

METHODS OF STUDYING THE CRIMINAL MIND IN PETER CAREY'S *JACK MAGGS*: MESMERIC SÉANCE AND MAGNETISM¹

PETER CAREY'İN *JACK MAGGS* ROMANINDA SUÇLUNUN ZİHNİNİ İNCELEMEK İÇİN KULLANILAN YÖNTEMLER: HİPNOTİZMA SEANSI VE MANYETİZMA

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to study Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* as a Neo-Victorian and metafictional rewriting of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* in the light of philosophies and theories on time and space. The theories and philosophies which constitute the conceptual background of this study are related to the existence of beings and their environment, which is also the focus of the dialectics of the subject-object dichotomy and the dynamics of their struggle for power and acknowledgement. This Dickensian Neo-Victorian rewriting is dominated by metafictional elements of narrative since the protagonist and the antagonist are portrayed in a power struggle throughout the novel. The macrocosmic level of the argument is visible on the territorial and spatial discourse on the Motherland, colonies, exile and turning back; and the microcosmic level reveals itself in the ongoing struggle between the author in the novel and the protagonist as a former convict. This struggle takes place in the concrete and abstract spaces of the individual, involving the acts of relentlessly crossing the borders and invading the personal space. Tobias Oates, the author in the novel, uses naturalist and supernaturalist methods of his choice to achieve the depths of the criminal mind, which he sees as a virgin and fertile land to be invaded. The mentioned journey reveals the dynamics of reflexivity and self-reflectivity while both the convict and the author find themselves in a process of confrontation, resistance and acknowledgement.

Keywords: Peter Carey, Jack Maggs, Neo-Victorianism, postmodern rewriting, metafictional narrative

Özet

Bu makalenin amacı, Peter Carey'nin *Jack Maggs* adlı eserini, Charles Dickens'in *Büyük Umutlar* adlı eserinin Yeni-Viktoryacı ve üst kurmaca bir yeniden yazımı olarak, zaman ve mekân üzerine felsefe ve kuramlar ışığında incelemektir. Bu çalışmanın kavramsal arka planını oluşturan kuram ve felsefeler, öznesne dikotomisinin diyalektiğinin de odağı olan varlıkların ve çevrelerinin varoluşu, güç ve kabul görme mücadelelerinin dinamikleri ile ilgilidir. Bu Dickensvari Yeni-Viktoryacı yeniden yazımda üst kurmaca anlatı unsurları hakimdir, zira roman boyunca kahraman ve karşıt kahraman bir güç mücadelesi içinde resmedilir. Tartışmanın makro kozmik düzeyi, Anavatan, koloniler, sürgün ve geri dönüş üzerine bölgesel ve mekânsal söylemde görülebilir; mikro kozmik düzey ise romandaki yazar ile eski bir mahkûm olarak başkahraman arasında süregelen mücadelede kendini gösterir. Bu mücadele bireyin somut ve soyut alanlarında gerçekleşmekte, sınırları durmaksızın aşma ve kişisel alanı istila etme eylemlerini içermektedir. Romanın yazarı Tobias Oates, işgal edilmesi gereken bakir ve verimli bir toprak olarak gördüğü suçlu zihnin derinliklerine ulaşmak için seçtiği natüralist ve doğaüstü yöntemleri kullanıyor. Söz konusu yolculuk, düşünümsellik ve öz-düşünümsellik dinamiklerini ortaya koyarken, hem mahkûm hem de yazar kendilerini bir yüzleşme, direniş ve kabullenme süreci içinde bulurlar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Peter Carey, Jack Maggs, Yeni-Viktoryacılık, postmodern yeniden yazım, üst kurgusal anlatı

Introduction

Peter Carey is an Australian novelist who won The Booker Prize twice in his career and Commonwealth Writers Prize for *Jack Maggs* in 1997. In *Jack Maggs*, the story of the child

¹ Bu çalışma yazarın doktora tezinden üretilmiştir.

and the criminal is rewritten. The reader witnesses a dominating and categorising study that takes place among the memories and subconscious of a possible convict. Both the search of a hidden past and the act of breaking and entering in a very personal and confidential area of human mind are carried through a series of experiments. Spiritual séances, mesmerism, hypnotism and trickery are used as tools in this experiment. Mystification occurs as an effect in the novel, keeping the tension high for both the characters in the novel and the readers. Besides, crime, mystic events, suspense are utilised as a driving force.

Charles Dickens is placed in *Jack Maggs* as the author, Tobias Oates. Peter Carey uses Dickens as an element in the plot. Tobias Oates uses mesmerism and tries to map the criminal mind like a cartographer. He experiments like a scientist, hypnotises Maggs, acting like a thief and violating moral and ethical values. The presence of an author in the novel brings the issue of authorship under focus; moreover, the novel carries biographic details as a result of employing a Dickensian author as a character.

In *Jack Maggs*, the equivalent character to Pip, the protagonist of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, is Henry Phipps, who already became a gentleman at the beginning of the novel. Apart from the discussion of his qualification as a gentleman, the reader does not witness the process of bringing up or education. On the other hand, Jack Maggs' self-making process is emphasized throughout the novel. Maggs declares his own will and he hardly turns back to what he once owned. Phipps' life and his acceptance are very dear to him since he finds solace and retribution in his unofficially adoptive son's life. Moreover, it could be stated that Maggs sees himself as a saviour in Henry's life. Meanwhile, Henry's indifference and coldness towards Maggs is degrading and snobbish; the adoptive son does not seem to value his chance in life that is enabled by a fellow criminal.

The aim of this article is to study Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* as a Neo-Victorian and metafictional rewriting of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* in the light of philosophies and theories on time and space. The theories and philosophies which constitute the conceptual background of this study are related to the existence of beings and their environment, which is also the focus of the dialectics of the subject-object dichotomy and the dynamics of their struggle for power and acknowledgement.

1. Temporal and Spatial Roots of the Subject versus Object and the Dynamics of Reflectivity

Sometimes the reader or the critic comes across an object, a person or a place in a work of literature that eludes the portrayed atmosphere and creates an eye-catching plane of existence. Time seems to stop, slow down or, on the contrary, accelerate depending on the experience and situation the person is going through. Places or spaces are rendered as limited or expanded; perspective is altered to create a distancing or magnifying effect. A person or an object may become a potential field of production, or a tool of destruction. The qualities of that person or thing may differ from the average subject or object of the time being, they may be part of a transformation and even an evolving process. When it comes to the function of time on life and literature, linear time appears as a major theme. People use the past, mostly in the form of memories, to build their personal and national identity, and at the same time, how they deal and represent the past and history reflects and affects the notions of the same history. We are formed by the past as much as we alter it with our mode of representation, through our gaze and perception.

When it comes to the field of academic studies, West-Pavlov states that for the literary scholar, space serves as a background for the act of writing. He says, "[t]he relationship of space to

writing (secondary, neutral, visible) was similar to that of writing to thought (writing was merely the recording code necessary to preserve and fix thought, which, though primary, was always in danger of being forgotten)” (West-Pavlov, 2009, 16). Michel Foucault comments on the “disqualification of space” and tendencies of the nineteenth century in *Power/Knowledge*: “Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic” (Foucault, 1980, 70). In his *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, he also underlines that “[t]he great obsession of the nineteenth century was history: themes of development and space, themes of crisis and cycle, themes of accumulation of the past” (Foucault, 1994, 175). Michel Foucault evaluates the twentieth century in philosophical terms in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*:

The present age may be the age of space instead. We are in the era of the simultaneous, of juxtaposition, of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the scattered. We exist in a moment when the world is experiencing, I believe, something less like a great life that would develop through time than like a network that connects points and weaves its skin. (Foucault, 1994, 175)

As Foucault points out, the preference of space over time in practices and in ways of thinking is one of the keys of contemporary philosophy.

To elaborate on Minkowski space and its relation to theories on relativity, it would be useful to restate David Bohm’s notes on the subject in his book *The Special Theory of Relativity*. Bohm says, “at any given moment we are experiencing only what is actually present at that moment. What we see at a given moment as past no longer actually exists at that moment. What is left of the past is only a trace, existing in the present. This trace may be in our memories, or in a photographic plate, or it may be left in the structure of things ...” (Bohm, 1965, 134-5). He states that we reconstruct the past in our minds following these traces, and treat previous events and things as if they still exist the way we recall them, forgetting that a memory is only what remains of the past that is gone (Bohm, 1965, 135).

Husserl defines a tendency in modern philosophy, which is the turn to the first-person singular: an opening to the notion of an “‘inner space’ of subjectivity, a subjective field, whose ‘being as it is’ is compatible with the non-existence of the physical world” (Glendinning, 2007, 50). Glendinning comments on this transition:

[T]he crucial transition effected by the Husserlian epoche’ is not to the Cartesian idea that perhaps the world does not exist but to the Kantian idea that the world is in every respect something for me. We thereby make possible the distinctively ‘transcendental reduction’ which consists in a shift in focus to, or regress to, the subject for whom there is a world given as it is given in everyday ‘positional’ consciousness. (Glendinning, 2007, 52)

Simon Glendinning describes the circular reflective movement: “The path involves a regress to a subject in order, from that apodictic starting point, to return once more, although now within philosophy, to our pre-reflective point of departure” (Glendinning, 2007, 58).

As one of the leading figures of existential phenomenology, Maurice Merleau-Ponty built his studies around the philosophical concept of being-in-the-world, leading to ontology of the flesh. He analysed the meaning and influence of having a living body and its functions both philosophically and with regard to its effects on language.

In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), Merleau-Ponty cultivated an understanding of phenomenology expressing the importance of the body in human experience. He emphasised body image, which consists of experiencing our physical being and its role in our life. Merleau-Ponty opposes the traditional Cartesian separation of mind and body, broadening Husserl's

account of the lived body. As Smith explains, “the body image is neither in the mental realm nor in the mechanical-physical realm. Rather, my body is, as it were, me in my engaged action with things I perceive including other people” (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, 21). Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology has a perspective which “puts essences back into existence” (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, vii). The quotation below taken from *Phenomenology of Perception* sheds light on the subject:

If the subject is in a situation, even if he is no more than a possibility of situations, this is because he forces his ipseity into reality only by actually being a body, and entering the world through that body. In so far as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world. The ontological world and body which we find at the core of the subject are not the world or body as idea, but on the one hand the world itself contracted into a comprehensive grasp, and on the other the body itself as a knowing-body. (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, 475)

Coming from the line of French Marxist philosophy, Henri Lefebvre is well known with his studies that involve the critique of everyday life, the production of social space, and analysis of urban space. Lefebvre’s influence is crucial in studies held around the notion of spatial justice, of which the best-known names are David Harvey and Edward Soja. Unlike the previous idea of space as an empty area or container, Lefebvre expounds space as “the very fabric of social existence, a medium woven of the relationships between subjects, their actions, and their environment” (West-Pavlov, 2009, 18).

As much as humans create and produce spaces to serve their domestic, social and industrial purposes, these spaces themselves shape and influence their makers in return. Furthermore, “space is always already caught up in representational practices, with different groups vying for control of discourses about space, but also of the messages which are coded in spatial artefacts themselves” (West-Pavlov, 2009, 19). At this point, both the discourses about space and the messages conveyed through spatial artefacts become objects of desire for the parties who wish to possess the power of governance and manipulation. In the same direction, Lefebvre draws attention to the uses of space as a medium: “‘Representations of space’ controlled by powerful elites in society may be contested by subaltern space users who attempt to make out of them ‘spaces of representation’” (qtd. in West-Pavlov, 2009, 20). Lefebvre also states that representations of space have a “practical impact” since they interfere in and shape “spatial textures which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology” (Lefebvre, 1991, 42).

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2. Neo-Victorianism and Neo-Victorian Novel as Metafictional Rewriting of the Nineteenth Century Fiction

With the deepening of individualisation and isolation at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is observed that Husserl and Heidegger develop their own philosophies based on subjective experiences, self-reflection, and observations of the ontological space of the individual.² Sartre also criticises existence with his philosophy on observing the ontological space of the individual. With the emphasis he makes on the existence of the body and whole of the activities

² Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations* (1931); *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy I and II* (1913)
Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time* (1927); *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927)

it encloses, Merleau-Ponty premeditates those concepts that seem separate in duality merge in the ontological field of the body.³ The philosophical survey that constitutes the background of the study indicates a shift from epistemology to ontology. The philosophies on the perception and representation of time and space are studied in a survey starting from the currents of thought that constitute the basis of nineteenth century philosophy, which occurs as a focal point of the mentioned movement of “looking back”.

In the point of cultural and literary production, Neo-Victorianism as a retrospective movement processes the fiction, culture and myths of the Victorian period with diverse motivations, in ways that enable different voices to be heard. In novels of the Victorian era, the gaps that are left by the authors and the voiceless or shaded characters carry traces of commercial anxiety and fear of contradicting the dominant class. In Neo-Victorian movement, however, these gaps and characters are spaces of creation, studied, analysed and accepted as focal points of the structure.

The members of the crowded working class in England and their conditions become center of attention in novels through different characters. The same situation is evident in the individuals who were exiled to colonies: some acquired a life after they fulfilled their punishment, and some turned back to England since they have not lost the sense of belonging to their native county. The character that has the same name with the novel, *Jack Maggs*, is sent to Australia as a convict, and then turned back to England despite the risk of being executed. The focus of this rewriting is that character and the life revolving around him.

Since Neo-Victorian novel brought a breath of fresh air which involves the analysis of old narratives and events from different perspectives, it is not only limited to reading the spaces which were used under colonial purposes. At the same time, it takes the issues of journey, life as a continuation in the mainland, and living spaces in contexts of cultural practices and social classes as its subject.

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Neo-Victorian movement encloses various elements of postmodern literature, particularly rewriting and adaptation. In multilayered narratives, by mirroring different characters, lie opportunities of telling and criticising the untold ways of Victorian social life, and discussing the echoes of institutional applications in the nineteenth century. Since modern and postmodern critical theories focus on the representations of previous times and spaces in the degree they affect the individuals, they enable the discussion of applications which are still influential. Intertextual relations and rewriting of history are among basic elements of the novels that are stated within Neo-Victorian movement. With back and forth movements in time, and with real and fictional characters in Victorian novels, even in widening perspectives of fiction in which authors are present, are reached to multivocal narratives, which enclose intersections of different planes in life. Purposes of this movement vary from criticising the present day, imitation, catching a glimpse of nostalgia, to illuminating the spaces which were not taken as a subject before.

Llewellyn defines neo-Victorian fiction as “those works which are consciously set in the Victorian period . . . or which desire to re-write the historical narrative of that period by representing marginalised voices, new histories of sexualities, post-colonial viewpoints and other generally ‘different’ versions of the Victorian” (Llewellyn, 2008, 165). This perspective draws attention to some functions of the movement: voicing the marginalised “other”, providing information which was inaccessible before, and imagining alternative versions of events that took place in the past. Along the same line, Kohlke comments on the outcomes of these issues, drawing attention to actions to bring the cycle to an end:

³ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945)

Increasingly, the period is configured as a temporal convergence of multiple historical traumas still awaiting appropriate commemoration and full working-through. These include both the pervasive traumas of social ills, such as disease, crime, and sexual exploitation, and the more spectacular traumas of violent civil unrest, international conflicts, and trade wars that punctuated the nineteenth century. (Kohlke, 2008, 7)

At this point, Kucich and Sadoff provide an effective comment, saying that “[n]ew academic historicisms have enabled a wide range of theoretical revisionings—not just those of cultural studies— and although this work has been carried out in all historical periods, the nineteenth century has been a particularly fertile area for consideration” (Kucich and Sadoff, 2000, xiii).

There is a bivious affection among events of another era and their narration through either historical or fictional writing, which transforms our perception of both. This effect becomes evident in Brian Finney’s words: “the past resolves itself into a series of texts which themselves interact, bringing past to bear on present and occasionally present to bear on past—or at least the past as it is textually constituted in and by the present” (qtd. in Shiller, 1997, 14).

Simon Joyce draws attention to the idea that:

[W]e never really encounter ‘the Victorians’ themselves, but instead a mediated image like the one we get when we glance into our rearview mirrors while driving. The image usefully condenses the paradoxical sense of looking forward to see what’s behind us, which is the opposite of what we do when we read history in order to figure out the future. (Joyce, 2002, 3)

Every social group chooses a reflection of itself as “the other” in the mirror of time, whichever consonant to the zeitgeist; to see, perceive, and define itself. In this search, Llewellyn states:

The Victorian and the neo-Victorian offer the simultaneous possibilities of proximity and distance. This is particularly true in relation to choices about individual identity, specifically in relation to sexuality of gender. In this sense, the Victorians, particularly in their status as multiply “Othered” subjects, offer the potential space for working through ideas and concerns that still dominate social discourses today. (Llewellyn, 2008, 175)

There has always been a general idea based on linear flow of time, arguing that we learn from previous events and get shaped by them, and thus, the past is a concrete structure that cannot be changed. However, as opposed to the aforementioned way of thinking, when the relation between the past and the present is analysed through the interaction of these elements where narration acts as a medium, we reach a wider perspective and understand that borders are not concrete; they are always subject to transgression because of the need to compare, contrast, and define our present standing point, not only the past.

3. Peter Carey’s *Jack Maggs* as a Metafictional Narrative: The Author in the Novel as a Pseudo-Scientist and Observer, and the Protagonist as a Challenging Empowered Character

Peter Carey creates the character Jack Maggs and names the novel after him, particularly to emphasise the position of this criminal character in transition, which represents rewriting and refocusing of crime and criminals, by turning back to the Victorian Age and using Abel Magwitch from Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*. The uncanny labyrinth of Jack Maggs’ criminal mind is highly valued by the author in the novel, Tobias Oates. Unexplored paths of the criminal mind are unexpected treasures for the author. They are rarely encountered and he

is excited to use these observations in his narratives. Abstract notions regarding crime and criminals almost become concrete in Oates' descriptions. In a world where the element of surprise is ruined by excessive information, and wide and effortless accessibility of knowledge and people, several crucial elements of stories have gone missing; it is hard for authors to find suitable tools to create suspense and interwoven conflicts.

Tobias Oates, the author in the plot of *Jack Maggs*, is interested in drawing subjects from his experiences and observations, rather than employing imagination and creative capacity at a higher level. Peter Carey obviously criticises naturalist and Darwinian tendencies of the nineteenth century, which are mainly based on experiment and observation—sometimes excessively bending ethical values and scope of studies. Ethics, purpose and interpretation are crucial steps in experimental processes, if they are to qualify as scientific studies and prove fruitful for humanity. The author in the novel, however, trespasses personal and ethical boundaries, and interferes with the subject or object at the focus of observation. Carey gives details when he states that “Tobias Oates had an obsession with the Criminal Mind. He found evidence of its presence in signs as small as the bumps upon a pickpocket's cranium, or as large as La Place's *Théorie analytique* which showed the murder rate in Paris unchanged from one year to the next” (Carey, 1999, 49). Therefore, it may be derived that Tobias Oates reaches to ideas and conclusions by both experimenting on and watching people, and by learning from published books and articles.

Peter Carey discusses pseudo-scientific methods of the nineteenth century, and assigns Tobias Oates as an unofficial investigator, who is after every kind of information he can use to publish and provide for his family. Oates has a chance to apply these methods when he discovers that Jack Maggs, who works as a servant for Mr. Percy Buckle, shows signs of distress, pangs, tics and sleepwalking. Oates easily gets permission from Mr. Buckle, telling Maggs that “[his] master is a student of Mesmerism. He will be pleased to make you available for science” (Carey, 1999, 55). When it comes to persuading the subject to take part in these séances, Oates brings forth the issue of sleepwalking and its dangers for oneself and his surroundings. Maggs' concerns are obvious in his answer: “Whatever it is called, it is a terrible thing, Sir, for a man to feel his insides all exposed to public view, a thousand times worse than to come before you with my stockings in this state” (Carey, 1999, 52). Maggs pronounces his anxiety about maintaining a sense of privacy. Oates relies on so-told former data on séances to assure Maggs “that no mesmeric act on earth will have anyone perform an act against their moral temper” (Carey, 1999, 32).

Human nature is prone to finding solutions and learning by observing and attributing meaning to oneself and one's own situation; therefore needs to distance oneself and obtain something that will function as a mirror through which one can perform the observation. Among most important actions of humans who observe and attribute meaning to themselves and their lives, the act of storytelling, by its nature consists of historical patterns from a certain perspectives, or fictions based on power of imagination, and sometimes a mixture of these two elements. Sometimes the reader or the critic comes across an object, a person or a place in a work of literature that eludes the portrayed atmosphere and creates an eye-catching plane of existence. Time seems to stop, slow down or, on the contrary, accelerate depending on the experience and situation the person is going through. Places or spaces are rendered as limited or expanded; perspective is altered to create a distancing or magnifying effect. A person or an object may become a potential field of production, or a tool of destruction. The qualities of that person or thing may differ from the average subject or object of the time being, they may be part of a transformation and even an evolving process.

Naturalism versus supernaturalism creates a tension between the practitioners of each in the text. There are passages and twists between these two concepts leading to ambiguity, since the

author in the narrative starts his journey with naturalistic aspirations but uses unscientific and supernatural methods such as mesmeric trances and seances based on somnambulism. These efforts cannot exceed the limits of supernatural practices, carried out by an unprofessional and unauthorized practitioner since the methods and rules of modern psychotherapy were set only after the Second World War. The lack of defined ethical and legal laws leave a grey area for Tobias Oates to exercise his pseudo-scientific studies without remarkable constraints except the resistance of the subject.

Mesmerism, animal magnetism and supernaturalism⁴ are the adopted techniques of psychotherapy in the nineteenth century and these terms are used interchangeably in the novel to describe the process of questioning the criminal mind. The Dickensian author applies the mentioned methods without constraints since there are no regulations on the subject yet. The suspected look and nature of the character Jack Maggs functions as a justification for questioning, suspecting and blaming him for a criminal history as well as a continuous motive for perceiving him as a possible convict of further crimes. The prejudice of the society directed towards the convicts and criminals is a key fact of the nineteenth century, ambiguously and negatively functioning as an interference in the legal system, standing in the way of the individuals' right to fair trial as well as the measure and justness of the punishment, which all become questioned concepts in Dickens's *Great Expectations* and Carey's *Jack Maggs*.

Oates tries to persuade Maggs to be a subject, by offering to solve the inner cause of his problems: "But that if I should take the demons from your heart where they are causing you pain? What if I write them on paper and then place the pages in this box here? When we are done, we can go to this fireplace, Jack Maggs, and we can burn them together" (Carey, 1999, 53). This statement causes further curiosity in Maggs, and he asks the reason why Oates is interested in his situation. He says that "[i]t is [his] pain after all", only to be answered thus: "I am a naturalist" (Carey, 1999, 53). Eventually, Oates defines himself not as an author, but as if he is a scientist, experimenting as a naturalist. In other words, Oates uses methods that exceed the definition of naturalism as a literary movement. He goes beyond observing and narrating hereditary and environmental effects on shaping human character; he excavates the mind of the subject and violates the integrity of the sense of self, bringing out his secrets and memories out into light, whether with or without his will.

Oates alienates Maggs' traumatic experience and names it as the Phantom, which forces the boundaries of his consciousness with pangs of physical pain when it is triggered with events. Oates tells Maggs: "'But this Phantom lives within you,' . . . 'You have a creature who wishes you harm, who lives within you like a worm lives in the belly of a pig. It is the Phantom who hurts your face'" (Carey, 1999, 52-3). This is an act of estrangement, leading to the search of the source of evil coming from outside, and possessing one's being. This situation leads the person to trace reasons outside him, in a mistaken manner. As a matter of fact, the source of evil in Maggs' life derives from traces of traumatic experiences, in other words, imprints of past events on his consciousness, trying to find solution, atonement, or retribution.

Tobias Oates is encouraged by the news of a practitioner he heard, who applies mesmeric séances, and uses the information he retrieves from this illegal investigation method to catch thieves. Oates' description of the method and its applier shows signs of approval and admiration:

The Thief-taker," said Tobias Oates, "is not some rogue like Jonathan Wild but an educated, modern man who obtained his information by making mesmeric

⁴ Kaplan, Fred. *Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975.
Tatar, Maria M. *Spellbound: Studies on Mesmerism and Literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978.
Willis, Martin – Wynne, Catherinne Eds. *Victorian Literary Mesmerism*. New York: Rodopi, 2006.

passes”—here he waved his hands mechanically up and down in front of Hawthorne’s unblinking eyes—“by making mesmeric *passes* over the four witnesses the police had already interviewed, he put each into a condition of Magnetic Somnambulism. This Thief-taker, whose name is Wilfred Partridge, obtained by this method a full description of the suspect from those who *imagined* they had not seen him clearly. (Carey, 1999, 31-2)

The mentioned thief-taker steps in when a regular police investigation does not bear any results. His success lies in the unusual methods, rendering forgotten or suppressed memories of the subconscious available again. Above and beyond the thief-taker, Tobias Oates takes on a role similar to a detective’s—especially reminding contemporary readers of Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous character, Sherlock Holmes. Oates justifies his interest with further examples: “The Cerebrum . . . is a vessel that never leaks. It holds everything, remembers everything. And if Mr Hawthorne likes to think of Animal Magnetism as a scurrilous parlour game, it is only because he has not read his Villiers or Puysegur” (Carey, 1999, 32). Oates gives references to the earliest examples of magnetism, which aim at unveiling the structure of subconscious and unconscious, and are very early forms of psychological studies.

Lisa Rodensky draws attention to the writing habits of Dickens to be taken as a reference for his legacy:

(...) Dickens acts not only as judge and jury for an actual criminal defendant but also has at his command of all powers and may take advantage of all the licence of the novelist while doing so. My study considers in some detail one power in particular: that which gives the novel’s third person narrator imaginative access to the minds of his or her characters. It need not be by inference from external evidence that third person narrators offer the thoughts of their characters; they can hold themselves out as representing thoughts directly. Novels invite their readers to imagine that they are in the mind of the criminal. This access to the mind distinguishes fiction — and the novel in particular— from law, from history, from psychology, and even from other literary genres, like biography (...) the novel can enter the mind, and the Victorian novel explored the interior life of its characters as never before. (Rodensky, 2003, 6)

The phase of reassuring and convincing the subject leaves its place to the experimental *séance* and its consequences. A chamber of observers witnesses the experiment, which means that these people learn Maggs’ deepest secrets and witness his confession of crimes. It comes to an extent that, “Maggs did not even have the space to be angered by these people. It was the man upstairs who was the focus of his animus. He was burgled, plundered, and he would not tolerate it” (Carey, 1999, 36). The mentioned focus of Maggs’ rage is Oates, who does not limit himself to solving the reason of Maggs’ tics and sleepwalking, but freely reveals his memories to be used for his disadvantage. These results are beyond expectations of Maggs and observers. A dialogue takes place before the *séance* between Oates and an observer, on the possibility of a confession:

“Now come, Oates,” said the fellow with the quivering chin. “No hard-hearted villain is going to give his secrets up in a court of law.”

“Even the lowest type of renegade,” said Tobias Oates, “has an inner need to give up the truth. Look at those gallows confessions they are still selling on Hollborn. 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.” (Carey, 1999, 33)

The hidden agenda of the *séance* was to take a confession from the criminal, abusing his sense of guilt. Oates’ alleged cure for Maggs’ distress turns out to be a mask for the real purpose.

Ethical questions rise in the mind of the reader, on issues of crime, guilt and conscience; since there is a paradoxical situation where a criminal who pays his sentence is treated cruelly, and an author applying illegal and unethical methods by trickery is not punished for his acts.

The criminal accepts to be a subject for the experiment when he sees it as a cure for his sickness, but the séance bears unwanted and unprecedented consequences for him:

By mesmerized he understood that he was made the subject of magnets, and that these magnets in some way tugged at his Mesmeric Fluid, a substance in his soul he could not see. He understood that, under the effect of magnets, he was able to describe the demons that swam in this fluid, and that Tobias Oates would not only battle with these beings—named Behemoth and Dabareiel, Azazel and Samsaweel—but also, like a botanist, describe them in a journal where their host might later see them. (Carey, 1999, 99-100)

The author abandons his purpose of untying the physical symptoms of distress with suppressed memories, and in a manner that could be placed between a faux preacher and a mediocre journalist, he interprets the retrieved information to gain more power over the subject. Therefore, Jack Maggs finds himself in a disadvantaged situation by all means. He is deprived of privacy and basic rights to maintain his integrity; he is in grave danger because his secrets are exposed; and even if he has paid the bill, his chances of building a new life of his own choosing is being taken from his hands.

If and when the situation is observed from Tobias Oates' point of view, Maggs represents a novelty of utmost importance that he does not intend to abandon. Oates is obsessed with the kind of power he has over the subject:

He will not wake up until I release him, Lizzie. Don't you see what I now possess? A memory I can enter, and leave. Leave, and then return to. My goodness, my gracious. What a treasure house, eh, Buckle? You can hear the cant in his talk. He has it cloaked in the livery but he wears the hallmarks of New South Wales. (Carey, 1999, 96)

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While the author is overwhelmed by the taste of power and grandeur, some observers in the chamber express the voice of their conscience. A grocer among them defines the episode as “a page of history”, and tells that “[w]hatever his offence, anyone with half a heart can see that he has paid the bill. I could not send him back for more” (Carey, 1999, 97).

Oates applies pseudo-scientific methods without considering ethical issues, or any outcomes that may occur. He still defines Maggs' subconscious with an obsessed fascination in his talk with Mr. Percy Buckle:

But what you have brought me here is a world as rich as London itself. What a puzzle of life exists in the dark little lane-ways of this wretch's soul, what stolen gold lies hidden in the vaults beneath his filthy streets.”

“I don't follow you, Sir?”

“It's the Criminal Mind,” said Tobias Oates, “awaiting for its first cartographer. (Carey, 1999, 99)

Oates defines the criminal mind as a concrete space; a place to be conquered, mapped, traced and explored by others to come. This definition recalls Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh, according to which memory occupies a place in the body. The field of space called the human body employs physical, mental, emotional and spiritual activities, all of them affecting each other and processing simultaneously within the borders of this concrete form. Oates' violation

of privacy find roots from physical symptoms, but transforms into a crime which affects all levels of Maggs' being at the same time. The concept of crime and ethics is effectively rewritten, leaving readers with numerous questions about the treatment of criminals in the nineteenth century, lack of borders especially among middle classes of the society at the time, and professional ethics, as in the example of Oates as an author.

The criminal mind is a space to be conquered by the intruder Tobias Oates, who is a character playing the role of a Dickensian author in the narrative. The mind of the criminal becomes a mirror for the investigator/author in the narrative, facing his own past and self in this self-reflexive mirror. The buried past of the criminal, causing the painful tic doloureux, gives a signal to Tobias Oates, the author in the metafictional narrative, starting the process of investigation under the name of Mesmeric seances. These seances are pseudo-scientific experiments as well as sessions of an unauthorized interrogation, violating multiple laws of human rights and ethical boundaries. The powerful image of the criminal character, Jack Maggs, and his act of seemingly willing cooperation as accepting to be the subject of the mesmeric seances transforms into an act of resistance and assertion of his power when he feels intimidated by the unauthorized investigator who is prying into his secrets in the alleys of his mind. The threat lies in the danger of exposing these secrets, which are the details of perpetrated crimes. The heterotopic space of the criminal mind becomes an ambiguous place for both the subject and the object of the experiment (both the pseudo-scientist and the subject of the experiment). The subject of the experiment accepts to join the process since he was promised to be set free from his trauma that causes the painful tic on his cheek, but the uncontrolled and intrusive act of excavation gives birth to the act of resistance. The pseudo-scientist and author Tobias Oates conducts the seances, beginning with the motivation to resolve the trauma and its possible outcomes, then transforms into a process of endless greed for facts and details to be used in further composition of a fictive work in the novel, to be named by him as *The Death of Jack Maggs*. The author finds an unexpected heterotopic artefact in the process, the mirror of the criminal mind that forces him to face his unethical and criminal acts as well as parts of his shady family history, including the image of his father, which he describes as a scoundrel. He describes himself as the son of a scoundrel in his private space.

Conclusion

The spaces and places of focus in the novel reveal the practices of establishing and asserting power, as well as the dynamics of objectification versus the experience and resistance of the subject of research. Tobias Oates is the Dickensian author in the novel who is a metafictional self-conscious element in the plot and also used as a powerholder and observer, since he traps Jack Maggs as a subject and oppresses him with the knowing gaze throughout the novel. The surprising twist of the plot creates an endless tension between the observer and the subject, which is based on the potential of the empowered subject and the shattering image of the might of the observer/author.

The empowering of the othered subject is achieved through a multidimensional and ambiguous process in which the physical traits of the individual play as an import role in the construction of this image as the mental strength that takes its roots from an indomitable willpower to assert his truth and a determination to claim his rights in the Motherland. The context of the narrative includes exile as a sentence to be rejected by the convict, his turn back as an empowered citizen claiming his rights, and since it is impossible to achieve this aim, he uses a substitute and becomes the benefactor of an orphan, Henry Phipps (who is the equivalent of Pip in Dickens' *Great Expectations*), to raise him as a gentleman, fulfill his destiny and take his revenge in return. The complexity of this plan reveals the rigidity and strictness of the system of justice of

the 19th century, prone to export the criminals growing in number to the colonies to an unknown future, some of them never to return to their native land. The scale and impact of the punishment lies in the irreversible nature of it, which does not take any possibility of improvement into consideration. The constructive side of the native land lies in its culture and system as well as its territoriality, leaving its imprints on the sense of belonging with valuable memories of a personal history. The dramatic influence on the character Jack Maggs and his endlessly growing will to empower himself to transfer it to Henry Phipps is his definition of the only form of retribution for the seemingly unjust scale of capital punishment imposed on him.

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