perspective – she is possessed, saved by, but, therefore, perhaps also colonised by the world of the white man. Matilda fully identifies herself with Pip: "Me and Pip had something else in common; I was eleven when my father left, so neither of us really knew our fathers" (Jones 21). What is more, she learns that she can "slip inside the skin of another ... or travel to another place with marshes, and where, to our ears the bad people spoke like pirates" (20-21). This quotation illustrates the fact that Mr Watts is literally capable of impersonating Dickens's characters, he imitates their peculiar manner of speaking, gestures and, as a result, makes the pupils feel the characters' presence in the classroom. The teacher's story-telling is much more complex because he mixes Western tradition and culture with the fixed norms of the island. According to Monica Latham, Lloyd Jones "gives birth to his hybrid story of survival and makes *Mister Pip* a composite postmodernist and postcolonial novel" (84). Jones's novel is privileged by numerous acts of story-telling and orality, in the classroom, around the campfire, "giving weight to the affective power of narrative" (Kossew 282). From the critical perspective, *Mister Pip* consists of "many different texts that are woven together in a complex process of intertextuality" (Uggla 1).

Thanks to the teacher Matilda reconstructs the atmosphere of the novel, Victorian attires and the language used in the nineteenth century. She imagines herself talking to Pip,

comforting and criticising him for his selfish actions. Matilda identifies with Pip, she seems to adopt his life: “Pip was my story” (Jones 219). His anxieties, thoughts and even friends and enemies become hers. Simultaneously, she recognizes the parallels between Pip’s and her own life changes. As Pip faces difficulties, anxieties, and cruelties, Matilda anticipates her own impending hardships.

Through Pip’s new expectations and life, Matilda begins plunging deeper into other people’s minds, for instance, for the first time she ponders over her father’s life in remote Australia. It is clearly seen when Pip has to “leave behind everything he’d known” (Jones 46) – the place where he has been raised and the forge where he has been taught the value of labour. At this moment, the novel problematises Matilda’s strong longing for her father. On the one hand, Matilda criticises Pip for leaving his home behind, on the other hand, feeling abandoned, she transfers all her anger to her father who she now understands has deserted her emotionally and literally. Being a good observer, Matilda knows that the failure of her parents’ marriage is caused by her father who, similarly to Pip, leaves his family behind:

> Away from class I found myself wondering about the life my dad was leading, and what he had become. I wondered if he was a gentleman, and whether he had forgotten all that had gone into making him. I wondered if he remembered me, and if he ever thought about my mum. I wondered if the thought of us kept him awake at night like the thought of him did her. (Jones 47)

Jones also indicates issues which distinguish Matilda from Pip. Although Matilda has to face an unknown reality because of the civil war, she still misses her father and appreciates the significance of her background and home. When Pip steps into the new world of a big city, he moulds his new identity like a migrant and starts erasing from his memory the much-loved people who have given him comfort and support. He intentionally separates from Joe

and Biddy in order to pursue social advancement and adjust to his new circumstances. Matilda censures Pip as follows:

> I was troubled by what I had detected to be a shift in Pip's personality now that he was in London. I didn't like his London friends. I didn't take to his housemate Herbert Pocket, and I couldn't understand why Pip had, and it worried me that he was leaving me behind. Nor could I understand why he had changed his name to Handel. (Jones 60-61)

Unlike Pip, when Matilda moves away, she does not forget about the past and intends to go back to the island – her real home. At the end of the novel she says: "I would try where Pip had failed. I would try to return home" (Jones 219). It seems that home is more important to Matilda than to Pip because she emigrates to another country/island, that is to say, the distance is greater compared to Pip's situation. In this respect, Matilda emerges as a national migrant whereas Pip should be seen as a social and cultural one.

As has been said, Matilda's strong identification with Pip can be explained by the fact that their lives and experiences are parallel. Being an orphan brought up by his strict sister, Pip is subject to humiliation and abuse but he goes through numerous transformations in his behaviour and personality. Affected by the devastating civil war and separated from her father, Matilda's life changes into a nightmare. Confronting the new brutal reality on the island, Matilda finds solace in reading about another world in Dickens's novel, fostering her imagination and evolving into a mature and self-conscious person. There are other clearly similar moments in both Matilda's and Pip's lives when they nearly escape death, lose hope and the will to fight. They are certain to experience the darkest sides of life like oppression, death of their loved ones, illness, a sense of guilt and contact with crime. However, after the death of Matilda's mother and Mr Watts, Matilda survives thanks to the memory of Pip, which gives her strength to escape from the island and reunite with her father in Australia. So powerful is the book's influence that even though read while undergoing many devastating

events, Matilda does not associate Dickens with negative experiences. It is just the opposite since, after leaving the life of aggression and humiliation behind, she is still profoundly preoccupied with and affected by the Dickensian world. She is determined to broaden her knowledge about Dickens, reading the author's books and visiting his museum in London. She succeeds in becoming a scholar and expert on Dickens, still believing that literature offers salvation and escape in the worst moments of human life. Geraldine Bedell concludes her review of the novel saying that: "As *Great Expectations* opens out its meaning to Matilda, so *Mister Pip* broadens into a consideration of post-colonial culture, a meditation on what is kept and what rejected, what remembered and forgotten, and the extent to which individuals can choose ... how to be in the world."

Commenting on the postcolonial reading of *Mister Pip*, it is essential to mention Abel Magwitch. Matilda compares the deep grief Mr Watts feels after the island inhabitants' belongings have been burnt to the episode when "Magwitch, recaptured, lies in prison, a sick old man awaiting trial" (Jones 91). The sense of helplessness and isolation as well as their futile attempts to change their fortune seem to be the main characteristics that unite Mr Watts and Magwitch. Magwitch's yearning to create new expectations for Pip resounds as a parallel to Mr Watts who, familiarising Matilda with Dickensian world, becomes a trigger for her safer life.

Feeling "as lonely as the last mammoth" on the island, Mr Watts can also be compared to Pip, who feels like an outsider after arriving in London (Jones 96). Similarly to Pip, Mr Watts needs to adapt to life he is not used to, and he even shares the boy's deepest sorrow and anxieties − "You cannot be any more stuck than the only white person living among black people. Mr Watts was another I regarded as stuck" (Jones 50). This is evident after the burial of his wife Grace, leaving the teacher totally orphaned on the island. The children at school compare his tragic situation with Pip and Estella's separation – "his anger was listed on behalf

of Pip's suffering, but it came of his own loss" (Jones 126). The comparison not only demonstrates Watt's strong sense of identification with Dickens's character, but also the teacher's profound absorption in *Great Expectations*. Moreover, the emphasis on Mr Watts's sense of loneliness on the Pacific island bears a close affinity to the loneliness experienced by European colonisers during imperial expansion, who were also orphaned due to the loss of emotional bonds with their families and motherland. This seems to echo the loneliness of a white man in the overseas "exotic" territory presented in *Heart of Darkness*, where loneliness and inner desolation become the trigger for uncontrollable violence. However, while marking Mr Watts as a paragon of nobility despite his sense of seclusion, Jones attempts to break the stereotype that all white individuals involved in the imperial scheme fit a description of Kurtz from Conrad's novella. Ironically, the inhabitants of the island wish "the white man to come back and re-open the mine" whilst the redskins emerge as the epitome of bestiality and exploitation of the native population (Jones 43). It is not only symbolically depicted in the bestial slaughter of a dog called Black that "had its belly ripped open," but in a detailed description of unjustifiable homicide (34).

The endless apprehension and the sense of inevitable doom make Matilda feel hopeless and lost. It is Mr Watts who gives her "another world to spend the night in [or] escape to another place" (Jones 20), and thanks to her imagination, the reality she is literally incarcerated in becomes more bearable. In this respect, Mr Watts becomes a spiritual guide in Matilda's eyes. He provides her with solid foundations to survive, offering her "another piece of the world. [She] found [she] could go back to it as often as [she] liked" (21), allowing her to escape from the hostility of her home. Matilda's predicament explicitly echoes Bhabha's concept of "unhomeliness" evidenced in her constant imagining of Victorian England, her dreaming of Dickensian characters and identifying with Pip. As Lois Tyson states, "to be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in

yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee" (421). By both interiorising and exteriorising (as evidenced, for example by writing Pip's name on the sand) the values of English culture, Matilda develops a sense of apprehension that she does not fully belong to or identify with the island or its culture. Being literally absorbed by the Dickensian world, she emerges as a hybrid of ambivalent identities positioned in-between two seemingly oppositional cultures. It can be said that Matilda's sense of being "unhomed" is strengthened when she finally escapes from Bougainville and migrates to Australia. The crisis of her cultural identity, which is the aftermath of hybridisation, overtly refers to Bhabha's predication that the world cultures seem devoid of their purity and homogeneity, because "cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation" (*The Location* 58). Bhabha "directs our attention to what happens on the borderlines of cultures," pointing out that "what is in-between settled cultural forms or identities – identities like self and other – is central to the creation of new cultural meaning" (Huddart 4-5). As a result of this "split," the "Third Space" is formed. This liminal space gives rise to something different, new and unrecognisable. Located in the interstices of the colliding cultures, the space enables the emergence of a new area of negotiation of meaning (*The Location).* The presence of the hybridised heterogenous subject in this in-between space embodies Bhabha's opposition to the notion of a simple binary between West and East used to define cultures and identities in unitary representation. It must be added that Bhabha's postcolonial theory is not only concerned with the impact of colonial power dynamics on the subaltern but also with the subaltern's impact on the coloniser. According to Bhabha, "colonial identification subject (both colonizer and colonized) [is constructed by] the repertoire of positions of power and resistance, domination and dependence," that is to say, they "are in a process of miscognition where each point of identification is always a partial and double repetition of the *otherness* of the self" (*The Location* 67, 97). It seems to be reflected in Jones's novel *Mister Pip* in the

character of Mr Watts, who is not a coloniser but a white settler, and who also falls victim to the emotional state of "unhomeliness." Similarly to Matilda, he develops "an unstable sense of self," which is the product of "double consciousness" (Tyson 421). He also becomes a hybrid, living in the in-between space of two cultures. As an inhabitant of the island, he lets other cultures and knowledge influence him, while simultaneously remaining intertwined with his English background. His idea to invite the children's parents and relatives to the classroom to listen to their local stories runs parallel with his need to keep in touch with his own culture, as evidenced in his reading of *Great Expectations*. As has been said, "unhomeliness" is strictly connected with migration and thus separation from the subject's homeland. In *Mister Pip*, it is seen in Mr Watts's migration to Bougainville as well as in Matilda's becoming a diasporic individual after settling in Australia.

Apart from Pip, Mr Watts is the other person with whom Matilda forms a strong emotional relationship. As the novel progresses, Matilda discovers new aspects of her teacher's complex personality. Mr Watts is the last white man on the island and Matilda notices that his "sight represented a bit of uncertainty in our world, which in every other way knew only sameness" (Jones 2). Her fascination with the teacher begins when she hears his voice and the way he reads Dickens's masterpiece. Matilda notices that Mr Watts is extremely respectful towards literature, consistently referring to the author as "Mr Dickens" and wearing a white suit at school while reading *Great Expectations*. Despite being curious about Pip's life, Matilda also desires to go deeper into her teacher's mind: "He had given us Pip, and I had come to know this Pip as if he were real and I could feel his breath on my cheek. I had learned to enter the soul of another. Now I tried to do the same with Mr Watts" (Jones 50). Matilda discovers more enigmatic traits of the teacher's character when the redskin soldiers come to the island. Mr Watts impersonates Charles Dickens, creating his own life story, mixing facts with fiction: "the bones of his story remain with me, what I've come to think of as his Pacific

version of *Great Expectations*" (Jones 149). Similarly to Dickens, who created Pip and gave him a chance to change his life, Matilda's teacher also fills the girl's head with expectations of escaping from the island to a better place: "He was inviting me to leave behind the only world I knew" (Jones 150). What is more, Mr Watts becomes a writer/creator because, to some extent, stimulating her imagination, he intends to write Matilda's life story and future. It is Mr Watts and Charles Dickens who help Matilda not only survive but also start a new life.

4.2. Mr Watts and Dolores: Paragons of the Dickensian Gentleman

Mr Watts becomes as important to Matilda as Pip. She strongly believes that Mr Watts is Charles Dickens, the narrator of the story, the one who is able to put it together and transport people to another place. According to Monica Latham, Mr Watts helps Matilda find her own voice, making her write "her life story in the spirit of the Victorian writer" (88). This refers to the concept of intertextuality but also to the importance of the oral transmission of stories. As has been said, *Great Expectations* instigates the process of storytelling, and makes Matilda aware of the importance of her community's stories, "most of the stories within Mister Pip are told by someone and then written down by the narrator Matilda many years later" (Uggla 4). Thanks to the teacher, the children at school can "feel the shape of each word" (Jones 18). For Matilda, Mr Watts is a mentor who is able to explain the incomprehensible and complex aspects of human nature. Matilda's anger with Pip for his ruthless attitude towards his dearest is skilfully tamed by Mr Watts, thus revealing his understanding of human psychology and tolerance of humanity with all its weaknesses: "'It is hard to be a perfect human being, Matilda,' he said. 'Pip is only human. He has been given

the opportunity to turn himself into whomever he chooses. He is free to choose. He is even free to make bad choices'" (Jones 61).

Examining Mr Watts's past as well as his personality, one can notice some distinctive features of Dickens which resurface throughout Jones's novel. Parallels between Mr Watts and Charles Dickens stem from the baggage of negative experiences their lives seem imbued with, such as a feeling of being abandoned, emotional orphanhood, trauma after losing a child and the subsequent need to escape to the world of imaginary characters. Matilda's teacher "looked like someone who had seen or known great suffering and hadn't been able to forget it" (Jones 1), which brings to mind Dickens's childhood trauma connected with his shameful occupation. The trauma Dickens and Mr Watts experienced after the death of their infant child is another similarity connecting Matilda's teacher with the Victorian novelist. Matilda's discovery of Mr Watts's penchant for theatrical performances is another analogy to Dickens's enthusiastic interest in the theatre. For Dickens, the theatre was a place "of a dream, in which all the restrictions and difficulties of conventional reality fell away" and consequently he had "more delight in acting than in any other work whatever" (Ackroyd 498-499). Perhaps the theatre where "there was no susceptibility to hurt, no experience of pain" (498), reflects Dickens's strong yearning for complacency or regaining the lost Eden he was bereft of after facing his spendthrift father's incarceration and becoming a common "labouring hind" in the blacking factory. According to Arthur Symons, people enchanted by the theatre "tend to be dreamers of illimitable dreams [persisting] in demanding illusion of what is real, and reality in what is illusion" (Ackroyd 498). The above example of an escape from reality that the theatre offers has its backdrop in *Mister Pip*, where Mr Watts's is constantly reconstructing the scene from *The Queen of Sheba* with his wife and is seen wearing a clown's nose, pulling his wife Grace along the beach in a trolley. The situation can be read as his yearning to create a world of illusion and to change the reality he is caught in. His solitude on the island, comparable to

the sense of orphanhood, resonates with the image of young Dickens's desolation at Warren's factory. Later in life, in his fiction Dickens attempted to "rewrite the world, to make it a more vivid yet more secure place, to dominate and to control a reality" (Ackroyd 87). Despite the urge to "fill" the island with the light of the Victorian novelist and his masterpiece in hopes of changing the reality of its inhabitants, Mr Watts, similarly to Dickens, "could not escape the stain of reality, however hard he tried" (Ackroyd 87).

Mr Watts also finds "reality in what is illusion" when he literally embodies Charles Dickens and Pip, respectively. So substantial is the illusion that it leads to events fraught with disastrous ramifications. The blurring of boundaries between fiction and reality in Jones's novel becomes tangible in Mr Watts's and Matilda's strong emotional identification with Pip. They both are able to co-feel the boy's experiences. Fiction literally steps into the island's reality when some of the occurrences in Dickens's novel have a bearing on the ones happening in Matilda's and her teacher's lives. Inge Joosten points out that Matilda "incorporates [Pip] in her family tree and she identifies different people in her life as characters from *Great Expectations*" (21). For Matilda, Pip is more important than "a few scattered and unreliable facts about dead relatives" (Jones 66), and the characters from Dickens's novel are "more part of [her] life than [her] dead relatives, even the people around [her]" (Jones 65). It may emerge as an echo of Dickens's unfathomable interaction with the characters he created, surrounding him in each sphere of life, and becoming the living phantoms in his mind. Apparently Dickens used to say: "the character took possession of me," thus the world from his fiction seemed "more real than the world in which he lived and moved" (Ackroyd 423).

Mr Watts's thespian abilities come to the fore when he reads *Great Expectation* and the children can hear the voices of Pip, Estella, Miss Havisham, and Joe through Mr Watts's adoption of their specific identities. This can also be seen as an echo of Dickens's talent for

imitation, or, as the novelist admitted, his infinite fondness of "feigning to be somebody else" (Ackroyd 499).

Dickens's enthralment with a comic actor Charles Mathews mirrors not only the novelist's profound interest in the theatre, but his being enchanted by the actor's ability of changing voices: "he could represent seven or eight different, and very varied, characters in an evening" (Ackroyd 147). In addition to this, the novelist's biographer quotes the words of an American observer remarking that Charles Dickens's "rapid change of voice and manner in the impersonation of character was almost like what we read of the elder Mathews" (147). During his public reading or while performing *The Frozen Deep*, Dickens "mesmerised" the audience with "the old delicacy [and] a subdued tone" of his voice, eliciting emotions raging from despondency to exhilaration (Ackroyd 1122). Dickens would habitually embody the characters he created, "relishing [their] idiosyncrasies and mannerism," even "composing letters in the guise of Wilkins Micawber or Edward Cuttle or Toots" (Ackroyd 276). Mr Watts seems to be sated with the above peculiarities – not only does he introduce himself to the redskin soldiers as Charles Dickens, but he becomes Charles Dickens, a mesmeriser, along with his subtle voice, captivating both the rebel soldiers with his gift of storytelling and the school children who "slowly stirred back into [their] bodies and [their lives]" when the teacher would pause while reading *Great Expectations* (Jones 18).

In 1870, the deterioration of Dickens's health made him look "dreadfully shattered [with] the worn, buffeted face, the strained eyes," and the only hope for "his perfect recovery" would be the revival of his public readings (Ackroyd 1122). The communion with the public appeared to be a kind of therapy for Dickens, the echoes of which can be seen in an implied analogy to Mr Watts – the stranded, inscrutable man, pointlessly maundering along the beach – whose genuine reprise is to "hypnotise" the public (the island community) with his stories

created, just like Dickens's, "out of his own misery. Out of his own sense of loss and of wonder" (Ackroyd 93-94).

Matilda's and Mr Watts's worlds/cultures literally interchange, having a strong influence on each other, which is especially true for Matilda who in the end acquires the Western way of life. This process is coherent with Bhabha's idea that "cultures recognise themselves through the projections of 'otherness'" (*The Location* 12). By referring to "the 'unhomely' condition of the modern world" (11), Bhabha refers to Goethe's statement that: "Nations could not return to their settled and independent life again without noticing that they had learned many foreign ideas and ways, which they had unconsciously adopted, and come to feel here and there previously unrecognized and spiritual needs" (qtd. in *The Location* 11). It seems to echo the three-phased process, identified by Peter Barry: adopt, adapt, adept, used especially for the analysis of postcolonial writers. Barry suggests that in the first phase a postcolonial writer is under "European-derived influences [adopting] the form as it stands, the assumption being that it has universal validity" (196). The second phase of the process "aims to adapt the European form to [the culture's] subject matter, thus assuming partial rights of intervention in the genre." In the final phase a writer "is an independent 'adept' in the form … without reference to European norms" (Barry 196). Focusing on Matilda's stepping to maturity in the course of the novel, we can observe that she undergoes a similar process to the one characterised by Barry. Matilda adopts the form of Dickens's *Great Expectations* and is familiarised with a white, orphaned boy called Pip who yearns to become a gentleman. In the adapt stage, the indigenous girl not only integrates Pip into her family, treating him even better than her own ancestors, but also makes conflation of Pip's life experiences and dilemmas with her own. However, it has to be underscored that Pip is a white boy living in imperial England whereas Matilda, similarly to Mathinna, will always remain black or the Other from the perspective of the white culture. It again echoes the negative

aspect, or the menace of colonial mimicry, understood by Bhabha as "The desire for reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage; its excess, its difference" (*The Location* 86). However, it must be noted that, in Matilda's case, Bhabha's mimicry should be read in positive terms. Although she mimics the Western culture, there is not a single moment in the novel when Matilda, and other inhabitants of Bougainville, are classified by Mr Watts in the categories of their stereotypical "Otherness." He does not define himself "positively by 'othering' groups whom [he] demonize[s] or otherwise devalue[s] for that purpose" (Tyson 428). As has been demonstrated, the presence of *Great Expectations* and its recreations and reinterpretations by the indigenous community do not aim to undermine their peripheral culture, which is never presented as one that can parallel the Western one. The theme of the alleged supremacy of Western culture over the indigenous one seems to be suppressed in the novel. This is particularly evident in Jones's depiction of the outcome of the military conflict, whose victims include both Mr Watts, representing the West, and the subaltern community.

The final stage of the three-phased process begins when Matilda is reunited with her father in Australia. The original version of Dickens's *Great Expectations* as well as the mannequin of Dickens she sees at Eastgate House in Rochester do not meet her expectations. This is the moment when Matilda begins to rebel against the culture presented by Mr Watts. When she becomes an adept scholar on Dickens, she declares her cultural autonomy by realising how much the island where she has been raised means to her. Seen through a colonial lens, Matilda's case shows that mimicry should not be read as a desire of the colonised "to be accepted by the colonizing culture" (Tyson 421) nor should it be seen as "the

shame experienced by colonized individuals concerning their own culture, which they were programmed to see as inferior" (421).

After leaving the island, Matilda is still determined to discover more about her teacher's previous life. Despite learning about his acting abilities and becoming angry with him for simplifying Dickens's masterpiece, Matilda will always treat Mr Watts as Mr Dickens who, like Pip, has become her friend, instilled in her his passion for literature and helped her to survive the hardest times in her life. Paradoxically, in the postcolonial reality we are faced with an ideal colonial situation: it is the white man who turns out to be the paragon of decency, a truly moral character, the gentleman formerly described by Charles Dickens:

> I only know the man who took us kids by the hand and taught us how to re-imagine the world, and to see the possibility of change, to welcome it into our lives ... . He was whatever he needed to be, what we asked him to be ... . We needed a teacher, Mr Watts became that teacher. We needed a magician to conjure up other worlds, and Mr Watts had become that magician. When we needed a saviour, Mr Watts had filled that role. When the redskins required a life, Mr Watts had given himself. (Jones 210)

The strong attachment to Mr Watts and to the culture of the white man he stands for causes a long-lasting clash between Matilda and her mother, Dolores. She is a crucial character in the novel who represents the moral standards of Christianity, calling herself God's witness.

The conflict between mother and daughter arises when Dolores is apprehensive of the fact that she "would lose her Matilda to Victorian England," to a world of white people (Jones 30). The uneasy feeling of disagreement is strengthened when Matilda confesses to Pip's significant role in her life. Dolores starts to put the blame on Mr Watts and becomes troubled about her daughter's morality and loyalty to her teacher. This situation clearly shows Dolores's negative attitude to the former times of colonisation of the island and her suspicion of everything that comes from outside and is associated with white men. "What made her

blood run hot was this white boy Pip and his place in my life. For that she held Mr Watts personally responsible" (68). As a dedicated Christian believer, Dolores is firmly convinced that God, not words written in a novel, is the only source of solace that can change lives for the better. Matilda's attempts to involve her mother in the Dickensian world and its characters always come to nothing, "she didn't want me to go deeper into that other world" (Jones 30). Frederika Uggla explains that Dolores cannot accept *Great Expectations* because the novel was brought from the outer world; however, she seems to overlook the fact that also the Bible was brought by missionaries from the outside (8). Dolores's concept of morality is based on the Bible, which is why she is not able to understand the act of theft committed by Pip. Furthermore, Dolores notices that Pip has become more significant to Matilda than her relatives and the other people living on the island. Dolores becomes more and more hostile towards Mr Watts and does her best to humiliate him and show her aversion towards his beliefs and methods of teaching. Her disapproval of the teacher is noticeable throughout the book, and is reminiscent of Estella's disdain and hostility towards Pip: "she returned to her favourite pastime of constant put-downs of Mr Watts, or Pop Eye as she was back to calling him. *Pop Eye*. She put all her contempt into that name" (Jones 114).

Dolores's contempt for Mr Watts can be explained by her inability to come to terms with the fact that her husband has abandoned her, and now leads a peaceful and secure life in Australia. As a white man, Mr Watts seems to embody the cause for the disruption of her family, since, according to Dolores, white people have stolen her husband and transformed him into a "white man." The sense of Dolores's isolation and her constant bitterness inspire Matilda to compare her mother to Miss Havisham from *Great Expectations*: "She had more in common with Miss Havisham – Miss Havisham who cannot move on from the day of her greatest disappointment" and who is trapped in the time that has irretrievably passed (Jones 49). Dolores cannot step into Matilda's new world, losing control of and contact with her

daughter. The Estella−Miss Havisham, and Matilda−Dolores relationships are parallel. Similarly to Dickens's tragic character, Dolores craves to destroy the world that she has not given to Matilda. She prefers to stay in her own world of stopped clocks which symbolises her refusal to move forward and accept the new reality. The more preoccupied Matilda becomes with Pip's life, the more distant she grows from her mother. The more English Matilda becomes, the more animosity Dolores bears towards her daughter. It is especially evident when the girl wants to show affection to her mother − "I went to hug her, but she saw that coming and took a step back ... Do you not have a shadow of your own to play with?" (Jones 114). This emblematic incident seems to mirror Lady Jane Franklin from *Wanting*. Unable to exterminate Mathinna's strong affiliation to the world she despises, Lady Jane adopts a parallel strategy to Dolores: they both assume emotional distance. However, examining this situation from a postcolonial lens, it is possible to justify Dolores's behaviour and view Matilda as someone who is "actually colonised by *Great Expectations* and lost in another culture" (Uggla 17). Perhaps, from the mother's point of view, Matilda is not saved by *Great Expectations*, but lost to her own culture, and in this sense, the woman becomes a rebel who wants to protect what belongs to her.

It must be noted that, similarly to her daughter, Dolores is also profoundly dedicated to a book which comes from the Western world, the Bible. Both Dolores and Matilda remain faithful to their ideas derived from the texts and this is the main cause of their clash. As the novel proceeds, a wall of mistrust and misunderstanding growing between Matilda, her mother and Mr Watts. This complicated situation and intensifying tension between the characters, prompt Dolores to steal and hide Dickens's novel. When Matilda finds it in their house, she feels betrayed and realises that her mother's intention is to destroy Mr Watts and Pip, the people who have introduced her to a better world: "It is hard to put into words my feeling of betrayal at that moment" (Jones 93). The woman remains silent even at the cost of the destruction of the

villagers' possessions and houses, because, as a Christian, she cannot admit to a sin of theft. At the same time, Matilda cannot betray Dolores and decides to take on the burden of carrying her mother's guilt: "I knew what she had been doing. Her silence was meant to destroy Pip and the standing Mr Watts, a godless white man who would seek to place in her daughter's head a make-believe person with the same status as her kin" (Jones 93).

Dolores's identity throughout the novel turns out to be a process: from an enemy, she becomes Matilda's ally. She seems to understand that she has not achieved anything by her previous behaviour and, like Mr Watts, she becomes an example of a moral person, a gentlewoman akin to a Dickensian gentleman. She accepts Mr Watts's, that is Dickens's, and Matilda's values, which she had firmly rejected before. When the redskin soldiers kill Mr Watts, Dolores finds courage to say: "Sir. I saw your men chop up the white man. He was a good man. I am here as God's witness" (Jones 175). At that moment, for the first time in the novel, Matilda's mother becomes Mr Watts's supporter and reminds the reader of his words that "to be human is to be moral and you cannot have a day off when it suits" (Jones180). Doing that, she knows that she will suffer the same fate as Mr Watts. Not only does the conflict between Matilda and Dolores come to an end, but the girl also sees her mother as a person to be proud of: "My brave mum had known this when she stepped forward to proclaim herself God's witness to the cold-blooded butchery of her old enemy" (Jones 180). It is not clear if Dolores's act of bravery has been caused by the violent circumstances of the civil war or by her true characteristics, which she was reluctant to reveal before. However, her transformation proves both her boundless devotion to her beliefs and her unconditional love for her daughter.

Mister Pip shows that literary texts can transform the reader's view of the world, even if they are alien to postcolonial cultures, which are "inevitably hybridised, involving a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to

create or recreate independent local identity" (Ashcroft et al., *The Post-Colonial* 95). Barbara Klonowska sums up the impact of Dickens's novel on the Aboriginal girl from a radically different culture and on the role in literature in *Mister Pip*:

> *Mister Pip* dramatises the saving power of reading, both short-term as an affecting means of reducing fear, and long-term as an explanation and inspiration for life ... . In a similar manner, *Great Expectations* perform such functions within *Mister Pip:* it is used to soothe, heal and explain, offer consolation and instruction. Like Aboriginal myths, it is not treated as a useless story but as guidance and practice. (231)

Not only does Jones demonstrate the healing power of literary texts, but he also, paradoxically, shows that Western culture does not have to be perceived as imposing its power on the non-European realities or colonising the natives' consciousness. In *Mister Pip*, it is the white man who gives the inhabitants a voice to tell their stories that are later written down by a black female character, Matilda. Apart from the significance of the emblem of the English book and the omnipresent colonial backdrop, the motif of orphanhood emerges as an implicit centrepiece in *Mister Pip*. It is discernible in the analysed concept of "unhomeliness," which can be seen as a metaphorical representation of orphanhood. If read as a state of being devoid of "protective affiliation," orphanhood appears to evoke the notion of "unhomeliness," the state in which cultural hybrids, especially the diasporic ones, develop the feeling of not belonging to a certain place. The "unhomed" subjects are positioned in-between self and other, and thus are not affiliated to either of them. As has been said, this happens to both Matilda and Mr Watts, because their identities seem split due to their being on the threshold of two cultures: the indigenous and the British. Jones's revisiting of *Great Expectations* in *Mister Pip* contains obvious references to the Dickensian motif of orphanhood. The feeling of insecurity on the island and a sense of abandonment by her father make Matilda identify with Pip, the orphaned boy from Dickens's novel. Her emotional connection with him seems

stronger after her emigration to Australia. Also the life experiences of Matilda's teacher seem to bear affinities with Pip's. Similarly to the boy, Mr Watts migrates to the place he does not belong to, as evidenced in his reclusive existence on the island. He can metaphorically be referred to an orphan due to the fact that he is the last white man in Bougainville and experiences the death of his child and wife. Mr Watts's traumatic past experience emerges as a parallel to Dickens's as well. Mr Watts's sense of abandonment on the island can be read as a metaphor for Dickens's abandonment by his parents while he was working in the factory, a place where he also did not belong. In addition to this, they both faced the trauma of losing a child. Finally, the inhabitants of the island, defined by Catherine Lanone as "the lost children of the former empire" (24), now left alone and bereft of any support or significance to the world, implicitly fit into the portrait of orphans in Dickens's fiction.

Conclusion

In the introductory chapter, I have pointed that Dickens's portrayal of orphans ostracised by British society and state institutions reflects the author's criticism of the state's gross negligence of its parental duties towards its most vulnerable subjects. Provided that colonial expansion can be figuratively interpreted as parent-child relations, it has been suggested that the indigenous inhabitants of the Empire can be seen as its mistreated orphans. In the four analysed postcolonial novels the Empire's parental duties are exposed to have failed miserably. The motif of orphanhood prevalent in Dickens's fiction has been transposed into colonial reality to unmask how the Empire, as a parent, evaded taking full responsibility for its offspring in the conquered overseas regions. Similarly to Dickensian orphans, whose presence was seen as a bane in the Victorian social system, the subaltern and oppressed characters in *When We Were Orphans*, *Wanting*, and *Jack Maggs* also seem to be classified as the contagion of English culture. Consequently, they are discarded beyond the margins of society and "exiled from where the centre is, or from where home is" (Watchel 104). It is only in *Mister Pip* that Matilda's countrymen become the source of oppression, not a white man representing English culture.

It has to be noted that the marginalisation did not only include the colonised, but also generations of children of mixed autochthonous and European legacy. Commenting on the issue of Eurasians born from contacts between native women and European men, David M. Pomfret describes the generation of Eurasians in the Indochinese Federation and Hong Kong as "vulnerable children abandoned by European fathers … a rising underclass of rootless,

culturally lost children" (318-319). Imperial states also evaded parental duties towards these people, locating the problem of a growing number of Eurasians "within the lowest substratum of colonial society" (Pomfret 320). Such a situation was definitely based on discriminatory colonial practices, reflected in the form of a pseudoscientific studies. To strengthen the notion of the biological superiority of the white race, Cantile concluded that mixed-race children "suffered from an inherent lack of endurance, an exaggerated vulnerability to disease and other debilitating physical conditions" (qtd. in Pomfret 321).

In *When We Were Orphans*, I have attempted to show that traces of childhood trauma noticed among the orphans presented in the novel, can also be read as an unspoken reference to Dickens's own miserable childhood experiences. Similarly to Christopher, Jennifer and Sarah, who unexpectedly lose their childhood Eden following a transition from an *Innocent* to an *Orphan* state, both emotionally and literally, Dickens underwent a parallel transition as a teenage boy, the echo of which can be detected in his fiction and life. By presenting Diana Banks's tragic story and uncovering the "obscured" intertextual connection of Ishiguro's novel with Dickensian *Great Expectations*, I have demonstrated that *When We Were Orphans* revisits the Victorian era, which marks a significant epoch in British history, characterised by its peak of colonial pursuit. Ishiguro's implicit reference to this particular novel, especially the theme of a secret benefactor, shows that, like Dickensian Pip, Christopher also becomes a beneficiary of colonial history, unaware of the realities of the external political situation.

In *Wanting*, I have demonstrated that Mathinna's cultural denigration makes her a touchstone for the persecution of Aboriginal autochthones by Western civilisation. The consequence of her literal orphanhood is overshadowed by her figurative orphanhood, caused by colonial hegemony, which leaves her without any protective affiliation and ultimately abandoned by the Franklins. By presenting Mathinna as a hybridised, unhomely colonial

subject split between two cultures, I have shown that by mimicking British culture, she subverts colonial authority and poses a threat to the colonisers' stable identity.

The Empire's neglect and carelessness towards its own vulnerable citizens, was stridently censured in Dickens's fiction, where the author particularly sympathised with the persecuted orphans forgotten by their Mother England. I have attempted to present that Dickens's criticism of the domestic Victorian system lacking sympathy towards its paupers and orphans has been transferred to the colonial reality, where Flanagan exposes the vices of the same oppressive structure and its British representatives.

In my analysis of *Jack Maggs*, I have suggested that the eponymous protagonist can be seen as a domestic orphan due to his dislocation and abandonment by Mother Britain, becoming a suppressed voice for the Empire's marginalised colonial children. In this respect, imperial England seems to embody parental negligence towards both its domestic and colonial children. Despite being a white Englishman, Maggs is seen by Victorian society as the Other from peripheries because he is tainted by the "inferior" Australian culture. I have also pointed out that his "Otherness" is amplified by the fact that he is a convict who, by returning to imperial London, becomes a threat to British national identity. Read as a diasporic hybrid of two antagonistic cultures, Maggs seems to be more identified with the supposedly "inferior" one, as he is foreign to the notion of Britishness. Thus his revengeful actions against British citizens can be read in terms of Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity, when the Other diminishes the authority of the Eurocentric world and articulates his story.

In his neo-Victorian subversion of *Great Expectations*, Carey overtly undermines the Dickensian portrayal of England as a motherland that looks after its colonial offspring, as evidenced in Pip-Magwitch parent-child relation. I have attempted to show that Carey's unfavourable depiction of Victorian society is evident not only through the actions of its

citizens in the novel, but also through the shameful, though implicit, intertextual references to Dickens's life as presented by Peter Ackroyd and Claire Tomalin.

In my analysis of *Mister Pip*, I have indicated that Lloyd Jones decides on a different approach in addressing the colonial notion of Western supremacy. The presence of the white man and the influence of Dickens's *Great Expectations* on the tropical island should not be viewed within the confines of a binary opposition between the European and indigenous worlds, nor should it be interpreted as a symbol of colonising and dominance over the culture of the Other. I have demonstrated that the English book in Bougainville occupies a split and hybridised position, undergoing processes of repetition and transformation, yet it retains its significance and influence. *Great Expectations* helps Matilda survive the oppression of the civil war and escape from the island.

As has been demonstrated, the Dickensian motif of orphanhood is evident not only in Matilda's and Mr Watts's identification with Pip, but also in the concept of "unhomeliness" that characterises the experiences of the girl and her teacher. In this context, they emerge as "unhomed" cultural hybrids, occupying an intermediate space and lacking secure affiliation.

Present-day events demonstrate that the colonial past has become a burden from which many British seek to emancipate themselves. In 2017, students at the University of Liverpool launched a petition to remove the name of William Gladstone, the former British Prime Minister, from the university building. Gladstone's parliamentary speech in 1833, where he opposed the abolition of slavery to support his father, who owned slaves on plantations in the West Indies, underscores the contentious legacy associated with his name ("William Gladstone"). David Olusoga recounts another significant action taken in Bristol in June 2020 when a group of protesters intentionally destroyed a bronze statue of Edward Colston, a notorious slave trader believed "to have sold about 100,000 West African people in the Caribbean and the Americas between 1672 and 1689." After the toppling of Colston's statue,

calls to remove the infamous statue of Cecil John Rhodes from Oriel College in Oxford reignited by the protesters. It must be noted that these anti-colonial actions can be interpreted as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement, initiated in 2013 to fight racism, "anti-black violence," and eliminate white hegemony ("Black Lives Matter"). The protests against the legacy of slavery and imperialism suggest that perhaps nowhere else in the world is the drive to eliminate the remnants of its memory as potent as it is in Great Britain.

The removal of the symbols of colonialism, however, does not equate to the erasure of historical memory. Rather, by revisiting the imperial history of colonial powers, postcolonial literature serves as a tool to articulate narratives of formerly colonised nations and their descendants. Postcolonial literature engages in rewriting and reexamining Western canonical texts or referring to them intertextually. In doing so, it subverts their hegemonic position by reinterpreting them from alternative standpoints, often provoking the perspectives of colonial powers. Therefore postcolonialism can be read as an authority to remember and reassess the colonial past, or "to deconstruct canonical texts that contain racist and other pejorative nuances, and to reveal postcoloniality in cultural forms" (Burney 47). Elaborating on the counter-discursive function of postcolonial literary texts, Helen Tiffin argues that their main objective is "the rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record" (18). Postcolonial literature delves into how Europe established and maintained its cultural hegemony across much of the world. One of the strategies that allows writers to revisit the colonial past is through "canonical counter-discourse," as Tiffin calls it, a method of challenging established narratives and perspectives propagated by colonial powers, when "a post-colonial writer takes up a character or characters, or the basic assumptions of a British canonical text, and unveils those assumptions, subverting the text for post-colonial purposes" (22). Tiffin notes that texts which enable the "psychical capture" of colonialism most, are the literatures considered "great," those which are part and parcel of the reading canon imposed

on the colonised communities by the Western educational system (22). In this respect, the postcolonial novels explored in my thesis, with their intertextual references to Dickens and Dickensian themes, are inscribed within the framework of "canonical counter-discourse."

However, it is important to acknowledge that some critics do not accept the postcolonial approach presented above. A prominent critical perspective in postcolonial studies, which is in opposition to my thesis and methodological foundations, has been voiced by Erin O'Connor. The critic argues that Victorian literature has recently fallen within the framework of "globalizing literature" (217), indicating a renewed exploration through a postcolonial lens. O'Connor attributes the emergence of the tendency to analyse nineteenth-century novels for their correspondence to imperialism to Gayatri Spivak's essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," which appears to have "established a paradigm for treating the Victorian novel as a local instance of widespread imperialist sentiment" (218). According to Spivak, "it should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English" ("Three Women's Texts" 243). What is questionable for O'Connor is the fact that Spivak formulates her predication on the basis of "a singularly skimpy and partial reading of a single novel [*Jane Eyre*] that presumes to call itself a reading of an entire genre, culture, and politics" (229). Writing from the perspective of Victorian rather than postcolonial studies, O'Connor perceives Spivak's inclination to categorise the Victorian novel into a class of single/imperial representation as analogous to the infamous "Minute on Indian Education" delivered by Thomas Babington Macaulay in 1835. In his speech, Macaulay advocated for the Westernisation of the Indian community, suggesting that by receiving English education, they would become "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (729). In other words, they could assimilate European values and this aligns with the project of imperialism

(O'Connor 230). According to O'Connor, Spivak offers a similar reformatory practice, a "missionary brevity, a moralistic zeal" in a form of "intellectual imperialism," this time, directed at the Victorian novel (230). While Spivak's perspective undeniably enriches the field of postcolonial research, it may also result in an unfair generalisation of all Victorian works, limiting them merely to colonial contexts. Such an approach risks obfuscating the real literary contributions these texts have made to the canon of world literature.

Similarly, it is noteworthy that while Edward Said's and Homi Bhabha's works compellingly engage in the criticism of the past hegemonic dogma of the Western world, employing the term "postcolonial" to designate "the subaltern consciousness and praxis" and reframe "older problems of Third-Worldism," there are academics who oppose its use, claiming that it "[glosses] over contemporary global power relations" (Xie 7- 8). In other words, they seem to be "tired of the field's infatuation with the past at the expense of the present" (Niazi 541). Anne McClintock argues that the term "postcolonialism" "re-orients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial/post-colonial", and "its premature celebration of the pastness of colonialism, runs the risk of obscuring the continuities and discontinuities of colonial and imperial power" (85, 88). Arif Dirlik accuses "postcolonialism" of its complicity in hegemony due to its "diversion of attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination" (331). Referring to American imperialism in the eighties and nineties, Ella Shohat finds the term "postcolonial" inadequate since it explicitly carries "the implication that colonialism is now a matter of past", which disguises the fact that "global hegemony … persists in forms other than overt colonial rule" (105). This "global hegemony" in the form of "neocolonialism" of the Western and Eurocentric culture exists in contemporary world "both through multinational capital and through the complicity of the non-Western in their uncritical acceptance of Western culture" (Xie 12). In other words, terms like "neocolonialism" or "after postcolonialism" are more

widely used nowadays, as they highlight the ongoing influence of former colonial powers' in the non-Western world and the continued acknowledgment of Western superiority by less developed countries, especially in the fields of economy and technology.

Discussing the notion of neocolonialism, Shaobo Xie refers to Dipesh Chakrabarty's pungent comment on today's Western and non-Western worlds. Chakrabarty argues that the present-day Western world "remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories" (1) whereas the present-day non-Western world seems to find these hegemonic theories "in spite of their inherent ignorance of 'us,' eminently useful in understanding our societies" (3). This entails the fact that non-Western communities seem to be involved in "the propagation of neocolonial values and ideas" (Xie 14). According to Xie, these societies cannot go beyond coloniality, as evidenced by the continuous practice of reading and studying canonical texts of English literature in non-Western countries, such as at Arab universities (14-15).

In her reading of Edward Said's critical analysis in *Orientalism*, Shehla Burney comments that the most significant aspect of his postcolonial theory is that it "reveals the hidden structures of power and knowledge that govern the social construction of the 'Orient' as Other" (46). Said's critical approach can be used as a deconstructing regime to show "how identity is politicized and how the postcolonial subject is created through hegemonic Western lenses" (Burney 42) This viewpoint resonates in *When We Were Orphans, Wanting,* and *Jack Maggs*, where the authors' implicit or explicit depiction of subaltern or marginalised subjects reflects the Saidean notion of the "politicized identity" manufactured by the culture of the West.

Referring to the issue of representation elaborated in *Orientalism*, Metin Çolak quotes Said's example of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). Found by a French journalist, a significant disparity in the portrayal of Beirut in the works of Chateaubriand and Nerval compared the real image of the city destroyed in the war becomes an overt reflection of "the West's unconsciousness regarding the East" (Çolak 113). The critic mentions this example to

show that the distorted and contemptuous portrayal of the East has been created on the basis of "false experiences characterized by heartfelt adventures, exotic beings, extraordinary visuals resembling oasis, and their imaginary fictionalized in the world of imagination" (113), as evidenced in Said's book.

Although Said's seminal work is considered a signature contribution to the emergence of "intercultural discourse of the Other" (Burney 41), his theory has garnered contemporary adversaries. David Zarnett, for example, focuses on the study that directly criticises Said's work: *Defending the West* (2007) by Ibn Warraq's and *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (2008) by Daniel Martin Varisco. One of Warraq's main charges against Said's theory is that *Orientalism* ascribes the phenomenon of imperialism only to the Western/European world, whereas "every civilisation has committed its fair share of crimes and atrocities" and lots of non-Western nations have had their complicity in committing imperialists felonies (Zarnett 55). In the same vein, George P. Landow censures Said for myopically indicating that the imperial pursuit belongs solely to the Western world, "and its harmful political consequences are something that only the West does to the East rather than something all societies do to one another" (Landow). A similar approach has been taken by Robert Irwin, who criticises Said's judgement that "every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric" (qtd. in *Orientalism* 204). Irwin claims that European Orientalists' examination of "Middle Eastern language, culture, and history was by no means so tightly linked to Western imperial ambitions as Orientalism suggests" (qtd. in Mart et al. 370).

Another argument that seems to undermine the foundations of Said's postcolonial theory is connected with the issue of slavery. In his defence of the Western culture, Warraq points out that slavery cannot be considered as a merely European practice, and to prove his point he demonstrates a high contribution of Africans and Arab merchants to slave trade,

which led to the enslavement of 17 million black Africans starting from the seventeenth century to the 1920s (qtd. in Zarnett 55). Moreover, it was because of the pressure of the Western world to abolish slave trade, and the military action of the British Imperial Navy, that finally this practice was put to an end (Zarnett 55-56). Apart from the abolition of slavery, Warraq defends the culture of the West by listing its intellectual concepts and traditions:

> The great ideas of the West—rationalism, self-criticism, the disinterested search for truth, the separation of church and state, the rule of law and equality under the law, freedom of thought and expression, human rights, and liberal democracy—are superior to any others devised by humankind.

However, the praise of Western thought seems to demonstrate Warraq's ignorance of the barbarity of colonial imperialism. It can be suggested that he considers the Western world only "as a force of modernization, i.e. a civilising mission" (qtd. in Hamdi 131).

Expanding on contemporary criticisms of Said's postcolonial theory, I would like to discuss another opponent, Daniel Martin Varisco. One of the examples of Varisco's critique of *Orientalism* is his assertion that Said "is writing a history about a subject about which he has only a selective and superficial knowledge" (qtd. in Zarnett 39). Varisco censures Said for paying no attention to a theme of Jews' persecution in Europe, and argues that "this omission is due to Said's wholesome opposition to Zionism and Israeli politics" (Zarnett 59). Accusing Said of having a selective and imprecise attitude towards history, Varisco maintains that Said is "disturbingly ahistorical to argue that Orientalism is one of the most profound examples of the machinery of cultural domination, it pales in actual historical impact next to the genocide of indigenous populations elsewhere" (34). In addition to this, Varisco attempts to refocus the academic debates and commence research that "[permits] individuality within a body of work to be distinguished from the rest," simultaneously dismissing "the binary-thinking that Said rhetorically opposed but intellectually promoted" (Güven 427).

Turning now to a completely different perspective on Said's theory, I would like to present a compelling viewpoint of Tahrir Khalil Hamdi, who finds Said's predications still valid in the contemporary world. Hamdi begins by refuting the unfavourable views of Said's opponents who have tried to discredit his analysis of the firm connection between knowledge and power, which he derived from Michel Foucault. According to Said, Western Orientalist discourse epitomises an especially poignant example of the "affiliation of knowledge with power" (*Covering Islam* xlix), because Orientalism, as Said puts it, is "a Western style for dominating, reconstructing, and having authority over the Orient" (*Orientalism* 3). Hamdi notes that Said's view on the Orientalist frame of mind can be noticed nowadays, since advanced technology, especially the Internet, enables "the intellectual factories funded by governments, corporate benefactors … in metropolitan centers, such as Washington, London and Paris" (131), to pervade any community regardless of its Western or Eastern location. Hamdi proceeds by presenting a firm association of Bernard Lewis's Orientalist discourse, "The Roots of Muslim Rage" (1990), with George Bush's military discourse in 2001, and finds Lewis's questions about the reason for Muslims' hatred of the Western world on the same note as Bush's: "Why do they hate us?" (qtd. in Hamdi 133). What is particularly tantalising is the fact that the answers to these questions are strikingly similar. For Lewis, Muslims' "rage" is caused by their fear of Western democracy, "secularism and modernity," whereas Bush argues that they generally hate Western freedom: "our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote" (qtd. in Hamdi 133). It seems that the present-day political-military discourse on Islam goes hand in hand with Orientalist discourse in establishing the Muslim mindset as a "historical and cultural clash with Judeo-Christian tradition" (133).

Despite the selected critical voices on Saidean theory, it must be remembered that Said promotes humanism as the only form of "resistance we have against the inhuman practices

and injustices that disfigure human history" (*Orientalism* xx). He overtly calls for breaking with the binary oppositions defined as "the manufactured clash of civilizations" (xx), stating that we should pay attention to the "slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow" (xx). This can be interpreted as Said's appeal to embrace "global multiculturalism and diversity while promoting commonalities" (Güven 429) and engage in a real discussion free from division, biases and political polarisation.

While Homi Bhabha has risen to prominence as a postcolonial theorist, his notion of hybridity has also faced criticism for its perceived ahistorical character. Aijaz Ahmad, Benita Parry, Ella Shohat, Michael Hardy, or Antonio Negri argue that Bhabha's statement that the hybrid occupies the "in-between" space, thus negating the binary oppositions (it is neither one nor the other), makes the hybrid subject ahistorical and unidentified (Bysiecka 119). Ahmad notes that the concept of hybridity is merely theoretical and cannot find its realisation in a reality dominated by binary oppositions. The subject cannot escape the imposed social categories and historicism that shape its identity (Bysiecka 119). However, Bhabha's original concepts of hybridity and mimicry, which capture the nature of ambivalence, the experiences of diasporic communities, and the sense of belonging, continue to position him as a leading theorist in the field of postcolonialism.

A riveting contemporary response to Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory has been voiced by Gilbert Shang Ndi. The critic demonstrates that the terms *tactics* defined by Michael de Certeau can be translated to Bhabha's aesthetics of opposition in the form of "the subversive dynamic of mimicry [that de-authorizes] hegemonic orders" (95). In colonial and postcolonial contexts, *tactics* occupies a space within enemy territory and subverts the dominant culture by inverting "the epistemological basis on which the totalizing culture and order of meaning foreground their hegemony" (Ndi 96). The subject involved in *tactics* emerges as a hybrid

because in the process of adaptation to the environment imposed by the strategy of prevailing culture, the subject cannot completely free itself from its structures. *Tactics* disrupts and corrupts "the macro sign, reproduced to function in an order other than that which the instances of power prescribe" (96). Some of the measures that seem significant in the mission of *tactics* include "irony, parody, paronomasia (pun), epantharnosis (intentional error), polysemy, verbal slips, repetitions" (96). Ndi sees a strong connection between De Certeau's *tactics* and Bhabha's mimicry since both concepts are in cohesion with hybridity. Just as the hybrid nature of mimicry deconstructs cultural purity and homogeneity, "[stretching] and [teasing] out the sign to include other things and meanings" (Ndi 96), *tactics* also seems to be permeated with such ambivalence, posing both "resemblance" and "menace".

During the public discussion at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on 30th September 2019, Homi Bhabha introduced a new term, "degradation," and its application to the acute issues of the contemporary world. Bhabha observes a "*degradation* of the foreigner" because today's "strongman" world rules "are tantalising their supporters with retrograde visions of national greatness," which means the subjugation of 'the other,' often taken to be minorities, migrants, and dissidents" (Liu). Such a vision was promoted by Donald Trump whose slogan "Make America Great Again" must be read, according to Bhabha, as the legitimation of "a mythical return to a state of racial purity; a closed-in cultural homogeneity; a sexuality that is deeply regulated; a walled insecurity of territorial sovereignty" (Liu). Thus he propounds a new rhetoric of emotion in addressing the threats the Other has to face nowadays. Discrimination, which "casts racial violence as a bug in the system," should be replaced with *degradation* because the latter one is more emotive and "deals in the language of abuse; it deals in incivility" (Liu). Bhabha argues that the issue of immigrants seeking asylum is typically addressed in an official manner "using the language of rights and legal obligation." He suggests that by introducing emotive language, such as the language of poetry, we can

better empathise with “the complex, intimate experiences of those on the ground” (Liu). Bhabha adds that adopting a compassionate approach to difference and “addressing human rights from the standpoint of those often precluded from the outset” are critical questions that, together with climate changes and nativism, are bound to become more urgent (Liu).

On a final note, I would like to emphasise that postcolonialism, along with Said’s and Bhabha’s postcolonial theories, which are closely associated with the past, cannot be diminished or supplanted by both critical voices and more present-day concepts such as neocolonialism. These theories remain crucial frameworks for understanding and addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism in our contemporary world. Indeed, due to the rich history of colonisation and imperialism, postcolonial literature – both existing and yet to be written – will always preserve the memory of the colonial past. Consequently, it continues to serve as valuable material for postcolonial academic research, offering insights into the complex legacies and ongoing impacts of colonialism on societies around the world.

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