RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY

IN

PETER CAREY'S *JACK MAGGS*

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DISSERTATION

for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

at the

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

Supervisor: Prof. M.J. Wenzel

2007

Potchefstroom Campus

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and children

Jozua, Jan-Hendrik and Kobus Viljoen

who have made it possible for me to be more than I could ever have imagined.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Marita Wenzel. This dissertation would not have been completed without her expert advice and considerable patience.

I wish to acknowledge the financial contribution received from the National Research Foundation of South Africa, which has enabled me to do research and to attend a conference abroad.

I would also like to thank Ms Gerda van Rooyen of the Ferdinand Postma Library for her assistance in searching for sources.

A special thanks to my friends and colleagues who patiently listened to my ideas, frustrations and complaints.

I am extremely grateful to my mother who helped with the referencing, cooking and all the other chores that I could simply delegate to her.

Finally, a special word of thanks to my husband and children for their support and unfailing faith in my abilities. You are worth more than any degree could ever be.

ABBREVIATIONS

All references to novels by Charles Dickens and Peter Carey will relate to the editions specified in the bibliography and will be given in the following abbreviated form:

Charles Dickens

DC	*David Copperfield*
GE	*Great Expectations*
LD	*Little Dorrit*
OT	*Oliver Twist*
PP	*The Pickwick Papers*
SbB	*Sketches by Boz*

Peter Carey

BS	*Bliss*
JM	*Jack Maggs*
KG	*The True History of the Kelly Gang*

ABSTRACT

The formation of identity is closely integrated with contextual, temporal and spatial dimensions. Perceptions about personal, cultural and historical identities are created within literary spaces through authorial and literary representation. As a postcolonial writer, Carey questions modernist authors who assume that they are accurately recording reality, as well as the representation of the identities of peripheral characters and contexts found in Victorian fiction. By revisiting Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*, Carey addresses socio-historical; cultural, identity and literary issues within a postcolonial context. In his novel, *Jack Maggs*, he succeeds in subverting and appropriating the authorial authority and historical and narrative spaces as they are perceived to be in Victorian fiction, by the manipulation of narrative aspects and by the use of literary conventions such as intertextuality and metafiction. He also succeeds in creating alternative methods of identity formation.

OPSOMMING

Identiteitsvorming is ten nouste verweef met kontekstuele, temporale en ruimtelike dimensies. Persepsies van persoonlike, kulturele en historiese identiteite word binne literêre ruimtes geskep deur die wyse waarop literêre voorstelling plaasvind. As 'n postkoloniale skrywer, bevraagteken Peter Carey die veronderstelling dat modernistiese skrywers se werke 'n akkurate weerspieëling van die realiteit is. Hy bevraagteken ook die voorstelling van die identiteite van marginale karakters en ruimtes soos dit in die Victoriaanse konteks gevind word. Deur te verwys na Charles Dickens se *Great Expectations*, fokus Carey in sy roman *Jack Maggs*, op sekere sosiaal-historiese; kulturele, identiteits- en literêre kwessies binne 'n postkoloniale konteks. Carey slaag daarin om die Victoriaanse skrywer se outoriteit, asook die historiese en narratiewe ruimtes – soos dit in Victoriaanse fiksie weerspieël word – te ondermyn en aan te pas deur die manipulasie van narratiewe aspekte en die gebruik van literêre konvensies soos intertekstualiteit en metafiksie. Hy slaag ook daarin om alternatiewe metodes vir identiteitsvorming daar te stel.

CHAPTER 1: Literature and Identity

1.1 Contextualization

This dissertation attempts to trace and foreground the significance of postcolonial texts in the re-writing of realist Victorian master narratives[1] as exemplified in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860 – 1861). *Great Expectations* is used as a matrix in comparison with the postcolonial text, *Jack Maggs* (1997) by Peter Carey, who constructed this novel as a counter-narrative. From a postcolonial perspective, the heterogeneity of original texts and their historical contexts prevents us from making general assumptions about such texts as different societies "had experienced very different forms of colonialism" (Thieme, 2001:2). This study illustrates how revised texts produce an alternative interpretation and understanding of identity formation and contributes towards its postmodern perception. This perception of identity as a fluid and constantly changing process is determined by changing historical, cultural and socio-economic contexts. Consequently, the comparison of *Great Expectations* with *Jack Maggs* also focuses on the socio-historical contexts of Victorian England and Australia as a postcolonial society.

Great Expectations is a predominantly realist novel and formulated in the style of a *Bildungsroman* but it also contains strands of the gothic (mystery), mystery and the fairy tale that are indicated in the idea of a dual ending cleverly anticipating and fusing the realist and fantastic traditions. Davis (1999:27) defines *Bildungsroman* as being the story of

> a young person from the provinces who, dissatisfied with the social an intellectual restrictions of provincial life, leaves home to make his way in the city. There he is initiated into the truth about the

[1] Klein (1995:275) states that "[T]he phrase *master or meta narrative* has grown popular for describing stories which seem to assimilate different cultures into a single course of history dominated by the West" (my italics).
Kvale (1992:32) asserts that "Postmodern thought is characterized by a loss of belief in an objective world and an incredulity towards meta-narratives of legitimisation."

> world, often through painful love affairs, and he loses his illusions and accommodates himself to the newly discovered reality.

In *Great Expectations,* the narrative involves the story of a young boy who is dissatisfied with his life and prospects as an apprentice to a blacksmith. He is given unexpected hope and expectations through a mysterious benefactor and, as a result, moves to the city only to find that he had drawn the wrong conclusions about his benefactor and that the grass is not greener on the other side of the fence.

Dickens's complex narrative structure and characterization in *Great Expectations* are depictive and representative of the Victorian notion that identities are fixed. Victorian ideologies[2] and beliefs are reflected in characters such as Pip, the protagonist of the novel, who strives to become the archetypal Victorian gentleman; Joe, Pip's brother-in-law; the Pocket family; Jaggers and Wemmick, and in the female characters' dispositions that range from the cruel (Pip's sister and Estella) and manipulative (Miss Havisham) to the traditional, sweet and wholesome home maker (Biddy). Magwitch, the returned convict who longs to be an English gentleman by proxy, is portrayed as the archetypal picaresque child and peripheral character whose destiny is sure to be a life of crime, disaster and, eventually, exile and death.

Pip's life is intertwined with those of convicts, criminals and crime. Pip is an *internal character-focalizer* (first person narrator), whose life is turned upside down on more than one occasion because of the interference and involvement of the convicted criminal, Magwitch, who (after his exile) returns to England to claim Pip as his creation. *Great Expectations* is not the only fictional work of Dickens with the theme of a convict who returns home from exile. In one of his earlier works, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836 – 37), Dickens includes the story of "[T]he convict's return" (*PP, 76*–83).

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[2] I understand ideologies to include political, social, religious and cultural values, beliefs and practices.

During the past three decades, postmodern and postcolonial literature have included various works by authors such as Peter Carey (Australia), Jean Rhys (Caribbean) and J.M. Coetzee (South Africa) who have assumed the self-appointed responsibility of rewriting, re-imagining and re-inventing some of these classic English literary texts. By taking existing texts, especially classic English Victorian texts, postcolonial writers create counter-discourses in which the underlying assumptions of the original are abrogated and appropriated. The use of the term *abrogated* in this case is intentional, as this term also refers specifically to post-colonial writers' rejection of "a great range of cultural and political activities – film, theatre, the writing of history, political organization, modes of thought and argument" (Ashcroft et al, 2000:5 & 6).

In *Jack Maggs*, Carey revisits Dickens's novel, *Great Expectations* but he provides an interesting postcolonial angle to the original novel. Carey reflects on the Victorian novel and covertly subverts its representation of ideologies that marginalized peripheral characters and societies during this period. Questioning Dickens's stereotypical depiction of identities, especially of peripheral characters such as Magwitch, Carey creates a complex narrative structure by approaching his novel from a postmodern / postcolonial perspective and by using intertextual strategies to strengthen the message. To analyze the narrative structures of *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs*, I refer to the four basic aspects of narrative: plot, context, characterization and focalization.

Although it is implied that Carey's main frame of reference for *Jack Maggs* relates to Dickens's *Great Expectations*, there is much more to Carey's novel than a deliberate allusion to a Dickensian style of writing with regard to form, context, characters and language. Carey states that "Great Expectations is not only a great work of English literature; it is (to an Australian) also a way in which the English have colonized our ways of seeing ourselves. It is a great novel, but it is also, in another way, a prison" (Bold Type, 2003:4). He also mentions that he felt Dickens's depiction of Magwitch as the "foul and dark, frightening, murderous...other" (Bold Type, 2003:2) to be unfair.

In *Jack Maggs*, Carey decentres the main protagonist in Dickens's *Great Expectations*, Pip, and re-invents Dickens's peripheral character, *Magwitch* (the returned convict) to make him the main protagonist of the novel. Instead of only one narrator, Carey shifts the focalization from one character to the other, thus creating a sense of *polyphony*, which results in the emergence of multiple perspectives and voices. Peter Carey's contribution to the sub-genre known as Australian convict literature is not limited to *Jack Maggs*. His novel, *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000 – hereafter referred to as *Kelly Gang*), is also concerned with the lives of the transported convicts and their offspring in the newly established settlements of New South Wales.

On the one hand, Peter Carey's novel pays homage to the realist style and form used in Dickens's *Great Expectations*. On the other hand, however, *Jack Maggs* also exhibits strong metafictional qualities if one were to consider Waugh's (1984:14) claim that "such fiction exhibits the frame-break of technique and counter-technique, of construction and deconstruction of illusion." Culler (1997:34) also points out that "[N]ovels are at some level about novels, about the problems and possibilities of representation and giving shape or meaning to experience."

In *Jack Maggs,* Carey questions the credibility, that is, he questions modernist authors who assumed that they were accurately recording reality. Consequently, he re-imagines and rewrites socio-historical and cultural issues within a postcolonial Australian context. Krassnitzer (1995:23) describes this type of fiction as "self-conscious, self-reflexive, autoreferential, introverted, narcissistic and experimental." This "self-conscious turning toward the form of the act of writing itself" (Hutcheon, 1988:128) is further manifested in Carey's introduction of multiple authors (polyphonic strategy) and several allusions to a variety of Dickens's other works, as well as a metafictional intertext in Carey's juxtaposition of the novel with the life of the historical author - Dickens. By means of this polyphony and intertextuality, Carey involves two historical authors, i.e. Dickens and himself, and two fictional authors, i.e. Maggs and

Tobias Oates in the depiction of the (hi)story of Jack Maggs. The presence of these authorial figures results in the representation of various voices and perspectives within different contexts, as well as the inclusion of previously silent voices.

The proposed study of *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs* foregrounds the different cultures and historical contexts of the two protagonists: the world of the learned gentleman in Victorian England versus that of the convicted criminal transported to the newly established settlements in New South Wales (Australia). Apart from presenting the reader with the narrative present that chronicles the events of Maggs's return to London after an extended period spent in the penal colonies of Australia (as does Magwitch in *Great Expectations*) where he has become a gentleman of some means, Carey also adds the narration of Maggs's childhood experiences as a picaresque character through external retroversion (see Chapter 2).

Both Maggs in *Jack Maggs* and Magwitch in *Great Expectations* return to be reunited with the young men who had been so kind to them at the time of their attempted escapes. Both men have a desperate need to establish themselves within their original place of birth and within Victorian society and to reinvent themselves as Victorian gentlemen, mainly by way of association with the young gentlemen they regard as their adoptive sons. This concept of *Victorian gentleman* is a crucial one as it features in both *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs*. The characters (Pip, Magwitch, Jack Maggs and Henry Phipps) in both novels delude themselves about the definition of what a Victorian gentleman is. They all deny their origin or true identity which leaves them with no frame of reference to build a new future. They all fall prey to 'false expectations' but are then able to function within their context once they realize and acknowledge their authentic identity and gentility.

The historic distance separating the two novels also exposes the different literary dominants that characterize them: nineteenth century realist writing

(*Great Expectations*) and twentieth century postmodern and postcolonial writing (*Jack Maggs*). McHale (1987:9 & 10) makes a distinction between modernist and postmodern writing based on his opinion that modernist writing is *epistemological,* while "the dominant of postmodernist fiction is *ontological*." For the scope of this dissertation, postmodern literature is considered as works of fiction that subvert the traditional nature of modernist fiction, while Postcolonial literature is perceived as literature from previously colonized countries that features a political agenda and subverts the ideologies that underscore colonization and imperialism. The location of postcolonial theory, critique and writing is "less a matter of geography than where individuals locate themselves as speaking from, epistemologically, culturally and politically, who they are speaking to, and how they define their own enunciative space" (Young, 2001:62).

Although the terms *postmodern* and *postcolonial* are both used in this dissertation, they should not be regarded as synonymous, but should rather be considered as interactive concepts that have a common interest in challenging the master narratives represented in modernist writing and imperialist ideologies. In *The Novelist as Teacher* (1965), Chinua Achebe emphasizes the essential role that texts play in shaping and reflecting social structures within the postcolonial context, as well as the texts' important role in bringing about change and restitution. The postcolonial revised text establishes alternative discourses in order to "define...images of identity, community, of history, of place" (Lawson, 1995:168) and saves them - as Nelson (1990:30) claims - from the "colonialist historical narratives...from distortions and denigrations." The author - particularly the postcolonial author - takes the "basic assumptions of a British canonical text, and unveils those assumptions, subverting the text for postcolonial purposes" (Tiffin, 1987:19).

The concepts of realism, postmodernism and postcolonialism as dominant approaches in literature will be discussed in more detail in the chapters pertaining to the novels relating to these concepts (Chapters 3 & 4).

1.2 Cultural contexts

There is a relationship between context and, for example, cultural identity. This claim leads us to consider the relationship between context and culture. Hofstede (1994:5) defines culture as "a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. It is *the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.*" Crang (1998:1 & 2) regards "cultures as locatable, specific phenomena...[that] are sets of beliefs or values that give meaning to ways of life and produce (and are reproduced through) material and symbolic forms." It is thus safe to infer that culture is construed by the interaction of ideas, practices and products of a specific society at a specific location and within a specific period which finds expression in several constructs such as the visual arts, performing arts, architecture, literature etc.

Human identity is formed through interaction with spatial and temporal contexts. These contexts shape the human's experience of environment and influence the construction of culture and history. Crang (1998:102) claims that people "define themselves through a sense of place" and therefore, the most important component in the process of identity formation is context. In the postcolonial context, space is no longer perceived as merely a geographical location with physical boundaries; it is increasingly associated with social, historical, cultural and contextual identities and ideologies. Lerner (1991:335) claims that "any text can be related to at least three contexts: its ideology, its strategies of writing, and social reality." This means that the text relates to, amongst others, socio-historical, cultural and geographical contexts, a well as literary dominants. It is within these contexts that the identity formation of a society or an individual is formed. Therefore, it is clear that there is a relationship between spatial and temporal context and the formation of identity.

As the contexts are shaped or reshaped by means of innovation and/or transformation, new contexts are created or old ones are appropriated in order to reflect and record changes in society. The result is a plurality and multi-layeredness in the formation of contexts. Crang (1998:22) describes this concept of layering as *palimpsest,* where new inscriptions are written over the original inscription without the original ever being completely erased. The perception of cultural context is, therefore, dynamic: it reflects and embodies the evolving social, political and religious ideologies, values and experiences of a society within a specific temporal and spatial dimension (cf. Hofstede, 1994; Crang, 1998). The evolutionary and dynamic shaping or reshaping of context and socio-historical circumstances within a new temporal and spatial dimension, requires the adaptation of previous texts to create new 'versions', whether oral or written.

In her book, *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image 1830 - 1870,* Mitchell (2000) points out a tendency to view the narrative representation of nineteenth century history as a just and immutable reflection of the past (cf. Bowen, 2002:489). It is this fixed impression of verisimilitude and immutability that contributes towards the contemporary perception of history as representative of the Victorian *Zeitgeist.* Consequently, from a postmodernist perspective, Victorian literature – and more specifically the Victorian novel – still serves as a source of reference and a benchmark when it comes to defining British space, norms/values and identity as well as its impact on the colonies. The Victorian novel's concern with the socio-political, economic, spiritual and cultural issues of its era contributes towards an impression that it represents a 'true' reflection of historical events and socio-historical contexts; that it represents an ontological and epistemological consciousness of the period, as well as a "source of valid socio-historical evidence" (Jędrzejewski, 1996:268).

This Victorian *Zeitgeist* in Britain is grounded in the British imperialist consciousness of the nineteenth century. Young (2001:28) explains that "imperialism...often operated retrospectively, after the event, a misleading,

belated *nachträglichkeit* designed to give cultural meaning to the historical practice of colonialism." As such, imperialism became the justification of British territorial, political and economical domination. This domination was not only centered within Great Britain, but was expanded internationally by means of exploration and colonization. Both imperialism and colonialism were characterized by "the exercise of power either through direct conquest or...through political and economic influence" (Young, 2001:27), as well a sense of intolerance towards the morals, social codes and values of *others.*

The British imperialist consciousness is underscored by its historical perceptions and assumptions that represent the *other* as inferior and incapable of social, political and economic self-realization. Although the *other* is traditionally used to imply the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, this study will also use the term with regard to the individuals who are subjected to the imposition of the ideological beliefs of their time. The *other* includes the marginalized, the silenced, the colonized. The British imperialist representation of the *self* and of the *other* represents a worldview that does not allow the colonized *other* the freedom of ontological and epistemological appropriation or self-realization. Therefore, the "western perspectives, historical consciousness and...textuality...become complicit in the imperial enterprise" (Tiffin, 1988:173).

However, Lerner (1991:334) argues that

> it has become commonplace to argue that history cannot give us direct access to objective facts, since the ideology and the verbal strategies of the historian will determine what he chooses to notice and how he describes it, to say nothing of the connections between events that he then establishes.

Perceptions about physical, cultural and historical identities are created within literary spaces by the way the author depicts and represents these identities in literary texts. The counter-discursive strategies used in the postcolonial texts of revision seek to create alternative discourses in which the reader can be

presented with new perspectives on the past and in which alternative ways of dealing with the present and the future can be created.

The postmodern and postcolonial author enables the colonized subject to take possession of his/her[3] (hi)story in order to redefine his identity. Hall (1997:111) cites Fanon's opinion that this rediscovery and reinvention of identity is often motivated by "the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others."

1.3 Context and identity

There is a reciprocal relationship between context and identity. Experiences and contexts inform perceptions, perspectives and the perception of identity. Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1995) is a good example of this reciprocal relationship. This novella, that provides the reader with glimpses of liberal and objective visions outside the Victorian *Zeitgeist*, anticipates postmodern and postcolonial ideas. When Marlow arrives in the Congo expecting to observe signs of civilization brought about by those who preceded him, he finds a "philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work" (Conrad, 1995:46). Consequently, there is a discrepancy between that which he thought he knew, that which he expected and that which he actually encounters. The way of life that he expected is non-existent. Because of the discrepancy between the perception of reality and the reality of his experiences, Marlow's perceptions change. He develops a different perception of London and of its society because of his experience of the imperialist exploitation of Africa. To Marlow, London is no longer the beacon of light and civilization, but has become – due to the

[3] For the sake of expediency, the male pronoun will be used in all future reference, although both genders are implied.

pretensions and atrocities of colonization and imperialism in the Congo – the "heart of an immense darkness" (Conrad, 1995:126).

Segers (1997:269) points out various "levels, or indicators of identity...a national level...a regional / ethnic / religious / linguistic affiliation; a gender level; a generation level; a social class level; an organizational level or corporate level". This plurality results in the existence of concepts such as cultural identity and personal identity. The manner in which these identities are represented in literature then results in a narrative identity.

1.3.1 Cultural identity

There is a close relationship between the shaping of cultural experiences and ideologies (see page 2); their representation in literary texts and the formation of identity. The question of identity is, however, not a simple one. Perceptions of personal and cultural identity are often tainted by a person or a group's unrealistic perception of its own uniqueness, by stereotypes and by unrealistic expectations. Defining identity is further complicated by the plurality of its constitution. Segers (1997:272) asserts that the cultural identity of a specific group is based on three factors: the characteristics of the group within a specific historical context, the group's perception of their own unique cultural identity and the perception of the group's cultural identity by people who are not part of the group.

Furthermore, the cultural identity of a society is also informed by its national identity. It is possible for a nation to consist of multiple cultural societies, such as is the case in South Africa. Each ethnical group, such as the Xhosa, the Zulu and the Tswana, has its own cultural and ideological beliefs and practices. However, the hybrid and multi-cultural nature of the South African population and the ideological, political and socio-economic history of the country is bound to contribute to the identity formation of each cultural group and the "ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their

force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied" (Said, 1997:23).

It thus becomes very clear that context plays a pivotal role in defining and forming identity. However, if one assumes that culture and identity are not static ideas or perceptions, but that they are protean in quality and forever in flux, the question of identity assumes a complex nature or interpretation (cf. Hall, 1997:10). Consequently, several issues need to be considered: how does cultural context influence the formation and reformation of identities; to what extent are people interpellated by cultural contexts and is it possible that the formation of cultural identity and self-realization is manipulated by cultural context?

Bloom (1990:53) argues that "individuals who share the same identification will tend to act in concert in order to protect or enhance their shared identity." Hall (1997:111) acknowledges the existence of "common historical experiences and shared cultural codes that provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning". These shared experiences and codes can be referred to as a society's cultural identity – an identity that is transferred from one generation to the next. We have to keep in mind, however, that the temporal and spatial context of such a society may change and that – because of the interaction between culture and identity formation - this change is bound to bring about a change in the society's perception of their cultural identity. This appropriation of the society's cultural identity, according to the contemporary context and the society's commitment to the context, concurs with the views of scholars such as Segers (1997) and Ellemers *et al* (1999) who believe that "cultural identity...is a mental conception which may vary according to the constructor, the time and place of the constructor" (Segers, 1997:273). In other words, cultural identity is the perception the subject has of himself as individual - or as part of a collective identity – within a specific time and space. Many perceptions about physical, cultural and historical identities are created within literary spaces through authorial / literary representation.

One example of the appropriation of a society's cultural identity is when the representation of marginalized cultural groups (who find themselves placed within a new geographical and/or socio-political context) contributes to the emergence of new identity formations for these groups. The displaced subject attempts to find a relationship between the knowledge and perceptions he has of the displaced context and the representation of his position and identity within this new context. The subject's perceptions are often confronted by contradictory events and realities. Displacement, therefore, leads to epistemological frustration in the search for the relationship between ontological representation, self-realization and the displaced context. The subject's perceptions and expectations of reality are proven wrong because of the way his life is represented, the way he perceives himself within the context and the realities he encounters within the new context. Any form of uprootment, for example, whether it is forced or voluntary displacement such as migration or exile, influences identity formation because of the change in temporal and spatial dimensions.

The process of representation and self-realization within the displaced context may be hindered by the anxiety and constraints placed on the subject by the memories of the past and by unrealized expectations. Bhabha (1998:36) refers to this process as an "anxious passage [that needs] to be traversed in the search for truth residing in the encounter between ontological cultural impulse and the memory of displacements". When the *anxious passage* is confronted, the subject can begin to appropriate his ontological value and find new methods of identity formation within the relevant context.

The formation of cultural identity, however, is not founded only on shared characteristics, but also on differences. These differences can be the result of external and internal character traits. The external aspect of difference that contributes towards the formation of cultural identities refers to the relationship between *self* and *other.* The perception of the *self* is embedded in the contrasting perception of the *other.* The *other,* in turn, largely exists through the

perception of the *self.* Crang (1998:59) suggests that "writing the *foreign* helped construct a notion of the *home* culture through a process of *Othering,* whereby the *Self* is defined in relation to the characteristics of an *Other* culture" (my italics). Ellemers *et al* (1999:1) underscore this definition of identity that evolves "in relation to other relevant groups *in situ*." They also acknowledge the influence that comparative contexts (that is the context of the group/individual and that of the *other*) have on the formation of identity.

The internal aspect of difference that contributes towards the formation of cultural identities refers to the relationship between present and past. Hall (1997:112) argues that cultural identities "belong to the future as much as the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories". As mentioned before, it is this "constant transformation" (Hall, 1997:112) that forces us to consider our historical past when forming our current cultural identity.

During the twenty-first century, the possibility of comparing contexts is foregrounded more than ever before. Segers (1997:264) identifies the contrariness between globalization and nationalization as one of the most recent phenomena that contributes to the shaping and formation of new cultural contexts and identities. Because of globalization and particularly information technology, the awareness and knowledge of diverse societies, ideologies, religions and cultures have become important and commonplace. Furthermore, traditional concepts of space and time have been reduced due to the diffusion of geographical, cultural and intellectual boundaries – a phenomenon that has been anticipated by postmodern thought and promoted by globalization. Crang (1998:5) acknowledges the study of the "fragmented juxtaposition of cultural forms and the identities arising from this [that is the juxtaposition]." South Africa is an excellent example of the juxtaposition of various cultures within a single nation. The result is a plurality of both cultures and identities - the emergence of a new, hybrid culture and identity. Appiah (1997:618) goes further to promote the notion of a culture that involves cosmopolitan patriotism. He

defines this cosmopolitan patriotism as the retention of the cultural values that belong to the natal context - that is the context into which the subject was born - while simultaneously embracing the other, different and new places, people and cultures. *Home* constitutes the place where the subject experiences a sense of belonging. Appiah (1997:621) also maintains that the adoption of other cultures, whether national or global, does not necessarily mean the negation of cultural differences, or a unique identity or the development of a homogenous culture. It simply means that cultural hybridization could occur.

1.3.2 Personal identity

Up to this point, the focus has been on the relationship between context and cultural identity, but it is also necessary to address the formation and re-formation of a personal identity. Culler (1997) raises important issues when he asks whether the definition or the perception of the *self* is attributed and constructed or whether the formation of the *self* relates to social and cultural contexts. He goes on to acknowledge four basic points of view with regard to these opposing notions. In the first place the subject - the 'I' is regarded as innate. This notion correlates with Ricoeur's (1994:4) perception of the subject which refers to the subject as *ego cogito:* the *Self* is posited. The second notion regards the subject as the result of both the attributed original dimensions and the social contexts. The third notion stresses the fact that the self is a dynamic phenomenon that will change according to its experiences and contexts. Finally, the fourth notion emphasizes the formation of identity in relationship to the roles the subject occupies within his society.

Earlier studies of the formation of personal identities did not regard the subject's ability to represent or signify itself within a dynamic context as important. These earlier studies, in other words, showed no great concern with the relationship between context and identity formation. Over time, however, the contribution of a specific context to the formation of the subject's personal identity became

central: a reciprocal relationship between time, place, belonging and defining the *self*.

Another dimension to consider in the formation of personal identity is its relationship to temporality. Ricoeur (1994), for example, is of the opinion that the most salient characteristic of the *self* is its temporality. He identifies the greatest omissions in earlier studies of identity formation as the neglect to consider the temporality and historical context of the subject. Ricoeur (1994) believes that the only way this existing gap can be filled, is through the reconstruction of a narrative theory which will be based on "its contribution to the constitution of the self" (Ricoeur, 1994:114) and consider the relationship between the narrative and the formation of the self, eventually defining a narrative identity. Ricoeur's belief in the interaction between narrative and identity formation leads to the need to examine the relationship between literary context and the formation of identity.

1.3.3 Narrative identity

One of the most powerful mediums through which the representation, production and shaping of cultural identities can be achieved, is in arts and literature in particular. It is also possible that the act of writing can result in a better understanding of the *self*. By selecting and arranging historical, social, political, personal and general data, one becomes able to understand the *self* and life. This is what happens, for example, especially in the autobiographical writings by black women.

Although literary representation often focuses on individual identities, it also contributes to the formation of group identities. Culler (1997:112) argues that "[L]iterature has not only made identity a theme; it has played a significant role in the construction of the identity of readers." Segers (1997:275) claims that literature has the ability to depict the unique qualities of a community and therefore, could "offer an excellent opportunity to construct basic elements of

the cultural identity of a certain nation or group". Should one relate this to Segers's (1997:272) three factors mentioned earlier in the chapter, it is apparent that literature within the group reflects and shapes the social, material and literary dimensions of the group from which it comes. With regard to the second factor, literature reflects on and contributes towards the formation of the self-image and self-realization of the group and the individual. Finally, the literary text also shapes the perceptions that people outside the group will have of that specific group or of the individuals that constitute the group.

It is within the narrative structure of a literary work that the search for the identity of the *self* takes place; it is within this structure that the equivocal relationship between the *self* and the *other* is considered and clarified. The study of personal identity has to include the temporal context as well as the narrative dimension. Ricoeur (1994:116) is adamant that "solutions offered to the problem of personal identity which do not consider the narrative dimension fail." Each narrative presents its audience with a perception or a focalization. Each narrative becomes the vehicle through which ethics is channeled and in which opinions, ideologies, reflections, predictions, subversions and verisimilitudes are embedded. It is within the involvement with these narrative dimensions that the *self* construes its *ipse*-identity and its *idem*-identity: the *self* and (also as) the *other*.

Therefore, we can conclude that literature has the ability to contribute to the formation of personal and cultural identities. The formation of a cultural and personal identity is often created and represented within the literary context, and within the narrative structure of the text. The historical, socio-economical and political context within which the text originates, as well as that in which the text is read, has a definite influence on the perception of identity formation and representation.

1.4 Culture and literature

The formation of the cultural identities of individuals and groups, as well as the function of cultural practices and products are two of the subjects with which cultural studies are concerned. Because literature is regarded as a cultural practice, it is included in cultural studies. In the case of literature, it is safe to infer that cultural studies have contributed towards broadening the literary canon, for example, by including texts by marginalized groups such as women and indigenous authors in postmodern and postcolonial literature. These texts then appear to be representative of the culture of the author and the historical and socio-political context in which the text was written. Once again the reciprocal nature of literature and cultural context has to be stressed. Literature informs the cultural context and reflects its conventions and codes as much as the cultural context informs literary texts. Caserio (1979:xiv) asserts that "the most vital element in literature is not its self-containment, but its relationship to historical human change – that literary structures are transformed in response to the human metamorphoses they represent." Therefore, literature contributes to changes in perception.

Wissing and Johl (1996:42) point out that literature has the ability to affect the reader on various levels that encourage "multicultural interpretation and exploration". The diversity of literary genres and discourses leads to literature's ability to depict "different relationships to space...and how spatial relationships within literature can be invested with different meanings" (Crang, 1998:44). Thus, literary texts become the textual representation and the mouthpiece of identities, cultures, ideologies, socio-political perceptions and of history itself within different contexts, as well as a source for the readers' perceptions of those contexts. This results in a change of meaning and perceptions and in the emergence of new genres that facilitate and enhance interpretation.

The meaning and ideological influence of a text should be related to spatial and temporal contexts in which it originates (historical context), as well as the

context in which it is read (contemporary context), because meaning is not only related to the intent of the historical author. Throughout this process, however, the possible initial intent or motivation of the historical author is not negated. Culler (1997:33) underscores the belief that literary works "take up, repeat, challenge and transform" previous works. As literary texts are read within the different temporal and spatial contexts, new meaning and interpretations will be attributed to the text. The changing interpretations of literary texts are, therefore, the result of the dynamic nature of context, as well as the interaction between text and context. We could argue, for example, that Peter Carey's alternative interpretation of Dickens's character, Magwitch, is a result of the different context and assumptions that inform Carey's perceptions of this character.

The subjectivity of literary representation and interpretation does not necessarily mean that truth is sacrificed. Pocock (1981:11) avers that "[F]ictive reality may transcend or contain more truth than the physical everyday reality." The majority of readers will base their perceptions of reality on the fictional representation of that reality prior to actually experiencing the physical and concrete reality itself (cf. Crang, 1998:44). Benedict Anderson (as quoted by Culler, 1997:37) states that "[F]iction seeps quietly and continuously into reality". The fiction in literature becomes representation, a method of finding "reality, truth or ideas" (Culler, 1997:9). It is thus a 'subjective' experience of context, based on people's emotional experience and perceptions of spatial, temporal and ideological dimensions.

1.5 Methodology

This study will focus on an analysis and comparison of *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs*, in order to determine the role that narratives play in representing and redefining various types of identities in literary works and within specific contexts. Narratology – as enunciated by Mieke Bal – will be used as the theoretical framework to analyze the plot, context, characterization and focalization of the chosen novels. The approaches used for this dissertation will include the literary and cultural dominants of Victorian realism, postmodernism and postcolonialism, because of the specific contexts of the two respective texts. The dynamics of identity formation in literature are best defined by the theory of narratology and a postmodern/postcolonial approach that results in a focus on authorial, historical and narrative representation in literature.

This dissertation is mainly concerned with the narrative strategies employed by Dickens and Carey in the construction of their narratives with regard to the formation of identity. Several questions emanate from a comparative study and the analysis of the two primary texts.

The **first question** concerns itself with the relationship between context and identity. How does context relate to identity formation in literature? With regard to this, I discuss the relationship between context and identity, the relationship between cultural context and the formation of group and individual identities, the relationship between culture and literature and the formation of identity through narrative representation in Chapter One.

Chapter Two focuses on narratology and asks the **second question**: how do the abovementioned narrative aspects employed by authors influence the readers' perceptions of historical, ideological, cultural and geographical contexts and identities? The discussion of narrative aspects such as plot, context, characterization and focalization will serve to form the basis for better understanding of the discussion of these aspects in later chapters. The chapter also includes a discussion of some of the literary conventions and various

components involved in the creative act of writing: allusion and intertextuality; metafiction; author and authority, reader response and interpretation.

The **third question** addresses the question of how Charles Dickens's novels, and specifically *Great Expectations,* depict the fixed Victorian identity as well as the *other.* Chapter Three, therefore, includes a brief overview of the Victorian social context and *realism* as the dominant approach in Victorian literature. The chapter presents an analysis of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860 – 61), which focuses on the narrative aspects mentioned above, such as plot, context, characterization and focalization. Chapter Three concludes with an overview of Dickens's use of allusion as a literary convention. In order to substantiate and clarify any arguments presented, I shall refer to other novels by Dickens such as *The Pickwick Papers* (1836 – 37), *Oliver Twist* (1837 – 9), *David Copperfield* (1849 – 50), *Little Dorrit* (1855 – 7) and to *Sketches by Boz* (1836 – 7).

Chapter Four focuses on the **fourth question**: which postmodern techniques does Carey employ in his fiction, especially in his novel, *Jack Maggs*? The chapter includes a brief overview of the socio-historical context to which *Jack Maggs* refers, as well as a discussion of *postmodernism* as the dominant approach of, amongst others, postcolonial literature. It concludes with a discussion of Carey's use of intertextuality and metafiction as literary conventions. In order to substantiate and clarify any arguments presented, I shall refer to other novels by Carey such as *Illywhacker* (1986), *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988), *Tristan Smith* (1996), *Kelly Gang* (2000) and *My life as a fake* (2003).

The concluding chapter, which addresses the **fifth** (and final) **question**: how does Peter Carey, by revisiting *Great Expectations* and creating *Jack Maggs,* create new contexts within which alternative methods of identity formation become possible? This chapter will focus on the similarities and differences in the two primary texts. The purpose is to show how Carey, by using postmodern strategies such as intertextuality, metafiction and polyphony, succeeds in:

creating new contexts; presenting alternative and multiple perspectives on existing ideas and subverting fixed perceptions of specific identities, such as the gentleman, the author and his fiction and the Australian *other* in Victorian fiction. Finally, this chapter will also consider Peter Carey's contribution towards postcolonial writing in his attempts to map alternative means for the formation of personal and cultural identity through literary representation of other voices and by presenting the reader with alternate stories.

CHAPTER 2: Narratology

2.1 Narrative aspects

The previous chapter discusses the interaction between spatial and temporal context in the formation of identity. It also concludes that literature has the ability to contribute towards the formation of personal and cultural identities. Chapter Two focuses on narratology as a method of analysing narrative texts in order to determine and interpret the basic components of identity formation in literature as well as on intertextuality and metafiction as literary conventions. The chapter also discusses the relationships between the various components involved in the creative act of writing: literary conventions such as intertextuality and metafiction; author and authority, reader response and interpretation.

Wales (2001:265) defines narratives as being "structured in the sense that they characteristically consist of the narration of a succession of (related) events or experiences [and of which the] propositions are usually related temporally or causally." Hawthorn (1994:129) cites Genette who maintains that

> the word *narrative* (in French, *récit*) can refer to three separate things: either the oral or written narrative statement that undertakes to tell of an event or events; or the succession of real or fictitious that are the subject of the discourse, with their varied relations; or, finally, the act of narrating.

The study of narratives is taken up by narratology. In narratology, a distinction is made between the *elements* of the imagined material (the fabula) and the conscious manipulation of these elements, during which the elements become *aspects* of the story: plot, context, characterization and focalization (cf. Bal, 1985:5). For the scope of this dissertation, I shall mainly adhere to the theory of narratology as it is found in Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1985). I shall, furthermore, refer to Phelan's (1989) *Reading People, Reading Plots* when discussing the analysis of characters and also refer to Rimon-Kenan's (1983) *Narrative fiction: Contemporary Fiction* with

regard to focalization. The manipulation of and relationship between narrative aspects such as plot, context, characterization and focalization have a definite influence on the formation of the reader's perceptions of historical, ideological, cultural and geographical contexts.

In the first place I would like to explain my interpretation of Bal's elements of the *fabula* and how they may be translated into the aspects of the *story.* The fabula can be described as the original material that may be reworked or manipulated, using specific methods of construction, into a story (hereafter referred to as narrative). The fabula consists of elements such as a series of events that are "logically and chronologically related..." (Bal, 1985:5) and which occur at a certain time(s) and location(s). The time and location may be completely fictional or imaginary, but – in the fabula – have the potential for depicting time and location in reality. The events are performed by actors (those who perform the action). The events and elements are presented from specific points of view and perspectives.

The imagined material (elements) refers to any imagined events, context and characters that might possibly be included in the story. Once the imagined material of the fabula is manipulated and the narrative is constructed in a specific way, it can be interpreted as *aspects* of the narrative, which include *plot* (events), *context* (time and space), *characterization* (actors) and *focalization* (point of view). In the manipulation and construction of the narrative it is possible to deviate from the chronological and logical sequence of the events, resulting in the emergence of a *plot*, which relates to cause and effect. The time and location of the imagined material are transposed into a literary *context* with specific properties, which can relate to the thematic dimension of the narrative. The actors, when given specific physical and emotional characteristics, become *characters* who may be representative of both cultural and individual identities and ideologies. Bal (1985:9) states that it is possible to choose "among various 'points of view' from which the elements can be presented" and, as such, we can refer to it as the *focalization* of the narrative.

The section that follows will focus on the detailed discussion of the aspects of the narrative as mentioned above: plot, context, characterization and focalization.

2.1.1 Plot

Worthington (1996:14) asserts that "narratives are concerned not with isolated moments or particular acts, but with *sequences* of acts and events. They are orderings and interconnections of phenomenological perceptions, or the memories of these perceptions, in time and space." This manner of narration, where the disruption of chronology in the narrative is limited, is typical of realist writing. In realist writing, the author attempts to present the reader with a mimetic and objective rendition of a temporal reality in which experiences are based on causality.

However, the issue of plot is much more complex than this definition of narratives leads us to believe. The narration of real life experiences within a specific temporal and spatial context cannot be related as purely a *succession of related events* (chronology). Within such a temporal and spatial reality, the succession of causes and effects is more than likely to be interrupted, resulting in *chronological deviations* or *anachronies* - hereafter referred to merely as *deviations* (cf. Bal, 1985:53). Bal (1985:52) claims that deviations may be a manner of "drawing attention to certain things, to bring about aesthetic or psychological effects, to show various interpretations of an event, to indicate the subtle difference between expectation and realization." The plot of a text – if it is to claim any real mimetic or objective intention – should reflect the relationship between chronology and deviations.

In the plotting of lived experiences, the relationship between the chronological nature of experiences and the understanding of those experiences cannot be ignored. It is natural for the human brain to place experiences in chronological order, especially when experiences are planned ahead or recalled. When lived

experiences are recalled, however, the mind begins to comprehend the achronological cause and effect of those experiences. This results in the emergence of a narrative structure that mediates between the chronological and the achronological, the temporal and the a-temporal and between the intentional and the unintentional actions.

Great Expectations, as well as *Jack Maggs* reflect chronological deviations. In order to understand the function of these chronological deviations (as discussed in Chapters Three and Four) it is necessary to view the deviations in relation to the primary story-time and the 'present' time of the fabula and the narrative. In this sense, *present* refers to the "moment in the development of the fabula with which the narrative is concerned at the time the anachrony interrupts it" (Bal, 1985:59). *Primary story-time* refers to the relation of the deviations to the fictional present; that is the present in which the events are taking place (cf. Bal, 1985:57). A deviation can move in one of two directions in relation to these time frames, that is in *retroversion* or *anticipation*. Both retroversion and anticipation can be described as *external*, *internal* or *mixed* depending on its relationship to the primary story-time or 'present' of the text. When the deviation occurs before or after the events imagined in the fabula, it is referred to as an *external deviation* and is often used to provide more information of past history or future outcomes. A deviation that takes place inside the time frame of the fabula, is referred to as an *internal deviation*. Its primary functions are the further elaboration on information that has already been given and emphasis of an event by means of repetition. A third possibility is when the deviation starts before the primary story-time and is concluded within the primary story-time. In this case it is referred to as *mixed deviation*. Another technique which is frequently used in realist novels is beginning a narrative *in medias res*. Bal (1985:62) defines this as "where the narrative begins in the middle of the fabula and the preceding events are then recalled in their totality." These techniques are evident in the two primary texts that are analyzed in this dissertation.

The actions in a narrative are undertaken by a character and this undertaking creates an implied relationship between character and plot. Plot plays an essential role in the formation of the identity of the *self*. The dialectic between character and plot and the formation and representation of the character's personal identity take place within a constructed temporal space. The dialectic between chronological deviations embedded within the chronologically constructed temporality further influences the formation and representation of the "history of life, to which is equated the identity of the character" (Ricoeur, 1994:147).

The study of the relationship between character and plot is not new. One of the early scholars who considered the relationship between character and plot is Aristotle who claims that plot is more important than character (cf. Abbot, 2002:123). Aritstotle's claim implies that the character's identity is dependent on the actions that take place in the narrative. Despite the acknowledgement of the dialectic between plot and character, the problem with such a relationship of subordination is that it implies, to a certain degree, the separation of these two aspects. It might be more plausible to regard the relationship between the plot and character as being one of mediation and that the identity of the character is reflected and shaped by the plot. The reciprocal relationship between plot and character is underscored by Ricoeur's (1994:146) assertion that there is a "mutual reinforcement of semiotics of the actant and a semiotics of narrative discourses, to the point at which the narrative appears as the path of the character and vice versa."

The identity of the character is constructed by the narrative and is thus known as the character's narrative identity. The narrative identity of the character is, however, not only dependent on the plot itself. It is also construed by the interpretations of the audience. The 'imaginative variations' (cf. Ricoeur, 1994:48) contained in these interpretations may, in some cases, show a degree of commonality with each other while, in other cases, the variations allow for complete differentiation.

In conclusion, the function of the plot can be regarded as the medium through which human, cultural, historical and socio-political experiences – as they occur within a specific time and space - are told.

2.1.2 Context: place, space and time

Context can include historical and contemporary temporalities and ideologies. Although Bal (1985) does not use the term *context*, it is my understanding that her concepts of time, place and space can be transposed to *context*. However, the term is much more encompassing than merely the location and time in which the narrative takes place; it includes specific topographical places and relates to narrative, cultural, socio-economic, political and geographical spaces.

The relationship between place, space, time and identity is one of the themes that permeate postmodern and postcolonial literature. Ashcroft et al (2000:177) state that "[T]he concepts of place and displacement demonstrate...the importance of space and location in the process of identity formation." Hall (1997:110) points out that "[W]e all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific." He also suggests that identity should be regarded as "a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation" (Hall, 1997:110). This dynamic nature of temporal and spatial contexts calls for the reconsideration of current and previously constructed perceptions with regard to identity.

In order to comprehend the role that context plays in a literary text's formation of identity, it is necessary to explore the meaning and relationship of concepts such as *place, space and time*. It is also necessary to consider the dialectic between language and the representation of place and space.

a) Place, space and time

Place can be described in two ways: as a physical, topographical space with topographical features, or as an abstract concept, that relates strongly to identity and a sense of belonging. As an abstract concept, there are various aspects, such as religious and cultural beliefs, socio-economic standing and political conviction, that can influence a sense of place. Ashcroft et al (2000:177) state that "a sense of place may be embedded in cultural history, in legend and in language." They also point out that certain societies or tribes, such as the Aborigines, do not regard place as "a visual construct, a measurable space or even a topographical system, but a tangible location of one's own dreaming, an extension of one's own being" (Ashcroft et al, 2000:179).

Any form of displacement disrupts this *sense of place* or *a sense of being*. Ashcroft *et al* (2000:178) argue that the physical removal of "colonized people by forced migration, slavery or indenture" results in the displacement of the colonized. The alienation from a specific space results in the trauma of displacement that causes discrepancies between lived experiences and the perception of the unfamiliar and uncertain space in which they now find themselves and which has become imperative. However, displacement is not only caused by the physical removal from a specific space. Any negation or erasure of an individual or a group's cultural history, or the imposition of the oppressor's language (both which occurred in colonization) or the denial of religious freedom results in the perception of being forced to sacrifice (or being robbed of) a sense of belonging, a particular place, within a particular space. Hall (1997:113) asserts that "[T]his inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms" and goes on to cite Fanon who claims that this expropriation results in "individuals without anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless".

When, for example, the language of a marginalized society is negated or when language is used as a method of oppression, "[L]anguage becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established" (Ashcroft et al, 1989:7). For those displaced and marginalized societies or individuals, language largely contributes to discrepancies between lived experiences ('reality') and the manner in which not only these lived experiences, but also the displaced places/spaces are described in the language of the oppressor (cf. Ashcroft et al, 2000:179). Language is the main vehicle of textual representation (narrative) and when confronted with the above-mentioned discrepancies between description and 'reality', the marginalized societies or individuals feel that the place/space they inhabit is misrepresented. The problem is that, within imperialist societies, this textual representation of the marginalized society or individual was often perceived to be the 'truth' or the 'reality'.

The relationship between the *place* and the *perception of place* results in the depiction of *spaces* within the narrative (cf. Bal, 1985). Before modernity and before colonization, *place* and *space* were regarded as the same concept, which was strongly related to time (cf. Ashcroft et al, 2000). The time of day, for example, would be determined by considering the relation between the positions of the sun to the physical location of an individual. Since modernity and colonization, however, it has been possible for space and place to be regarded as separate concepts (cf. Ashcroft et al, 2000:178) with corresponding traits. Just like places, spaces may be physical spaces with topographical features, but they can also represent ideologies, histories or socio-political circumstances. As is the case with *place*, space is informed by temporality, for example: any ideology is informed by the *zeitgeist* in which it exists.

In postmodernism *space* is more closely linked to what this dissertation defines as *context*. This includes the existence of particular temporal and ideological spaces such as religion, politics and history, as well as physical spaces with

particular topographical features and enclosed boundaries. Bal (1985:93) states that, within the narrative, "places are linked to certain points of perception." The nineteenth century reader, for example, will perceive the Congo in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to be exactly that: the heart of darkness – of savagery and bestiality, while England is perceived to be the source of that sacred fire" (Conrad, 1995:17) that is civilization. Within the text, this perception is underscored by Kurz's report in which he writes that the whites "must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with the might as of a deity" (Conrad, 1995:83). Marlow subverts this misplaced perception with his very first utterance: "this [England] also...has been one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad, 1995:18).

There is always a relationship between the characters and the space within the narrative. This relationship often depends on the positioning of the character within the space. Bal (1985:94) refers to the "space in which the character is situated, or is precisely not situated," as the *frame* – another term that relates to the term *context* as used in this dissertation. At times, a character may find that being outside a specific frame or context is more comforting than being inside it. In a narrative about a haunted house, for example, the character might want to escape the inner frame (the house) in order to find sanctuary in the outer frame (outside). A specific room in a house may hold a feeling of safety for a character while the world outside that room may be regarded as being threatening. However, it is not only the inner and outer frame of spatial aspects that contribute to the perceptions in the narrative. In many narratives the contrasting perceptions of city and country - a dichotomy that is a salient theme in the Victorian novel - are used as a vehicle to depict opposing Victorian ideologies.

Another aspect that influences the perception of spaces in a narrative is the implementation, placement and ordering of objects, well-known people and landmarks. A narrative which refers to well-known landmarks creates a perception of reality and the reader can relate to that space because of *a priori*

knowledge. In many of the realist novels, an over emphasized description of surroundings creates just such a perception of reality, for example, the imaginary region of Wessex in Hardy's novels.

2.1.3 Characterization

Bal (1985:80) maintains that a character does not have any "real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act, but it does possess characteristics which make psychological an ideological description possible." She also (1985:85 & 86) points out that the image of a character is constructed through the repeated mention of characteristics, the accumulation of various characteristics, the character's relationship to him and others and, finally, the changes that may take place in a character. Bal's theory is complemented by Phelan (1989:9) who distinguishes between a character's dimensions and the character's functions. He distinguishes between synthetic, mimetic and thematic *dimensions* and *functions*. Phelan (1989) believes that an author creates a character with various dimensions and functions and designates *dimensions* as those traits recognizable in a character when placed outside the work itself. These dimensions become *functions* once the traits are made applicable within the narrative progression.

As a mere fictional construct, the character has a synthetic function – it is deprived of any form of reality in the sense that it does not represent something specific. The character is merely described as tall, short, blonde, brunette, male, female etc. The mimetic dimension is foregrounded when there is an interaction between the synthetic dimensions and any characteristics that are recognizable as human traits, for example love, hypocrisy, hate and physical appearance. The thematic dimensions of a character are regarded as those traits that are "viewed as vehicles to express ideas or as representative of a larger class than the individual" (Phelan, 1989:12). When the character's traits and actions become representative of a certain ideology, culture and/or society and the literary character is placed within a specific historical, cultural or socio-

political context, the reader asks the question: what is the significance of the presence of such a character? The result is the emergence of salient mimetic and thematic functions in the characters. The narrative progression relies on these functions to elicit and shape the reader's response and ultimately to contribute towards the effective and affective value of the text. The criteria for judging the plausibility of a character as representative of, for example, any ideology, culture or society, should be based on the knowledge or inference of the context in which the author wrote as well as the literary conventions popular in that context. In *Great Expectations*, for example, we can infer that Joe Gargery is representative of the natural gentleman (as opposed to the Victorian gentleman) because we have some *a priori* knowledge of the inclusion of this dichotomy in Dickens's works of fiction.

The character can become known to the reader in various ways and through various sources (cf. Bal, 1985:89), for example through the narrator. Any (or all) of these sources may be reliable or unreliable. Introspection (when the character contemplates and describes himself), is usually rather subjective and cannot be regarded as completely reliable. The same applies to self-representation: when the character tells others about himself. It is only when we can be sure of the character's complete honesty, that the introspection or representation can be regarded as reliable. The reliability of the character's depiction depends on the relationship between the character and the narrator. If the narrator is not reliable, it is questionable whether the narrator's depiction of the character is reliable.

The various functions of the characters in *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs* are discussed in Chapters Three and Four. However, to illustrate Phelan's theory of synthetic, mimetic and thematic dimensions and functions we can look at Marlow, the main protagonist from Joseph Conrad's novella, *Heart of Darkness*, as an example. The basic elements of Marlow, that is his synthetic qualities, may be listed as follows: he is the narrator; he is a seaman and a wanderer; he is "appointed skipper of a river steamboat" (Conrad, 1995:23) who

has been sent to the Congo. On the surface, Marlow would seem like any ordinary character in a work of fiction. However, the reader of *Heart of Darkness* is warned by the frame narrator who states: "Marlow was not typical" (Conrad, 1995:18). Marlow is different because "to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze" (Conrad, 1995:18). Marlow is more than a synthetic character. His mimetic and thematic dimensions manifest themselves in the fact that he becomes representative of those disenchanted spectators who no longer believe in imperialism's pretences. He exposes the discrepancy between the ideal perception of imperialist ideologies that he has in his mind and the squalid conditions and the atrocious actions that he encounters in the Congo. Marlow points out the belief that the only thing that redeems the atrocities committed during conquests "is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to" (Conrad 1995:20). Marlow is disillusioned because he realizes that the ideal of imperialism is used to justify and conceal questionable and atrocious behaviour. He is very critical of imperialism and direct in his criticism which refutes any attempt to find an ethical basis for imperialism.

2.1.4 Focalization

The reason for this dissertation's concern with focalization is that the manipulation of this aspect is one of the dominant narrative strategies in Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*. The section which follows will discuss the term, *focalization*, based on the opinions of scholars such Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Bal (1985) and Currie (1998). Furthermore, this section is concerned with the relationship between focalizer and focalized, as well as the facets of focalization.

Any study of a literary work should consider the reciprocal relationship between the one who observes the represented events, the one who narrates these

events and the one who reads the work. Currie (1998:118) justifies the study and development of this relationship, stating that it is a "new exploration in the rhetoric of fiction, the way fiction positions us, can manipulate our sympathies, can pull our heart strings, in the service of some moral aim." Bal (1985:122) asserts that focalization is the "most important, most penetrating, and most subtle means of manipulation" and that any analysis of a given text's underlying ideologies should include a study of the focalization.

Until the early 1970 the terms *point of view, perspective* or *narrative perspective* were used to describe the narrator's position in relation to the context and events of the text. Since then, however, scholars such as Genette (1972), Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Bal (1985), Fludernik (1993) and Currie (1998) have preferred to use the term *focalization*. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) goes even further and distinguishes quite clearly between *narration* and *focalization*. She argues that "focalization and narration are separate in so-called first-person retrospective narratives, although this is usually ignored by studies of point of view" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:73).

Bal (1985) argues that none of the terms previously used, for example *point of view*, *perspective* and *narrative perspective*, distinguishes between the point of view from which the fictional events are presented and the identity of the one who presents them: "To put it more simply: they do not make a distinction between *those who see* and *those who speak*" (Bal, 1985:100). She refers to the relationship between the fictional events and the one who sees and the one who speaks as *focalization.* Currie (1998:18) states that "*point of view* is potentially misleading, suggesting as it does the idea of an opinion or stance on a topic." He suggests an alternative where "in narrative there is a point from which a narrator views fictional events and characters as if visually" (Currie, 1998:18).

The terms *perspective* and *narrative perspective* also do not suffice. Although the term *perspective* traditionally includes the narrator and the point of view, as

well as the physical observation and the psychological point of view, it does not include the one who performs the narrated action. Wales (2001:54) underscores Rimmon-Kenan's (1983) and Fludernik's (1993) understanding of focalization as the "'angle of vision through which the story is focused, but in a sense which includes not only the angle of physical perception...but also the cognitive orientation...and emotive orientation." The term *narrative perspective* also poses a problem, because it is not clear whose perspective is being presented. It may be the perspective of the first person narrator standing in an objective position, relating events purely from a physical dimension or that of the 'I' character who is involved in the fictional events. It may also be the narrator narrating the events in retrospect, or the narration may be part of the current fictional events. If it is a third person narrator, the question arises whether it is an objective, neutral narrator simply relating events, or whether it is an omniscient narrator who is involved in the fictional events, as is the case in Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969). It is clear that there are so many narrative perspectives, that it becomes almost impossible to use this term to describe the relationship between narrator and fictional events without some confusion emerging.

Bal (1985) believes that, because focalization is a reciprocal relationship between two participants, it is necessary to study both participants, the *subject of focalization (focalizer)* and the *object of focalization (focalized)*. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:74) underscores this distinction and defines the *focalizer* as the "agent whose perception orients the presentation". This focalizer may be part of the fictional events; that is a character-focalizer, or may be positioned outside the fictional events; that is narrator-focalizer (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:77). It is also possible for a narrator-focalizer to be part of the fictional events. However, in any situation where the focalizer, whether it is a character-focalizer or a narrator-focalizer is involved in the fictional events, his vision/version may be impaired and biased – thus regarded as subjective and even unreliable. Bal (1985) regards the narrator-focalizer as typically the third person neutral

narrator, while the character-focalizer has the potential to be any one of the characters involved in the fictional events. Although this distinction relates in some sense to that of the traditional first person narrator and third person narrator, it is important to remember that the focalizer does not necessarily have to be the narrator.

One of the advantages of the concept of focalization is that it holds the potential for plurality and polyphony. There need not be only one focalizer within a fictional work. In postmodernist fiction, for example, there can be more than one focalizer, including the narrator, the historical author and a character or characters. Shifting the focalization from a homodiegetic narration with a character-focalizer to a heterodiegetic narration with a narrator-focalizer and vice versa can develop the polyphonic structure of the narrative progression even further. Borrowed from music belonging to the Baroque era, the term *polyphonic* refers to the contrapuntal, independent development and occurrence of musical utterances within one composition. In a literary work, the focalization can shift from one focalizer to another in a way that moves away from a chronological structure to a structure that allows for the dialogical interweaving of voices and languages. As a result, the reader is presented with more than one perspective and point of view.

The *focalized* is "what the focalizer perceives" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:74). It is not only the reader's perception of the object that is influenced by the subject's focalization. Because of the reciprocal nature of the relationship between subject, object and reader, the reader's perception of the subject is also influenced by the way the subject focalizes the object. The subject need not only focus on other characters, because the manner in which the subject focuses on context and events, allows the emergence of a cultural, historical and socio-economical identity in the reader's mind. The perception of a character's identity, for example, is influenced by that which the character focuses on, how the focalization is done and who, in turn, focuses on the character. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:72) points out that "it is almost impossible to

speak without betraying some personal 'point of view', if only through the very language used."

Rimmon-Kenan (1983) distinguishes between three facets of focalization: the perceptual, the psychological and the ideological. The perceptual facet relates to the spatial and temporal dimensions of the focalization and focalizer. It is possible for the narrator-focalizer to focus on various events taking place in various places and spaces at various times, whether it is the present, the past or the future, as is the case with the narrator focalizer in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852 – 1853). This is more difficult for a character-focalizer, because this focalizer is often limited to relating only the events happening in the specific space and narrative present or past in which he is involved.

The psychological facet is concerned with the cognitive and emotional dimensions of the focalization. The external narrator-focalizer is omniscient and reserves the right to limit or divulge that which he knows in order to create specific effects. The internal character-focalizer, on the other hand, is limited because he only has partial knowledge of the fictional world of which he is a part. The emotional dimension of focalization has to do with the objectivity or the subjectivity of the focalization. Any internal focalizer is likely to be subjective, regardless of whether it is a narrator-focalizer or a character-narrator. This type of focalizer is often regarded as unreliable. The external narrator-focalizer is believed to be more objective and therefore, more reliable.

The ideological facet of focalization refers to the socio-economic, religious, political and moral values presented in the text. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:81) states that "the ideology of the narrator-focalizer is usually taken as authoritative, and all other ideologies in the text are evaluated from the 'higher' position." However, the juxtaposition of various focalizers within a single fictional work allows for the emergence of a plurality and polyphony of ideological dimensions, as is the case in Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*. The

ideological view of a character-focalizer or of a narrator-focalizer can be implied by his actions and utterances, or it may be stated implicitly.

It is possible for the various facets of focalization to be merged within a fictional work. In a work that focuses very strongly on the ideological facet of focalization, a very subjective character may represent a specific ideology. It is also possible to attribute the various facets of focalization to different characters within the work. This juxtaposition of respective ideologies that can be contrasting in nature, will present the reader with various perceptions as is the case with the two worlds that are representative of different dominants in Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman.*

2.2 Literary conventions

Abrams (2005:47) asserts that conventions may be regarded as "conspicuous features of subject matter, form, or technique that occur repeatedly in works of literature." Thus, conventions could include the repeated occurrence of a specific type of literary device such as irony, the characteristic use of figurative language or the recurrent manipulation of narrative aspects that is unique to a specific author. It may also include stereotypical characterization and narrative progressions (as evident in *Great Expectations*). While intertextuality and metafiction and their precursory forms are not the only literary conventions employed by Dickens and Carey, they are the most salient in especially *Jack Maggs* and, therefore, will be discussed in greater detail in the section that follows.

2.2.1 Text and intertextuality

In his essay "From Work to Text", Barthes (1977:156) claims that "[I]t would be futile to try to separate out materially works from texts." Directly after this claim, Barthes proceeds, however, to suggest some differences between work and text, mainly distinguishing between the concrete (work) versus the abstract (text), acknowledging the plurality and fluidity of text and discussing the

involvement of the author and the reader in the text. The text cannot be regarded in isolation as the author and reader form an integral part of the interpretation process.

I would conclude that, for example, a novel, poem, narrative, painting, sculpture or film can be acknowledged to *exist* as a work. However, this work –if it is not activated through the act of being read, told, exhibited and interpreted, cannot be regarded as text (I shall hereafter refer to this act of interpretation as *reading*, assuming that any text can be read). Text emerges once the configuration of the creator of the work has been reconfigured or interpreted and meaning has been attributed to the work. Various texts - originating from different sources – can all influence each other and reflect upon each other, resulting in the emergence of even more alternative texts. It becomes clear that any utterance or enunciation, however cryptic or extended, written or spoken, literary or non-literary, whether canonical works or popular literature, can be regarded as text. Even environment can be regarded as text (cf. Crang, 1998). There are, however, some provisions.

The first provision relates to context. (Lokke, 1987:10) asserts that "there is no text without context". We are forced, therefore, to consider what the context is, before we can attempt any definition of what the text is. It would be difficult even then to state a general taxonomy. It would depend on which point of view is applied when considering the text. The reader's general and literary contexts will determine which hermeneutic method he applies while reading the text. Because of the diversity in readers' contexts and interpretations, a wide variety of meaning can be attributed to a single work, thus a wide variety of texts are created. The issue of reader response and interpretation is addressed later in this chapter.

The second provision relates to the work itself. Up to this point, it might have seemed as if the idea of text only originates *outside* the work, that is, once the work is activated through the acts of reading and interpretation. However, it is

quite possible for a work to contain meaning in itself that is so profuse that the reader does not necessarily need an interpretative code in order to derive meaning from the text. The use of literary devices such as allegory and irony results in the emergence of an intra-textual texture that contributes to the plurality of the work. *Intra-textuality* should not be confused with *intertextuality*. While *intertextuality* refers mainly to the relationship between one work and others that already exist outside that work, regardless of whether it is a literary or a non-literary work, the term *intra-textuality* can be described as a cross reference and reciprocal relationship between emerging texts within a single work. In *Jack Maggs*, for example, we can discern some measure of intra-textuality relating to the theme of abortion. Although the Victorian society and people such as Tobias Oates, Percy Buckles and Henry Phipps regard people such as Maggs, Ma Britten and Sophina as less virtuous because of their criminal background, Oates is not beneath resorting to Ma Britten's measures in order to solve his own uncomfortable little problems. When Oates impregnates his sister-in-law, he does not put up too much of a fight when Maggs turns to Ma Britten to help Oates abort the baby, just as Ma Britten had done with Maggs's and Sophina's baby years before.

Allusion, a term which Abrams (2005:10) defines as "a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or rhetorical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage", can be regarded as the precursory form of *intertextuality*. Just as a metaphor is an extended simile, intertextuality can be seen as an extended form of allusion. The term intertextuality was coined in 1967 by Julia Kristeva. Abbot (2002:94) asserts that intertextuality refers to the

> fact that all texts (films, plays, novels, anecdotes, or whatever) are made out of other texts. Just as a language pre-exists any narrative written in that language, so too do all of a narrative's other features precede it, from its overarching genres to its minute turns of phrases. They come out of a pre-existing cultural web of expressive forms.

The life experiences of a person can be regarded as text, as Wales (2001:220) indicates when she defines intertextuality as "a continual dialogue between the text given and other texts/utterances that exist outside it, literary and non-literary". As such, any allusion to the biographical context of an author's life can be regarded as intertextuality.

One form of intertextuality used by postmodern and postcolonial authors is *parody*. Although parody is often regarded as the ridiculing of the original text, it should, in this case, be regarded as a rather serious and even respectful re-presentation of the original. The wit and ridicule that characterize parody in Dickens's fiction can, of course, still be traits of the parodic representation in postmodern fiction, but they no longer constitute the only traits of parody. Parodic representation may also be achieved by the omission or exaggeration of characteristics. Dickens, for example, takes great pleasure in depicting characters with their own particular traits and mannerisms (cf. Ackroyd, 2002:144). His depiction of peripheral characters might seem to be almost absurd caricatures of his perceptions of real-life people, where prominent or typical characteristics and mannerisms are either negated or exaggerated.

Hutcheon (1989:93) states that the

> parodic reprise of the past is not nostalgic; it is always critical. It is also not ahistorical or de-historicizing; it does not wrest past art from its original historical context and reassemble it into some sort of presentist spectacle...parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from continuity and difference".

Thus, through the parodic treatment of the original, the reader can infer the relationship between past and present representations as well as the relationship between representation and the formation of identities.

It may be argued that *paratextuality*, a device that includes chapter titles and epigraphs such as used by Dickens, may also be regarded as intertextuality. This paratextuality, as used by Carey in his novel *Tristan* and by Fowles (1996)

in *The French Lieutenant's Wife*, also includes footnotes, forewords and epilogues that have several functions (cf. Hutcheon, 1989:86). This paratextuality creates specific social and historical contexts. Footnotes, forewords and epilogues have the possibility of adding an additional language or voice to the narrative that contributes to the dialogical character of the text. This additional language or voice can be contradictory, supplementary or supportive of the text's inherent message. McHale (1987:166) claims that this heteroglossia[4] is the "vehicle for the confrontation and dialogue among world-views and ideologies in the novel, its orchestrated *polyphony* of voices." He does warn, however, that not all heteroglossic texts are necessarily polyphonic. The use of heteroglossia is also not restricted to postmodern texts. The use of heteroglossia in the realist text, despite its efforts to construct a unified ontological plane, unintentionally creates an often conflicting plurality. The postmodern heteroglossic text sets out to deconstruct the attempt to a unified ontological plane and uses heteroglossia intentionally in order to construct multiple, often contradictory, conflicting contexts and ideologies (cf. McHale 1987).

As a characteristic of historiographic metafiction, paratextuality has a dual function: not only does it remind us of the fictionality within a text, but also foregrounds the factuality in the case of historiographical representation. Hutcheon (1989:86) states that "whatever the paratextual *form*...the *function* is to make space for the intertexts of history within the texts of fiction." Eventually, paratextuality results in a perception of a text being objective, credible and valid.

Another form of intertextuality, that is *allegory,* may be regarded as an intratextual as well as an intertextual concept. Allegory presents the reader with a symbolic presentation, "a kind of extended metaphor (figurative v. literal

[4] The term *heteroglossia* was coined by Mikhail Bakhtin in the 1930's and refers to the multiplicity of languages in a text. Wales (2001:187) points out that "the ready incorporation of heteroglossia as a principle of [the novel's] structure" is something Bakhtin found fascinating.

meaning)...or ambiguity (double/multiple meaning...a systematic, structural kind of symbolism" (Wales, 2001:14). Allegorical writing, for example, enables the author to reconstruct history through the medium of fiction. Slemon (1988:164) asserts that postcolonial counter-discourses want to negate the legitimization of false / bias "power relationships [established] within it [the master-code]." Issues that may be allegorized are the exploitation of the colonized by the colonizer; cultural disintegration because of colonial interference; the pattern of decolonization and the typological and cultural pluralism that is so typical of the postcolonial experience. The allegorical treatment of these themes is intra-textual. However, the reader's understanding and interpretation of the allegory depends on his knowledge and perception of colonial history. When the reader reads the allegory, he reconstructs the history presented in the allegory. It is thus clear that allegorical works, as any other work, need to be activated through the act of 'reading' and interpretation.

2.2.2 Metafiction

Krassnitzer (1995:23) points out that the essence of metafiction is "self-conscious, self-reflexive, autoreferential, introverted, narcissistic and experimental." Hutcheon (1988:183) claims that "the deconstruction effected by metafictional self-consciousness is indeed revolutionary." Metafiction involves the intentional and systematic focus on the artificial and functional character of fiction in order to establish the relationship between fiction and reality (cf. Bertens and D'haen, 1988:104 & 105). It exposes fiction as an artifice and challenges the authority of the author, as well as the form itself. This challenge opens up possibilities for addressing the representation (through literature) of, for example, dominant ideologies and rigid assumptions.

Thaden (1997:756) points out that it is customary for metafiction to place "time-honored narrative structures...in a new context, made to speak in our time and to a new audience, with startlingly different connotations." In metafiction, the

text can refer to the construction of fiction: its origin, its nature and its function; or to the fictitiousness of the real world.

2.3 Literary construction and interpretation.

There are various components involved in the construction and interpretation of each literary work, for example text, context, narrative, author and reader. Each of these components constitutes a literary space. As such, we can refer, for example, to *authorial space* as one such literary space. It is through the abrogation and appropriation (cf. Ashcroft et al, 2000:5 & 6) of these literary spaces that the revised post-colonial text provides the reader with alternative methods of identity formation.

Several models have been devised to identify and explain the different components and spaces in literary construction and interpretation, because different theoretical approaches tend to emphasize the different components of the literary construction and interpretation.

Selden & Widdowson (1993:4) go on to explain that

> If we adopt the addresser's viewpoint, we draw attention to the *writer* and his or her 'emotive' or 'expressive' use of language; if we focus on the 'context' we isolate the 'referential' use of language and invoke its historical dimension at the point of its production; if we are principally interested in the addressee, we study the *reader's* 'reception' of the 'message', hence introducing a different historical context (no longer) the moment of the text's production, but of its *reproduction.*

Hawthorn (1987:9) underscores the relationship between "dynamic socio-historical context" and other components involved in the literary process as well as the role of the critic. His approach is pragmatic and dialectical and finds significance in the plurality of the literary process; that is "the system of assumptions, customs, rules which gives the literary work meaning and upon which the writer in some sense depends" (Hawthorn, 1987:11). He goes on to describe the advantages of a model in "that it takes our attention away from

literature as a *thing*, the text as an object demanding attention, and instead encourages us to consider *literature* in terms of a set of shifting relationships which are never stable but which are all temporally mobile" (Hawthorn, 1987:9 - my italics).

Specific components are involved in the reconfiguration of the literary construction and its interpretation within a context (contemporary context) other than the historical context. Within the historical context, we have the authentic author, who writes a literary text with a specific intent, probably known only to himself and with a specific audience (the authorial audience) in mind: an ideal, posited audience, who would understand the exact intentions of the author's narrative construction (cf. Phelan, 1989). Sometimes a text is analyzed in an attempt to reach a reading and an interpretation that would defer to - and concur with - the historical context, the authorial audience and the intent of the historical author. Culler (1997:67 & 68) refers to this process as the *hermeneutics of recovery.* Hawthorn (1987:27) defines hermeneutics as "the art or science of interpretation...the rules, principles and conventions deemed essential for the production of correct interpretations."

When, however, the reader or analyst places the historical text within a contemporary context and interprets the text from that point of view, an alternative process emerges. This *hermeneutics of suspicion* (cf. Culler, 1997:67 & 68) implies that the narrative audience regards the "lyric, dramatic, or narrative situation [not as] synthetic, but real" (Phelan, 1989:5). The narrative audience attributes the author with an intent that does not necessarily correlate with the authorial intent. The discrepancy between the audience's perception of authorial intent and the actual authorial intent does not necessarily imply that the audience suspects the historical author's intent to be subversive or nugatory. In other words, the author's intent is not regarded as worthless and irrelevant; it merely presents the reader with an alternative, contextualized point of view on contemporary issues. The attributed intent and contemporary context of the narrative audience result in the reconfiguration of the text as the

interpreted text. This interpreted text forms the base on which the reader creates a model of identity formation such as the reconfiguration that informs the work of the postcolonial writers.

In this chapter, the discussion has revolved mainly on the aspects involved in the construction of narrative. The conclusive concepts in the literary process that need to be discussed in more detail then, remain to be the context of the author and the reader.

2.3.1 Author and authority

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the role of the author within the literary process received more critical attention. The awareness of a close relationship between the author and the text and theories such as Romantic-humanism underscored the belief that a detailed knowledge of the author's life would create a better understanding of his literary text (cf. Webster, 1990:17 and Selden & Widdowson, 1993:4).

In a text, the author has the freedom to reveal himself either through the narrator, through a character or through metafictional intervention. Metafictional intervention can happen either directly or by means of a posited author in the work as well as through refraction. Bakhtin (1990:313) points out that a character may "refract authorial intentions and consequently may to a certain degree constitute a second language for the author." It is possible for a character's actions or utterances to diverge, for example, from the apparent, main ideological strands within the novel, thus providing a dialogical effect that would substantiate Bakhtin's (1990) theory of multiple languages within a single work. As such, the author has the means to present the reader with more than one perception. This second language is not only limited to characters, but can also be applied to the narrator. Bakhtin (1990:314) claims that

> Behind the narrator's story we read a second story, the author's story; he is the one who tells us how the narrator tells stories, and

> also tells us about the narrator himself. We acutely sense two levels at each moment in the story; one, the level of the narrator, a belief system filled with his objects, meanings and emotional expressions, and the other, the level of the author, who speaks (albeit in a refracted way) by means of this story and through this story. The narrator himself with *his* own discourse, enters into this authorial belief system along with what is actually being told.

The opening sentences in Dickens's novel, *A tale of Two Cities* (1859), is a good example of this metafictional intervention, when the narrator voices the opinion of the author on the socio-economical climate of the time. Eventually, the interaction between the two languages and/or stories - that of the author and that of the narrator – enables the reader to infer authorial intent. This inference might be an unconscious ideological inference and does not necessarily need to correlate with the real intent of the author.

One such example of the interaction between two languages can be found in the seminal text, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. Lothe (1989:23) points out that "the exceptional thematic complexity of 'Heart of Darkness' is in part dependent on the varying degrees of insight shown by the novella's narrators." The fact that the two narrators, that is Marlow and the personal frame narrator, contradict and supplement each other, leads to a thematic structure that is rife with complexity, paradox and irony. The frame narrator, who serves as both narrator and narratee (being one of the men travelling with Marlow), starts the narration with a description of the context and of Marlow sitting against the mast. Although this description is simplistic by nature, it contains the imagery that stresses the gloom and the darkness while also describing the merchants and voyagers as those who spread civilization (cf. Conrad, 1995:17). Marlow's opening statement implies that England has not always been as civilized as it would like to pretend and this contradicts the personal frame narrator's depiction of England as the "sacred fire" (Conrad, 1995:17) and also foreshadows one of the central metaphors in the novella, that is darkness vs. light. At the same time the personal frame narrator also warns the reader that Marlow's narrations do not "have a direct simplicity" (Conrad, 1995:18) as the

yarns of ordinary seamen do. To Marlow (and by implication to the reader as well) "the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel, but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out" (Conrad 1995:18).

It is, however, not only the narrator's function which contributes to the dialogic nature of *Heart of Darkness*. Hawthorn (1979:7) claims that Conrad evinces a "suspicion of language in general and 'beautiful writing' in particular", and that Conrad uses Marlow as a vehicle to manifest this lack of trust. In Marlow's description of Kurz's report, he mentions that "[I]t was eloquent, vibrating with eloquence, but too high strung" (Conrad, 1995:83). It is well-known that Conrad did not use words randomly and therefore, it can be inferred that Conrad's reference to the *eloquence* of Kurz's report might well be a manifestation of the author's own scepticism about the seduction and entrapment of beautiful writing which might not be above scrutiny. Conrad uses another text in *Heart of Darkness*; the book left by the young Russian entitled *Some Points of Seamanship*, to show that it is possible for written words to have some sense of honesty.

Not all scholars regard the role of the author as being uppermost in literary construction and interpretation. In his essay, "What is an author?" (1969), Foucault seems reluctant to attribute too much importance to the role of the author in literary construction and interpretation. This reluctance stems from his belief that - if the author were to be placed in the centre and regarded as the "source of creative talent, genius and imagination" (Webster, 1990:19) – the author has a very specific function: to promote some or other ideology. There is, for example, a strong link between the works of female African authors such as Flora Nwapa, Bessie Head and Mariana Bâ and the strong sense of female consciousness that permeates their works. According to Nancy Bazin (1985:183), the works of the above-mentioned authors reflect upon the "customs and attitudes [that cause] suffering...and [those] signs [that might] suggest hope that the causes for this suffering will eventually be eliminated." Foucault's (1989:275) concern is that the author, because of this strong

association with specific ideologies, places a constraint on fiction's various functions. He predicts that the authority of the author might change as contexts change and that the functions of texts would be determined by asking questions such as

> What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions? And behind all these questions, we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of indifference: What difference does it make who is speaking? (Foucault, 1989:275)

Hawthorn (1987) and Bakhtin (1990) underscore a dialectical and reciprocal approach in which the understanding of literature becomes optimal when the relationships between the various components involved in the literary process are taken into account (cf. Hawthorn, 1987:10). This means that the author's biography, the authorial intent, the reader's response, the stylistic aspects of the text and the historical and contemporary socio-political and literary contexts are taken into account during the interpretation of the literary text. There is nothing amiss in questioning the author's claim to authority, originality or authenticity, but in order to arrive at an answer that is both reliable and viable, the reader or critic would have to take into account the historical, cultural, literary, biographical and socio-political context of the authentic author. The relevance and relationship of these contexts to the author cannot be negated, just as we cannot merely negate the role of the author within the literary construction and in the process of deriving meaning from a text.

2.3.2 Reader response and interpretation

The reason for including this sub-section on reader–response is because the postmodern and postcolonial reader, due to his experiences and perceptions of different and contrasting contexts, will attribute certain properties and assumptions to a text. In the case of Peter Carey, the reader is also an author and the underlying assumptions he has result in the need for a postmodern

reading, interpretation and reconstruction of Dickens's *Great Expectations* in order to depict alternative views.

The reader is not the only participant in the reading process. There is a definite interaction between text and reader and this interaction does not only contribute to the reader's perception of his own world *gestalt*, based on his experiences, but also of the new world or reality presented by the literary text. The reader becomes actively involved in the text bringing out that "something that is to come, the structure of which is foreshadowed by their [the sentences'] specific content" (Iser, 1988:214). Iser distinguishes between two opposites: the author's text and the reader's concrete perception of that text. He states that these opposite tendencies result in the "literary work [not being] identical with the text or with the realization of text" (Iser, 1988:212). Iser also believes that there are gaps in the text that the reader will fill in the course of the reading process. The reader realizes the text through the act of *Konkretisation* (cf. Iser, 1988:212). The way these gaps are filled, depends on the reader's imagination and the way in which the reader's repertoire, that is his cultural, historical and socio-political context, has contributed towards "creation of a dynamic, alternative reality" (Rodgers, 1999:2).

The reader's interaction with the text is also subjected to a temporal dimension. The affective value of any text is not only reserved for the period after completion of the reading process, but also involves the response of the reader *during* the reading process. It often happens that, when a reader reads a text for a second time later in his life, the affective value of the text, as well as his interpretation of the text, may differ somewhat from the earlier experience. The reason for this is that - due to the dynamic nature of the temporal, spatial and cultural context, the fluidity of the reader's personal and cultural identity and a sense of maturity and development in the reader's ability to interpret a text - the reader's perceptions may have changed and that this may lead to a different response to the text. When the contemporary reader reads the texts, the relationship between present, past and future realization, between retrospection

and anticipation, leads to the possibility of an alternative concretization or realization emerging.

Consequently the variables that play a role in the reader's realization of the text and his response to it are: the temporal, spatial and cultural context within which the text is read; the choice of a hermeneutical method the reader applies when reading the text, as well as the gender of the reader. The fact remains that reader-response cannot be separated from the concept of interpretation.

Stanley Fish (1980) regards the strategies and processes used by the reader, rather than the text, as the main source of meaning. He discards the idea that a text has a specific meaning, but acknowledges that there would be a certain amount of commonalities in respective interpretations, because of the common perceptions readers might have on how meaning is construed from a text or context. On the other hand, Hawthorn (1987:25) describes the role of the interpreter as "a continuum: at one end of this the interpreter is like a taxi-driver, whose job it is to find the address determined by the passenger/author. At the other end of the continuum the interpreter's relationship with the author and with the text is more like that of driver to car-manufacturer: once the car has been bought the driver can drive anywhere he or she wants." However, it might be more plausible to underscore a dialectic and reciprocal approach. Should one only choose the one or the other extreme of the continuum, there is the risk of reaching an interpretation that is either devoid of any originality or an interpretation where the interpreter is free to interpret the text in whichever way he likes – even if it is not viable. An analysis and exegesis of the text in which not only the authorial intent of the historical author, but also the reader's response is taken into account, would result in an interpretation of meaning that is both original and viable. Such a dialectic approach allows for a sense of authorial authority, as well as for the possibility of reconfiguration of the fictional 'truths' as presented by the historical author.

CHAPTER 3: *Great Expectations* – Charles Dickens

This chapter addresses the perception of a fixed Victorian identity as reflected the Victorian literature of the nineteenth century, with specific reference to the works of Charles Dickens. The main question in this chapter is: how do the novels of Charles Dickens, and specifically *Great Expectations*, depict the Victorian identity in terms of the marginalized *other*? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to include a brief overview of the Victorian social context and realism as the dominant approach in Victorian literature. The chapter presents an analysis of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860 – 61), which focuses on the narrative aspects mentioned above, such as plot, context, characterization and focalization. The chapter concludes with an overview of Dickens's use of allusion as a literary convention.

3.1 The Victorian Social Context

Potter (1987:222 & 232) points out that "industrialization was undoubtedly the major factor during this period...[and that] the changes in Britain's economic situation were responsible for the changes in most other areas of life." People who had previously lived in the country now moved to cities and worked in the newly established factories. People found that values and perceptions previously based on a life in the country, were no longer applicable in the cities and they had to adapt to their new geographical and socio-economical contexts.

The Victorian lifestyle "was based on a stern religion and an equally stern moral code that allowed and forgave no deviation from the rigid standards that had been set" (Potter, 1987:234). The rise of the middle-class was based on material advancement and political development. Therefore, many people were able to advance their own position in life – often from dire poverty to a life of comfort. Because these people wanted to show that they deserved their new position in life, respectability was highly valued and people strived to live a life

of propriety, decency and morality. However, their increased attempts to improve their lives often resulted in hypocritical behaviour.

As an author, Charles Dickens acted as a social conscience to Victorian society. Kucich (1994:388) argues that Dickens created a sense of English identity that "flattered middle-class interests and consolidated middle-class values as national ones." These values included "moral courage, personal independence and individuality...an outspokenness about social injustice...industriousness, enterprise, individualist energy" (Kucich, 1994:388). His fiction encouraged virtues such as honesty and sincerity and promoted the conscious undermining of hypocrisy and of specious ideas, reputations and beliefs that characterized middle-class society. However, the social criticism in Dickens's later novels, such as *Bleak House* (1852 – 1853) and *Great Expectations* (1861 – 63), focuses more on the entrepreneurial middle-class. For example, in *Great Expectations* and in *Bleak House,* Dickens's disgust with middle-class shortcomings is evident in his depiction of Mrs Pocket's snobbery and incompetence as a mother, Mr Pumblechook's hypocrisy, Jaggers's and Wemmick's lack of empathy towards their clients and Mrs Jellyby's "telescopic philanthropy" (*GE*, 31).

3.2 Realism and Victorian literature

The fiction of the nineteenth century, reflects upon, assesses and exposes the socio-economical ideologies of its time. The most popular genre of the Victorian period was the novel (cf. Wheeler, 1985:33) because, at the time, more people were educated and able to read. The novel is the one genre that can depict characters (particularly ordinary people in everyday situations), places and events and reflect social issues in such a way that they seem to be real. Thus, the realist novel[5] not only depicted and influenced the society in which it originated and bloomed, but it was also shaped by that same society; it

[5] Regan (1995:99) questions the assumption "that realism was capable of portraying society in all its complexity". The realist novel attempted to give and objective interpretation of society (cf. Kvale, 1992:32) in contrast to the postmodern novel's subjective interpretation.

represented the socio-historical, ideological and cultural context of nineteenth century Victorian England. The realist novel addresses social concerns such as poverty, education, the judiciary system and morality within a given time and space, while also being representative of the political, socio-economic and cultural traits of the nineteenth century societies. It addresses the rise of the bourgeois society and its relationship to the world of trade and economics (cf. Bertens & D'haen, 1988:80); the birth of democracy, the economical changes and growth of a country and the influence that geographical displacement, due to industrial growth, has on a society.

Charles Dickens used fiction as a vehicle to describe and illustrate the paradoxical and complex nature of the Victorian age and Victorian England. He uses fiction in an attempt to both establish the emerging identity of a rapidly evolving society, and to make critical assessments about the same society in a covert manner. By juxtaposing binaries such as virtue/hypocrisy, education/illiteracy and opulence/poverty, he addresses and speaks on behalf of the Victorian middle-class society so that he presents the reader not only with social criticism, but also with a social vision of what Victorian society could be. In his fiction, Dickens includes the injustices, the anxieties, the prejudice and the political and socio-economic ideals and hopes of his authorial audience: the Victorian middle-class.

Morris (2003:9) states that *realism* "is a notoriously tricky term to define." The term is complex because it does not only refer to a specific period in the history of literature, but also to a *type* of literature, that is *realist writing*, that transcends time and space. An example of this transcendence can be found in Peter Carey's novel *The Unusual life of Tristan Smith* (1996 – hereafter referred to as *Tristan*), in which the physical, social and cultural contexts seem so real that it comes as a complete surprise to the reader to eventually realize that both *Efica* and *Voorstand* are fictional countries.

Abrams (2005) underscores claims that any effort to define realism should begin by considering the effect that the text has on the reader. He is of the opinion that "realistic fiction is written so as to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader, evoking the sense that its characters might in fact exist, and that such things might well happen." (Abrams, 2005:269). However, the reader's perception of reality, as it is presented in the novel, is influenced by the reader's socio-economic, cultural and historical context and it can happen that the reader's perception of the represented world does not relate to his view of reality.

The perception of reality can be achieved in various ways. The author can depict characters, context and events to subvert reality and engage the reader in contemplating reality in different ways. This is done by the use of various literary devices, for example irony, satire and parody. According to Hawthorn, (1992:47) the "paradox, then, is that sometimes that which distorts what real world is like, actually leads us to see the real world more accurately." Some authors create a perception of reality by the solid and detailed description of the physical, temporal and spatial context within which the action takes place. In Dickens's short story, *The Great Winglebury Duel,* included in *Sketches by Boz,* the town, as well as the house in which the action is about to take place, are described in detail.

> The little town of Great Winglebury is exactly forty-two miles and three-quarters from Hyde Park corner. It has a long, straggling, quiet high street, with a great black and white clock at a small red town-hall, halfway up – a marketplace – a cage – an assembly room – a church – a bridge – a chapel – a theatre – a library – an inn – a pump – a post-office.
>
> The house is a large one, with a red brick and stone front; a pretty spacious hall, ornamented with evergreen plants, terminates in a perspective view of the bar, and a glass case, in which are displayed a choice variety of delicacies ready for dressing... (*SbB*, 389 & 390).

Other authors create as sense of reality by giving a detailed description of characters' relationships to the political, judicial and economical systems within a recognizable social structure and of characters' social relationship with other characters in the novel. These relationship are often not only related by means of the exact words that characters might actually utter in reality, but they are also related and summarized by the narrator's voice, that would often be omniscient. Cobley (2001:90) states that the "[R]ealist narrative offered verbatim imitations of what characters said but, rather than allowing characters to speak interminably, linked the places and times in which they spoke by way of the narrator's summarizing voice."

Another narratological aspect that contributes towards the perception of reality is the plot. Although techniques such as retroversion and anticipation – in Bal's (1985) terminology - occur in the narrative progression of the realist novel, the plot development in the realist novel is logical and the seemingly real-life situations and events are linked in a cause and effect relationship that is often chronological. Regardless of the manner in which a sense of realism is achieved, the representation of that which was believed to be 'real' played a significant part in the eighteenth and nineteenth century novel.

3.3 Analysis of *Great Expectations*

Dickens's fiction is regarded as representative of nineteenth - century British realist fiction. Clayton (1991:183) asserts that "our concepts of the Romantic, Victorian, and Modernist periods have each been shaped, to a measurable degree, by critical reflection on the life and literature of Dickens". The section that follows focuses on narrative aspects such as plot, context, characterization and focalization, as they are found in Dickens's fiction.

3.3.1 Plot

Brooks (1984:114) states that "it was part of the triumph of the nineteenth-century novel in its golden age to plot with a good conscience, in confidence

that the elaboration of plot corresponds to, and illuminated human complexities." Dickens became a master at structuring and extending the narrative progression in such a way that, eventually, not only a single plot, but several plots and subplots are often intertwined. This narrative structure contributes to Dickens's depiction of Victorian England's society as well as to the social vision and criticism of that society.

Grossman (1997:174) claims that "it was in fact in *Pickwick* that Dickens first discovered an extended plot." This extended plot is manifested in Bardell's lawsuit against Pickwick, which runs like a unifying thread throughout the various chapters of this serial novel. The plot is shaped by cause and effect. The initial concept of the extended plot, as it is found in *The Pickwick Papers,* is further developed in the complex interweaving strands of plot that occur in later novels such as *Bleak House* which has two main plots that initially seem to run parallel with each other. As the two plots - the stories of Esther Summerson and that of Lady Dedlock - develop throughout the novel, several subplots are introduced, such as the story about the relationship between the irresponsible Richard Carstone and Ada who is innocent, naïve and trusting.

Dickens's ingenious treatment of the narrative structure is evident in the eventual confluence of apparent coincidences and unrelated events in *Great Expectations.* Dickens makes use of a central plot to bring about unity in a novel that has various fictional strands. It is possible to have more than one viable interpretation of the central plot. Kucich (1994:390) claims that the central plot of *Great Expectations* "condemns the desire to vindicate one's social exclusion by creating respectable surrogates – a dark form of patronage dramatized by Magwitch's creation of Pip as a gentleman and by Miss Havisham's creation of Estella as femme fatale." On the other hand, the central plot could be interpreted (as is argued in this dissertation) as a confirmation of the realization that the formation of an authentic self and happiness can only be achieved through the acceptance of origins and lived experiences, not by social standing or material riches. Whichever interpretation one chooses to accept,

Great Expectations is a novel that gives the "impression that its central meanings depend on the workings-out of its plot" (Brooks, 1984:114)

As mentioned earlier, *Great Expectations* can primarily be regarded as a *Bildungsroman* that was written in three volumes. Various strands of plot and subplot can be found in each volume. Dickens's narrative progression, however, is not chronological, but contains deviations such as *retroversions, anticipations, repressed plots and cross-connections.* All of these are functional in the sense that they contribute to the meaning of the text. Besides the sub-plots that relate the stories of Miss Havisham, Magwitch, Joe and Biddy and Wemmick, there are also *repressed plots* (Brooks, 1984:117). These plots are developed throughout the narrative, but are continuously repressed by the characters. At some stage, this latent and repressed plot surfaces when the character is forced to recognize or to recollect the events of that context. Pip's recollection of the events in the churchyard when Magwitch visits him in London, is an example of a repressed plot. Up to this point, Pip had pushed the events that had led to Magwitch "swearing to his resolutions in his solitude" (*GE*, 330).

As referred to earlier, the Victorian perception of identity was fixed. The section that follows will focus only on those strands of the plot that relate to the formation of Pip's identity: the influences and characters that shape his life and personality.

In *Volume One* of *Great Expectations* the reader is introduced to Pip: an innocent young boy who lives in the marsh country (*GE*,3). Pip's relationship with various other characters and their relationships with each other are established in this volume. The novel begins with Philip Pirrip, the grown-up Pip, looking back on is life with insight and understanding. Dickens starts Pip's life story as a clean slate – a child without identity. He then plots a course for Pip's life, including all the events that will eventually lead up to his realization

that his identity is closely linked to Magwitch's acts of intervention (cf. Brooks, 1984:115) on the one hand, and to Pip's acceptance of his own circumstances.

The first indication of Pip's distorted sense of self can be found in the opening scene. His self-appointed nickname, adopted due to his inability to pronounce his given name, Philip Pirrip, as well as his admission to the tombstone being the only authority on which he bases his knowledge of his family name, indicates the meagre foundations for the formation of an identity. Mukherjee (2005:118) asserts: "Pip's identity is grounded in unstable foundations, the loss of family, and an act of unwilled charity toward the convict." Mukherjee (2005:115) also claims that "Dickens's anti-heroic and common Pip, who for the most part does not write his life story but is written, steps out of the *fictio* of his childhood and youth with the desire to articulate a life story." Pip is in search of an identity: for a sense of place - a sense of belonging.

Unfortunately, Pip's already broken sense of self is tainted even further by his experiences in the graveyard and on the marshes. Pip's "first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things" (*GE*, 3) is bleak, dark, wild and savage; an image underscored by the context of the marshes. This impression is confirmed even further when he is confronted by a stranger in the cemetery. Pip's encounter with a "fearful man...who limped, and shivered and glared and growled" (*GE*, 4) and literally and figuratively turns him and his life upside down. This event becomes one of the repressed plots in Pip's memory, only to be recalled when Magwitch comes to claim him as a surrogate son. Pip's encounter with the convict also becomes the genesis of Magwitch's expectations of becoming a gentleman by proxy. It is Pip's acts of kindness in Chapter One and loyalty in Chapter Five - although both acts were born out of fear and forced upon the child - that result in Magwitch's obsessive determination to return the favour by turning Pip into a gentleman.

Pip's encounter with the convict not only confirms and expands Pip's distorted sense of self, but also his regard of himself as being criminally inclined - a

notion that his mean-spirited sister underscores. His sister implies that, because he has a tendency to ask many questions, he would become a criminal like those who are "put in the Hulks because they murder, and because they rob, and forge, and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questions" (*GE*, 15). Furthermore, the fact that the fugitive in the graveyard forces Pip to steal from his sister's pantry convinces Pip that he was destined for the Hulks: "I was clearly on my way there. I had begun by asking questions, and I was going to rob Mrs Joe" (*GE*, 15).

One of the most significant strands of plot in Volume One of the novel is the influence and results of Pip's experiences at Satis House and his involvement with its inhabitants: Miss Havisham and Estella. Pip's experiences at Satis House suddenly result in a feeling of inferiority because of his exposure to a life different from that on the marshes. This is the place where his dreams and expectations are born. When Pip is first introduced to Miss Havisham and the beautiful Estella, he is too young to realize that the derelict environment is symptomatic of the moral decay inside the hearts and souls of its inhabitants. As a child and as a young adult he is so besotted with Estella and so conscious of the perceived honour of Miss Havisham's involvement in his humble life, that he does not realize how cruelly he is being manipulated. Miss Havisham is the only person known to Pip who possesses material wealth. Therefore, when Jaggers informs Pip of his "great expectations" (*GE*, 135), it is – in Pip's mind at least - self-evident that Miss Havisham is his benefactor. Pip even comes to believe that Miss Havisham must have a long-term goal in mind by having him educated as a gentleman.

> She [Miss Havisham] has adopted Estella, she had as good as adopted me, and it could not fail to be her intention to bring us together. She reserved it for me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin – in short, do all the shining deeds of the young Knight of romance and marry the Princess (*GE*, 229).

It is also at Satis House that Pip, in a seemingly unrelated incident, meets the young man, Herbert Pocket, who will later become his closest friend, confidant and landlord.

The main strand of plot in the second volume is concerned with Pip's life as a young adult in London and Hammersmith. By reuniting Pip with various characters that were introduced in Volume One, Dickens creates the opportunity for the further exploration of what a certain group of Victorian society is like (as represented by the Pocket family), as well as the way in which Pip's new identity is formed.

Pip's new identity is born when he meets Herbert Pocket in London. Herbert Pocket is the "pale young gentleman" (*GE*, 92) that Pip had beaten to the ground in Volume One of the novel. Pip asks Herbert to call him by his first name, Philip, but Herbert immediately decides that the name is inappropriate. To Herbert, the name conjures the image of a fictional character; a story-book character without true or real identity.

> I don't take to Philip...for it sounds like a moral boy out of the spelling-book, who was so lazy that he fell into a pond, or so fat that he couldn't see out of his eyes, or so avaricious that he locked up his cake till the mice ate it, or so determined to go a birds'-nesting that he got himself eaten by bears who lived handy in the neighbourhood (*GE*, 176).

Herbert, therefore, immediately renames Pip and forthwith proceeds to call him Handel. The name is based on a composition of Handel – *The Harmonious Blacksmith* – and is indicative of Herbert's relationship with Pip. Herbert is the one who moulds and shapes the new Pip by teaching him gentlemanly manners (cf. *GE,* 177) and by introducing him to his father, Mr Matthew Pocket, with whom Pip will do his apprenticeship. Pip's new name and the fact that he is "so differently dressed and so differently circumstanced" (*GE*, 227) results in his assuming a new identity – that of a scholar and a gentleman.

Another reunion that influences and shapes Pip's new identity and endorses Pip's expectations, is his reunion with the inhabitants of Satis House: Estella and Miss Havisham. This reunion enables Dickens to further develop the plots which involve the relationship between Pip and other characters such as Joe Gargery and Estella. Pip's reaction on meeting Estella, who "was so much more beautiful, so much more womanly" (*GE,* 232) again, is interesting. Instead of feeling more mature and worthy because of his new and improved position and identity, Pip immediately feels that he had "slipped hopelessly back into the coarse common boy again" (*GE,* 232). This feeling of inferiority and fear of ridicule stays with him and brings about an increasing estrangement between him and Joe.

As Pip's new identity develops, his relationship with Joe Gargery changes. Initially, the relationship between these two men is good. Pip admits that he loved Joe perhaps "because the dear Joe let me love him" (*GE,* 40). However, Pip's changed image, identity and circumstances result in him being a little ashamed of Joe's simplicity when the latter visits him in London. Pip admits that he "never thought there was anything low and small in [his] keeping away from Joe, because [he] knew that she [Estella] would be contemptuous of him [Joe]" (*GE,* 241). Estella did, after all, clearly state: "what was fit company for you once, would be quite unfit company for you now" (*GE,* 234).

Finally, the reunion with the convict of the marshes, Magwitch, again turns Pip's life upside down. At the end of Chapter Nineteen of Volume Two, Pip looks back on the meeting and recognizes it as the moment when "the roof of my stronghold dropped upon me" (*GE,* 307). Everything that had happened up to that point culminated into one mind-blowing realization that all his expectations and assumptions had been wrong; that his new identity as a gentleman was assumed and false. Pip slowly - his "heart beating like a heavy hammer with disordered action" (*GE,* 314) – realizes that the convict has been his benefactor all the time. This repugnant, dreadful man was the source of all his dreams, not Miss Havisham. Pip realizes that any loving relationship with Estella was not

meant to be and – even more terrible - that his betrayal of Joe's love and friendship had been in vain.

> Miss Havisham's intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for the greedy relationships, a model with a mechanical heart to practice on when no other practice was at hand; those were the first smarts had. But sharpest and deepest pain of all – it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes, and liable to be taken out of those rooms where I sat thinking, and hanged at the Old Bailey door, that I had deserted Joe (*GE*, 318).

In the third and last volume of the novel, the various strands of plots and subplots in the novel seem to come together and the interconnected relationships between various characters are clarified. In this volume we see the development of the relationship between Pip and Magwitch and Pip's growing insight, through suffering, into his own true worth and also the worth of true friendship.

Pip learns the value of true friendship in the unselfish efforts of Herbert Pocket and Wemmick to help Magwitch escape, as well as Joe's loving care when Pip falls ill. Pip also learns compassion and acts in and unselfish manner when he realizes that Magwitch is "a much better man than [he] had been to Joe" (*GE*, 441). He decides that Magwitch should "never know how his hopes of enriching [Pip] had perished" (*GE*, 441) because there is no written statement proving that Magwitch intended Pip to inherit a "sum of money...and ...certain lands of considerable value" (*GE*, 442) in New South Wales. Lying on his deathbed, Magwitch notices the change in Pip's attitude and declares: "And what's the best of all...you've been more comfortable alonger me, since I was under a dark cloud, than when the sun shone. That's best of all" (*GE*, 453).

Having been assured of Joe's forgiveness, Pip sells everything he possesses and joins Herbert and his wife in Egypt. Pip goes on with his life as a professional self-made man who goes into business with Herbert and who "work[s] pretty hard for a sufficient living, and therefore - [does] well" (*GE*, 477).

The novel ends with Pip, still not married, meeting the widowed Estella when he visits the ruins of Satis House.

Dickens changed his initial ending for the novel to leave Pip seeing "the shadow of no parting" (GE, 478) from his beloved Estella. The original ending to *Great Expectations* was changed after Dickens was urged to do so by Edward Bulwer Lytton, a colleague and friend of his (cf. Davis, 1999:160). The original ending has Pip return to London and, while walking with Joe and Biddy's son (also named Pip), meeting Estella. Since their last encounter, Estella has been married twice. When she sees the little boy with Pip, she believes him to be Pip's child and she informs Pip that suffering has changed her. The original ending concludes with Pip's remark:

> I was very glad afterwards to have had the interview; for, in her face and in her voice, and in her touch she gave me the assurance, that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching, and had given her heart to understand what my heart used to be (cf. Davis, 1999:160).

In this ending there is no expectation of future meetings or marital bliss.

In the revised ending, which seems correlate with a fairy tale, Pip states

> As the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so, the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her (*GE*, 478).

Although this revised ending may seem happier and more ideal than the original ending, Davis (1999:160) points out the recurrence of images in *Great Expectations*: "the desolate landscape of the marshes; twilight; chains binding us to home, the past, and painful memories; fire; hands that manipulate and control". He suggests that, if this perpetual imagery is kept in mind when analyzing the revised ending, a strong sense of ambiguity could be found in Pip's final statement. Whereas the original ending takes place in London, the revised ending takes place at the "low quiet mounds of ruin" (*GE*, 475) that

once was Satis House. It is twilight and a "cold shivery mist" (*GE,* 475) is surrounding the dismal surroundings. Considering this image of dreariness when reading Pip's final statement, his certainty that he "saw no shadow of parting from her" (*GE,* 478) can be interpreted as him being quite sure that he would never meet with her again, rather than regarding it as his new expectation: that Estella will finally return his feelings of love. Davis (1999:161) is of the opinion that such an interpretation "confirms the disillusioning note with which the novel began."

Pip can look back on his life, having learnt through his experiences. He is, at last, fully aware of how his childhood has shaped his life and the expectations as a young adult and how it has resulted in the man he is and where he is at the moment when he relates his life's story. By telling his life's story, Pip claims the authorship of – and the authority over his own life.

3.3.2 Context

The dialectic between space and the formation of identity is underscored by Zlogar's (1986:176) statement that, "through the reciprocal interaction of the individual with the spaces he finds himself in and with the others who dwell in those spaces can a true self develop." The regular shift in space and time in *Great Expectations*, the retroversions and anticipations all result in the intensified sense of interrelationship between space, characters and events.

The fact that the context for Dickens's novels is mostly the city of London is significant. Davis (1999:218) asserts that "[W]hat Paris was to Balzac and Petersburg to Gogol, London was to Dickens." In the later novels, such as *Bleak House, Little Dorrit* and *Great Expectations,* the depiction of London's social and economic evolution is indicative of the change in the author's social vision. This change is a strong property of the realist nature of his texts (cf. Brown, 1982:34). Dickens's perception of London, as the hub for both social and industrial development, becomes the source of his creative work.

Dickens's depiction of London serves as a depiction of the moral and economical values and positions of its society. Kucich (1994:396) claims that

> there is often an apocalyptic note in Dickens's description of urban life, a tendency to use images of urban decay as signs for general moral chaos. His metaphors for the urban landscapes – fog, mud, dirt, pestilence – suggest a systematic, animated evil, as if the city's growth had taken on a destructive, all-consuming life of its own.

His novels often depict the city in such a way that it seems more feasible for the main characters to escape from it before they become entangled or imprisoned by its corruptive powers: literally and figuratively. It is in the city of London that characters are displaced by physical imprisonment in prisons such as Fleet prison, King's Bench prison and Marshalsea prison. When Pip first enters London, he has to admit that, had it not been considered treason for Britons "to doubt our having and our being the best of everything...I might have had some faint doubts whether it [London] was not rather ugly, crooked, ugly and dirty" (*GE,* 161). His first exploration of London brings him to "Smithfield; and the shameful place, being all asmear with filth and fat and blood and foam, seemed to stick to [him]" (*GE,* 163). When he takes another turn to escape these filthy surroundings, he lands in front of Newgate prison where there is a strong smell of liquor.

Another context which has significance in Dickens's works is that of the family home. Kucich (1994:392) states that "[T]he most important, most undiluted aspect of the bourgeois Dickens, however, is his attitude towards home and hearth." He also points out that "[T]he domestic environment seems less a part of a larger social construct or a constituent element in a societal network than it had been at the beginning of the [nineteenth] century. It has become discontinuous with the larger context and is now a defence or bastion *against* the social world" (Kucich, 1994:175 – my italics). Brown (1982:43) claims that "[I]n the ideal the home was seen as...a shelter or refuge from the indifference of a business-orientated world."

There are three significant houses in *Great Expectations* that are relevant to Pip's expectations and experiences: the house of Joe Gargery and his wife (Pip's sister), Satis House and Wemmick's house in Walworth. Contrary to the hearth in Ester's room in *Bleak House,* the fireplace in Joe Gargery's house does not hold any comfort for Pip. He does, however, find refuge in the chimney when Joe, in order to protect Pip from his angry sister, "passed [him] into the chimney and quietly fenced [him] up there with his great leg" (*GE,* 9). Pip is displaced because he has no sense of belonging in his sister's house and feels as if he "might have been an unfortunate little bull in a Spanish arena" (*GE,* 25). Even though he is living with a blood relative, the absence of a loving mother makes him feel exposed and in danger – a child who finds the origins of his identity on the tombstones in the graveyard rather than in the house of his only living blood relative.

Dickens's description of this context when Pip returns to Joe's house in the countryside is vastly different from the dreary image in the opening scene.

> The June weather was delicious. The sky was blue, the larks were soaring high over the green corn, I thought all that country-side more beautiful and peaceful by far than I had ever known it to be yet. Many pleasant pictures of the life I would lead there, and of the change for the better that would come over my character when I had a guiding spirit at my side whose simple faith and clear home-wisdom I had proved, beguiled my way (*GE,* 279).

It is significant to note that his house on the marshes that once was a place of humiliation, alienation and abuse has now been transformed to a safe haven because of the love between two people who both possess "simple faith and clear home-wisdom" (*GE,* 279). It is in a home similar to this one that Pip eventually finds a place: he moves in with Herbert and Clara and, within this loving environment, finds the peace of mind and a sense of self he so desperately seeks. He has made peace with his past and remembers the important lessons he has learned. He no longer pines for Estella or a life other than the one he is living: "I have forgotten nothing in my life that ever had a

foremost place there, and little that ever had any place there. But that poor dream, as I once used to call it, has all gone by, Biddy, all gone by" (*GE,* 475).

The second house that is of great importance in this novel is the house of Miss Havisham – Satis House. When Pip first visits Miss Havisham at Satis House, he is shown to a room in which there is an "arrest of everything, [a] standing still of all the pale decayed objects, [where] not even the withered bridal dress on the collapsed form could have looked so like grave-clothes, or the long veil so like a shroud" (*GE,* 59). When, after his first visit to Satis House, he flees into a section of the grounds which is deserted, he finds it in a state of dereliction:

> it was a deserted place, down to the pigeon-house in the brewery-yard, which ha been blown crooked on its pole by some high wind...there were no pigeons in the dove-cot, no horses in the stable, no pigs in the sty, no malt in the storehouse, no smells of grains and beer in the copper or the vat...In a by-yard, there was a wilderness of empty casks, which had a certain sour remembrance of better days lingering about them...Behind the furthest end of the brewery, was a rank garden with an old wall...it was overgrown with tangled weeds (*GE,* 62).

The general decay of Satis House and its surroundings serves as the perfect canvas on which Miss Havisham's vengeful insanity and Estella's contemptuous selfishness could be sketched. The decay of Miss Havisham's house, her room and her clothes reflect a kind of moral decay, which leads her to exploit both Estella and Pip. It is in this house that Pip feels "humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry" (*GE*, 61). His first experience at this house leaves him with the sure knowledge that he is "common...ignorant and backward" (*GE,* 69). However, despite all of this, Pip gradually undergoes a change. He begins to regard his own home as being "coarse and common" (*GE,* 104) in comparison to Satis House. He is afraid that Estella might come to where he is doing his apprenticeship as a blacksmith to find him being at his "grimiest and commonest...with a black face and hands, doing the coarsest part of [his] work and would exult over [him] and despise [him]" (*GE,* 105 & 106).

In Pip's mind, Satis House is the place where his expectations originate. It begins with the twenty-five guineas Miss Havisham pays Joe Gargery as payment for his apprenticeship with Joe (cf. *GE*, 99). This generosity, his perceived impressions of Satis House as superior to his own and his infatuation with Estella further fuel his dream of becoming a gentleman. When Jaggers informs Pip that Matthew Pocket, "the only family member of Miss Havisham's who did not attend on her for her money" (*GE*, 186), is to be his tutor in London, Pip automatically assumes that Miss Havisham is his benefactor. Suddenly Pip believes that his dull childhood is something of the past and that Estella is to be part of his future: "henceforth I was for London and greatness: not for smith's work in general and for you! I made my exultant way to the old Battery, and, lying down there to consider the question whether Miss Havisham intended me for Estella, fell asleep" (*GE*, 144).

Finally, it is Wemmick's house in Walworth that is of some significance in *Great Expectations*. It is a "little wooden cottage in the midst of plots of garden...with the queerest gothic windows...and a gothic door, almost too small to get in at" (*GE*, 204). The house, which strongly resembles a castle, - with its mini battlements and drawbridge, is surrounded by a moat which serves to "cut off the communication" (*GE*, 204) with the outside world. It is ironic that Wemmick's rural home has a flagstaff from which he runs a real flag every Sunday. One is reminded of Pip's desperate lies of red, blue and star spangled flags being waved about at Satis House during his first visit. The sense of rural domesticity is enhanced by the presence of animal pens and a vegetable garden.

Although Wemmick's well-kept rural castle is the direct opposite of Miss Havisham's house, Mukherjee (2005:118) points out the similarity in the fact that both houses are "monuments to solipsism and self-enclosed fantasy". These almost make-believe surroundings and the loving atmosphere and relationship between Wemmick and his ageing parent, are the context for Wemmick's alter ego. This is where his authentic identity as a loving and caring

son, gardener and domesticated man, comes to the fore. Davis (1999:155) points out the discrepancy between the domestic, rural context of Wemmick's house and the "hard and materialistic clerk he [Pip] met in the City." This discrepancy underscores the perception that life in the country is more wholesome and virtuous than life in the city. It is only when Wemmick returns to his rural castle where he and his aged parent live, that he seems to reflect a greater sense of humanity. At Walworth, he is king of his castle and it is here where he "brushes the Newgate cobwebs away" (*GE,* 205) and shows real empathy for his aging father. Wemmick's separation of private and professional lives is directly linked to the separation of the two spaces in which these lives are lived. He confesses to Pip that "[W]hen I go into the office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me" (*GE,* 206).

The reciprocity between space and identity is quite clear in Wemmick's case. Wemmick becomes representative of the two contrasting sides of Victorian society. On the one hand, Wemmick is an objective, competent and reserved clerk when in office on Little Britain. He seems to cherish and nurture the power he has over the wretchedness of those restrained within the prison walls. On the other hand, Wemmick – within the space of his rural home in Walworth – is quite a different man. Here he becomes representative of a different set of values contained within the Victorian society. These values underscore the wholesomeness and benefits of a loving relationship with family members, of the soothing interaction with nature and of the necessity to distance oneself from the maddening crowd in the city in order to uphold these values.

Pip's visit to Jaggers's house in Soho is very different from his experiences at Wemmick's houses. Jagger's house is a stark contrast to Wemmick's house. It is described as "dolefully in want of painting, and with dirty windows" (*GE,* 209). Furthermore, the description of the interior of the house creates an image of gloom and darkness. Jaggers's house is an extension of his office with books

on "criminal law, criminal biography, trials, acts of parliament" (*GE,* 209). The official atmosphere of the offices on Little Britain is echoed inside his house.

> The furniture was all very solid and good, like his watch chain. It had an official look, however, and there was nothing merely ornamental to be seen. In a corner, was a little table of papers with a shaded lamp: so that he seemed to bring the office home with him in that respect too, and to wheel it out of an evening and fall to work (*GE,* 209).

Jaggers's identity is completely interwoven with his work.

The other context, which is of particular importance for our comparative study between *Great Expectations* and Carey's *Jack Maggs,* is that of Australia. This context is often utilized as a counterpart for the ideal British Empire. Australia is seldom, if ever, regarded as a primary context for Dickens's narratives. However, this territory is a context that emerges in Dickens's fiction as early as in *The Convict's Return* – one of the stories in *The Pickwick Papers.* Initially, Dickens's fiction depicted Australia as site of penal colonies for exiled criminals such as Uriah Heep or women of ill reputation such as Martha; both characters in *David Copperfield.* However, after the publication of Samuel Sidney's work, *Sidney's Australian Hand-Book* in 1849 (cf. Lansbury, 1971:12), Dickens also depicts Australia as a type of utopia where characters, such as Mr Micawber and Em'ly, are relocated to live happily ever after.

As a penal colony, Australia contrasts with the British Empire as the "reservoir of utopian images and alternatives that helped energize reform impulses at home" (Brantlinger, 1990:8). It also serves as a place where redemption is possible. Convicts were sent to the penal colonies in order to redeem themselves. Victorian society, however, were dubious whether this redemption did, in fact, take place. Even if they did have the idea that, at least with the arrival of the convicts, "Australia itself would be redeemed from savagery and mere desert waste" (Brantlinger, 1990:110), this was little comfort because they perceived the convicts to be as savage as the indigenous peoples of Australia.

Those characters, for example, Magwitch, who are sent to the penal colonies of Australia, continuously long for their natal country and cannot make peace with their displaced context.

Despite this longing to return to their natal country, certain characters do make a successful life in Australia. Magwitch becomes a successful businessman: "I've been a sheep-farmer, stock-breeder...I've done wonderful well. There's others went out alonger me as has done well too, but no man has done nigh as well as me. I'm famous for it" (*GE,* 313). He, however, is not driven by greed but only by his own will to succeed. He is driven by his obsession to make a gentleman of Pip.

> And then, dear boy, it was a recompense to me, look'ee here, to know in secret that I was making a gentleman...I says to myself, "If I ain't a gentleman, nor yet ain't got no learning, I'm the owner of such..." This way I kep myself a going. And this way I held steady afore my mind that I would for certain come one day and see my boy, and make myself known to him, on his own ground (*GE,* 317).

Magwitch's whole existence, his sanity and his identity in Australia are dependent on his successful creation of a gentleman (Pip) and, as such becoming a gentleman by proxy. The reason for his wish to become a gentleman stems from the Victorian obsession with class, money and respectability.

3.3.3 Characterization

An important narrative aspect that underlines the realism in Dickens's later novels is his characterization. Wheeler (1985:75) points out that nineteenth century critics did not all agree in their opinions about Dickens's method of characterization. In his autobiography (1863), Trollope accuses Dickens of creating characters that were not representative of real people. However, other critics such as George Gissing (1898) and David Masson (1859) do not agree with this opinion. George Gissing acknowledges the merit of Trollope's statement, but believes Dickens's tendency to exaggerate habits and

mannerisms in his characters to be highly effective, because this makes the characters memorable. Masson, on the other hand, regards the mimetic function of Dickens's characters to represent the essence of mankind (cf. Wheeler, 1985:75).

Modern critics, such as Wheeler (1985:75) are more likely to agree with Masson that the "key to Dickens's technique often lies in the collective rather than the individual function of his characters." His characters reflect the essential properties and ideology of the whole of mid-Victorian, middle-class English society. Characters' social responsibilities are part of their narrative construction and moral issues, such as honesty vs. hypocrisy; respectability (and people's obsession thereof) and greed vs. economic conservativeness, are embodied in his characters. Some characters in Dickens's novels reflect mimetic and thematic functions that are representative of the human psyche, but their functions are not necessarily as strongly developed to prove more salient and convincing than the merely platitudinous utterances of their (often assumed) social class. A single character need also not only embody only one specific theme. It is possible that various characters may represent "variations upon specific social themes" (Wheeler, 1985:76).

Kucich (1994:389) points out that Dickens's novels have an "enigmatic use of doubles." This means that the heroes in Dickens's novels often have counterparts that are villainous, hypocritical, untrustworthy and even murderous. Examples of this technique can be found in the characters of David and the hypocritical Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* and Joe Gargery and the murderous Orlick in *Great Expectations.* The doubling, however, is often extended to juxtaposing the virtues of a natural gentleman with those of the Victorian gentleman who becomes a gentleman by proxy or through inheritance. A good example of this is the juxtaposition of Joe Gargery (as representative of the natural gentleman) and Pip (as representative of the learned Victorian gentleman) in *Great Expectations.* Dickens's female characters are often doubled, such as David's angelic and submissive mother in

David Copperfield, whose counterpart is her very mean sister-in-law, Miss Murdoch.

Dickens constructs his characters' emotional and physical features and actions in such a way that the reader gains vision and assessment of Victorian society and of that society's perception of the *other*. One way in which he achieves this is by depicting some of his characters with having their own particular traits and mannerisms (cf. Ackroyd, 2002:144). His depiction of peripheral characters might seem to be almost absurd caricatures of his perceptions of real-life people, where prominent or typical characteristics and mannerisms are either negated or exaggerated. Whereas these caricatures may have been a source of humoristic intent in Dickens's earlier novels, such as Alfred Jingle in *The Pickwick Papers*, the later novels present them as much more sinister and threatening. In *Great Expectations*, Magwitch's mannerisms "gave him a savage air that no dress could tame" (*GE,* 333) and which "in these ways and a thousand other small nameless instances arising every minute in the day, there was Prisoner, Felon, Bondsman, plain as plain could be" (*GE,* 334).

Dickens also depicts humans as progressively devoid of human properties while, at the same time, attributing human characteristics to animals and objects. An example of this type of characterization can be found in *Great Expectations*. Magwitch's dehumanization is brought about through imagery that relate to animals and machines. Pip notices the clicking sound he makes in his throat "as if he had works in him like a clock, and was going to strike" (*GE,* 19). The way Magwitch devours his food remains the same as in his first encounter with Pip who notices "a decided similarity between the dog's way of eating, and the man's. The man took strong, sudden bites, just like the dog...he was very like the dog" (*GE,* 19). When Pip watches Magwitch eating after his return from Australia, he once again concludes that Magwitch looks "terribly like a hungry old dog" (*GE,* 327). This literary method results in the depiction of an ongoing evolvement during which the human and the world are regarded as "a world of objects, and society is portrayed as an external *thing*

constraining man, something fundamentally non-human and hostile" (Brown, 1982:169 – my italics). Dickens's world sketches a picture of a society caught up in the economical and industrial context of their times - a society in which individuals are manipulated, exploited and dehumanized and where materialism reigns.

A closer consideration of Dickens's depiction of the Victorian gentleman, women and children in Victorian society will result in a better understanding of Dickens's methods of characterization.

3.3.3.1 The Victorian gentleman

One of the most interesting characters Dickens constructs in his novels is that of the Victorian gentleman. Not being born into aristocracy and, therefore, not having the right to claim the appellation of *gentleman*, seems to automatically define a man to be the *other*. On the one hand, Dickens seems to encourage the ideal of the *other* – the self-made gentleman. There are several examples of male characters who - whether directly (David Copperfield) or by proxy (Magwitch) – strive to become the respected Victorian gentleman, despite their lowly background. On the other hand, the fact that the self-made man succeeds within the parameters set by a society with questionable moral standards, is often regarded more a failure than success, as is the case with Pip in *Great Expectations*.

Ferris (1994:408) cites Thackeray's definition of a gentleman given during his lecture on George IV in 1855: "To have lofty aims, to lead a pure life, to keep your honour virgin; to have the esteem of your fellow-citizens, and the love of your fireside; to bear good fortune meekly; to suffer evil with constancy; and through evil or good to maintain truth always." Ferris (1994:408) further describes the conduct of a Victorian gentleman as "modest, true, simple, pure, kindly, and upright in his dealings with others." The fact that Thackeray deemed it necessary to define the concept of the Victorian gentleman is proof that it was

a contentious issue. There are two questions that need to be answered in order to determine whether one has the right to be called a Victorian gentleman: origin and conduct. The aristocracy could claim the appellation of gentleman by right of birth. However, there were also those industrialists and economists who, as part of the rising middle-class, continuously attempted to claim the title of *gentlemen* because of their increased wealth and social standing – the self-made man. This group did not always find it easy to adopt the interests and customs of the aristocratic class to which it constantly deferred and, therefore, always experienced some sense of emotional and social conflict. The last group who tried to claim the title of *gentleman* consisted of those who felt entitled by virtue of their professional status.

Dickens often juxtaposes the self-made (often less than plausible) Victorian gentleman against an additional *other* - the so-called authentic *natural* gentleman (cf. Brown, 1982:49). The natural gentleman, however, continues to yield to the values and properties of his aristocratic counterpart. He accepts the fact that he will be governed by this superior rendition of himself and that he will never become part of the same social class as the Victorian gentleman. These characters are depicted as the salt of the earth – the vulnerable, placid and subservient character that is treated in a rather patronizing fashion. This, for example, is what happens to Joe in *Great Expectations*. Herbert Pocket cites his father's definition of a 'natural' or true gentleman:

> No man who was not a true gentleman at heart, ever was, since the world began, a true gentleman in manner. He says, no varnish can hide the grain of the wood; and that the more varnish you put on, the more the grain will express itself (*GE*, 179).

In *Great Expectations*, Dickens juxtaposes Joe Gargery and Pip in order to illustrate the above-mentioned statement. Joe, whose thematic function is to be representative of the 'natural' gentleman, embodies the social vision that holds morality and the value of life in higher regard than material wealth. When Jaggers offers him money as compensation for the loss of Pip's labour, Joe

firmly declines the offer. He states that money cannot compensate the loss of a child or of friendship. Joe also points out to Pip that the differences between the working middle-class and the aristocracy are part of the natural order of life. He accepts his place within that order and that gives him an air of complacency that Pip notices:

> Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Diwisions among such must come, and must be met as they come...You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor yet anywheres else but what is private, and beknown, and understood among friends...I am wrong in these clothes. I'm wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th'meshes. You won't find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with my hammer in my hand, or even my pipe (*GE*, 222).

Joe reflects the relationship between happiness, morality and context. He is a simple man who keeps to his standing. Within his specific spatial and social context, he is a happy man. The reason for the emotional and social distance between Pip and Joe is not because Joe feels out of place; it is because Pip, in his attitude towards Joe, distances himself from the only father figure he has ever known. After Joe has nursed him to health, Pip is baffled to realize that "in prosperity [he] should grow cold to him (Joe) and cast him off[?]" (*GE*, 463). Joe's reaction to Pip's attitude in these times causes Pip to realize that Joe is aware of - and content with his own authenticity. Joe is content with the fact that his world is different from Pip's, but he will always be available to help and support Pip as he does when he pays Pip's debts in full. Joe is the typical authentic natural gentleman.

In *Great Expectations,* Pip's character has both mimetic and thematic dimensions and functions. As a character who strives to become the archetypal Victorian gentleman, he embodies the physical transformation of a man in search of social status, as well as the hankering for social and economic advancement typical of the Victorian middle-class. Brown (1982:128) clearly

perceives this ideal when he comments that Pip's expectations are the embodiment of "the whole power of money and class in mid-Victorian England." Long before the realization of a benefactor who would enable him to have *great expectations,* Pip complains to Joe that he feels "ignorant and backwards...common, and that [he] wished [he] was not common" (*GE,* 69). This awareness, of course, results from his acquaintance with Miss Havisham and Estella. Pip feels unhappy and dissatisfied with his life and clearly states that he has "particular reasons for wanting to be a gentleman" (*GE*, 125). These reasons, of course, all pertain to winning the affections of Estella. Pip agrees completely with Jaggers who tells him: "the sooner you leave here – as you are to be a gentleman – the better" (*GE*, 139).

In *Great Expectations* Dickens creates an alternative to both the characters of the archetypal Victorian and the authentic natural gentleman, namely the Victorian perception of a gentleman in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The fictional character of the Victorian gentleman becomes the touchstone for the ideal self-made man of the mid-Victorian middle-class. He is the man who is perceived and depicted to contribute positively to the moral and economic ethos of the mid-Victorian society. He is humane, has high moral values and gentlemanly manners – truly a man of gentility. In *Great Expectations,* Herbert Pocket is such a man. He is a character representative of professional and economical independency and authentic gentility. When Pip moves to London, he becomes the friend who guides Pip and teaches him the way a gentleman should behave. He is a young man who has "a natural incapacity to do anything secret or mean" (*GE,* 175). Pip recognizes this honesty and integrity, but also senses "something that at the same time whispered to me that he would never be very successful or rich" (*GE,* 175). Eventually, with Pip's secret intervention, Herbert Pocket leaves for Cairo to join the company of Clarriker and Co. and to marry the girl of his dreams. When Pip leaves England to join the couple in Cairo, they take him in and he lives with them for eleven years.

3.3.3.2 *Dickens's female characters*

Considered from a feminist point of view, the characterization of the female characters in Dickens's fiction leaves much to be desired. It is difficult to decide whether Dickens depicts the female character as the *other* (as opposed to the male character) or whether this is his personal perception of women in general. It seems as if he, in his construction of the female character, regards women as much as the *other* as the society does that he so often criticizes. Kucich (1994:392) points out that Dickens's heroines are "passively virtuous, devoid of sexuality, rapturously domestic and infantilized." Dickens's archetypal depiction of women as hapless, helpless and submissive is only alternated with depictions of cruelty, eccentricity, insanity and permissiveness. It is possible to assume that Dickens subverts the stereotypical perception of female characters if one were to judge from the ironical slant of his writing. However, this poses a problem because none of the female characters ever develops to a point of being quite independent and free of a patriarchal system. Their lives often seem to take a turn for the better and they often seem only happy and complete when a man intervenes and takes charge.

An excellent example of a disreputable female character can be found in *Oliver Twist*. In this novel, the little boy (Oliver) is protected by Nancy, a prostitute working for the villain, Fagin. Dickens's view of this character is revealed in the preface to the April 1841 edition, as quoted by Hawes (2002:161), in which Dickens wrote that "it is useless to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seem natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. It is TRUE...From the first introduction of that poor wretch, to her laying her bloody head upon the robber's breast, there is not one word exaggerated or over-wrought." Another female character in this same novel, Mrs Sowerberry, treats Oliver with the utmost disdain. Apart from feeding him the dog's food, she has him sleep in a coffin.

In many of the mid-century novels, such as *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit*, the women are depicted as meek and mild ladies who might swoon at the merest pretext. In *David Copperfield*, David's mother, Clara, is incapable of protecting her child from his abusive stepfather. She is described as a meek and timid woman who, despite a momentary attempt "not [to] suffer her authority to pass from her without a shadow of protest" (*DC*, 51), submits to her domineering husband and his sister's every wish.

In *Great Expectations*, the female characters are representative of a wide range of dispositions and provide excellent examples of doubling. They include the mean-spirited Mrs Gargery; the unpretentious, demure and wise Biddy; the irresponsible Mrs Pocket; the aloof Estella and Mrs Havisham who seems to be insane. Biddy tries to give Pip clear and just advice, but he does not heed her. When he decides to return to his childhood home and to ask Biddy to "go through the world with [him]" (*GE*, 466), he is baffled to find that Biddy has not been patiently and idly waiting for him, but has married Joe on the very day of his arrival. This is a surprising change to the usual pattern in Dickens's work. Biddy's tears are not those of being grateful that a man has at last returned her secret love and she does not cling to Pip and kiss his hand out of pitiful dependency. She is truly happy to see an old friend who has "come by accident to make their day complete[!]" (*GE*, 472).

Mrs Havisham and Estella pose the reverse side of Biddy's wisdom and sensibility. Mrs Havisham, who lives alone in Satis House where she keeps everything exactly as it was on her wedding day when she was jilted by her bridegroom, adopts Estella and raises her to be the instrument of her anger and vengeance. She includes Pip in the "wrecked fortunes of that house" (*GE*, 392) and provides him with money. Her insane obsession with getting even with men, results in Estella being raised as a cold, heartless young woman who is incapable of loving anyone. Estella's detachment and dissociation is evident in the fact that she never touches Pip at all, contrary to Biddy who comforts Pip by putting her "comfortable hand...upon [his] hands and softly patted [his] shoulder

in a soothing way" (*GE*, 127). Mrs Havisham, of course, is fully aware of the person she has created and just before she dies, she pleads for forgiveness and admits to Pip that, despite her initial intention to save Estella from being hurt as she was, she has "stole[n] her heart away and put ice in its place" (*GE*, 395). Despite the insight into her own destructive actions, Dickens has her dying a violent death "shrieking, with a whirl of fire blazing all about her, and soaring at least as many feet above her head as she was high" (*GE,* 397): a death befitting the meanness of her character.

3.3.3.3 Dickens's children

Dickens's construction and depiction of the orphaned child is surely one of the most salient images that permeate his work. The orphaned child is found in various novels such as *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit* and in *Great Expectations*. In various cases, such as David in *David Copperfield*, Esther in *Bleak House*, Amy Dorrit in *Little Dorrit* and Pip in *Great Expectations*, the child is subjected to physical and emotional abuse. However, in all these novels the individual rises above this and goes on to live a happy life. Even in *Oliver Twist,* Oliver, despite having been forced to join in Fagin's criminal acts, is saved from a life of criminality by the grace of intervention. A truth that is evident in all these novels, however, is the fact that all the children are victims of society. They are neglected and shunned either by society, or by individuals. In the cases of Oliver and Magwitch, the betrayal is twofold. They are forced to turn to crime in order to survive and then they are judged and punished by the same society that has discarded them. Wenzel (1995:81) cites Miller's (1967:130) understanding of the *picaro*: "[I]f the world is tricky, peopled by tricksters, the picaro must either give up his personality to join the trickery or perish. The picaro always joins." This interpretation should be kept in mind when speaking of picaresque-like characters in Dickens's fiction.

Even though Magwitch is a peripheral character, we see in him the archetypal picaresque character. If Pip is at all a product of his upbringing – as he claims

to be – Magwitch is even more the product of his environment: the squalor and unjust society of mid-Victorian London. He embodies the results of Victorian English society's inability to nurture the orphaned child; he is a victim of society who takes revenge on that society. The way he goes about taking his revenge becomes clear when he tells his life's story to Pip and Herbert. Magwitch's revenge is, of course, not vicious and criminal nature. His obsession with acquiring a measure of respectability and acceptance as the benefactor of a 'real' gentleman, Pip, is his way of proving those who slighted and betrayed him wrong. In Magwitch's mind, his success is society's punishment for underestimating his determination to live a life of success and virtue.

Magwitch does not beat about the bush, but "put[s] it at once into a mouthful of English. In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail...That's my life pretty much" (*GE,* 342). He is an orphan "who almost from infancy had been an offender against the laws" (*GE,* 451). He does not even know how he came to be called Abel Magwitch. He grew up deprived of clothes and food and relates the ironic behaviour of a society who tries to preach gospel to a child hardened by starvation. The events of his childhood formed a vicious circle: people would not employ him because of his appearance and his background of petty crime and his appearance and behaviour. However, his appearance, criminal acts and behaviour are the result of poverty and deprivation. He also tells how Compeyson had tricked him and how he had paid the price by being exiled to the penal colonies of Australia.

The other orphaned child in *Great Expectations* is Pip. Pip is not by definition a picaresque character, because he does not take revenge on society in any way. However, Pip does have his fair share of deprivation, physically and - even more so, - emotionally. He is used to physical abuse and admits to often serving "as a connubial missile" (*GE,* 9) when awakening his sister's wrath. He very often becomes the target of adults who sees to it that he "[gets] so smartingly touched up by...moral goads" (*GE,* 25). They continuously remind him that he should be grateful to his sister and her husband, seeing as "[H]e

was a world of trouble to [her]" (*GE*, 27). His sister, of course, does nothing to alleviate the situation and makes Pip feel that she blames him for "all the times she had wished [him] in [his] grave, and [he] had continuously refused to go there" (*GE*, 27).

Pip feels dehumanized and humiliated. Mr Wopsle gives a little moral sermon at the dinner table about the prodigal son and the swine and makes Pip feel "as if he were mentioning [his] christian name" (*GE*, 26). Estella, during one of his visits to Satis House, brings him food in a manner "as insolently as if [he] were a dog in disgrace" (*GE*, 61). Even Magwitch's treatment of Pip seems to turn the latter into the object of Magwitch's selfish intent. Brown (1982:129) asserts that Magwitch dehumanizes Pip because he regards him almost as personal property. Magwitch almost reduces Pip to prove to the gentlemen in Australia who look down upon him, despite his financial success, that he is capable of producing a gentleman as grand as they are and even more so (cf. *GE*, 314 & 316).

Pip, even at this young age, realizes that he is the product of his unjust upbringing.

> Within myself, I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known, from the time when I could speak, that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand, gave her no right to bring me up by jerks (*GE*, 61 & 62).

Pip's perception of himself as common, is underscored by the contempt with which Estella treats him and Mr Pumblechook's rude behaviour towards him. He is very conscious of his thick boots and his coarse hands. Pip's hankering for refinement and economic and social advancement starts long before he is informed of his windfall.

3.3.4 Focalization

Dickens's narrative mode, that is the choice of narrator and focalization, is one of the narrative aspects he uses in order to bring about the affective value and the moral message of his fiction. His narrative mode varies from internal focalization to external focalization with the use of narrator-focalizers as well as character-focalizers. In *Bleak House* he uses dual focalization as his narrative mode: the omniscient male narrator-focalizer with a "panoramic view of the world" (Davis, 1999:35) and the female character focalizer. He employs shifts in focalization as a narrative strategy in order to construct the identity not only of the individual, but also of a society. With the exception of one, that is Esther in *Bleak House,* Dickens always uses male narrators.

Walder (1995:138) asserts that the nineteenth century autobiographical sub-genre of the novel, that employed the first person narrator, resulted in a narrative in which "the moral focus on the individual...was central to the formation of realist fiction". In many cases, the adult character-focalizer relates the narrative of his life as a child, because the child narrator is not expected to have the insight and the sophistication to relate and analyze the feelings and the circumstances in which events had taken place in a credible way. In *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield* Dickens uses the internal character-focalizer. In both cases, the character-focalizer can be described as an "autobiographical 'I' as protagonist" (Partlow, 1961:123). In *David Copperfield* David as the adult informs the reader right at the beginning that his narrative will be one related in retrospect, and that "these pages must show...whether I [that is David] shall turn out to be a hero of my own life" (*DC*, 13). The position of the focalization in *Great Expectations*, however, is initially not as obvious as it is in *David Copperfield.*

Although *Great Expectations* seems to have an internal character-focalizer as its narrator (autobiographical 'I' as the protagonist), some questions need closer consideration. Is the story told by the adult Pip in retrospect, actually reflecting

on his own past, as well as on that of the other characters in the novel or is it told by a single narrator who shifts focalization? Is his narration a historical and factual recording of his life's story or a subjective interpretation of the effects certain events had on his life? To what extent is an autobiographical character-focalizer, who is also the protagonist, a reliable narrator?

Taking into consideration the tense in which the novel is written, that is the past tense, it seems plausible to believe that the narrative is presented by an adult character-focalizer (a middle-aged Mr Pirrip) who recalls his life as a child and as a young man. The story "involves an adult narrator looking back over a considerable time and [is] able to exercise adult judgements about himself" (Walder, 1995:136). The focalizer is able to become, in retrospect, a narrator who is able to place past events and perceptions in perspective and to understand how those events had affected his moral development and the construction of his *self*. By using this narrative mode, that is internal character-focalizer and retrospective mode, Dickens is able to comment not only on the moral development of the individual, but also, by implication, on that of a society.

The fact the Dickens uses internal focalization, does not mean that he does not make any shifts in focalizer within the novel. One such example occurs in the opening paragraphs of the novel. The focalization in the narrative's first four paragraphs shifts from the adult Pip to that of Pip as a child. This is achieved by the specific use of language. Dickens depicts the first meeting between the convict and the child using direct speech for the first time and language that reminds the reader of that of a child.

> 'Hold your noise!' cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from the graves at the side of the church porch. 'Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!' A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head (*GE*, 4).

The use of direct speech in the description of this first encounter, the lack of verbs in the physical description of the convict and the gothic imagery of the graveyard and the irons on the convict's legs, convey a realistic immediate impression and also mirror the way a child would tell this disturbing event.

Another example occurs in the first few pages of Chapter Three in Volume Three, when Magwitch tells the story of his life to Pip and Herbert. At first glance, it seems as if Magwitch has become the narrator. However, despite this shift in focalization, the use of quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph right through Magwitch's relation, implies that his life's story is recorded in written form by Pip.

> Dear boy and Pip's comrade. I am not a going fur to tell you my life, like a song or a story-book. But to give it to you short and handy, I'll put it at once into a mouthful of English. In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail. There, you've got it. That's *my* life pretty much, down to such times as I got shipped off, arter Pip stood my friend (*GE,* 342).

To a large extent, this shift in focalization is brought about by the fact that Dickens again uses direct speech and also the specific use of register and diction and tenses. Whereas the register of the larger part of the novel is rather sophisticated, even when the focalization shifts to the Pip as child narrator, the relationship of Magwitch's life is written in a much more colloquial register. The use of words such as *fur, arter, agen, reg'larly* and the incorrect use of tenses, for example *grow'd up, know'd and warn't a soul* (cf. *GE,* 342) establishes Magwitch as speaker, but it is still Pip who narrates that which was spoken.

The shift in focalization that also strongly relates to an example of external retroversion is when Wemmick tells Pip the story of Molly's (Jagger's housekeeper) life. In this case, Wemmick becomes the focalizer. He tells Pip how Molly, years before, was tried for, and acquitted on a murder charge. During that time, Molly had a child – a girl. Straight after her acquittal, she started working as a housekeeper in Jaggers's house. Pip begins to suspect

that Estella might be Molly's daughter. Proof of the connection between Estella and Molly is only revealed later in the novel.

One of the questions that are often asked is whether there is a relationship between the author and the narrator: is the voice of the narrator necessarily the voice of the author? It would be quite dangerous to assume that all the opinions of all the narrators are factual reflections of Dickens's own ideologies. At times, however, one can discern instances in his novels, to which Keen (1998) refers as *narrative annexes*, where the conjunctive progression of the story is interrupted by a "disjunctive moment in the narrative in which both the characters and the novelist briefly break through the confines of the novel's primary world and genre" (Malz, 2000:138). In *Little Dorrit*, the main narrative mode is external focalization, with the narrative related by a male narrator-focalizer. Dickens, however, enters the novel as historical author, commenting on the matter of focalization. Referring to Amy Dorrit's focalization, Dickens claims that "[T]his history must sometimes see with Little Dorrit's eyes and shall begin that course by seeing him" (*LD,* 208). He then, however, proceeds to relate Amy Dorrit's innermost association of Arthur's home with the grandeur and the squalor of Covent Garden, using the external narrator-focalizer. Once again, it is Amy who sees, but the third person narrator who relates the story. Pip's momentary insight into the injustice of his sister's behaviour towards him (to which I referred earlier in this chapter) is an example of *narrative annex* in *Great Expectations*. This incident is not only the mere pondering of a man on his miserable life as a child, but it is also the social assessment of the author that the social and moral environment in which a child is raised is detrimental to the child's development and the perception of *self*.

Regardless of which narrative mode Dickens chooses for his fiction, the fact remains that his choice is based on more than a whim. Focalization, for Dickens, is a narrative aspect that is employed to bring about various perspectives.

3.4 Literary conventions

3.4.1 Allusion

One of the literary conventions that permeate Dickens's novels is allusion. In his novels, he alludes to known people, places and other sub-genres of the Victorian novel.

Dickens based some of his characters on actual people. Two characters that are based on real people, are Mr Merdle, a financier and banker in *Little Dorrit* and the criminal, Fagin, in *Oliver Twist*. In both cases, the characters are based on more than one person. Hawes (2002:151) states that the character of Mr Merdle is based on George Hudson (1800 – 71) and that of John Sadleir (1814 – 56). George Hudson was also known as the *Railway King*. His business collapsed and he left England in 1854, a year before the first chapters of *Little Dorrit* appeared. John Sadleir committed suicide after the Irish bank that he managed, collapsed. The similarities with Merdle's character are clear. These sources were included by Dickens himself in the 1868 edition's preface of *Little Dorrit*.

Regardless of whether Dickens's characters were based on real people or not, Ackroyd (2002:141) points out that certain scholars, after having researched this question, concluded that "in some cases he exaggerated, in some cases he underemphasized, and in some cases faithfully recorded the reality." In *Great Expectations* Uncle Pumblechoock and Miss Sarah Pocket are perfect examples of caricatures. Uncle Pumblechoock, a corn-handler, is described as a "large hard-breathing middle-aged man, with a mouth like a fish, dull staring eyes, and sandy hair standing upright on his head" (*GE*, 24). Miss Sarah Pocket looks like "a little dry brown corrugated old woman, with a small face that might have been made of walnut shells, and a large mouth like a cat's without the whiskers" (*GE*, 85).

Very often, the characters' eccentricity or their power of representation is found in a name. Estella, for example, means star which is ironic because a star is beautiful (just like Estella), but also far removed, just as Estella is emotionally from Pip. Apart from using ordinary Christian names that he listed in his Book of Memoranda (cf. Hawes, 2002:4), Dickens often invented names in order to contribute to a sense of melodrama or comedy. Sometimes the names are indicative of certain occupations, personalities or habits, such as Bar, a barrister in *Little Dorrit* and the pleasant, merry Cheeryble in *Nickolas Nickleby* (1838 – 9). Hawes (2002:4) points out that several of the names "are brilliant inventions, which suggest through onomatopoeia, connotation or symbol the traits and functions of the personage in question." A good example of such an invention is Uncle Pumblechoock in *Great Expectations* who continuously looks "as if had just been all but choked" (*GE*, 24) and who later literally chokes when Orlick breaks into his house, ties him to his bedpost and " stuffed his mouth full of flowering annuals to perwent his crying out" (*GE*, 460). Ruth Glancy (1996:802) states that "Dickens frequently used variations of his own name for his characters, often with the implication of doubles or doppelgangers (sic)". There are several examples of this practice, such as Charles Darnay in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Mr Dick in *David Copperfield*, Dick in *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838 – 9) and *Oliver Twist* and Richard Doubledick in *The Seven Poor Travellers* (1854).

Several of Dickens's novels hold allusions to actual well-known landmarks in London and the surrounding area, as well as familiar social and religious places and practices. In *Great Expectations*, for example, Pip recalls the conceited Wopsle's manner of looking around the congregation as if to say: "You have heard my friend overhead; oblige me with your opinion of this style[!]" (*GE*, 24). Wopsle's invitation alludes to the church's pulpit which consisted of three levels. A clerk such as Wopsle would occupy the lower level in order to read the psalm, while the minister would read his sermon from the top level of the pulpit. Another example fro *Great Expectations*, involves the churchyard. It has been

suggested that the churchyard in *Great Expectations* alludes to that of Cooling – a small village known to Dickens. In his notes on *Great Expectations*, Calder (1986:499) points out that several places in *Great Expectations* may have their origins in Dickens's "combined memories of several small villages lying between Gad's Hill and the Thames."

However, his allusion to well-known prisons and judicial buildings such as the Parliament, the House of Commons and the Circumlocution Office is even more significant. Dickens's prison contexts include all of the major debtor's prisons of his time, for example Fleet Prison in *The Pickwick Papers*, King's Bench Prison in *David Copperfield*, Marshalsea Prison in *Little Dorrit* and Newgate Prison in *Great Expectations*. The theme of imprisonment begins in *The Pickwick Papers* and is followed by the narration of inmates breaking into and out of prisons in *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) and the later novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. In *Little Dorrit* the imprisonment is not only physical, but also metaphysical. In *Great Expectations*, the concept of imprisonment is further developed from imprisonment in prisons located within the city limits, to Magwitch's exile to Australia: a criminal removed from society.

Dickens's own introduction to crime and the penal system came at an early age when his father was incarcerated in the Marshalsea Prison when he failed to pay outstanding debts to the amount of more than forty pounds. Ackroyd (2002:47 & 48) claims that "Marshalsea was the place and the area which haunted Dickens throughout his life... [T]he high wall with the spikes on top of it, the shadows cast by the prison buildings, the lounging shabby people – all of these images return again and again in his narratives." Dickens becomes even more directly involved in his father's shenanigans when, in his later life, John Dickens forges Charles's name as the guarantor for his debts (cf. Ackroyd, 2002:186).

One of the most interesting literary conventions noticeable in Dickens's novels is the allusion to elements of other sub-genres of the Victorian novel. Clayton

(1991:183) points out that "[R]omance, realism, the Gothic, the sentimental, and the melodramatic are only the most prominent generic categories that have been articulated with and around the case of Dickens." As mentioned before, *Great Expectations* is predominantly formulated in the style of a *Bildungsroman* (see p. 1). However, there are noticeable traces of elements relating to the gothic novel, romance novel, murder and mystery novel, detective novel, and fairy tale. One of the explanations for Dickens's allusions to other sub-genres of the Victorian novel might be the fact that he wrote his novels in monthly installments. It would make sense that, although forming part of a more comprehensive plot, each installment would have to contain something that would compel readers to read the next installment, whether it is to follow the romance, solve the mystery or escape into a life of fantasy.

In *Great Expectations* the Gothic elements manifest in, amongst other things, the description of several spaces such as Wemmick's rural castle. This small castle has the "queerest gothic windows...and a gothic door" (GE, 204) and reminds us of a miniature replica of a medieval castle. However, Pip's surroundings in the opening chapter of the novel conjure images with even stronger traces of Gothic elements. These surroundings are dark, damp, and misty and filled with images of death. The marshes are described as "just a long black horizontal line...angry red lines and dense black lines intermixed" (*GE*, 7). The surroundings are misty and the weather is "cold and threatening, the way dreary, the footing bad, darkness coming on" (*GE*, 33). The dark marshes and the events that take place there have a profound influence on Pip. When Magwitch forces Pip to help him, Pip's despair and fear of being found out is enhanced by images of dungeons and incarceration brought about by the dampness and cold of the marshes and the sound of the irons around the convict's ankles. Pip recalls the ominous atmosphere of the marshes when he visits Satis House. The room in which Pip finds himself is dark: "the daylight was completely excluded and it had an airless smell that was oppressive (*GE*,

82) and "the reluctant smoke [which] seemed colder than the clearer air" (*GE*, 82) reminds Pip of the mist on the marshes.

The image of darkness is also linked to death when the darkness of the night is likened to "a great black velvet pall" (*GE*, 15) – a cloth that is used to cover a hearse, a tomb or a coffin. The image of death is introduced in the opening scenes with Pip finding himself in a churchyard, studying the inscriptions on the tombstones of his family. Pip's whole world is inverted in this churchyard when he encounters Magwitch for the first time. The convict literally turns Pip upside down and shakes him around. After that, nothing in Pip's life seems sure any more, not even the church, which is supposed to represent something constant in life. By turning Pip upside down, Magwitch makes the church "go head over heels [and it] jumped over its own weathercock" (*GE*, 4 & 6).

Another sub-genre to which *Great Expectations* alludes, is the romance novel[6]. The most well-known romantic strand in the novel involves Pips infatuation with Estella. Pip loves her

> against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. Once for all; I loved her none the less because I knew it, and it had no more influence in restraining me, than if I had devoutly believed her to be human perfection (*GE*, 229).

However, beside the relationship between Pip and Estella, there is a continuous hinting at a possible romantic relationship between Pip and Biddy. Pip becomes aware of the changes in Biddy's appearance as she becomes a young woman. Although he still thinks that she is not in the same class as Estella, he acknowledges the fact that she is a thoughtful, attentive girl with beautiful eyes: "Her shoes came up at the heel, her hair grew bright and neat, her hands were always clean" "[S]he was not beautiful – she was common, and could not be like Estella – but she was pleasant and wholesome and sweet-

[6] Abrams (2005: 35) defines romance: "Its standard plot is that of a quest undertaken by a single knight in order to gain a lady's favor."

tempered" (*GE*, 122). Pip even becomes rather jealous and indignant when Biddy confesses that Orlick has made it clear that he has feelings for her and feels "very hot indeed upon old Orlick's daring to admire her; as hot as if it were an outrage on [him]self" (*GE*, 129). The possibility of a romance between Pip and Biddy is interrupted by Pip's expectations of becoming a gentleman. The moment he receives the news of the opportunity that has befallen him, he turns condescending towards Joe by telling Biddy that the older man needs to brush up on his manners if he were to move "into a higher sphere" (*GE*, 146). When Biddy does not agree with him and in an overt comment actually criticizes him, he resorts to attack as the best defense.

> He may be too proud to let any one take him out of a place that he is competent to fill, and fills well and with respect...
>
> 'Now, Biddy,' said I, 'I am very sorry to see this in you. I did not expect to see this in you. You are envious Biddy, and grudging...it's a bad side of human nature' (*GE*, 146).

Therefore, it comes as no surprise to the reader when Pip eventually decides that he will return to Biddy in order to court her. However, Dickens inserts a little twist in the tale when Pip arrives at Joe's house only to find that Joe and Biddy had been married that very day.

Probably the most significant reflection of the style of the romance novel is the second ending to *Great Expectations*, as discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Whereas the first ending Dickens wrote relates more to the objective style one would expect of a realist novel, the second ending allows for the possibility of Pip and Estella reconciling – something that fits in perfectly with a romantic plot.

The rise of the detective novel must have contributed towards Dickens's allusion to the elements of murder and mystery in *Great Expectations.* There are numerous examples of these elements present in the novel. The murder that Molly had committed years before, the mystery of the attack on Pip's sister;

the mystery of Miss Havisham's failed relationship with Compeyson and the mystery surrounding Magwitch's connection to Estella all contribute to the presence of these sub-genres. Pip is probably the biggest detective in this novel, because he is the one who suspects Orlick of being involved in the attack on Mrs Joe and he is also the one who snoops around in order to find out what the relationship between Magwitch and Estella is.

When Pip starts asking around about Molly, Wemmick tells Pip how Molly, years before, had been tried for, and acquitted on a murder charge. During that time, Molly had a child – a girl. Straight after her acquittal, she started working as a housekeeper in Jaggers's house. Pip begins to suspect that Estella might be Molly's daughter. Further proof of the connection between Estella and Molly is revealed in Chapter Eleven of Volume Three when Herbert informs Pip that Magwitch had told him about a young woman who had been the mother of his child. This woman had been acquitted of murder and had threatened Magwitch that she would destroy the child – something Magwitch believes she has really done. Pip finally realizes that Estella must be the child of Molly and Abel Magwitch. Pip confronts Jaggers with his suspicions and Jaggers acknowledges that he had forced Molly to give up her child in order for Estella to have a better life than the one Molly could offer.

Finally, *Great Expectations* also holds fairy tale elements of style that are reflected in, for example, the presence of a castle; a princess (Estella); a fairy godmother (Miss Havisham); an ogre (Magwitch) and the male version of Cinderella (Pip). However, many of the stereotypical fairy tale elements are subverted in *Great Expectations.* Wemmick's castle is merely a miniature replica of the original fairy tale castle and Miss Havisham turns out to be more representative of the wicked witch. Estella is more an ice princess than the loving, blushing damsel one would expect in a fairy tale and Pip, because of his irresponsible and often condescending behaviour, does not seem to be as deserving of good fortune befalling him as Cinderella was. Magwitch turns out not to be an ogre at all, but the fairy godfather.

In conclusion, it needs to be mentioned that all the thematic issues and devices described above are emphasized in the use of imagery, such as that of hands that become symbolic of the relationships between characters. Examples of this symbolism can be found in the distance between Pip and Estella where her hand never touches him, but only waves at him from a distance. Another example is Joe's calloused hands that touch Pip "with the touch of a woman...[a] combination of strength with gentleness" (*GE*, 138). Pip acknowledges that Joe always did his duty "with a strong hand, a quiet tongue and a gentle heart" (*GE*, 280). This is in complete contrast to the abuse Pip has to suffer at the hand of his sister. Miss Havisham's burnt hands emphasize the image of distorted senses and of a woman burnt by betrayal in past relationships. Finally, there is the image conjured by Jaggers's large, strong hands: he is a powerful man who, from the first time he lays his hand on Pip's shoulder, helps to manipulate the young man's life, just as he manipulates Molly's life both physically and emotionally. The manner in which he "clapped his large hand on the housekeeper's like a trap" (*GE*, 211) is indicative of the power a man in his position has and how Molly cannot escape this entrapment.

An interpretation of the allusions and images, as well as a comparison to Carey's use of intertextuality, will be included in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4: *Jack Maggs* – Peter Carey

4.1 Socio-historical context

The question of identity and the matter of literary representation of identity are issues that most individuals, cultural and social groups have in common. However, for countries such as South Africa and Australia these issues are especially important because of their unique historical, political and social backgrounds. In South Africa, for example, the legacy of apartheid still informs much of our present socio-economic and cultural circumstances and practices. South African novels, such as Zake Mda's *Ways of Dying* (1995), J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Mark Mathabane's *Miriam's Song* (2000), address the hardships and atrocities of life in the townships during the apartheid era; the emergence of democracy and the shift of political powers in the penultimate decade of the twentieth century; the healing of emotional and psychological wounds caused by experiences in the past and the new challenges and dilemmas facing all races within the changed socio-political climate of South Africa.

Goldsworthy (2000:111 & 112) maintains that in Australia, during the period between 1900 and 1970, "any sense of historical responsibility and inherited guilt, as manifested in the literature, was still mainly focused on Australia's convict past" and that this involvement with its convict history has a definite influence on the formation of the Australian identity. However, this fixation on its convict history has resulted in Australian literature's contribution towards the deconstruction and rebuilding of the nation's history and the alternative formation of a collective identity. This deconstruction, appropriation and re-imagining of the past is often done by returning "again and again to the historical novel as a form of nation building, of alternative history writing, of expiation for colonial guilts" (Goldsworthy, 2000:108).

Goldsworthy (2000:112) lists Judith Wright, Hal Porter, Thomas Keneally and Patrick White as authors who employ themes relating to the convict system in their work. Peter Carey (b. 1943), who is regarded as one of Australia's leading authors of postmodern and post-colonial fiction, continues the tradition of developing themes relating to the convict system in at least two of his novels - *Jack Maggs* (1997) and *Kelly Gang* (2000). In answer to a question about what had motivated him to write *Jack Maggs*, Carey answered that, although few modern Australians are descended from the first convicts...they affected the character of our nation forever" (Bold Type, 2003:1). He claims, furthermore, that "Australians do not like to celebrate this moment when the nation is born" (Bold Type, 2003:1). The acknowledgement and consideration of the Australian convict history is very important in the formation of the Australian sense of collective self.

Carey employs a wide variety of narrative modes, which include fantasy (*The Unusual life of Tristan Smith*), the picaresque mode (*Illywhacker)*), the fable (*Conversation with Unicorns*) and realism. Krassnitzer (1995:37) claims that "[A]lthough Carey mixes fact with fantasy in his writing he considers himself a realist in the sense that he writes about reality." However, whenever Carey uses realism, such as in *Oscar and Lucinda* and *Jack Maggs*, it is to subvert the techniques used by realism and realist authors. In novels such as *The True History of the Kelly Gang* Carey juxtaposes fiction and facts, while in *Bliss* he moves away from realism and incorporates fantasy and surreal elements.

In many cases Carey uses more than one narrative mode within one novel and this "capacity to mix narrative modes becomes a characteristic feature of Carey's fictional practice" (Woodcock, 2003:12) that results in a hybrid style. The reason for Carey's use of these mixed-narratives and hybrid styles is that it enables him to "create dislocations, disrupting any supposed norms of fictional practice" (Woodcock, 2003:9). Woodcock (2003:11) also points out that Carey has a "love for the bizarre, a fascination for the nightmarish, a delight in the sordid, the surreal, the lurid." This becomes evident in novels such as *Tristan,*

Bliss and *Illywhacker*. *Tristan* holds elements of surrealism, magic realism and fantasy, while both *Bliss* and *Illywhacker* are rife with sexual incidents explained in lurid detail. *Bliss* also holds elements of fantasy, which is evident in the incident when Harry tells the police that an elephant had sat on his car (cf. *BS*, 73) and the juxtaposition of contexts, such as when Harry looks down on his body as he dies (cf. *BS*, 11&12).

Chapter Four focuses on an analysis of *Jack Maggs* with regard to Carey's postmodern treatment of narrative aspects such as plot, context, characterization and focalization in his fiction, especially in his novel, *Jack Maggs*. It also includes a discussion of Carey's use of intertextuality and metafiction as literary conventions.

4.2 Postmodernism, postcolonialism and literature

4.2.1 Postmodernism

According to Clayton (1991:185) postmodernism is concerned with various topics.

> the fate of modernity; the value of Enlightenment ideals of rationality and progress; the status of metalanguages or of overarching theoretical paradigms; the relationship between mass culture – including advertising, television, video, and film – and other cultural forms; the froth of new communication and information technologies; the coming of advanced capitalism or what has been called the postindustrial society' the proliferation of marginal, unauthorized, or subversive practices in everyday life; and the consequent birth of a new micropolitics, which emphasizes local struggles, diversity, gender issues, and marginal social groups.

McHale (1987:4) asserts that "we can discriminate among constructions of postmodernism, none of them any less 'true' or less fictional than the others". Postmodernism is a continuous process and various interpretations and explanations of postmodernism exist. It is even possible to refer to feminism, Marxism and postcolonialism as constructions or manifestations of

postmodernism – each of these movements focusing on its own specific issues. Despite of its initial goal to "de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life" (Hutcheon, 1989:2), postmodernism is always conscious of the fact that its own dominant features could be perceived as presuppositions and, therefore, always tries to negate even that dominance, striving to construct no clear center. This is why postmodernism is regarded as self-conscious and self-reflective: it succeeds in simultaneously confirming and challenging the assumptions and conventions that it is questioning. This ambivalence is characteristic of postmodernism's diffuseness as it is expressed in the blurring and fusion of boundaries, for example, between fact and fiction. However, the fact that boundaries are blurred and crossed, does not mean that they cease to exist; it simply means that they are shifted.

Hutcheon (1989:12) states that "[P]ostmodernism has called into question the messianic faith of modernism, the faith that technical innovation and purity of form can assure social order". In Chapter One, I stated the distinction between the epistemological and ontological dominants that respectively characterize modernist and postmodern contexts (McHale, 1987:9 & 10). The epistemological dominance of modernist fiction means that it is based on **knowledge**: knowledge of context, of the *self* within the context and the understanding of how knowledge is communicated. *Ontology,* on the other hand, questions the very **existence of everything**. It scrutinizes the manner in which everything exists and the relationship between all entities, as well as the function of the contexts and the role of the various *selves* within the contexts.

McHale (1987:27) concurs with Thomas Pavel's (1979) definition of *ontology* as "a theoretical description of *a* universe". The use of this indefinite article allows for a plurality in the "poetics that we might call postmodern *thematics*" (McHale, 1987:27). An example of this plurality is the possibility of *multiple selves* within a context, each with its own unique function. McHale (1987:36) goes on to quote Pavel as saying: "It is useful to set up a complex ontology involving different domains, populated by different kinds of beings." Due to its ontological

dominance, postmodernism allows for the possible existence of, for example, multiple contexts, such as religious, social, political etc. It also allows for the possible fusion of these contexts as, for example, in Carey's writing.

Bertens & D'haen (1988:83) assert that, within a postmodern context, the realist novel can no longer function as a critical instrument in the depiction of the human condition. Contrary to realist writing, postmodern literature seems to disregard and negate any branch of thought about the nature of existence based on an actual world or reality. Postmodernism questions the manner in which reality is represented and the way in which we interpret these representations within our unique socio-cultural contexts. Postmodernism promotes: the relationship between the individual and his context; the idea that the individual is part of a larger context; and that the representation and interpretation of any context has a direct influence on the formation of our cultural, national, personal identity and ideologies.

McHale (1987:30) underscores Ingarden's opinion that a work of fiction exists "both autonomously, in its own right, and at the same time depending upon the constitutive acts of consciousness of a reader". Postmodern representation does not only refer to the subject or object it represents, but allows for the role of interpretation by both the addressor, for example the author, and the addressee (the reader). The credibility of any possible context depicted by the author is dependant on whether the reader is prepared to believe or at least imagine the possibility of such a context existing. Examples of such contexts include those depicted in science fiction, fables and fairly tales. The fact that fictional works have the ability to create various possible contexts, even if they seem improbable, allows for the subversion of any presuppositions the reader may have of his own reality.

It is often asked whether it is possible for narrative to present the reader with an accurate fictional representation of a non-fictional experience is one that is often asked. Hutcheon (1989:7) asserts that "a study of representation becomes...an

exploration of the way in which narratives and images structure how we see ourselves and how we construct our notions of self, in the present and in the past". The acknowledgement that any work of art, whether it is a literary text, a sculpture or a painting, needs to take into account the past while playing a relevant role in the present, is also implicit in postmodernism. Postmodernism recognizes that each text carries traces of other texts and that a text can only be read against the background of (and in relationship to) other texts that constitute the cultural system within which the text functions (cf. Bertens & D'haen 1988:92). In postmodernism, however, the representation of the past and the knowledge we have of the past is challenged by alternative representations that "foreground[s] the postmodern epistemological questioning of the nature of historical knowledge" (Hutcheon, 1989:71). Postmodernism questions the authenticity of historical facts, as well as the sources from which these facts sprout. Postmodernism looks at the representation of past events from a contemporary perspective and context, and takes into consideration the influence of past events on the present situation. The representation of past events is regarded as being possibly biased and unilateral, rather than unbiased and multiple. Hutcheon (1987:66) states that "we now get the histories (in the plural) of the losers as well as the winners, of the regional (and colonial) as well as the centrist, of the unsung many as well as the much sung few, and...of women as well as men." Postmodernism, therefore, does not claim to present or represent a single objective 'truth' or reality. It prefers to acknowledge the existence of variants of the 'truth' or reality as determined by the variety of temporal and spatial contexts from which these 'truths' or realities arise.

4.2.2 Postcolonialism

Just like *postmodernism*, the term *postcolonial* is a contentious one. Postcolonialism is concerned with the history of the decolonization of those societies that were formerly subject to imperialist oppression. The phenomenon of postcolonialism paradoxically includes both the act of colonization, the

achievement of sovereignty and the development of a transformed postcolonial culture. While postcolonialism does include the history of colonialism, it focuses more on the victory than on the battle (cf. Young, 2001:60). However, it goes a step further than just a mere celebration of victory over colonialism: it also points out which changes still have to take place in order to analyze, expose, and subvert any contemporary, hegemonic systems that might attempt to dominate in an economic, cultural and political sense. Young (2001:58) claims that "postcolonialism is both contestatory and committed towards political ideals of a transnational social justice." It is concerned with the state of consciousness of a world order that negates any colonial and imperialist ideologies and is committed towards suggesting alternative forms of cultural and political identities and alternative ideologies.

Postcolonial literature includes and elaborates on several of the dominant postmodernist themes such as the influence of place and displacement on the formation of identity; the formation of identity in relationship to spatial and temporal contexts; hybridism; national and cultural identity and the perception of the *other*. Further concerns of postcolonial literature are issues such as liminality, marginality, elided voices and the abrogation and appropriation of language as hegemonic tool.

Postcolonialist writing also continues the postmodernist propensity of rewriting the past in order to challenge the validity and viability of previous representations and perceptions. Postcolonial literature is concerned with the dialectic between history and the way that history is depicted in fiction; it strives towards appropriating the bias and prejudiced representation of marginalized groups and cultures and it becomes one of the most important forms of intertextuality within the postmodern and postcolonial literature. The original text is reconstructed in order to undermine, abrogate and re-appropriate specific metanarratives. Despite this defiance of presuppositions and meta-narratives, McHale (1992:24) recommends that not all metanarratives are abandoned and suggests that they are reduced to become 'little narratives'. This reduction of

the metanarratives serves as a subversion of the underlying assumptions of known ideologies and perceptions. The fact that meta-narratives are subverted, forces the reader to critically consider reality as it is postulated within his temporal and spatial context. Postcolonialist writing displays several of the narrative strategies used in postmodernist writing, such as interpolation, juxtaposition, superimposition and misappropriation of spaces in order to create new contexts; heteroglossia and polyphony in order to present alternative points of view of existing ideas and various strands of intertextuality in order to, for example, subvert presuppositions.

4.3 Analysis of*Jack Maggs*

Krassnitzer (1995:4) states that "Peter Carey's work...is international, but also Australian; Australian but non-nationalistic." He is simultaneously a postmodern and postcolonial author and his works present the reader with ideological, historical and political dimensions. In the novel *Jack Maggs,* Carey provides an interesting angle to the postcolonial re-writing of master narratives as he revisits Victorian fiction in order to redefine, appropriate, reinvent and re-imagine various identities and spaces. *Jack Maggs* addresses literary form and convention while including the previously silenced voices.

The section that follows will examine how Carey employs postmodern narrative techniques to construct plot, context, characterization and focalization in his fiction, especially in his novel, *Jack Maggs*.

4.3.1 Plot

Carey often subverts any notion and assumptions relating to the chronological coherence of the narrative progression. Novels such as *Bliss* and *Illywhacker* "transgress[es] and undermine[s] presumptions of formal continuity and genre coherence" (Woodcock, 2003:53). In *Illywhacker*, the narrative progression moves erratically between the narrative present and the past experiences of three generations of several characters in the novel.

There are two main strands of plot in *Jack Maggs.* The manner in which the strands develop, is closely interwoven with the spatial and temporal context, as well as the focalization. The one strand of plot involves the (hi)story of the main protagonist, Jack Maggs, a man who had been transported as a convict to New South Wales and, in the narrative present, returns to London as a man in his forties. Maggs's story includes his past, which is told through external retroversion. At the same time, we learn of the events that occur during his stay in London which is related in the narrative present. The first strand of the plot also includes some of the events that occurred during Maggs's stay in New South Wales. The second strand of plot involves the (hi)story of Tobias Oates, a popular author whose character overtly alludes to Charles Dickens. Tobias's relationship with members of his family, his past history and information surrounding his fiction are depicted through intertextuality. His relationship and involvement with Maggs is told in the narrative present.

The plot development can be linked to the identity formation of the two main characters, Jack Maggs and Tobias Oates. In the narrative present, Jack Maggs arrives in London from New South Wales: "At five o' clock on Saturday, Jack Maggs had been a man of substance" (*JM,* 20). In New South Wales, Jack Maggs's "presence would have brought a hush of respect" but in Buckles's household, people "rushed about him, ignorant of who he was" (*JM,* 31). Who is Jack Maggs? He is a man who has had a picaresque childhood during which he was exploited by Ma Britten and Silas who initiated his implication in crime. When arrested, he was transported to New South Wales, where he paid his dues and successfully built his own little empire. Now he returns to London a redeemed man, to claim his place in society as an Englishman and a gentleman by proxy. He returns to London because: "This is my home... [T]hat's what I want. My home" (*JM,* 5).

However, in the houses of Percy Buckles, Tobias Oates and Henry Phipps, Jack Maggs is degraded and exploited just because he used to be a criminal.

The first house belongs to Oates, who has his own assumptions about criminals and does not see any harm in the way he treats Maggs.

> Even the lowest type of renegade...has an inner need to give up the truth. Look at those gallows confessions they are still selling on Holborn. It is what our fathers called 'conscience'. We all have it. For the criminal, it is like a passion to throw himself off a high place (*JM,* 28).

The mere fact that the confessions of criminals are regarded as popular reading material, says a lot about the Victorian society's warped fascination with the macabre. Carey creates the impression that Oates's assumptions reflect those of his society and of his profession and that this is the reason why Oates is unmoved by Maggs's pleas, threats and unwillingness to share his history with the author. The only way Oates can obtain this is by plundering Maggs's memories – thus also becoming a criminal in some sense.

The second house in which Maggs is humiliated belongs to Percy Buckles. Buckles is a middle-aged man who used to be a poor working-class man. He inherited the house, sold his small business and strives to live the life of a middle-class gentleman. The degradation in Buckles's house begins with Maggs being forced to "stand back to back with Constable" (*JM,* 13), the other footman in Buckles's household. Maggs is forced to sleep in a little room and serve food to Buckles and his companions like a common servant. He has to steal away across the roof to the house of his protégé, Henry Phipps – the house for which he, in fact, has paid. It is during his first visit to this house that Maggs probably feels the degradation most. He bumps into objects in the dark and stumbles helplessly around: "For this he laboured? To stand in Henry's hallway like a thief, his breeches smeared with London soot[?]" (*JM,* 35). Just like all those years before, Maggs's authentic self, as well as that which he has become in New South Wales, is negated by the events in London. In Oates's house Maggs has to wait through the night, his clothes torn and dirty, to find out what Oates had learnt about him the night before during the session of hypnosis.

Besides the degradation, the events in the houses of Buckles, Oates and Phipps also lead to pain and sadness. The pain is simultaneously physical and emotional. The physical pain manifests itself in the extremely painful nervous tic Maggs experiences in his left cheek, while the emotional pain is brought about by the painful memories that Tobias Oates bring to the surface by means of hypnosis. Oates exploits Maggs because he intends to use these memories to serve his own purposes as an author. It is ironic that this exploitation takes place, because Maggs is – from the very beginning – very wary of Oates. He thinks Oates is "as trustworthy as a Newgate Bird" (*JM,* 30). It is even more ironic because of Mercy's (a young maid in Buckles's household) comment and prediction that Maggs might even "pick a pocket for Tobias Oates" (*JM,* 18), while it is, in fact, actually Oates who metaphorically picks Maggs's pocket of memories. Oates places Jack Maggs under hypnosis in order to – for all apparent reasons – heal the very painful "twitching palsy in his cheek" (*JM,* 8). It is through this process of hypnosis that Oates gradually discovers (and steals) Maggs's criminal past and sets out to write a novel based on the memories of a criminal mind. It is ironic that Carey manipulates the narrative in a way (through intertextuality) that makes it seem as if he, in turn, is stealing Dickens's life.

The events that occur in Henry Phipps's house lead to infinite sadness. This house, which is supposed to be a spatial representation of Maggs's hopes and expectations, is the place where Maggs's expectations are finally shattered. In this house, Maggs is "an Englishman. Dressed in his red waistcoat and his tailored tweed jacket" (*JM,* 322). When Maggs finally comes face to face with Henry Phipps in this house, it is not the loving young man Maggs imagined Phipps to be that stands before him. In the light of the fire, Maggs "beheld his nightmare: long straight nose, fair hair, brutal dreadful uniform of the 57th Foot Regiment. The Phantom had broken the locks and entered his life" (*JM,* 323). All the painful memories of his suffering in Moreton Bay at the hands of the King's soldiers return in full force and Maggs's only thought is: "*I am to die before I meet my son*" (*JM,* 323). Mercy's unselfish act of placing herself in

harm's way is the only thing that prevents Phipps killing Maggs in cold blood. Finally, Maggs has to accept the fact that his expectations with regard to his relationship with Henry Phipps, is not going to be realized and this knowledge causes him much pain. Everything for which he had worked, the man he had become and the hopes he had: all in vain.

Carey employs external retroversion in order to depict Maggs's past experiences in London, as well as those in New South Wales. The instances of retroversions occur when Maggs writes letters to Henry Phipp in order to tell him his life's (hi)story. The events that constitute this history will be discussed in detail later in this chapter when we focus on the occurrence of *polyphony* in *Jack Maggs*. The focalization in these retroversions shifts from the external narrator-focalizer to an internal character-focalizer.

As mentioned earlier, the events relating to Oates's relationship with members of his family and his involvement with Maggs are told in the narrative present. Once again, the results of Carey's use of specific narrative strategies in his depiction of the events that constitute this relationship will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five when we focus on text and intertextuality. It is sufficient at this stage to point out that Carey's depiction of these events, results in the subversion of traditional perceptions of the Victorian author's authority and questions the reliability and credibility of the Victorian fiction's representation of the identities of peripheral characters and contexts.

4.3.2 Context

Francese (1997:7) asserts that "postmodern narratives do not use the writing subject as the organizing center of consciousness" as was the case in modernist writing where the focalization in the text determined the construction of space. Instead, postmodernist and postcolonial authors make use of various strategies to construct or deconstruct spaces or *zones* (cf. McHale, 1987). Besides using existing places and spaces such as America, London and

Australia, Peter Carey does not merely report reality, but creates new contexts and possible worlds (cf. Woodcock, 2003:17) by using the strategies listed by McHale (1987:45): *interpolation, superimposition, juxtaposition* and *misattribution*.

Interpolation, which is not restricted to postmodernism and postcolonialism, refers to the creation of imaginary worlds that correspond with real-world characteristics (cf. McHale, 1987:46), such as the imaginary *Voorstand* and *Efica* (which strongly resemble the relationship between America and Australia) in Peter Carey's *Tristan*. In this novel, Carey uses *interpolation* and *superimposition* in order to create these new spaces. The brilliant use of paratextual devices, such as footnotes, maps and bibliographical references, results in the credibility of the existence of these alternative worlds. Woodcock (2003:109) claims another result of the interpolation in Carey's fiction: the exploration of the "ambivalence of ...the covert strength of the periphery, the hidden weakness of the centre." Just like in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Carey's *Tristan* and *Jack Maggs* reverse the perception of the centre / periphery dichotomy. Another example of interpolation in *Jack Maggs* can be found in Carey's construction of Tobias Oates, a character who overtly alludes to Charles Dickens. Carey's interpolation of the world of the fictional character, Tobias Oates, with the biographical facts of Charles Dickens's life, results in the emergence of an alternative perspective on the Victorian author's authority, as well as the credibility of Victorian fiction's representation of the marginalized or periphery.

The strategy of *superimposition* is when "two familiar places are placed on top of the other...creating through their tense and paradoxical coexistence a third space identifiable with neither of the original two" (McHale, 1987:46). An example of such superimposition is again found in Carey's *Tristan* where, although the two contrasting imaginary countries are based on America and Australia, there is a strong evidence of reference to European countries such as the Netherlands (in place names such as *Voorstand*), Germany (*Bruder* Mouse)

and France (*Fue Follet*). This reference to various spaces contributes to the perception of a new, hybrid space – even if only within the space of the text.

It is also possible to juxtapose imaginary worlds (interpolated spaces) with known worlds. This *juxtaposition* can be extended to improbable and impossible real-worlds, as in the works of science fiction. In his novel, *Bliss,* Carey juxtaposes the ruthless world of advertising to which Bettina belongs and the hippy commune to which Harry escapes after leaving behind his live in Palm Avenue. Carey does this to counter-balance the intricate and contrasting ideologies of these spaces, as well as to reflect on their similarities.

A final strategy used by postmodern and postcolonial authors to construct or deconstruct new spaces, is *misattribution.* This is of the most salient strategies that Carey uses to create new spaces in *Jack Maggs.* Due to the general and literary context of any reader, certain assumptions, presuppositions and associations of the attributes of any given space exist (cf. Mc Hale, 1987:46). Contrary to modernist writing, which depends on the reader's knowledge of the attributes to comprehend the space, postmodernist writing disrupts all the presuppositions, assumptions and associations the reader has of these spaces. The use of misattribution in *Jack Maggs*, results in the subversion of the general, underlying assumptions that Carey's readers may have about the Victorian novel, the Victorian author (as represented by Charles Dickens) and about the identity of the middle-class Victorian society. Carey also provides his readers with alternative perspectives on the background of the exiled convict who helped found Australia. Misattribution, as well as interpolation in *Jack Maggs,* is mainly brought about by Carey's use of *intertextuality.* I shall discuss the result Carey's use of intertextuality in detail in the dissertation's final chapter.

Carey's concern with the Victorian fiction and socio-historical context is not limited to *Jack Maggs.* Three of Peter Carey's novels relate to nineteenth – century England and Australia. The context of Carey's much acclaimed novel

Oscar and Lucinda (1988) shifts from Victorian England to the newly established Colony of New South Wales while, in *Jack Maggs*, the main protagonist returns to London in 1837. Both these novels hold strong traits of nineteenth century realist fiction. Carey's novel, *Kelly Gang* is set in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the Colony of New South Wales. This novel, like *Jack Maggs*, develops themes such as the causes and results of convict transportation and the corruption of the imperial judicial system.

In Dickens's *Great Expectations*, there is reciprocity between Pip's identity formation, the country and the city. In Carey's novel, *Jack Maggs*, the reciprocity lies between Jack Maggs's identity formation and his childhood experiences in London and his adult experiences in Australia. Australia becomes the space in which Jack Maggs gets the opportunity to redeem himself – to rise above the circumstances of his past in London and to make a success of his life.

Carey's fiction does not try to depict Australia as a country without hardship and vices. However, he covertly attributes the hardship, hypocrisies and vices to the "poisons of the Empire" (*KG*, 35). In *Kelly Gang*, he describes the law in the newly established colonies as pompous with "no higher place than its own elevated opinion" (*KG*, 47). He exposes the exploitation of convict labourers and the corruption of the judicial system in New South Wales by those in power who "could bankrupt or hang you as they pleased" (*KG*, 17). Ned Kelly rebels against the unfair treatment of his mother in prison and warns that "[T]he Queen of England should beware her prisons give a man a potent sense of justice" (*KG*, 296).

Even the nineteenth century houses in Australia are described as less comfortable and less familiar than those in London. In *Jack Maggs*, Maggs follows Oates back to his home and immediately notices the differences between Oates's house and the houses in Australia.

> In the place Jack Maggs had most recently come from, the houses had been, for the most part, built from wood. The strained and groaned in the long hot nights, crying out against their nails...
>
> Tobias Oates's house in Lamb's Conduit Street was built from London brick...This was a house that would never scream in the dark, nor did it reek of sap or creosote. Its smells were English smells – polished oak, coal dust, Devon apples (*JM,* 40 & 41).

Carey's depiction of the London to which Maggs returns, leaves the reader with an impression of haziness, dirt and superficial fantasy. The city seems like a "fairground...a grand ball...[filled with] uproar, din, the deafening rush, the smell of horse shit, soot, that old yellow smell of London Town" (*JM,* 2). The gaslights illuminate streets that reflect the workings of an industrialized society: "a tobacconist...a laundry, and a narrow little workroom where glass eyes were made for dolls and injured gentlemen" (*JM,* 6). Like Dickens, Carey uses real place names that would be recognized by contemporary readers. Woodcock (2003:17) points out that "the inclusion of factual details such as real place-names...lends the air of authenticity to a fantastic scenario." The city is representative of the moral decay of a society that betrayed and excluded Jack Maggs as a child.

Emulating Dickens's use of space with regard to houses, Carey includes various houses in *Jack Maggs.* There is even an incident in the novel where Carey alludes to Wemmick's rural castle in *Great Expectations* when Oates becomes exasperated with Maggs's reluctance to co-operate during a hypnotic session. He tells Maggs that, if he does not want to imagine being in a prison, he "can have a blessed fortress. A castle with battlements and flying flags. It can be a house. It does not matter" (*JM,* 50).

Contrary to Dickens, however, Carey curtails the space even further by only referring to one room in some of the houses. Carey often makes use of confined spaces to reflect on the emotional and psychological confinement or

comfort of characters. In other novels, such as *Illywhacker*, spaces of confinement also become places of symbolism and manipulation. In some cases, the confined spaces even become representative of the stranglehold that the colonial history has on the identity of Australians. Woodcock (2003:64) argues that, in *Illywhacker*, "[T]he imagery of caging animals and birds is a powerful emblem of colonization, particularly given Australia's penal past."

In the house of Percy Buckles, Jack Maggs's has to belie the identity his redemption in Australia has earned him. He is reduced from being "a man of substance" (*JM,* 20) to living in a "stuffy attic [and sleeping on a] little crib" (*JM,* 20 & 21). Circumstances compel him to live within the cramped space of the room in the attic that constricts him as much as the ill fitting clothes that he has to wear.

Another significant room in *Jack Maggs*, is the drawing room in Henry Phipps's house, to which Jack Maggs escapes in order to write his life's (hi)story. When Maggs lights a candle in this space, the light reveals "the sparkling nests of gilt everywhere adorning the handsome room: chairs, mirrors, picture frames, even on mouldings far above his head. Here he settled himself, a massive man in the centre of a jewel box" (*JM,* 66). In Maggs's mind, this jewel box is home to his most precious possession – his adopted son, Henry Phipps. In this room, Maggs feels compelled to write his life's story: to claim authorship of - and authority over his own life. It is also in this room that Maggs, for the first time, voluntarily opens up to Mercy and hints at who he really is: "I am an old dog, he said, who has been treated bad, and has learned all sort of tricks he wishes he never had to know" (*JM,* 72 & 73).

A third room that has a profound influence on Jack Maggs's life is a room in Ma Britten's house. In one of the letters to Phipps, Maggs describes this room as plain, but with "blood with quantities enough to frighten any child" (*JM,* 211). In this room Maggs and his beloved Sophina discover things they cannot even mention to each other, let alone to others: aborted embryos in basins covered

with muslin cloths. It was in this "hateful little room" (*JM,* 240) that Ma Britten performs an abortion on the helpless Sophina. After this, Ma Britten's son, Tom, takes Maggs to the outside drain to show him the dead baby who has "on his queerly familiar little face, a cruel and dreadful cut" (*JM,* 240). This incident, the direct cause of Maggs's affliction, *tic douloureux*, is the real phantom that haunts Maggs's life - contrary to the fictional phantom that Oates so desperately tries to conjure.

Besides the spatial context of the novel, the temporal context in *Jack Maggs* is significant. Woodcock (2003:41) claims that Carey's "fluid treatment of time, with its suggestion of the plurality and simultaneity of multiple histories, allows a usefully disorientating felixibility." The shift between narrative present and past experiences in *Jack Maggs* complements the development of the narrative progress (as discussed in 4.3.1) as well as the focalization, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

4.3.3 Characterization

Many of the families in Carey's novels are dysfunctional with strained relationships between fathers and sons, absent or eccentric mothers, abandoned or orphaned children who become the victims of the dysfunctional situation or of society in general. In his novel, *Jack Maggs*, as well as in *Oscar and Lucinda*, Carey echoes various character types found in Dickens's novels. The section that follows focuses on the Carey's characterization of the Victorian gentleman, women and children in *Jack Maggs.*

4.3.3.1 The Victorian Gentleman

In creating the male characters in *Jack Maggs*, Carey defers to Dickens's representation and exposition of the Victorian gentleman. As in *Great Expectations*, there are examples of a male character from the rising middle-class and the so-called self-made man. There are even echoes of Dickens's caricatures in Mr Spinks (the butler) and the footman, Constable. However,

Carey goes further and creates a character that becomes representative of the Victorian author. Because of the overt allusion to Charles Dickens, the character of Tobias Oates is representative of the Victorian author and by means of this allusion Carey succeeds in subverting the assumptions readers have about the Victorian author and nineteenth-century fiction. The character of Tobias Oates will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five, but the section that follows will focus on Carey's depiction of Percy Buckles and Henry Phipps as representatives of the Victorian rising middle-class and the Victorian gentleman. It will also consider Carey's depiction of Jack Maggs.

Percy Buckles's thematic function is to be representative of the rising middle-class man who attempts to claim the title of *gentleman* because of his increased wealth and social standing. However, Buckles experiences a sense of emotional and social conflict because there is a discrepancy between his attempted social status, his past and his behaviour in the narrative present. Buckles claims the title of gentleman based on his inheritance, but Carey clearly states that Buckles is "no more a gentleman than the man who was presently entering his household in disguise [Jack Maggs]" (*JM,* 9).

Initially, Buckles seems to be a fair-minded man who understands Maggs's situation and background because he "had an older sister who suffered transportation to that same cursed place" (*JM,* 88). He acknowledges that Maggs has paid his dues and that he needs to be left in peace. However, as the narrative progresses, it becomes clear that Mr Buckles's past behaviour, as well as his behaviour in the narrative present is not really that of a gentleman. It is true that he took in Mercy as a child after she had been raped, but he then takes advantage of her insecurity and keeps her as his lover, knowing full well that she will not resist because she has nowhere else to go. She is a convenient companion who is degraded to a sexual object who has to "[T]urn over...and raise [her] sweet bottom in the air" (*JM,* 116). Buckles is consumed by jealousy when he realizes that Mercy finds Maggs intriguing and he

persuades Phipps to kill Maggs in a way that would allow Phipps to escape prosecution on some legal technicality.

Carey depicts Phipps's character through the eyes and memories of various other characters. Maggs's perception of Phipps's character is based on the letters he had received while he was in exile. From these letters, Maggs inferred Phipps "to have a tender heart and to obey the laws" (*JM,* 75). He thinks of Phipps as being polite and educated. After all, that is what he had envisioned for this young man and what he had worked very hard to bring about. Maggs's imagined perception of Phipps cannot be further from the truth. Phipps did not actually write the letters Maggs had received all by himself. Phipps's guardian, Victor Litllehales, "had taught him how to gratify the needs of him who signed his letters 'Father'...Henry Phipps had sung to Jack Maggs, sung for his supper" (*JM,* 325).

The first indication of Phipps's true character is provided by Mrs Halfstairs, Percy Buckles's housekeeper. She tells Maggs that she has heard that Phipps is a frivolous young man full of "[J]apes and high-jinks" (*JM,* 12). He frequents disreputable clubs where he drinks too much. It is ironic that Maggs deems it necessary, in one of his letters, to plea with Phipps not to be shocked at the thought of Maggs and Sophina having sex before marriage, because Henry Phipps's moral behaviour is not above reproach. On more than one occasion, Maggs's colleague – Constable – feels the need to confess to Maggs that "he too had known Henry Phipps, known him in the most personal and private sense" (*JM,* 167). However, Constable was disillusioned when he shared this news with his friend, Albert Pope. Albert committed suicide – probably because he too, at some stage, had been Phipps's lover. Phipps never shows any remorse for his part in this tragic event, just like he never gains any insight into his own shortcomings and there is, therefore, no measure of redemption.

Contrary to Pip in *Great Expectations*, Phipps never makes peace with his benefactor, but rather finds "the very notion of him vile" (*JM,* 164). Therefore, it

does not take much effort from Percy Buckles to persuade Phipps to kill Maggs. Carey's depiction of Henry Phipps subverts the notion of the Victorian gentleman as striving towards loftiness, purity, honour and truth. Carey's depiction of both Percy Buckles and Henry Phipps highlights the underlying hypocrisy, worthlessness, immorality and selfishness that cannot be erased by any pretence.

The character who replaces Pip in *Great Expectations* as the main protagonist in *Jack Maggs*, is the returned convict, Jack Maggs. Just as he does not try to romanticize or soften the reality of Australia, Carey does not attempt to depict Maggs as anything other than he is: a man hardened by circumstances. Carey's description of his physical appearance underscores the impression that Maggs is a difficult, dangerous and hard man. His face is almost menacing and he hides the "scarred stumps of his two middle fingers" (*JM,* 11) from sight. He has a presence that makes others feel uncomfortable, "yet there was a bruised even belligerent quality" (*JM,* 1) in his demeanour. Although no-one would imagine him to be a gentleman, very few would suspect him to be a returned convict, although Peggy Mott tells Mercy that "[H]e looks like a murderer" (*JM,* 15).

Maggs represents the transported convict who has this insatiable desire to return to his country of birth. He believes that he has redeemed himself and that he has the right to return to London as a gentleman (even if only by proxy): "I'm retired (from crime). I come here for the culture...[T]he opera, the theatre, I got a lot of time to make up for" (*JM,* 5). In all the years spent in New South Wales, Maggs never accepted the fact that it was to be his new home. He still regarded London as his home. He knows full well that he will be hanged if he is found in London, but claims: "I am a fucking *Englishman*, and I have English things to settle. I am not to live my life with all that vermin. I am here in London where I belong" (*JM,* 128). The citizens of New South Wales can never be who he is – an Englishmen. Even his own two sons, whom he left behind with other

people, could never be as good as Phipps. Maggs has only one wish for Phipps:

> I do hope I have found a better class of son. I most sincerely do. For his education, which is one thousand times as much as ever went into my brain box, cost [Maggs] fifty pounds each year. It is what every father wants – his son to be the better man (*JM,* 318).

In Maggs's imagination, Phipps has become the true Victorian gentleman: polite, well educated, loving and virtuous – someone Maggs yearns to be.

Maggs is also representative of those transported convicts who, eventually, did make their peace with their new circumstances and who contributed to the establishment and development of a new society. He returns to New South Wales with Mercy and they settle in Wingham, "away from the bad influence of Sydney" (*JM,* 327). Mercy has "five further members of 'That Race'" (*JM,* 327) – true Australians: born and raised in a country they can call their own.

4.3.3.2 Carey's female characters

Carey's women are depicted in a manner that defies generalization. In *Illywhacker* the women vary from being practical, compulsive and obsessive, sexually permissive, insane and suicidal, manipulative and victims of unsatisfactory relationship. In *Bliss*, the two women in Harry's life are simultaneously divergent and concurrent. Neither Bettina, nor Honey Barbara can be described as being prudish. Bettina's all-consuming ambition makes her utterly ruthless. Honey Barbara, despite being a "pantheist, healer, whore" (*BS,* 179) is also the one who nurses Harry back to health on more than one occasion, who nurtures his whole family by cooking and cleaning for them in Palm Avenue and who cultivates fresh vegetables in an organic garden. She is the practical one.

When considering the female characters in *Jack Maggs*, I shall focus mainly on two women in this section; Mary Britten and Mercy Larkin, the woman who

would accompany Jack Maggs when he eventually returns to Australia. The other female characters (Lizzie and Mary Oates) will be discussed in more detail when the concept of intertextuality is addressed.

Mary Britten is the only mother Jacks Maggs has ever known. He was brought to her as an infant "and she did not want me" (*JM,* 76). She eventually "did her duty by [him] in those early years. She grew [him] up" (*JM,* 93) because Silas Smith had paid her to take care of the starving infant. In his second letter to young Phipps, Jack admits that he "did so like the feel of her strong arms, that grassy herby smell which hung about her, [he] would have done anything to get it" (*JM,* 94). However, he never gets this unconditional motherly love and nurturing from Mary Britten. Just as Little Britain in *Great Expectations* is representative of the moral decay of Victorian society, Ma Britten - as Jack calls her when he first returns to London - is metaphoric of the decaying morality of English society; the foul smells of London's foggy streets, the exploitation and neglect of the underprivileged, orphaned and abandoned children of the Victorian society. She is a midwife who assists young women in aborting unwanted babies and neither Jack nor Sophina (Silas's daughter) has any power to stand up against her.

> She was a force of nature, the Ma – her long arms, her wild hair, her skin always smelling of snakeroot and tansy. She could fill a space. She could stand her ground. She was the queen of England in that little whitewashed room (*JM,* 93).
>
> She made her 'Belly-ache' sausages which she hung from the ceiling and for which women paid her a tanner. At that age I had no knowledge of the great upset they caused inside their wombs (*JM,* 94).

Just as Ned Kelly's mother in *Kelly Gang* gives him to a criminal as an apprentice, Mary Britten allows Silas Smith to use Jack and Sophina in order to fulfil their driving ambition: "to do a series of clever burglaries without never laying fingers on the goods" (*JM,* 153). Jack and Sophina realize this ambition for the two adults.

Mercy Larkin, the young kitchen maid in Mr Buckle's household, takes a very keen interest in Jack Maggs from the very first moment she lays eyes on him. She is an impetuous young girl who does not show as much respect and fear as Jack Maggs is used to from women in general. Despite her naturally inquisitive and chirpy disposition, she believes that Mr Buckle's household is the only place in which she is valued as a person. The reason for this belief is that Mr Buckles was the one who 'rescued' Mercy and her mother from a life of prostitution. Carey depicts Mercy as the opposite of Ma Britten. She is representative of her name: merciful. Mercy becomes a loving and caring mother for Jack Maggs's children on their return to Australia. This results not only in the discontinuance of child abuse and neglect to which both Jack and Mercy were subjected, but also gives both these characters the family they never had before.

4.3.3.3 Carey's children

The depiction of children in Carey's novels includes that of the contemptuous David and Lucy in *Bliss* and the emotionally insecure Oscar and orphaned Lucinda in *Oscar and Lucinda*. However, it is in the depiction of the picaresque child that Carey really captures the imagination. The best examples of this form of characterization occur in his novels *Kelly Gang* and *Tristan Smith.* Both Ned Kelly and Tristan Smith are depicted as the typical picaresque child in respectively *Kelly Gang* and *Tristan Smith.* The one thing these two children have in common with the main protagonist in *Jack Maggs*, is that their behaviour, just like that of Maggs, is a direct result of the experiences in their childhoods and the way they were treated either by the people surrounding them or society at large.

Ned, Tristan and Jack Maggs all work in various ways towards having their voices heard. The only thing Ned ever wanted was "to be a citizen I had tried to speak but the mongrels stole my tongue when I asked for justice they gave me none" (*KG*, 342). This is the reason why Ned Kelly and his gang turn to crime and violence – in order to be heard. Tristan Smith joins the Voorstand Sirkus,

where the costume of Bruder Mouse hides his deformities while allowing him the luxury of speaking without people wincing and fleeing from him. Jack Maggs writes his letters to Henry Phipps in order to tell his life's (hi)story.

In *Jack Maggs*, Carey emulates Dickens's depiction of orphaned and abandoned children who are exploited by the adults who are supposed to take care of them. Carey echoes Dickens's criticism of a society that, because of a lack of social structures that should protect these children, betrays them. Maggs's childhood experiences and some of the people he is involved with (Silas) remind us of Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. Just like Oliver, Maggs is exploited by an adult and forced to partake in criminal activities. By incorporating Maggs's letters to Phipps, Carey provides the reader with reasons why Maggs resorts to a life of crime and to explain his behaviour as an adult. Carey expands on the brief autobiographical overview that Magwitch provides in *Great Expectations* and adds the history of Maggs's childhood sweetheart, Sophina.

4.3.4 Focalization

The focalization in *Jack Maggs* bears closer resemblance to Dickens's novel, *Bleak House*, than it does to *Great Expectations*. Carey's frequent use of shifts in focalization in *Jack Maggs*, results in previously silent voices being heard and the presentation of alternative perspectives and points of view. This section will focus briefly on the shifts in focalization and the polyphonic nature of the novel.

There is no central narrator in Carey's *Jack Maggs*. On the contrary, the novel can be regarded as a *polyphonic novel*. Polyphony refers to "the recognition and celebration of multiple voices" (Stone, 1988:694) in a text, that enables the possibility of multiple perspectives. Polyphony is different from Bakhtin's *heteroglossia,* which Clark and Holquist (1984:220) define as "the mingling of different language groups, cultures and classes." Stone (1988:697) cites Bakhtin's assertion that "[T]he essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent and, as such, are combined in a unity of a

higher order than in homophony." Thus, all the voices in polyphony can be regarded as simultaneously independent and interdependent. The voices are independent in the sense that each voice presents the reader with an alternate perspective or point of view. However, the voices are also interdependent in the sense that they all contribute to a common goal, for example, the subversion of the underlying assumptions of a specific ideology.

Tremmel (2002:4) claims that "in a polyphonic or multigenre piece...the author becomes less an absolute ruler and more a mediator or orchestral conductor who, while not abdicating his or her authorial responsibility, executes that responsibility by maximizing the dialogue among voices." In a polyphonic novel, there is a shared authority amongst the various voices. In *Jack Maggs*, we can discern three levels of authorial experience and activity. The presence of at least three authorial figures results in the representation of various voices and perspectives, as well as the restoration of the silent voice.

The first authorial figure is embedded in the character of Tobias Oates, a young author, who is representative of the Victorian author and the Victorian context. Oates, being obsessed with the mind of a criminal (cf. *JM,* 43) places Maggs under hypnosis, under the guise of treating him for a nervous tic or spasm in his cheek. Oates suggests to Maggs that the reason for this problem might be that Maggs is "filled with Phantoms...who cause[s] [him] such distress" (*JM,* 46). Later Oates would even believe his own lies and contemplate how he would help Maggs to get rid of this "personification of pain that he had planted in the other's mind" (*JM,* 203). The fact that Oates starts believing his own fabrications is ironic, because it is at this stage that Maggs – in moments of clarity - realizes that he had never encountered any Phantom before he met Oates (cf. *JM,* 266).

Eventually Oates regards Maggs as merely a "memory [he] can enter, and leave. Leave, and then return to" (*JM,* 87). He is in total control. Maggs begins to feel that he is "the captive of someone whose powers [are] greater than he

had the wit to ever understand" (*JM,* 147). Despite his wish and insistence that nothing that he says while under hypnosis is written down (cf. *JM,* 49), Oates proceeds to write everything down, but keeps two sets of books. He deceives Maggs by giving him a fictional version to read – "transcriptions that had been fabricated by the writer to hide the true nature of his exploration" (*JM,* 91). It is tragic and ironic that even the so-called 'true' version in the second book is merely Oates's efforts to make sense of "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" (*JM,* 91). Despite having heard Maggs's (hi)story and obviously having taken note that Maggs has paid his dues to society, Oates refuses to back down. He promises to destroy any evidence and information that might incriminate Maggs, but never does so. It is only when Maggs gets to read the initial first chapter to *The Death of Maggs* that he realizes that he had been "burgled, plundered" (*JM,* 32) by Tobias Oates. He feels the terror of a man who is no longer, or never has been, in control of the telling of (hi)story. He destroys both the books that Oates's had made notes in, but eventually the story of *The Death of Maggs* is told.

The fictional story of *The Death of Maggs* is born in the mind of a bitter and angry man who blames Jack Maggs for this, "the darkest night of his life" (*JM,* 326) and for all his misfortune. In this rendition of Maggs's (hi)story, there is no mention of Henry Phipps' attempted murder of Jack Maggs; there is no happy reunion between father and adopted son. There is no mention of Mercy Larkin who leaves London with Maggs to go to Australia to raise his two sons and the children that were born from their relationship. This rendition does not relate the material successes and social standing of Maggs, nor does it relate the true manner in which Maggs died: not in a blazing fire, but as an old man surrounded by his loving and grieving family.

The second authorial figure is Jack Maggs (as the *other* - an outsider in Victorian society) who desperately tries to write his (hi)story and is representative of an individual and personal context. Maggs writes his own

(hi)story in letters he desperately wants Henry Phipps to read. These letters are written in mirror image in invisible ink. It is the (hi)story of an abandoned baby who is raised by a woman who helps other women get rid of unwanted babies by performing abortions and who deprives him from any emotional commitment. It is the story of a picaresque boy whose only acquired skill is that of a thief – a boy who, at the age of fifteen, falls in love with Sophina and who has to witness their aborted baby boy lying in the drain. The story tells of a young man who jumps to the defense of his loved one when she is accused of theft and takes the blame for the act. The outcome of this is that his love, Sophina, is sentenced to death by hanging and Jack Maggs is sent to the penal colonies of Australia. The sad and ironic truth about these letters is that Henry Phipps never reads them and that they end up in the "collection of the Mitchell Library in Sydney" (*JM,* 328). Carey's reference to a place that actually exists in Sydney today is an example of how history and reality can be employed to fabricate fiction that emulates reality.

Peter Carey is the third authorial figure, who brings to the text his own colonial heritage in juxtaposition to the Victorian context, and who is representative of a post-colonial context. Carey tells of the man whose only desire is to go back to London because it is his home and that is where he feels he belongs (cf. *JM,* 5 & 128). He wants to be with his son, Henry Phipps, who "is an Englishman" (*JM,* 312), because that would make him, by association, an English gentleman. When he enters Phipps' house – his freehold – he enters "a place in which [he] did invest...High Hopes...[a place where] all these long years later, [he] become[s]...an Englishman" (*JM,* 74 & 322). It is also Carey who relates the betrayal of Henry Phipps and Percy Buckles when they try to murder Maggs in an attempt to secure the lifestyle and property to which Phipps had hitherto been accustomed. It is Carey who tells of Mercy Larkin's selfless deed in trying to stop the bullet intended for Jack Maggs and the couple's return to Australia where Mercy Larkin helped raise Maggs's two boys, Richard and John, as well as five others born from their relationship. Carey tells of Maggs's achievements

and social standing in this adoptive country: the owner of a saw mill, a hardware store, a pub and a large mansion; president of the shire twice and an active parent who is president of his son's Cricket Club.

The presence of multiple authors furthermore correlates with the three levels of consciousness that emerge in *Jack Maggs,* i.e. textuality, intertextuality and subtext. To a large extent the ideological subtext emerges because of the text and the introduction of intertextuality.

4.4 Literary conventions

4.4.1 Intertextuality

Krassnitzer (1995:61) argues that "[O]ne of the reactions to colonial discourse is a deliberate confrontation with it, and writers like Peter Carey foreground the historical as well as the literary heritage of their colonial past and try to transgress them from within." The author's confrontation with the past can be achieved by the use of intertextuality – a device that Carey uses quite often in a masterful way. Intertextuality, as manifested in epigraphs, the use of existing literary characters or extended allusions to real life characters and events, is evident in all Carey's novels such as *Bliss, Illywhacker, Oscar and Lucinda, Tristan, Jack Maggs, Kelly Gang* and *My life as a fake.*

In his novel, *The Unusual life of Tristan Smith*, Carey echoes Laurence Sterne's work, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (cf. Woodcock, 2003:56). Krassnitzer (1995:63) points out that *Oscar and Lucinda* hosts "innumerable parodic cross-references to various Victorian writers such as Trollope, Dickens and Eliot, but also to the realism of Melville, Mann, Tolstoy and Patrick White and the modernism of James Joyce." Carey even includes the author, George Eliot, as one of the characters in the novel. Furthermore, the titling and numbering of chapters in *Oscar and Lucinda*, emulate the style of the Victorian novels. The intertextuality in *Bliss* includes a reference to Katherine Mansfield's short story with the same title; the occurrence of literary characters such as

Gatsby and Walter Mitty in the narrative, the use of Australian myths and "the neo-colonial myths of Americanization" (Krassnitzer, 1995:62). The allusion to Australian myths is echoed in *Illywhacker* and in this novel Carey even goes as far as to create a moment of authorial intimacy with an allusion to the Ern Malley incident that occurred in 1944.

However, Carey does not always present and rework the original material in a way that is merely fantastical and improvised. In his novel, *Kelly Gang*, Carey admits that his goal was to "respect what was known in history and to imagine the unimagined parts" (Murphy, 2003:4). Carey emulates the style of Kelly's original letter: "[U]npunctuated and ungrammatical, by turns abusive and ironic, humorous and bristling with Irish outrage" (Gerster, 2001:401) as well as the historical and social circumstances of the transported Irish convict in New South Wales in the nineteenth century.

Just like Ned Kelly, the convicted felon in *Jack Maggs* gets the opportunity to tell his own story, thereby presenting the reader with an alternative perspective on existing histories and stories. In *Jack Maggs* and *Great Expectations* we have - on a textual level - two novels written by two different authors, each with a personal cultural, contextual and literary repertoire and each depicting a unique perspective on the physical, cultural and historical dimensions of his own time and space. On an intertextual level we can, in *Jack Maggs*, discern allusions not only to Dickens's personal life, but also to his creative efforts.

Carey's allusions to Dickens's creative work in structuring Tobias Oates's profile as author, includes anything from the way he gained information for his stories to the way his stories "appeared in serial [before being] gathered in handsome volume" (*JM,* 328). Carey further alludes to Dickens's thematic material in echoing the picaresque characters of e.g. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. Jack Maggs and his sweetheart, Sophina – like Oliver in *Oliver Twist*, are archetypal picaresque characters. All of them are products of the society in which they find themselves: "trained to be varmint" (*JM*, 264). Tobias Oates

adopts Dickens's method of incessantly making notes (cf. *JM,* 91) and grabbing "almost blindly at any material close to hand" (Ackroyd, 1997:84). Probably the most significant allusion, however, is the date of publication of Oates's fictive novel, *The Death of Maggs* publication (1860) which corresponds with the date of the first publication of *Great Expectations* (1860 – 1861).

Carey also uses the experiences of Dickens as a young man in structuring the character of Tobias Oates. It is the year 1837 and Oates is a 24-year old author, as was Dickens in 1837. Oates is someone "who is accustomed to not being interrupted" (*JM*, 26) and to everyone doing whatever he wanted them to do (cf. *JM,* 49), just as Dickens was someone who suffered the '...inability to see his conduct on anything other than his own terms.' (Ackroyd, 2002:250). Oates shares Dickens's mundane origins and a determination – almost an obsession – "to create that safe warm world he had been denied" (*JM,* 36). Carey also draws on Dickens's troubled relationship with his father - who he perceived to be "long...in growing up to be a man" (Ackroyd, 2002:9) – to sketch an equally troubled relationship between Oates and his father who would "tell any untruth to get his hands on money" (*JM,* 117). Besides these allusions to Dickens's life – and many others – there are two others that are worth - while investigating.

One of the most noticeable allusions to Dickens's life in Carey's novel, *Jack Maggs*, is the relationship between Tobias Oates and his sister-in-law, Elizabeth (Lizzie) Warriner. Catherine Dickens, Charles's wife, had two sisters, i.e. Mary and Georgina Hogarth. At the time of Charles's wedding to Catherine, Mary Hogarth was a young girl of sixteen, "a welcome and often long-staying guest with the young couple" (Ackroyd, 2002:118). When she died on 7 May 1837 (the same date as the death of Oates's sister-in-law, Lizzie), Charles Dickens was devastated. He cut off some of her hair and started wearing her ring. He insisted that her clothes be kept and was found taking them out of safe-keeping in order to look at them as long as two years after her death. He also proclaimed a wish to be buried with the young girl who, to him, epitomized

youth, beauty and goodness (cf. Ackroyd, 2002:129). Whereas there is no evidence at all that Dickens ever had anything but a familial relationship with Mary Hogarth, Carey's novel, *Jack Maggs*, has Tobias Oates having an adulterous affair with Lizzie, the younger sister of his wife, Mary. This affair started when he and Lizzie had shared the "shouldering of small domestic offices which a husband and wife might properly have performed together" (*JM,* 37). It is interesting that Charles Dickens and Mary Hogarth also shared tasks one would expect a married couple to do, such as, on 6 January 1837, searching for and buying a little desk for his wife's bedroom.

The second noticeable allusion to Dickens's experiences is one on which Carey builds the entire motivation for Oates's reason for subjecting Maggs to hypnosis. In 1844 Charles Dickens started treating an English lady called Augusta de la Rue who was suffering from a "nervous *tic* or spasm on her face" (Ackroyd, 2002:249). Dickens, believing the reason for this infliction to be the physical manifestation of psychological origins, started treating her with the help of hypnosis after having convinced her husband "that he had particular powers of animal magnetism" (Ackroyd, 2002:249). He spent months treating her and became almost obsessively interested in this case. In Carey's novel, *Jack Maggs*, Tobias Oates places Jack Maggs under hypnosis in order to – for all apparent reasons – heal the very painful "twitching palsy in his cheek" (*JM,* 8). It is through this process of hypnosis that Oates gradually discovers (and steals) Maggs's criminal past and sets out to write a novel based on the memories of a criminal mind.

4.4.2 Metafiction

In *Jack Maggs*, the metafictional phenomenon challenges the authority of the Victorian author and the representation of peripheral characters in Victorian fiction. Carey, like J.M Coetzee in *Foe*, places a constant metafictional emphasis on the creative process of writing. Krassnitzer (1995:5) claims that Carey's novels "play with established myths and histories of his country to

expose their fictionality but also demonstrate the creation of myths through their self-conscious and metafictional qualities." The way in which novelists obtain, interpret and depict the material on which they base their stories, is subverted. Novels such as *Bliss* and *Jack Maggs* are concerned, in some way or another, with the possible unreliability of – or disbelief in the objectivity of stories. They examine the way that stories are constructed and expose the possible effects that subjective stories may have. The recurring disbelief in the reliability of stories that marks Carey's novels is also present in his novel *Oscar and Lucinda.*

Jack Maggs can be regarded as *historiographic metafiction.* Hutcheon (1988:20) uses this term with regard to postmodern novels, which are "at once popular bestsellers and objects of intense academic study." Thaden (1997:753) points out that some authors may use "the plot structures and characterization techniques of popular fiction, yet...they use parody and irony to challenge those very techniques from within the text." For example, Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*, as well as *Oscar and Lucinda* and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*, make use of strategies such as parody, irony, intertextuality and others. In *Jack Maggs*, Carey includes the complex plot structures, characterization techniques and themes of convict narratives and identity that can be found in the works of Charles Dickens. However, the traditional structure of the realist novel is subverted by shifts in focalization, frequent shifts in temporal spaces, the inclusion of multiple genres and the use of literary devices and conventions such as intertextuality, irony and parody.

In *Jack Maggs,* Carey uses parodic intertextuality when creating the character of Tobias Oates. Oates becomes Carey's vehicle for the subversion of the art of writing fiction, as it was tradition within the Victorian context. Carey's allusions to Dickens's creative work in structuring Tobias Oates's profile as author includes anything from the way he gained information for his stories to the way his stories "appeared in serial [before being] gathered in handsome volume" (*JM,* 328). Carey further alludes to Dickens's thematic material in

echoing the picaresque characters of e.g. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. Jack Maggs and his sweetheart, Sophina – like Oliver in *Oliver Twist*, are archetypal picaresque characters. All of them are products of the society in which they find themselves: "trained to be varmint" (*JM,* 264). Tobias Oates adopts Dickens's method of incessantly making notes (cf. *JM,* 91) and grabbing "almost blindly at any material close to hand' (Ackroyd, 1997:84).

CHAPTER 5: Dickens and Carey: a comparison

This chapter addresses the question of how Peter Carey, by revisiting *Great Expectations* and creating *Jack Maggs*, creates new contexts within which alternative methods of identity formation become possible. The focus is placed on the commonalities and differences between the two primary texts, *Great Expectations* and *Jack Maggs*, based on the analyzes in Chapters Three and Four. The purpose is to show how Carey, by using postmodern strategies such as intertextuality, metafiction and polyphony, succeeds in: creating new ideological contexts; presenting alternative and multiple perspectives on existing ideas and subverting fixed perceptions of specific identities, such as the gentleman, the author and his fiction and the Australian *other* in Victorian fiction.

The chapter also considers Peter Carey's contribution towards postcolonial writing and evaluates his attempts to map alternative means for the formation of personal and cultural identity through literary representation of other voices and by presenting the reader with alternative stories. It concludes with a suggestion on further studies that might include a study of how Dickens's works include the beginnings of specific literary conventions that would germinate and become characteristic of postmodernism.

The analysis of the narrative aspects and the literary conventions in the two primary texts results in the realization that both Dickens and Carey address similar themes. The section that follows focuses on Dickens's social criticism and vision which become evident in his treatment of themes such as materialism, family and crime. This critique is then followed by Carey's advantageous, retrospective comparison and implicit evaluation of contemporary society.

5.1 Dickens's social criticism and vision

Williams (1964:218) states that "Dickens's social criticism depends, in more ways than are immediately obvious, on his literary methods." Through his unique way of manipulating the narrative aspects such as plot, context, characterization and focalization and by means of literary conventions such as allusion, Dickens sets out to expose the machinations and ploys of institutions that emerged at the beginning of capitalism. He produces novels that "contain insights into the workings of his society" (Brown, 1982:15) and reflect on the influence and experience of the capitalist system (that had started years earlier) on mid-Victorian English society.

By the mid-nineteenth century Dickens had started questioning the foundations of contemporary English law, economic ethos, education and government. His work displays a sense of anger and intolerance against the exploitation of those who cannot fend for themselves - the *other*. This *other* includes (amongst others): the person inside the walls of the debtor's prison, the helpless child shunned and abused by society and the citizen foiled by corrupt social systems and officials. He exposes the incompetence of institutions such as the charity schools. In *Great Expectations* Pip's education is limited to attending school at an evening school run by Mr Wopsle's great-aunt. Education at this school is a farce, seeing as Mr Wopsle's great-aunt "was a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity, who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening, in the society of youth who paid twopence per week each, for the improving opportunity of seeing her doing it" (*GE*, 43).

Dickens's social criticism concerns itself with a complete way of living and also addresses the incompetence, corruption and hypocrisy of the governmental and parliamentary systems and officials. He is irked and frustrated by the seeming inability of society to admit that there are serious issues to address with regard to education and socio-economic circumstances and their reluctance to act on it (cf. Smith, 2001:14). These considerations are salient themes in his mid-

century and later novels, such as *Bleak House*, *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1855 – 1857) and *Great Expectations*.

Dickens's social criticism and vision, furthermore, reflect on the relationship between socio-economic context and morality. Dickens's consideration of this relationship is more than a mere reflection. He underscores the utilitarian belief that that economic values and prosperity should relate to the values and realization of social productivity. He regards issues and actions, such as greed, nepotism, corruption and criminal acts as the result of mid-nineteenth century England's social and economical context. In addition, he considers social and governmental incompetence and corruption as worse than individual incompetence and corruption, because they are more harmful. He mocks the government's pretence at "national efficiency" (*LD*, 146) where "half a score of boards, half a bushel of minutes, several sacks of official memoranda, and a family-vault of ungrammatical correspondence" (*LD,* 145) are employed to achieve nothing. He exposes the unreliability of promises made during election rallies and points out the futility of any attempt to rectify matters within this "mechanically...wonderful, all-sufficient wheel of statesmanship" (*LD,* 146).

Essentially, Dickens makes a distinction between professionalism and amateurism (cf. Smith, 2001:13). He regards himself as a professional author and sees professionalism to be closely linked to the concept of the self-made man (gentleman): a man who deserves what he receives because he has contributed earnestly and honestly towards his own success and towards the wellness of society in general. In his novels, Dickens exposes a perceived 'amateurism' within Parliament and the House of Commons. He questions the validity and true effectiveness of the Reform Acts and criticizes the nepotism permeating the Civil Service of his time (cf. Smith, 2001:13).

Another aspect of Dickens's social criticism reflected in *Great Expectations* is the fallacy that advancement of the social standing of the working class goes hand in hand with material wealth and happiness. Joe tries to make the young

Pip aware of this when he asks whether it "mightn't be the better of continuing fur to keep compare with common ones, instead of going out to play with uncommon ones" (*GE,* 70). Joe also warns Pip that he would not achieve his goal of social and economic advancement by being dishonest, while Biddy also questions Pip's desire to become a gentleman and wonders whether he will not be happier as he is (cf. *GE,* 125). Eventually Pip is only redeemed by the loss of his expectations and becomes a self-made man in deference to Dickens's social vision of a man whose gentility is based on his education and his profession and not on affluence.

Although the social criticism in novels such as *Bleak House, Little Dorrit* and *Great Expectations* might reflect some pessimistic views about the social identity of the Victorian society, Dickens never fails to retain a measure of optimism about the individual's ability to rise above the questionable demeanour of society and the individual's ability to create a different sense of self. Therefore, this criticism as such, should be regarded more as a social vision of what the Victorian industrial society could possibly and should ideally be, rather than being " articulated in an explicit political fashion" (Brown, 1982:15).

Another aspect of society that Dickens addresses in his works is family life. Smith (2001:5) claims that "[W]hat we are examining in Dickens's biography is, clearly, the transmutation of life into myth." Despite this apparent diffusion of boundaries between Dickens's personal experience and his fictional depictions of his perceptions, it would be advisable not to necessarily interpret all Mother and Father characters in Dickens's work as representative of his own parents. In real life, Dickens's parents were both creative and innovative in their approach to life: his mother assumed the responsibility of his early education at home and was very involved with her son, while his father, despite his lack of financial expertise, was not the ogre he is often perceived to be. Smith (2001:6) points out the possibility that it might have been Dickens's experience of the Blacking Factory that explains why his novels tend to favour "the side of youth,

and the generally disparaging view they adopt of mothers and fathers." There is no question that this incident had a profound effect on the young Dickens. In *David Copperfield*, his dismay manifests in the character of David Copperfield who says that he is baffled by the fact that "[A] child of excellent abilities and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager, delicate...can have been thrown away" (*DC*, 135).

Most families in Dickens's fiction are dysfunctional. Mothers are often portrayed as "poor in health, and very low in spirits" (*DC*, 15). These mothers are unable to protect their offspring against cruelty and injustice. Mrs Pocket in *Great Expectations* is depicted as being an absentminded mother of seven children. These children are cared for by two nursemaids. On the odd occasion that one of the nursemaids hands the baby to Mrs Pocket, she either "inexpertly dance[s] the infant a little in her lap" (*GE*, 186) or clumsily bangs baby's head against the table (cf. *GE*, 191). One of the other children, Jane, has to prevent the baby from poking his own eye out with a nutcracker while Mrs Pocket, quite oblivious of what is happening, carries on eating an orange. In cases where the mother dies at childbirth, as in the case of *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*, the motherless child is left to the cruelty of surrogate mothers such as Mrs Sowerberry and Mrs Joe Gargery. Both Oliver and Pip are *brought up by hand* and it is in this ambiguous phrase that the emotional severance and physical abuse is enclosed. Oliver "was brought up by hand." (*OT*, 6) and denied a baby's closeness with a mother when breastfed. Mrs Sowerberry gives him bits of meat left by the dog and he is reduced to eating with "horrible avidity the bits asunder with all the ferocity of famine" (*OT*, 33). Pip was raised "knowing her [his sister] to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon [him]" (*GE*, 8).

Dickens's father figures are very seldom, if ever, portrayed as the traditional head of the family who assumes the responsibility of providing for his family and protecting them from unnecessary hardships. A father figure's disposition may be portrayed as amiable or jolly (Mr Weller and Mr Wardle in *The Pickwick*

Papers) or abusive, such as Fagin *Oliver* Twist or Mr Murdstone in *David Copperfield.* The other father figures in this novel, that is Mr Micawber and Mr Wickfield, respectively epitomize irresponsibility and weakness. The later novels depict Dickens's father figures as surrogate parents, for example John Jarndyce in *Bleak House* and Magwitch and Joe Gargery in *Great Expectations.* However, even someone like Joe, who is a good and honest man, does not seem like the ideal father figure because he cannot protect Pip from his abusive sister. In fact, he is as abused by his wife as Pip is.

Another issue relating to society and social structures that permeates Dickens's work involves prisons and crime. In his treatment of the theme of imprisonment, Dickens expresses his disdain for prison officials who "at certain constitutional moments go through some form of overlooking something which neither he nor anybody else knew anything about" (*LD,* 97). He describes the debtor's prisons as physically and emotionally destructive where "[N]ot a week passes over our heads, but, in every one of our prisons for debt, some of these inevitably expire in the slow agonies of want" (*PP,* 554 – 555). He creates an image of confined places where prisoners are kept in "dark and filthy...damp and gloomy...little cellars" (*PP,* 534). It is within the walls of these "wretched dungeons" (*PP,* 134) that those who are imprisoned change and where the spirit of man is broken. This is where they slipped "into this smooth decent, and never more took one step upward" (*LD,* 103).

Not even children are indemnified from the effect that the debtor's prison has. In the earlier novels, such as *David Copperfield*, children become inhabitants of or visitors to the prisons because of adults' crimes. In the later novels, such as *Little Dorrit* children no longer only visit or inhabit the prison for a short period, but are born there and live there permanently. The life of a child within the prison walls is depicted as nothing short of oppressing and detrimental. Prisons also play a significant role in *Great Expectations.* Pip experiences first hand shoulder rubbing with criminals when he visits the Newgate prison with Wemmick in order to speak to clients of Jaggers. However, in *Great*

Expectations it is not exactly the prison as much as the criminal's actions that have a profound effect on Pip's life. In this novel, in addition to the depictions of prisons in *The Pickwick Papers* and *Little Dorrit*, Dickens illustrates the effect that a questionable judicial system and exile have on the lives of those affected, namely Magwitch and Pip.

The theme of criminality features prominently in *Great Expectations*. Pip is confronted with a life of crime at an early age. He meets an escaped convict on the moors near his home and he is forced to aid the man, Magwitch, by providing him with food and a file – which Pip steals from his sister and her husband, Joe – so that the convict can rid himself of his shackles. This incident becomes the first in a series of events that makes Pip feel "encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime" (*GE,* 260). When Magwitch is captured on the moors, Pip keeps their alliance a secret and Magwitch rewards him with two pounds. Pip experiences the money as dirty money: "two sweltering one-pound notes that seemed to have been on terms of the warmest intimacy with the cattle markets in the country" (*GE,* 77). Pip's indirect involvement with crime is furthermore underlined, when his sister is attacked by Orlick with Magwitch's leg-iron. Even when he moves to London, Pip is confronted with crime and corruption. The description of Mr Jaggers's office, with the casts of hanged men, is telling of the questionable dealings that take place there.

> Mr Jaggers's room was lighted by a skylight only, and was a most dismal place; the skylight, eccentrically patched like a broken head, and the distorted adjoining houses looking as if they had twisted themselves to peep down at me through it. There were not so many papers about, as I should have expected to see; and there were some odd objects about, that I should not have expected to see – such as an old rusty pistol, a sword in a scabbard, several strange-looking boxes and packages, and two dreadful casts on a shelf, of faces peculiarly swollen, and twitchy about the nose. Mr Jaggers's own high-backed chair was of deadly black horsehair, with rows of brass nails round it, like a coffin (*GE,* 163).

The image of limited light trying to infiltrate the gloomy room through the broken skylight enhances the perception of suspicion and underhandedness. These are the offices in which Jaggers enriches himself with money scraped together by clients who can barely afford his services. He does not care when, where and how they get the money. He merely asks his clients: "I don't ask you when you made it up, or where, or whether you made it up at all" (*GE,* 165). He is a lawyer who is prepared to switch sides and take bribes if the money is right.

The irony is that all these events lead up to Pip's eventual discovery that his *great expectations* had not been made possible by the generosity of Miss Havisham, but by that of a convict – a criminal. His expectations were false and only existed because of the picture he had created in his own mind: "Miss Havisham and Estella and the strange house and the strange life appeared to have something to do with everything that was picturesque" (*GE*, 107). He had fallen prey to the materialism and greed that characterized the Victorian era and had shunned true friendship and meaningful relationships.

Brown (1982:127), who claims that the "connection between Pip's newly gained but complacently held respectability and the world of convicts and crime...takes us to the very heart of *Great Expectations*", distinguishes between two worlds: the world of materialism and the world of crime. Pip as an individual and part of the society's material worlds is linked to both worlds and serves to illustrate Brown's (1982:128) claim that the "existence of the respectable and prosperous *nation* within society cannot be separated from the existence of the other miserable or disreputable one."

Ultimately, Dickens's novels present his readers with texts that do not only contain social criticism, but also represent a construction of the narrative identity of Victorian England's society. Novels such as *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House, Little Dorrit* and *Great Expectations* depict a society that negates any virtuous values such as honesty, integrity, hard work, steadfastness and economic conservativeness. They create an image of Mid-Victorian society as

hypocritical, cruel and unfair; a society that causes distress and alienates those individuals who do not fit into the preconceived mould. This is a society where possessions and social standing are worth more than human value and integrity and where the individual's private and official lives are separated "destroying [his] wholeness, rendering personality incomplete, and inducing a crisis of identity" (Brown, 1982:23).

5.2 Carey's social criticism and vision

Carey identifies the crisis of identity mentioned in the previous paragraph as it pertains to Australians and addresses this in his novel *Jack Maggs*. Koch (1987:32) claims that Australians "were subjects of no mortal country; hidden in our unconscious was a kingdom of Faery: a Britain that could never exist outside the pages of Hardy, Kenneth Grahame, Dickens and Beatrix Potter." This is the England that Jack Maggs idealizes, "that which he knew was meant by authors when they wrote of England, and of Englishmen" (*JM,* 322). In one of Carey's novels, *Illywhacker*, a character named Leah claims that Australia

> is stolen. The whole country is stolen. The whole nation is based on a lie which is that it was not already occupied when the British came here. If it is anybody's place it is the blacks. Does it *look* like your place? Does it *feel* like your place? Can't you see, even the trees have nothing to do with you (Carey, 1986:281).

Carey has a social vision for his nation. He wants to provide an alternative to this biased view about Australians' claim on their identity and their space. He wants Australians to make peace with their origins by presenting them with an alternative perception of the Australian convict from which they are descendants. Just as one can discern a social vision and assessment in the works of Dickens, one can also see how Carey constructs a social vision and assessment of mid-Victorian middle-class society that allows the reader to perceive the influence it had on the derelicts living outside the parameters of that society. He explores the roots of his culture and proceeds to "reinvent [Maggs], to possess him, to act as his advocate" (Bold Type, 2003:2). He does

not, however, stop there. Carey's use of Magwitch as representative of his ancestry leads to the negation and subversion of the nineteenth century English novel's 'colonized' perception and depiction of the Australian convict – thus reconstructing a cultural identity. It also, by overtly alluding to one of the leading novelists of the nineteenth century – Charles Dickens - reflects on the creative process of novel writing.

The themes pertaining to Carey's social criticism in *Jack Maggs* emulates several of those found in *Great Expecations.* Just like Dickens, Carey's novel exposes the futility of trying to find personal happiness in material wealth. Percy Buckles inherits money and a house, but cannot keep the love of his maid, Mercy. Henry Phipps has all the opportunities and means to become a gentleman of some means, but squanders it away on drink and gambling. Tobias Oates is successful and famous as an author, but his personal life is in shambles and he is financially ruined.

Another salient theme that Dickens addresses and that Carey echoes in his novel, involves family life. As in *Great Expectations*, the families in *Jack Maggs*, are dysfunctional. The behaviour of the mothers in the novel is not above reproach. The woman who assumes the responsibility of raising Maggs is not really a role model as a mother. Ma Britten is selfish, cruel and dangerous. Mercy Larkin's mother accepts money from a man who then proceeds to rape the young girl. Contrary to *Great Expectations*, however, Carey introduces the counterpart of these mothers in Mercy Larkin, a young maid that Maggs meets in the Buckles household. She convinces Maggs to return to Australia and to the children he had left behind. She accompanies him and becomes a strict, but loving mother to the two boys and the other children she bears for Maggs.

Similar to the father figure in Dickens's works, the father figures in *Jack Maggs* also fall short. Silas, the only father figure in Maggs's life, is a criminal who uses Maggs, Tom (Ma Britten's son) and Sophina to steal silver. He leaves Maggs in the lurch when the young man is caught, convicted and transported to

New South Wales. Percy Buckles, who saves Mercy from a life on the streets as a prostitute and takes her into his house, only does so in order to take her into his bed only to subject her to further exploitation. As a surrogate father, Maggs seems to be sincere in his intentions to create a better life for Henry Phipps, but one cannot ignore his ulterior motives: to claim his position as an English gentleman – even if only by proxy. There is also the issue of his denying his two sons in Australia the opportunity of his presence, because they are not of English origin. However, Maggs is redeemed in more way than one by Mercy's intervention. Contrary to Estella, who never contributes to Pip's eventual healing and redemption, Mercy helps Maggs make peace with who he really is: a wealthy man with vast opportunities in Australia who has a loving wife and children who stays with him till his dying day.

Whereas there are no true picaresque children in *Great Expectations* and Magwitch's picaresque childhood is merely mentioned in passing, Maggs is the stereotypical picaresque child. He is betrayed and exploited by everyone he has ever known and takes his revenge on society – if not necessarily by means of violent crimes; by showing them that he has risen above their expectations. The sad irony is that the other children in the novel do not have the opportunity to do this. Sophina dies when she is executed and Tom (Ma Britten's) a little later.

Besides the themes of materialism and family life, Carey also follows Dickens's example in addressing the issue of crime. However, whereas Dickens spends minimal time on providing background on Magwitch's life as a juvenile delinquent, Carey provides extensive information that explains the possible reasons for Maggs's criminal acts. It becomes clear that Maggs, and others like him, are victims of the society from which they come: a society that neglects them and forces them to a life of crime in order to survive.

What Carey eventually achieves with the emulation as well as with the adaptation of these themes is to show that everything is not necessarily as it

seems to be. There are counterparts for bad mothers and fathers; not every family needs to be dysfunctional; material wealth does not guarantee personal happiness and those people who contributed to the beginnings of a new establishment in Australia were not criminals by heart or by choice. Appearance does not always reflect or represent reality.

The theme of appearance versus reality is further developed through Carey's use of literary conventions such as intertextuality and metafiction. Carey's overarching theme relates, similar to Dickens's, to the binary oppositions of confinement and freedom: such as the different worlds of England and Australia; the different authors in the two novels, with their respective contexts; in the alter egos of characters such as Pip and Phipps; Oates and Dickens as well as Estella and Mercy and their interpersonal relationships.

The section that follows is concerned with Carey's use of these conventions in order to create new texts and contexts; to present alternative and multiple perspectives on existing ideas and to subvert fixed perceptions of the identities of the Victorian gentleman, the Victorian author and his fiction and the Australian *other*, as represented by Victorian fiction. This chapter will conclude by stating Peter Carey's contribution towards postcolonial writing: the mapping of alternative means for the formation of personal and cultural identity through literary representation of other voices.

On a textual level, *Jack Maggs* includes various genres and, as such, various texts. There are family stories, letters and autobiographical writing. A different author writes each of these texts. The postcolonial author, Peter Carey, compiles these texts and adds onto it his own contribution. Thus, the various texts are embedded in the text that Carey wrote. Firstly, the family stories include the histories of Tobias Oates, as well as his wife's family; the story of Mercy and her mother and brief backgrounds on Percy Buckles and Constable. Secondly, the letters that Maggs write to Henry Phipps are examples of autobiographical writing and constitute a text in itself based on the fact that the

actually present the reader with a complete subplot. Tobias Oates's recasting of Maggs's memories constitutes the final text: a text that, eventually, is exposed as unreliable and fictitious – an artifice.

However, it is through the use of intertextuality that Carey comments most effectively on the author and authority of Victorian fiction. Having firmly established Tobias Oates as an important figure in the art of fiction writing in Victorian England (such as Dickens was), Carey proceeds to depict Oates's behaviour and his representation (or misrepresentation) of Maggs's (hi)story. This depiction shows a man who is a less than honest, honourable and favourable character. This is a man who descends into a "damnable state" (*JM,* 291). He is a man who, apart from being unfaithful to his wife and impregnating her young sister, gives his mistress the medication to abort their unborn child and who, along with his wife, causes the death of Lizzie Warriner. It is, however, in the obtaining and representation (or misrepresentation) of Jack Maggs's (hi)story that Tobias Oates's credibility as author (being representative of the Victorian author) becomes the most questionable. By depicting Tobias Oates as an author whose credibility and whose representation of truth and history is questionable, Carey succeeds in subverting the role of the author and the act of creative writing as it was traditional in Victorian England. The subversion and abrogation of the author's authority leaves the authorial space open for appropriation.

The subtext in *Jack Maggs* is simultaneously historical and ideological, because it addresses the ancestral history and cultural identity of Australians. Mukherjee (2005:125) argues that the "trauma of Jack Maggs's middle passage between *there, then,* and *here, now,* cannot be commemorated in Oates's literary project." In a similar way, Dickens was unable to capture the anxiety and experiences that existed in the liminal space between Magwitch's childhood experiences in both London, his life in Australia and his return to London in order to claim his ownership of Pip's gentility. Eventually it becomes the task of the post-colonial writer (in this case Peter Carey) to fill in the gaps. He

assumes the task of alternative authorial representation, by including Jack Maggs as an authorial figure and contributes towards one of the goals of postmodern and postcolonial literature.

Carey's use of intertextuality, metafiction and polyphony results in the traditional perceptions of the Victorian gentleman, the author and authority of Victorian fiction and the Australian convict being changed. Equally significant is the change in perception of the nineteenth century English society and as well as of the origins of Australia.

Contrary to Dickens's character, Pip, Henry Phipps never gains any insight into his authenticity, but is rather corrupted by his expectations to a point where he resorts to crime in order to hold onto it. There is, in fact, no trace of a natural gentleman such as Joe at all in Carey's novel. This may be interpreted as that he is not convinced that such a character did exist at all in the Victorian era.

Because of the subversion of the Victorian author and the credibility and reliability of the representation of Victorian literature, the perception of the Australian convict is altered. The Australian ancestor is no longer merely a convicted felon who came to Australia because had to be removed from a society because he endangered their lives and sensibilities. He can now be regarded with some sense of understanding and empathy because one knows what led to him resorting to a life of crime.

Finally, Carey's novel changes the perceptions one has of England as the bastion of civilization, morality and Enlightenment. He continues Dickens's exposure of Victorian hypocrisy and immorality, but - contrary to Dickens - goes further. Carey also shows how Australia can be a country in which one can find one's place, where a life of prosperity and happiness is possible. It is possible to belong, even if your ancestors were not born there.

Carey's contribution to postmodern and postcolonial literature lies in the subversion and appropriation of preconceived perceptions and assumptions

about the identity of peripheral characters and societies, as represented by nineteenth century authors and fiction. By appropriating the authorial space, Carey succeeds in mapping alternative methods of identity formation, not only for Jack Maggs as a peripheral character, but also for Australians. Carey's alternative methods of perceiving Australia's ancestral identity formation, allows Australians "to celebrate this moment when the nation is born" (Bold Type, 2003:1). Jack Maggs becomes a round character to be understood and admired; a character representative of an ancestry that would not and dared not be denied. Through the character of Jack Maggs, Carey helps construct both a personal and cultural Australian identity.

5.3 Suggestions for further study

The initial purpose of this dissertation was to place Carey's *Jack Maggs* opposite to Dickens's *Great Expectations* as if they were two opposing entities on a continuum. However, after having analyzed the texts, it has become clear that it would be naïve to do this and that it would not lead to a viable conclusion. Rather than being a complete nullification of the original text, *Jack Maggs* should be regarded as, on the one hand, a homage to *Great Expectations* and, on the other hand, a contemplation of the credibility of Victorian representation of identities and their relevance in a postmodern and postcolonial context.

This statement is based on the realization that Dickens should not be regarded as purely realist in his construction of narrative aspects and use of literary conventions. There are, in fact, quite a few precursory tendencies that relate strongly to strategies and conventions applied in postmodern texts. Dickens's postmodern tendencies are evident in his use of storytelling as a method to present knowledge and criticism of the relationship between human behaviour and social structures. It is also evident in his metafictional treatment of genres such as the fairy tale and in his simulacrum[7] subjects, for example

[7] Wales (2001:359) points out that the simulacra are exemplary of the diffusion between the reality and fictional.

Pumblechook and Wopsle. The parodic treatment of genre and of characterization reminds very strongly of postmodern tendencies. He even displays instances of authorial interference that is so typical of postmodernism. As early as in *The Pickwick Papers*, when Dickens describes the actual effect that prison life has on inmates, he enters the narration as the historical author, stating clearly that "[T]his is not fiction" (*PP,* 554).

Clayton (1991:184) warns against disregarding Dickens entirely when considering postmodernism because this would "imply that he has little influence on the writing that matters today and that his works look forwards to few of the ideas and social conditions of the present." This, of course, is not true because we have seen how Dickens's use of allusion and his subversion of conventional aspects and perceptions of the fairy tale look forward to the concepts of intertextuality and metafiction in postmodern texts.

The value of identifying postmodern elements in Dickens "may help us see our own period differently. We must recognize that postmodernism is not the dawning of a new age but the realization of certain possibilities within Western society that were salient even in the time of Charles Dickens" (Clayton, 1991:195). This is why any further study of postmodern elements in the novels of Dickens may be beneficial to our understanding of Victorian literature as well as of postmodern and postcolonial literature. After all, it is through knowing the *other* that one gains the potential to effectively know the *self*.

5.4 Conclusion

In the first chapter of this dissertation I claimed that Carey, in *Jack Maggs*, questions modernist authors who assumed that they were accurately recording reality and that he rewrites socio-historical and cultural issues within a postcolonial Australian context. The reason for him revisiting Dickens's *Great Expectations* is to break the perceptions Australians have of their ancestry and identity. These perceptions are derived from literature produced by authors

such as Dickens, who "created an Australia which had only passing and fitful resemblance to experience, but which was to become a reality for Australians" (Lansbury, 1971:12). Carey subverts Victorian fiction's representation of ideologies that marginalized peripheral characters and societies, thus breaking the bondage of Australians' perceptions of themselves. The subversion of authorial credibility and authority and the deconstruction of the centre and the periphery result in the possibility for Australians experiencing alternative ways of seeing themselves as the *other*.

A comparison of the two texts not only highlights the fictionality of the Victorian novel as an artifice, but also exposes certain commonalities between the two contexts: Victorian England and postcolonial Australia. Crime, hypocrisy, corruption and moral decay are characteristic of both contexts. By exposing these traits in Victorian society, which has thus far been regarded as the matrix, Carey closes the gap between the *self* and the *other*. Australians, by better understanding the 'ideal' *other* (England), can now change their perceptions of themselves. They are no longer the peripheral *other* and need not see themselves as vastly different from the matrix. They can celebrate their rich culture and their ideologies in a country that was established by men and women who were the outcasts of a society that was not without blemish and blame. Like Jack Maggs and Mercy, Australians can live fulfilled lives, treasuring their families and contributing to the growth and history of their country.

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