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"Ripped and Tortured Skin": Mapping the Body in Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*

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Abstract: This article reads Peter Carey's novel *Jack Maggs* (1997) through a focus on mapping and mobility. Following John Thieme's recent attention to postcolonial literary geographies, the article argues that ideas of mapping in the text move away from fixed notions of place and space in order to disrupt colonial dynamics of control and power. It suggests that *Jack Maggs* explores the concept of vernacular cartography, in which bodies bear their own maps of trauma and transience. The eponymous Jack Maggs destabilizes the borders of Empire through his mobility, though he in turn faces attempts by other characters to manage and discipline his itinerant body. Similarly, the article considers how Carey's fictional mobility—his engagement with Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and his representation of Victorian England—challenges the literary maps that had long been used to fix Australian identity. Through its concern with mobile bodies, *Jack Maggs* performs a postcolonial cartography that blurs notions of maps and how they represent the bodies of people, texts, and nations.

Keywords: Peter Carey, *Jack Maggs*, Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, mapping

> I left a blank map for you and you have doubtless filled it with your worst imaginings.
>
> Jack Maggs in Peter Carey (*Jack Maggs* 238)

Peter Carey's writing has long reckoned with Australia's history as a settler colony, from his recent *A Long Way from Home* (2017) extending

back to earlier novels such as *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000) and *Jack Maggs* (1997). The latter novel, *Jack Maggs*, explores how this history remains saturated with the stories of the convicts who populated the penal colony. Based on Abel Magwitch from Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, the story follows the eponymous character, Jack Maggs, who illicitly returns to London after years spent as both convict and entrepreneur in Australia in order to re-establish connection with the man he regards as his son, Henry Phipps; as with Magwitch and Pip in *Great Expectations*, Jack hopes to leave Phipps the fortune he has amassed. However, he finds himself embroiled with the writer Tobias Oates, a character based on Dickens who profits off other people's stories. *Jack Maggs* asks: What does it mean for Australian national and literary legacies to be imprisoned by novels like *Great Expectations* as well as Victorian incarnations of colonialism? How can Australia's history be unshrouded and reclaimed through narrative?

I suggest that Carey offers a complex but ultimately constructive response by reflecting on the ethics of how people and nations alike are mapped through stories. Mapping emerges as a trope in *Jack Maggs* in several ways, most noticeably through the recognizable colonial exercise of mapping Australia as delineated space but also through subtler disciplinary practices that exceed ties to specific places and spaces. The unsavoury Oates offers one instance of how mapping takes shape in the novel—by conferring social and political power on the cartographer and operating on bodies as well as spaces. In one of the final confrontations between Jack and Oates, the reader is told that "[i]t had always been Tobias' method to approach his subject by way of the body" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 303). A writer, journalist, and amateur mesmerist, Oates is fascinated with Jack's criminal past, but he also displays interest in Jack's physical appearance as an indicator of his criminal psychology, devoting pages and pages of writing to Jack's hands and hair. For Oates, the connection is a logical one: all the separate features of Jack's body display his "Criminal Mind" (43), from his facial tic that leads to convulsions of pain, to the welts on his back which point to his flogging as a criminal, to his bruised but belligerent eyes, and even to his deformed hand. Indeed, Oates finds "evidence of [the Criminal Mind] in signs as small

as the bumps upon a pick-pocket's cranium" (43) and wonders "what stolen gold lies hidden in the vaults beneath [Jack's] filthy streets" (90). As Oates declares of Jack, "[i]t's the Criminal Mind . . . awaiting its first cartographer" (90). Jack's body, ripped and tortured from years in the penal colony, yields signposts for Oates in his exploratory expedition through Jack's mind. Oates' declaration of being a cartographer and his desire to monetize Jack's stories for his own gain highlight important intersections between mapping and colonial appropriation in the novel.

Following John Thieme's emphasis on attending to "postcolonial literary geographies" in order to question colonial dynamics of power embedded in cartography, I argue that *Jack Maggs* conceives of cartography as more than the mapping of space and place. It does so by focusing on the mobility of the body—specifically Jack's body—and its relationships to the people, places, and experiences that make their mark on one's skin and subjectivity. This understanding of the body recollects Laurene Vaughan's idea of vernacular cartography, a physical and emotional "atlas of travel" which offers an account of both transience and transition. Jack's body foregrounds how his experience in the Australian penal colony are indelibly linked as the colonial encounter becomes drawn on his very flesh. In taking his embodied history back to Victorian London and attempting to see his adopted son, Phipps, Jack provokes a crisis in the boundaries of Empire through his mobility, unsettling the fixity of imperial maps by his presence in the capital. This destabilization of the borders of Empire—his refusal to stay fixed in the place to which he has been assigned—marks a threat to the Empire's security, one that must be managed and disciplined. After discovering Jack's past as a convict, Oates tries to contain Jack within the map of scientific and literary discourse to minimize the threat, though he exploits Jack's memories and trauma in the process. Jack's body functions as a locus of concern about mapping in the convict colony of Australia, the growth of similar techniques to control urban development and the bodies of the poor in Victorian Britain, and the potential place of the embodied subject to challenge cartography as a mode of control and discipline. I invoke a multiplicity of ways cartography works in *Jack Maggs*—geographic, literary, scientific, vernacular—thereby "smearing

not only the words themselves but the concepts classically attached to them, concepts ultimately focused on the control of territory" (Wood 15). By foregrounding Jack's mobility, both his spatial movements as well as the ripples of pain on his skin, I question how the links between power and cartography can be shifted and reframed.

Jack's resistance to Oates' efforts resonates with Carey's own relationship to Dickens and *Great Expectations*. Carey has expressed frustration with the literary and cultural power Dickens and *Great Expectations* retain over the landscape of Australian history and identity. As Carey comments, *Jack Maggs* investigates how "the English have colonized our ways of seeing ourselves" ("Author Q&A") and works toward a new vision of Australian identity. I suggest that Carey, like his character Jack, steals into England and the literary "territory of Dickens or Thackeray" to "repossess" that territory ("Author Q&A"). Attending to *Jack Maggs*' emphasis on itinerant bodies, I focus on how Carey's fictional mobility and authorial pilfering signal the disruption of the literary maps that he sees as binding Australian identity for so long. As a novel, *Jack Maggs* moves across borders and fixed boundaries of place, space, and time to nineteenth-century England; through this mobility, it performs a postcolonial cartography that blurs notions of maps and how they represent the bodies of people, texts, and nations.

I. Texts as Mobile Bodies

The fraught nature of writing in *Jack Maggs* mirrors Carey's own entangled relationship with Dickens and Victorian England. Though Carey admits that he started the project with hostility toward Dickens, his focus shifted to a more complex response as the novel progressed. He discusses his views on Dickens and *Great Expectations* in an interview with Desmond Christy: "If it's read as a way of me taking revenge on Dickens, . . . that isn't how I feel about it. Great Expectations is a wonderful book, one of those perfect books. People have written enthusiastically that this is my project—to attack Dickens—but that's not right" (Interview). Elsewhere, Carey urges readers to see *Jack Maggs* as more than a rewriting of *Great Expectations*; he envisions it as a distinctly Australian story with characters who work through the pain

of their own histories and achieve a new understanding of their national identity (Carey, "Author Q&A"). In *Jack Maggs*, Australia becomes a land of hope and redemption, whereas *Great Expectations*, according to Patrick Brantlinger, remains much more doubtful about the moral possibilities for reform in the colony (*Rule of Darkness* 120).

While Carey conceives of *Jack Maggs* as more than hostile revisionism, he nonetheless performs a complicated reading of *Great Expectations* that challenges the novel's legacy while simultaneously "call[ing] attention to his indebtedness to Dickens and to the original story" by way of his "first-person renderings of Maggs' story and use of a Victorian setting" (Myers 457). Carey himself describes his work in terms of literary thieving:

> When you choose to write about nineteenth century London, you are entering very well traveled streets. . . . You are entering the territory of Dickens or Thackeray. . . . If you go to them for information, you will be nothing more than a plagiarist and a thief. Yet you must somehow—to put it bluntly—invade their territory and repossess it. . . . You need maps, charts. You need spies, agents, correspondents from the past. ("Author Q&A")

Carey stages a textual incursion into distant but hostile territory; like Jack, he steals into Victorian London in order to strip away the façade cloaking its colonial history. The metaphor of stealing into London indicates a complex activity that involves marking and resignifying the geographical and literary coordinates of Dickens' Victorian England. In this way, he offers "a blueprint for a revisionist postcolonial cartography that interrogates the totalizing, supposedly authoritative versions of world geography prevalent in maps of Empire" (Thieme 16)—and, I add, the canon of literary geography produced during the Empire.

Jack physically embodies the struggle of "entering the territory of Dickens or Thackeray," his ripped and scarred body attesting to the difficulty and labour of navigating such literary and colonial legacies. He has been branded a thief for his efforts—even his name invokes theft: the "Mag" in Abel Magwitch's name from *Great Expectations* is explicitly changed into Jack Maggs—Jack is both the low-class knave

that Estella mocks Pip for having called jacks (Dickens 95) and a magpie, a thief by his very name and later by profession. For Carey, Jack's illicit return to London acts as an imaginative infiltration of Victorian texts and streets. The metaphor of stealing back into London emerges as a creative endeavour that challenges established hierarchies and pries open the significations of colonial and literary maps.

While Carey emphasizes the creative necessity of literary theft for his postcolonial project, he remains aware of its ethical implications in terms of representation. His pilfering of Dickens' life for the character of Oates includes a commentary on Dickens' dubious habits of procuring material for his stories from people's lives. As C. Kenneth Pellow notes, "Dickens was in the habit of incorporating into his fiction slightly disguised versions of events, but especially of people, from his own life. Occasionally, this habit gave him second thoughts," and sometimes it caused actual trouble (90). While this is problematic in and of itself, Dickens, like Oates, "also claimed a sympathetic identification with the urban masses, proceeding from an unquestioned ability to correctly read, interpret, and represent them" (Joyce 29). By critiquing Dickens through Oates, Carey questions the representational power of authors, especially how they construct characters as objects of knowledge.

In this regard, Carey, too, is a thief. He pilfers from Dickens' life to shape Oates' character, but this act of thievery also functions as a way of re-imagining and re-embodying an author who has become temporally distant and shrouded in layers of accumulated academic interest and fan culture. Through Oates, Carey imagines himself into the life, motives, and behaviors of Dickens;[1] Oates may not be a very sympathetic character, but he has recognizable desires to move past his traumatic childhood in the slums into a middle-class life. In other words, Oates' actions prompt consideration about an author's ethical responsibility in representing others as well as one's motives in doing so. As Pellow argues, this concern is a trenchant one for Carey, especially if Oates is also interpreted as possessing parallels to Carey himself, including—like Dickens and Oates—a desire to be loved as an author (97).

Responsible representation may be seen as a nearly impossible task; representation inevitably risks flattening and distorting the difference

of others. Yet Shameem Black argues that there can—and should be—a positive conception of how authors and literature can creatively imagine others (4). She pushes for "emancipatory imaginative practices" that cross social borders and avoid the pitfalls of "Orientalist, primitivist, sexist, classist, or other modes of representational constraint" (10). *Jack Maggs* does not offer a definitive model of emancipatory representation—it never addresses the effects of Australian colonialism on Aboriginal peoples, a glaring omission for Elizabeth Ho, who argues that Carey's "[c]oming to terms with convictism . . . seems to facilitate a forgetting of aboriginal dispossession in the past and multiculturalism in the present" (56). Nonetheless, the novel does begin the process of imaginative border crossing through its temporal and geographical crossings as it meditates on Victorian lives and culture and Australia's colonial relationship with convicts. We can read the novel as a project that illuminates by turn Australia's origins in colonialism as well as its own postcolonial literary potential. Carey conceives of it as a textual project shared with earlier historical and literary writings about the nation: Australia's own history turns out to be fluid and mobile, as are the legacies of novels such as *Great Expectations*. At the end of *Jack Maggs*, Carey refrains from exchanging one overdetermined story for another; he does not replace the narratives of English colonialism with a fixed account about Australian nationalism. Instead, he focuses on the promise of an Australia that welcomes back its convicts but which ultimately must continue to reflect on its own history.[2]

II. Cartographies of the Convicted Subject

Carey's preoccupation with Australian national identity has extended over the course of his writing career, functioning as an attempt to work through the "great deal of furniture" Australians carry regarding their origins (Carey, "Author Q&A"). As other critics note, *Jack Maggs* is an example of convict fiction, a genre which has been "central to creating and reinforcing the ways in which settler Australians see themselves and their history" (Staniforth 579). Nonetheless, *Jack Maggs* takes place predominantly in London with little direct mention of Australia, as Annegret Maack points out. Yet Maack also remarks that "Maggs's

history of his years in Australia are [sic] written on his body" (240) through "the sea of pain etched upon the footman's back, a brooding sea of scars, of ripped and tortured skin" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 86) that mark "a page of his history" (88). In this novel, Australia is tied to bodies in pain.

Jack's pain embodies Australia's historical anxieties as well as his own psychological and physical traumas. Significantly, this pain and its convergence in national and personal agonies cannot be quashed or invalidated by either time or distance; instead, it travels with him around Australia and back to London. Jack's body suggests the ways mapping can possess a plurality of meanings, encompassing geographical cartography and personal ordeals. While Jack rarely mentions his past unless placed under Oates' mesmeric trances, he reveals that he assisted in the territorial mapping of Australia. Jack outfitted the explorers and participated in the actual expeditions, mapping with Captain Logan, the man responsible for flogging and abusing Jack as a convict (112). Jack is in the penal colony in the first half of the nineteenth century, when colonial exploration is already well underway in Australia. Since Cook's initial naming of New South Wales in the late 1700s, Australia had rapidly been carved into smaller and smaller territories. Speaking of England's hope that Australia would "function as a colony replacing those lost in America" (xv), Edward Said writes that Australia represents "first of all an Enlightenment discourse of travel and discovery"; later the continent is occupied by "a set of travelling narrators (including Cook) whose words, charts, and intentions accumulate the strange territories and gradually turn them into 'home'" (xv). Said's observation points to interrelated elements of colonial cartography: the territorial mapping that occurred under military and scientific auspices; its literary accompaniment in the form of ethnographic studies, travel writings, and adventure stories; and the ideological mapping that underpinned both territorial and literary geographies. This ideology relied on a sense of imperial entitlement and hinged on the forced labour of convicts such as Jack. Cumulatively, the goal of these efforts was to fashion a sense of home, which became as much a psychological project as a territorial one.

While Jack's participation in outfitting exploratory expeditions is under duress, he later achieves wealth through the opportunities for reform offered to Australian convicts. Brantlinger observes that the Australian experience "reclaims even convicts to lives of freedom and usefulness" (*Rule of Darkness* 121). Jack's business in brickworks after he receives his pardon discloses ties to building projects and thus colonial expansion in the new territory through the establishment of white settlements.[3] Convicts such as Jack thus enacted the material work of colonization on the physical territory of Australia. They may have been social outcasts and at the bottom of class hierarchies back in England, but in Australia the opportunity for pardons and land grants meant they could experience social power and economic prospects previously denied them. They were also of English parentage and could thus be conscripted as part of the civilizing mission to fight the "savages" and "tam[e] the wilderness" (Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness* 123), a plan unmentioned in *Jack Maggs* but which emerges in Carey's more recent novel *A Long Way from Home*.

Jack, however, dislikes Australia despite his later successes, and he refuses both identification with "that . . . Australian race" (312–13) and with Australia as his new home. In large part, he is repudiating his connections with the people who constitute the lower-class convicts and the poor who formed most of the early population of Australia as a colony. The expulsion of convicts from England to Australia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries marked a policy built on social perceptions linking morality, criminal tendencies, economic status, and disease to the lower classes (Gilbert, "Victorian Social Body" 13). Exiled from England as part of what Brantlinger identifies as a domestic policy of getting rid of contagious, redundant populations (*Rule of Darkness* 123), the fictional Jack and other convicts—who usually came from the slums of London—were marginalized within their homeland and sent away to "redeem" themselves through hard work (123); this expulsion was intended to help ease the pressures of urban expansion in England by focusing on the most "diseased"—physically and morally—individuals and social classes. Jack's repudiation indicates his belief in his own difference from such negative assumptions and a

firm conviction that his true home lies in England, though his beliefs are quickly challenged when he returns to London. He soon finds that "criminal" is an ontological label, one that he cannot escape simply by leaving Australia and refusing to be identified as one of the "Australian race." Notably, he thought he could escape the deleterious significations of Australia by leaving its physical territory; however, he realizes that pain is mobile, as are class implications.

Desiring to return home and meet the young man he regards as his son, Phipps, Jack must steal back into London because he is prohibited from returning to England lest he be discovered and hanged. Jack, however, is not new to illicitly crossing geographical boundaries. Brought up as a child-thief, he regularly entered the houses of the wealthy upper class and assisted in stealing silver plate. He was also convicted as a thief—hence his removal to Australia on the transport ships. However, Jack remains riven by what Janet C. Myers describes as a fundamental ambivalence in the novel toward the idea of home. Though he was forced into circumstances of theft through a combination of material need and the exploitation of his labour by adults, his formative relationships—including his first love—and identity were determined in London. Myers suggests that Jack "harbours nostalgic and idealized images of his homeland, England, and in particular, of English domesticity," in large part influenced by "the fictions he has read by English authors" (459). This nostalgia informs his mental and emotional mapping of England and motivates both his desperate desire for a relationship with this place and his deep attachment to the city in which he grew up, despite making his fortune and a new life in Australia. Returning to London holds the promise of new familial bonds with Phipps as well as an opportunity to reclaim a heritage that had been nearly broken by his expulsion. Visualizing the opulent England and refined Englishmen described by writers helped him through the torture he underwent: "The flies might feast on his spattered back; the double-cat might carry away the third and fourth fingers of his; but his mind crawled forward, always" to "a house in Kensington [with a] kind and beautiful interior" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 322). When he returns to England, however, he discovers that the paradisiacal images he has constructed of London belie its reality in

which "[n]early everyone . . . practises some sort of treachery" (Maack 230) and he is not so easily accepted into the ranks of wealthy English gentlemen. He instead finds that he is once more at the bottom of the social hierarchy, subjected not only to the petulant whims of his temporary employer, Percy Buckle, but also to the designs of the well-known author Oates.

Jack's profound emotional response to London is upended by the machinations of Oates and others, but it is also affected by radical changes in the city structure. When Jack returns to England, he finds the landscape dramatically transformed. In this early Victorian period, Britain was experiencing tremendous growth in industrialization, technology, and urban populations. As Jack thinks on his return to London in 1837, the city landscape has changed remarkably with the introduction of gas lighting and the "dense, tight crowds"—it has changed so extensively that "[a] man from the last century would not have recognized it; a man from even fifteen years before would have been confused" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 2). According to Simon Joyce, London was undergoing unprecedented growth and development at the time of Jack's return, including a "rapid and largely unplanned population expansion of around 20 percent between 1820 and 1840, due largely to an influx of peoples from rural areas of Britain and its colonial territories" (3).

The pace of urban development and the flood of people coming into the capital prompted general social unease about geographical and community boundaries, infrastructure improvement, and the spread of disease. These concerns were coded with class and racial implications and became embedded into the landscape through the spatial polarization of the city (Joyce 3). The spaces designated as slums were ideologically transformed into places imprinted with negative social meanings—meanings that cloaked their inhabitants for their whole lives. In Carey's novel, Jack learns that he cannot shake these implications despite his business successes and years away from London.

Denis Wood challenges the idea that maps are objects that navigate space and focuses instead on how they represent techniques to control territory (10–11). In the Victorian period, England employed this

understanding of mapping as control of territory in managing its own cities as well those abroad. Special measures were needed to handle the conditions wrought by fast-paced change, and the expulsion of peoples to the Australian colony became only one aspect of a larger program intended to enforce control by disciplining certain spaces and the bodies therein. Techniques for management came to be used on the "home" territory of the nation: territorial demarcation of the city of London into centre/periphery and West/East mimics the fundamental way the British Empire located itself as an imperial centre. Anne McClintock examines the parallels between the colonies and the London slums, writing that "[c]olonial discourse was systematically deployed to map urban space into a geography of power and containment. The analogy between slum and colony was tirelessly evoked, as was the presiding figure of imperial discovery" (120). While this analogy gained force in the 1880s and 1890s, McClintock notes it being used as early as 1829 (120), thus pre-dating Jack's 1837 reappearance in London in *Jack Maggs*. McClintock further comments on the portrayal of both colony and slum as regressive: "Like colonial landscapes, the slums were figured as inhabiting an anachronistic space, representing a temporal regression within industrial modernity to a time beyond the call of memory" (121). It is suggestive that Carey's protagonist comes from the slums, is forced into criminality, and ends up being a colonizer in Australia; the lines between colony and homeland become destabilized through the image of the slum as a regressive space within the imperial centre, and Jack's experience reflects this reality. In Victorian England, both colony and imperial capital became subject to similar technologies and techniques of population control and containment as well as rhetorical strategies of representation.

Pamela Gilbert argues that these techniques are forms of sanitary and medical mapping ("Victorian Social Body" xiii), and I suggest that they also participate in what Thieme describes as a "longer history of ideologically encoded geography" (4). Thieme asserts that colonialism and "post-Enlightenment Western thinking" (1) more broadly have "habitually promoted fixed conceptions of place, while redrawing borders, dispossessing peoples and despoiling landscapes for commercial

gain" (2). Such conceptions overwrite "pre-existing identities of place" (3), embedding "colonial geographies that characteristically denied the fecund potential of space by superimposing a closed, essentialist version of place—to the exclusion of all the other possibilities latent or nascent in an environment" (5). Graham Huggan similarly emphasizes the "reinscription, enclosure and hierarchization of space, which provide an analogue for the acquisition, management and reinforcement of colonial power" while focusing on the rhetorical strategies "implemented in the production of the map" (115). Both scholars note that fixing place through cartography and map-making attempts to control plurality and movement, operating as an exercise in power and management. These operations inform the very basis of Australia as a colonial nation built on the bodies of convicts and the poor, redundant populations expelled there. However, such operations also work in less overt but similarly insidious ways in England, the colonizing nation.

I suggest that *Jack Maggs* employs what Vaughan calls "vernacular cartography" to contest such colonial practices of cartography and control. In vernacular cartography, the body becomes a mapping tool "that both records space and through its actions or practices makes place." Vaughan explores "understandings of subjective mapping and place making" and thereby shifts the focus from hierarchical practices of enclosure to subjective trajectories of meaning-making, transience, and narrative. Instead of predetermining the colony or slum as a place full of disease and lax morality, vernacular cartography examines how individual bodies tell a different story about relationships to place, space, and other people in those environments. I diverge slightly from Vaughan in concentrating on people's movements—particularly Jack's kinetic, intimate contact with the people and places he encounters. His bodily mobility challenges how colonial cartography inflexibly melds place and space together.

In the following section, I examine how Oates maps Jack's body through scientific and literary discourses. However, I suggest that Jack disrupts Oates' assumptions through his own vernacular cartography. Jack's embodied experiences highlight the necessity of rethinking mapping and cartography so that the body can speak. In doing so, *Jack*

Maggs offers an example of what Thieme identifies in other postcolonial texts as "a blueprint for a revisionist postcolonial cartography that interrogates the totalizing, supposedly authoritative versions of world geography prevalent in maps of Empire" and welcomes the "link between fluid geographies and open reading practices" (16).

III. Mapping Mobile Bodies

In discussing the idea of the vernacular cartographer, Vaughan asks who the cartographer is: "Is it me, the observer, who creates the record . . . [o]r, is it those that are making the lines in space who are unaware of the shared map we are making?" Her question underscores a fundamental difference between Jack and Oates—between vernacular cartography and colonial cartography. The descriptions and actions of Jack and Oates contrast significantly, pointing to a fundamental difference in how each conceives of their embodied relationship to the world. Oates sees other people as potential stories to mine for his journalism and commercial writing, approaching them as scientific and literary objects rather than as subjects. He desires to be, in Vaughan's words, the observer who creates the record and instantiates it for an official audience. In comparison, Jack longs to create a shared familial map with Phipps, even as he only gradually becomes aware of the lines entangling him with other people in London or with Australia as his new home. The distinction pervades everything from their physical depictions to their conception of the role and purpose of writing to their understanding of England and themselves as Englishmen.

Jack's encounters are predominantly felt through his distinct physical presence, described by other characters as powerful and charismatic as well as sexual and even animalistic. He is focused on his sole purpose of meeting Phipps and can appear brusque and unfriendly. However, the tic douloureux (nerve pain) on his face, his hand deformity, and the ragged welts on his back bespeak a body that has suffered immense pain and continues to be vulnerable to the manipulations of others. He has a face that "had been rubbed at by pain until it shone" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 322). Despite—or perhaps because of—his experiences, Jack shows empathy for other vulnerable bodies, often subverting gendered

codes of conduct. He nurses the butler Mr. Spinks during an illness and attempts to help Lizzie, Oates' mistress, because he worries about the consequences she will endure as an unwed pregnant woman: "If she has your baby her life is ruined," he tells Oates as he encourages him to give Lizzie abortifacients (303). In so doing, he implicitly challenges the social and economic power of men like Oates and Buckle—power they have by virtue of their hierarchical authority and masculine dominance and which they seek to protect at all costs. Nonetheless, Jack's actions draw in other characters who have similarly been at the bottom of strict class divisions, including Buckle's servants Mercy Larkin and Edward Constable, notwithstanding their earlier mistrust of Jack. Mercy and Edward's eventual acceptance of Jack proves a marked contrast to other characters, such as the middle-class Lizzie who thinks of Jack as "wretched" (305) and as a beast to be mastered (82) rather than a man with a story that has embittered him.

Just as his face ripples with the pain of the tic douloureux and his back heaves with a sea of scars, Jack moves constantly in the novel. He has not yet found rest or stability in physical, domestic, or psychological terms, and this condition has engraved his life experiences. The very first page of the novel, announcing his return to England, involves him in motion: he travels in a coach to London, at which point he then roams the streets that are embedded in his mental map of the city—Agar Street, Maiden Lane, Floral Street, and on (3). These are the streets he inhabited as a child, where he slipped in and out of houses as a thief before he was expelled to Australia and had to map a new kind of territory. Given his status as a criminal, Jack returns illegally to London and must remain on the run to avoid exposure. He seeks a secure, genteel life with Phipps, but even that search for Phipps takes him all over London and then outside of the city. He frequently collapses due to physical agony, and Oates' attempts to mesmerize him to explore the pain rely on the idea that the interior body constantly circulates with mesmeric fluid (Carey, *Jack Maggs* i). Jack's transience, though painful and not often of his own choosing, attests to his entangled history with places such as London and Australia as well as his relationships with the state, which defined him as a dirty peasant child and a criminal from the slums. His body

records these distressing relationships through its scars and painful episodes, and he often tries to mask his agony through belligerence.

Whereas Jack combines a striking physical presence, marred by pain and disfigurement, with a gruff empathy, the novel portrays Oates less in terms of his body and more in light of his ambition to influence and manage others' bodies. At Buckle's dinner party, Jack notes how Oates is "edgy, almost pugnacious, with eyes and hands everywhere about him as if he were constantly confirming his position in the world, a navigator measuring his distance from the chair, the wall, the table" (26). Oates' hands and eyes express his determination to imprint himself on the surrounding space and events. He situates himself to the other guests as an authority in how to assess and chart human psychology and quickly takes control when Jack has an excruciatingly painful episode caused by his facial tic. Oates' character melds actor, writer, and scientist, and he marshals these roles in his desire to decode the mystery of Jack's body. He is spurred by the intriguing psychosomatic characteristic of Jack's facial tic and the excitement of rapid scientific advances in knowledge. He thinks to himself that "he would be the surgeon of this soul" (54), cutting out the secrets of Jack's past by magnetizing his body. The repeated linking of Oates to a surgeon, an archaeologist (54, 91), a botanist (90), and a scientific practitioner of mesmerism underscores Oates' participation in a scientific regime of exploration: "There was much of the scientist about Tobias Oates. [His] study . . . was ordered as methodically as a laboratory" (44), and he possesses stacks of "[e]vidence," experiments, and sketches—even a severed hand floating in a jar (44).

While he is not a trained doctor or scientist—as an actual doctor points out to him all too clearly after the death of the butler, Mr. Spinks—Oates considers himself part of scientific circles in his endeavours to map the "Criminal Mind," use mesmerism, and otherwise practice on the human body. In this way, he acts as one of the experts Gilbert identifies as gaining authority to map and manage the social body in Victorian England to maintain its health. The efforts by experts such as doctors and social geographers over the course of the nineteenth century may have been broadly conceived in focus, but they carefully

attended to the place of the individual body within wider geographical areas and larger matrices of knowledge (Gilbert, "Victorian Social Body" 14). Though primarily writing in relation to health, disease, and the social body, Gilbert suggests that "[i]ndividual bodies and their ills, as representatives of classes and populations, become indices of the condition of that less tangible entity, the social body" (*Mapping* 4). The body therefore emerged as a key point of focus, a text to be read and fixed with meanings about health, social class, and psychology. While the body's capacity to evoke such significations was not new, the developing importance of scientific discourse enveloped the body within specific, if shifting, frames of reference. For example, psychological pursuits like the mesmerism that Oates practices (as did Dickens, for that matter) also became more widespread (Willis and Wynne 2–3). In more general terms, science became increasingly important to the conceptualization and classification of individual and social bodies, as well as to Britain's self-identification as a beacon of progress and advancement. As Gilbert puts it, "science itself became an important part of national identity, as Britain saw itself as a scientific nation" (*Mapping* 3). The discourses of science often melded with discourses of colonialism to position people to control and manage the British populace to keep them fixed in place.

Oates employs these emerging discourses of science and nationalism to treat others as objects to be deciphered and then depicted for the appetites of emerging literary audiences. As a writer and journalist, Oates engages in what Joyce calls literary geography, a term Joyce borrows from Franco Moretti to refer to the spatial and cultural representation of the city in literature (Joyce 4). While geographical spaces (and even physical bodies in the emerging science of anatomy) were rendered visually through images, a form of urban cartography developed in writing beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. In literary geography, the city and its inhabitants were mapped by "novelists, journalists, sociologists, government investigators" (4). The mapping project functioned to place people within a defined space, locating the geographical borders of social class and inscribing such borders with moral, medical, and psychological meaning. Joyce examines literary geography to understand shifts in criminality throughout the Victorian era, highlighting how scientific

and literary mapping intensified together, complementing each other's projects: "The sheer novelty of this agglomeration of peoples during the first half of the nineteenth century gave rise to equally new forms of urban journalism and fiction, most obviously associated with Dickens and the urban sketch, and gave impetus to new models of social scientific investigation, such as the cataloging of city populations and trades" (3). The dual descriptions of Oates as scientist and writer allow him to map two separate but interconnected spheres simultaneously: London as an urban space and its inhabitants as individual bodies and psyches.

For Oates, mapping is a crucial part of how he understands his own location in relation to the city, and he further connects his literary geographies to his sense of self and social position:

> Now, each day in the *Morning Chronicle*, each fortnight in the *Observer*, it was Tobias Oates who 'made' the City of London. With a passion he barely understood himself, he named it, mapped it, widened its streets, narrowed its dingy lanes, framed its scenes with the melancholy windows of his childhood. In this way, he invented a respectable life for himself: a wife, a babe, a household. (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 182)

He constructs the topography of the city just as he constructs an identity—the Phantom—as the spectral embodiment of Jack's trauma, fear, and pain. Whereas the city has provided him opportunities for character sketches and opinion pieces (such as on child labour exploited to serve growing industrial expansion), Jack's presence offers a novel opportunity for Oates to exercise his more scientific passions. As Oates' fascination with Jack's scars and Criminal Mind escalates, Jack's body becomes a scientific and literary text that needs to be explored, charted, and made available for the enrichment of science and cultural achievement as well as Oates' own material enrichment as an author. Jack is a wild beast, a savage who must be tamed and possessed in an act of colonization. Though Oates initially offers to pay Jack for the mesmerism sessions, Jack is in a very real sense sold when Oates peddles his story to a publisher for sixty pounds (220); Jack receives no material benefit from this transaction, nor from Oates' later book.

Under the pretense of medical beneficence, Oates plans to both excise and exorcise the Phantom from Jack's soul and thus heal Jack's body, even as he dishonestly uses Jack's story in his desire for literary greatness. However, as Myers remarks, Oates' mesmerism is intended to keep Jack "under Oates' control" so that Jack remains "symbolically tethered" to a relationship that "epitomizes the violence of his colonial experience" (464).

However, Oates, of all people, should recognize how identities are fluid and maps fluctuate. He has already reconstructed his own identity, dragging himself up from poverty, harsh labour, and a lower-class existence in the slums; he had resisted society's overdeterminations of the links between poverty and criminality to make a respected name for himself and climb the class ladder only to denigrate those people who are unable to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Lizzie thinks of him as a "giant amongst men" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 307), a man who may have grown up poor but who possesses immeasurable talent and an upper-class sensibility. But when faced with the disintegration of his plans for his family and career, Oates' response is not to seek a resolution with his family but to escape by creating a new persona. He flees with Jack after the latter cuts the Thief-taker's throat (a swindler who misleads Jack about his son), and frantically thinks he "might invent himself again" (258). This time, though, one of the colonies—Jamaica, Cape Town, or Boston—will be the potential site of Oates' next transformation (258). The irony is that he might have to seek redemption in the same system of colonization that indelibly marked Jack's body as a convict and outsider.

At the same time, Oates refuses to recognize how he has appropriated Jack for his own purposes, imposing a narrative of criminal pathology on Jack's life. He sees Jack as an irrevocably stained upstart: "Jack Maggs is a criminal who presumes to come home from Banishment" (273). When Jack reads portions of Oates' writing, he experiences a "cold terror" in which he "knew his life and death were not his own" (273). In the nineteenth century, in the same moment urban cartography instantiated the social and cultural power of writers and journalists, a unique set of concerns simultaneously arose, particularly the clash between audience

expectations and authorial motivations in representing people and topical material. One emergent issue in the Victorian period rested on the urban journalist's "claim to speak for the people" (Joyce 29). This complicated matter pointed to the journalist's power to shape social perception and claim speaking rights for others, if not steal their stories outright without their permission or to their benefit. Dickens was known for such slippages and abuse of his authorial power (Pellow 90), and his parallel in the character of Oates makes it clear that Carey is well aware of the ethical dangers inherent in writing stories and claiming to speak for others.

Jack recognizes the threat posed by Oates' narrative and will not relinquish his psychological or physical territory easily—he constantly resists Oates' intentions while he is both awake and in the mesmeric trances. He furthermore questions the moral basis of Oates' scientific and literary endeavours, calling Oates a "damned little thief" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 279) who has stolen his fluid (his bodily magnetic fluid, according to mesmerism), his personal life story, and his pain without his consent. In the process, Jack feels that Oates has put him on display like a "fellow in a penny gaff" (80). Jack points out the impoverishment of Oates' ethical imagination in the latter's inability to empathize: "You steal my Fluid but you can't imagine who I am" (252). Oates' intentions are not to heal, nor are they altruistic; rather, Oates plans on appropriating Jack's pain and "Criminal Mind" for his own scientific and artistic gain, to pin Jack to a board like a butterfly (42) or to the page, as he did to the comic canary woman in one of his journalistic sketches (226). Through his outrage, Jack sets in motion events that culminate in him manacling Oates' hands—forbidding Oates to write any more by physically restraining the very hands that appropriate his life story through writing—and later burning Oates' first manuscript. Though Jack's surname "Maggs" means to steal and pilfer ("Magg"), he reframes the class and ideological assumptions embedded in thievery by identifying Oates as a thief. Jack, conscripted into burglary as a child and labelled a thief by the justice system, posits the idea that thievery comes in many forms, including physical (stealing the body's fluids) as well as literary.

Jack's own attempt to convey his subjectivity through writing proves to be a fraught experience. He writes his story but conceals it by writing backwards in invisible ink. His text is an enigma of signs, like his body, but he chooses to give a reading key to Phipps. Along with the text of his life story, he wants to give Phipps wealth, education, and a secure place to live in order to preserve Phipps' goodness and overcome his own taint as a thief (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 264). Jack thinks that giving this gift will unchain a new economy of familial love to replace the mercenary motives to which he has been subjected in his childhood and by Oates. But the act of giving his story to Phipps makes him vulnerable to a new kind of intimate cruelty. Mercy, the housemaid who comes to love Jack, sees the hope on his face when he speaks about giving his papers to Phipps, and "pitied him the cruel disappointment that awaited him" (317). Writing his own story and giving away money is not enough to overcome the maps others have constructed of him. Phipps rejects Jack and instead joins the military, resenting his material indebtedness to Jack and denying any familial bonds between the two. In this way, Jack's words fail—they do not achieve their aim of restoring a relationship. This problem in part stems from issues of audience: Jack wants only Phipps to read his story—a limited audience of one—rather than offering his account to a wider circle. Nonetheless, the letters etch Jack's subjectivity in what he perceives to be a father-son relationship, not a power struggle. In other words, he does not write primarily to produce a final, marketable product but to share his life with someone he loves and thus nurture a fragile personal relationship.

His motives and his writing are at odds with what Oates produces. Jack may get Oates to burn his first manuscript about Jack, but Oates nonetheless publishes another, more venomous book about Jack called *The Death of Maggs*. Jack does not even get to see this text in either its serialized or book form as Oates finishes it after Jack's death. In this way, Oates gets the final word over the public record of Jack, despite the fact that "[t]his Jack Maggs was, of course, a fiction" (326)—a fiction tinged with revenge spurred by Oates' anger over Lizzie's death. Throughout the novel, Oates "comes across as a detached, almost scientific compiler of facts about Jack Maggs, whom he regards as a case study, rather than

a friend," and Oates' views, actions, and words are "exposed as a bid for power" instead of an acknowledgement of Jack's "loss and suffering" (Savu 130). Given its spiteful tone, *The Death of Maggs* drops Oates' earlier detachment but only with the goal of exerting power over Jack's narrative rather than attempting to find any common ground through loss. Consistently, Jack and Oates hold drastically different understandings about people's stories, relationships, and the written word.

Jack resists the labels others place upon him, and this effort represents a threat in a colonial society trying to maintain its borders and manage social anxieties at home and abroad. Jack's experience highlights how "[t]he proliferation of spatial references, crossing of physical and/or conceptual boundaries . . . stresses the provisionality of the cartographic connection and [works as a] post-colonial response to and/or reaction against the ontology and epistemology of 'stability' promoted and safeguarded by colonial discourse" (Huggan 127). In this case, Jack's "ripped and tortured skin" and "brooding sea of scars" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 86) signify a shifting landscape of inscriptions that convey the body's evasion of attempts to map it. If the body is a map, a part of a person's vernacular practices of map-making, it, like a visual map, must be understood as open to a plurality of interpretations.

Jack's vernacular mode of cartography emerges in two ways in the novel: his physical mobility disrupts geographical boundaries while the excess of his body transgresses conceptual and class categories. As a child thief, his constant movement across the city of London both demonstrates and undermines the class divisions imposed on the city landscape. He wriggled down the chimneys of expensive houses and shimmied over the walls and barriers that marked the "social division symbolized by the East End and the West End" (Selles 447). Years later, he steals back into London again, disrupting the borders and laws intended to keep him out. In addition to frequently crossing borders, Jack's body reveals a constantly shifting topography rather than fixity, functioning as a living refutation of the idea that criminals are born. Jack may have been convicted as a thief, but only because he was forced into criminality as a child. He points out that "it was not our blood-line,

or our criminal craniums, but our natural human desire for something other than the tedium of close confinement" (Carey, *Jack Maggs* 213). Similarly, the persistent narrative focus on Jack's powerful body—at times belligerent but also liable to spasm with pain that "slapped his face like a clawed cat" (29)—indicates an interest in how his body is a site of excess, full of whip marks and overflowing with leaking emotions and fluids that scramble the lines written on it by others.

It is Mercy who plays a pivotal role in helping Jack re-map his relationship to his own body and to Australia through love, a capacity which had been repeatedly damaged through his experiences in the penal colony. She sacrifices herself to save Jack from being shot by Phipps, losing fingers on her hand. As a result, "the pair were finally matched in their deformity" (327); their bodies physically mirror each other, and they now share a psychological as well as kinetic point of contact. She helps him face the illusion he has constructed of Phipps and accompanies him back to Australia to "help the convict recognize the claims of Richard and John to have a father kiss them good night" (327); Richard and John are the sons Jack has left behind in Australia. These are familial calls to responsibility that she initiates, ones that Jack has not heretofore fulfilled. They are also legitimate ethical issues in a novel that, like *Great Expectations*, is concerned with not only parents and children but also how such relationships are framed in nationalistic terms: Mercy helps Jack realize the claims of his own Australian-born sons over his English one. As in *Great Expectations* with Magwitch and Pip, Jack's intense attachment to Phipps stems from seeing the latter as a child: "Then I see this little boy just starting out on the journey of his life, a very kind boy, with all his God-given goodness still undamaged. And I thought, so must you have been, Jack, before you were trained to be a varmint" (264). Phipps represents the possibility of hope and goodness when all of Jack's other relationships as a young man had unravelled. However, Phipps also comes to signify home and English identity, hence Jack's emphasis on his English-born son. The shift in Jack's perceptions of who constitutes his son comes at the very end of the novel, and it marks a substantial change in Jack's subjectivity, his idea of national belonging, and his approach to family.

Recognizing his Australian-born children as his sons means that Jack must reorient himself relationally, geographically, and nationally; he must overcome his feelings of shame and disidentification with Australia and position himself in new directions. In so doing, he becomes part of "that . . . Australian race" (312–13) and relinquishes his long-cherished identity as an Englishman with an English son.[4] Vernacular cartography embraces such shifts: it openly acknowledges that cartography is fluid and responsive to life changes and new perspectives. However, whereas Jack's subjective map-making enables such transformations, more fixed notions of cartography prove less mobile. According to both English law and Oates, Jack remains a lower-class criminal, one who has been irrevocably tainted by his time in Australia. Those lines are deeply drawn, unable to be smeared or smudged, demonstrating a taut and often uneasy relationship between vernacular and colonial modes of cartography.

Neither money nor personal letters are enough to procure familial bonds—at least in England. Jack finds new relationships with Mercy and his Australian sons but only because he moves once again: he leaves England a second time for Australia. He cannot stay in London, even in the slums, while constantly fearing the "rough rope of Newgate round his neck" (7) and must leave for its imperial counterpart in the colony. While the situation could be read as a second expulsion, even though it is one he chooses this time, Jack's illicit presence in the city accomplishes two things: he exposes the porousness of colonial maps through his thievery and mobility and he re-maps London through his embodied experiences of space in the capital. In so doing, he demonstrates the power of vernacular cartographies to transform the identities engraved on people and places by colonial imposition. Upon their arrival in Australia, he and Mercy find a promising future—Mercy ends up "civilizing" Richard and John and contributing "five further members of 'That Race'" (327). The Maggs family finds a welcoming home in the "fertile river flats" (327) of Wingham, where they finally settle and prosper and become known for their hospitality. Jack's story becomes an example of what Black identifies as the dynamic and fecund possibilities of border-crossing fiction: a "questioning of the hierarchical

optic that seeks to control whatever enters its gaze" (250) and a "desire to challenge constraining representations" (251). These are both difficult but necessary tasks under the eyes of colonial frames of power and knowledge-making.

Vernacular cartography can be understood as an attempt to reach out to others in systems of representation that inhibit imaginative empathies. Where colonial and literary maps try to foreclose such efforts, bodies—be it Jack's body, the textual body of *Great Expectations*, or even national bodies like Australia—resist containment, ownership, and appropriation by slipping through and thus exposing the flaws and presuppositions of the map. The landscape the map struggles to pin down resurfaces as permeable, mutable, and vulnerable to the influence of other readers. In understanding maps in this way, I refer once more to Wood's argument that maps are less about "orienting-type" objects or practices and more about the desire to construct stories of power and control. In other words, maps are not primarily wayfinding objects, nor are they wholly linked to spatial territories. Jack's story, written on his body and in his tentative words to Phipps, evokes a consideration of the responsibility involved in storytelling, for stories become maps we tell about others and construct for our own subjectivities. As a novel, *Jack Maggs* moves incessantly across borders of place and space in Australia and Victorian England, the home of Dickens and *Great Expectations*; through its itinerant path, the novel enacts a postcolonial cartography that smears notions of maps and how they represent the bodies of people, texts, and nations in order to see them in a new light.

Notes

1 See also Myers for a discussion of more of the links between Dickens and Carey's character Tobias Oates.

2 That Australian history must be subject to continued examination, especially for its treatment of Indigenous peoples, arises in *A Long Way from Home*.

3 As Brantlinger points out in *Victorian Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, these settlements were predicated on the idea "that Australia was terra nullius or a land that, prior to the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, belonged to nobody" and it became "the legal doctrine that helped dispossess the Aborigines of the entire continent" (93).

4 Ramone discusses the complex issues of parenthood in *Jack Maggs*, noting that figures such as Ma Britten, "an abortionist and an uncaring maternal figure," represent "the colonial motherland" (178). Through Ma Britten, "Carey is suggesting that Britain had neglected its parental responsibility to Australia, or that it had no ability to carry out such duties in the first place" (178).

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