

SUBVERTING THE IMPERIAL PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY OF PETER CAREY'S JACK MAGGS

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ABSTRACT

Carey's popularity rose with the world canvas with the publication of Jack Maggs. Like the Australian writers Judith Wright, Hal Porter, Thomas Keneally, and Patrick White, Peter Carey explores the convict past in two of his masterpieces, viz., Jack Maggs (1997) and True History of the Kelly Gang (2000). Here, an attempt is made to study Jack Maggs which is published in 1997 in Britain and Australia; and in 1998 in the United States. Like Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) which subverts Jane Eyre, Carey deliberately subverts Charles Dickens's Great Expectations, the myth of imperialism, the realist Victorian Master Narratives and the thematic concerns by investigating into the colonial renditions. He addresses socio-historical, cultural, political and literary issues within the postcolonial context. He expounds the inner conflict of Maggs, his struggle against his deluded belongingness to England and his later unification with his incognito Australian roots. The representation of identity as fluid can be determined by the changing historical and social milieus. This paper probes into the gentle pronouncement of the novelist who, at last, frees Maggs from his past ridden consciousness to his present enlightenment.

KEYWORDS: Peter Carey, Convict Past, Jack Maggs, Australian Identity