Introduction

Exploring the Fictional World of Peter Carey

The aim of this study is to demonstrate how certain thematic and structural patterns run through the fiction of Peter Carey. While the present attempt is not to enforce a reductive reading or to fit his fiction into a framework, a detailed reading of his fiction reveals certain concerns intentions of the novelist, predominantly the construction of an Australian identity. The identity evolves out of Australia’s historical processes. The matrix out of which Carey constructs Australian identity largely stems from the convict penal heritage of the first wave of English colonists. The early English convicts, for the sake of survival in inhumane surroundings were adept at fabricating lies, and in time turned out to be adroit too at the art of story-telling or spieling. The history of the nation created in Carey’s fiction is trapped in the prison of the past, the penal past. However, the nation’s history rendered aesthetically in Carey’s fiction is largely based on models of truths and lies, i.e. truth value is suspended in a bid to debunk the narratives of colonial histories. Carey does take cognizance of the Australian Aborigines. There is definitely a consciousness of their rich cultural past which was destroyed by the English colonizers. The contribution of the immigrant peoples to the construction of national identity too is reflected in his fiction. The spectre of the penal past from which the Australian cannot escape and the realization that he no longer belongs or is acceptable to England, forces him into accepting the new landscape and conjuring a heaven out of hellish circumstances. The thesis
statement is the aesthetic rendition of Australian National Identity in Peter Carey’s fiction is best echoed in Australia’s historical processes.

Having nine novels to his credit till date, Carey has presented a world that is strange and out of the ordinary. It is this world that this study is going to explore and examine. The present study will restrict itself to the study of six of his novels, namely, Bliss (1981), Illywhacker (1985), Oscar and Lucinda (1988), The Tax Inspector (1991), The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith (1994), and Jack Maggs (1997). The objective of my thesis is the exploration of the fictional world of Peter Carey with a view to corroborate the above stated thesis statement.

In the reading and exploration of Carey’s fiction, a few striking features loom large. The dominant issue is of national identity, a theme largely acknowledged by the author. As a corollary to the theme of national identity is Australian history, imperialism and its effects that in fact are the major factors that shape the national identity of Australia. He comes forth with a strong indictment of modern urbane Australia and the imperialist forces of Western capital that have been the cause for anarchy reigning in societies, especially in Australia. In reviewing Australia’s history and culture he attempts to bring out in the open the lies and myths that form such a great part of the ethos of the country. Apart from these issues, themes such as entrapment, solitude, family violence, etc. are also explored.
i) Rooted in Homeland: The Man and His Works

Having received the Booker prize twice and the Commonwealth prize too, he has also successfully secured every major Australian literary prize at least twice. Peter Carey remains one of Australia’s most celebrated living writers. Presently a visiting professor for the creative writing course at New York’s Hunter College, his work has drawn the attention of many critics. Paul Kane, editor of Antipodes, once remarked:

It is a mark of Carey’s writing that the stranger the fiction the more encompassing the vision, since what is strange, what exists on the margins of normalcy, can only be known with reference to the whole—that is, to the familiar and strange together. Carey wants to take in all of humanity, or at least all that is available to him, and place it before us such that the strange is made familiar and the familiar made new.¹

Rooted in his homeland, Carey is committed to the cause of his nation and its people. When Carey was awarded his second Booker for his novel on Australia’s prominent outlaw, Ned Kelly, his achievement was acknowledged all over Australia and abroad clearly categorizing him among those Australian authors who ‘evoke their own past’ with a view to demythify the notion of Australia as a mere ‘cultural wasteland’ so as to come to terms with the present. All through his narratives, Carey employs the postmodern mode of
multiplicity and fissures to challenge ‘fixations’ of any kind. Realizing that acceptance of the penal past would be more authentic than its denial, Carey presents ‘other’ and multiple possibilities of Australia’s past. For example, Carey reworks the Imperial account of the outlaw Ned Kelly in a bid to present other versions of Ned Kelly’s life, apart from the one narrated by Imperial forces. To the Australian whose descent arises from his convict past, Kelly remains a legendary figure.

Carey was born on the 7th of May 1943 in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, Australia, to Percival Stanley Carey and Helen Jean Carey (née Warriner). Carey’s family operated P. S. Carey Motors, the local General Motors dealership in his childhood. From 1948 to 1953 Carey attended the Bacchus Marsh State School. After pursuing his studies as a boarder at Geelong Grammar School, in 1961 he enrolled for a science degree course at Monash University in Melbourne, which course he did not complete.

At 19, Carey started working for Walker Robertson Maquire Advertising Agency in Melbourne. It was at the agency that Carey had his first tryst with literature and writing. It exposed him to such writers as Barry Oakley and Morris Lurie, who in turn introduced him to American and European masters like Samuel Beckett, Saul Bellow, Vladimir Nabokov, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Jack Kerouac and William Faulkner, which triggered Carey’s skill at creative writing. In 1964, Carey wrote Contacts, which was shortlisted and turned out to
be an unsuccessful finalist in 1965 for a Stanford Writing Scholarship. Between 1964 and 1970, Carey wrote three novels, namely, *Contacts, The Futility Machine* and *Wog*, which did not appear in print. After travelling all over Europe, in 1970 he returned to Australia. He began writing stories which appeared as *The Fat Man in History* in 1974, published by the University of Queensland Press. By that time, he also managed to write a fourth novel, *Adventures Aboard the Marie Celeste*, which was also accepted for publication. However, Carey declined the offer in favour of *The Fat Man in History*.

Around this time Carey worked full and part-time in advertising. In Australia, he worked first as an advertising copywriter at Masius Wynne Williams in Melbourne and later with Grey Advertising. After separating from his first wife, Carey's relationship with Margot Hutcheson introduced him to the alternative community at Yandina in Southern Queensland. Here Carey wrote all but two of his stories, and also *Bliss*, his first published novel.

*Bliss* (1981), Carey's first novel, "combines light and black comedy, incisive social satire and a poetic, futuristic vision" states *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*. In the words of Hassal, "[it is] a story about telling stories", wherein lies an "awareness of the problematic nature of trying to grasp reality through a fictitious construct". In *Bliss* Carey explores the life of a middle-aged advertising executive Harry Joy. After a heart attack, Joy experiences a clinical death and consequent out-of-body experience. He revives
with a radically different perception of reality. In the opinion of some critics, this incident, 'leads him to a recognition of the "worlds of pleasure and pain, bliss and punishment, Heaven and Hell."' His new lease of life leaves him with the onerous responsibility of trying to cope with a world that 'seems like Hell'. He firmly believes that he is in Hell. Living in a world in which his son is a drug peddler and has an incestuous relationship with his daughter, his wife is having an affair with his business partner. His daughter is a communist and a drug addict. It is clearly a world in which affluent citizens choose tawdry progress and cancer-inducing food-additives above conservation and self-discipline.

His second collection of stories, War Crimes was published in 1979. After completing Bliss, Carey left Grey Advertising, formed a joint advertising agency with Bani McSpedden and returned to Sydney. From here on, Carey began winning a slew of awards for his stories. War Crimes was awarded the New South Wales Premier’s Award for fiction in 1980.

Bliss bagged the New South Wales Premier’s Award, the Miles Franklin Award and the National Book Council Award in 1982. Well-received as a film in 1985, it won the best picture, director and screenplay awards from the Australian Film Institute, and was also shown as the official Australian entry at the Cannes Film festival.
Illywhacker (1985), Carey’s second published novel which also won multiple awards, established Carey as a writer of international stature. Illywhacker was written after Carey moved to Glennifer near Bellingen in northern New South Wales. The novel proved to be another landmark in Carey’s life. Illywhacker, won the Age Book of the Year Award, NBC Award for Australian Literature, FAW Barbara Ramsden Award, and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. The novel is about Herbert Badgery, a 139-year-old man who claims to be a trickster and liar. At the onset of the novel itself, Herbert Badgery quotes an extract from a dictionary of Australian slang, explaining the meaning of Illywhacker.

In the first few lines he tells us his age and then informs us tongue-in-cheek that ‘I’m a terrible liar’ and that ‘My age is the one fact you can rely on, and not because I say so, but because it has been publicly authenticated’ (Illywhacker11*). He goes back to 1861 in his narration of the history of his life, upto the present, where he is caged in his son’s establishment in Sydney, in a pet emporium named ‘The Best Pet Shop in the World’. Illywhacker is the story of three generations of the Badgery family, and runs parallel to the development of Australia after it gained its independence from England. The novel portrays the various branches of the Badgery family and their lives, including those of their friends, from 1861 to 2025.

* For all further references to Illywhacker, (I followed by page number) will be inserted in the text
Howard Jacobson, writing in the *New York Times Book Review* found the novel "a uniquely Australian work and contended that the experience of reading it was nearly the equivalent of visiting Australia."\(^5\) In Badgery's narration of the history of his life, one can't help but notice the keen examination of the lies and myths that underlie Australian history and culture. The fact is supported by Mark Twain's epigraph, where Twain states that:

**Australian history** is almost always picturesque; indeed it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiepest novelty the country has to offer and so pushes the other novelties into second and third place. It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies; and all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises and adventures, the incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities; but they are all true, they all happened.\(^6\)

Badgery keeps questioning the truth of the stories he is telling. This reflects on the official history of the country built with prodigious lies. The reader is given constant reminders that the narrator is a notorious liar. He is a narrator and "storyteller of immense gusto and confidence".\(^7\) He gives different versions of the same events stressing on the fictional nature of the narration. Nevertheless, each of these versions can have some truth in them. Sue Ryan states that "Illywhacker sets out to express the harsh truth about Australians and their
history in the guise of fiction, in an attempt to make it palatable and even entertaining."⁸

By 1986, Carey had already begun work on his next novel, *Oscar and Lucinda* that was published in 1988. *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988), his third novel, won for Carey his first Booker. It also secured him the Miles Franklin Award, NBC Banjo Award and Foundation for Australian Literary Studies Award. It became the only second novel of Australia to win the Booker Prize after Thomas Keneally’s *Schindler’s Ark*. D. J. O’Hearn refers to it as “a monumental masterpiece, a true *bildungs-roman* where stone upon crafted stone is set carefully in place to create an edifice of towering proportions.”⁹ It is a complex symbolic tale of the arrival of Christianity into Australia. *Oscar and Lucinda* says Norma Jean Richey, “tells us the story of two misfits, unsuited both by nature and by parents who raised them according to personal rather than traditional communal values.”¹⁰ It is a tale of two compulsive gamblers, Oscar Hopkins and Lucinda Leplastrier, two guilt-ridden individuals, who are also “stubborn and tenacious and soul-sick.”¹¹

Oscar’s story begins in Victorian England. An overtly obedient child, he conforms to the rigid control of his father, a preacher and head of the Plymouth Brethren. Never doubting his father’s convictions, Oscar’s confidence in his father is fissured after the incident with the Christmas pudding. As a consequence of this, Oscar joins the Anglican Church, which he serves as a
clergyman till being defrocked in Australia. Constantly berated for his effeminate nature and physique throughout his lifetime, he makes it a habit of accepting all kinds of nasty advances very stoically, accepting it as the will of God, and forever justifying it as essential for the atonement of sin. During his friendship with Wardley-Fish he is introduced to the world of gambling. The fruits are satisfying but at the same time the guilt that it is a sin is also present. The way out that he chooses is to presume that if God wills it he will win, if not he will be duly punished. It is the ensuing guilt from actions of this kind that make Oscar undertake the perilous journey to Australia.

Raised in Australia by an unconventional mother, Lucinda comes by a fortune on her mother’s death by virtue of her lawyers conducting the sale of her parents’ farm. Subsequently she gains ownership of a glassworks factory. She resents the hold the fortune has on her but can find no way of release from this control. The conditions that her being a heiress imposes on her are even more detestable. She refuses to dress as required, has close relationships with men like the Rev. Dennis Hasset, and even indulges in gambling to the extent of losing every penny she has on her person. She meets Oscar on a ship to Australia and their love of gambling draws them close to each other.

As the novel progresses we see Oscar and Lucinda losing touch with each other only to regain it later when she encounters Oscar who has been ousted from the Anglican Church because of accusations that he never clears himself of. The
progress of their love affair is not smooth as they are never aware that their love is reciprocated by the other. With a realisation of their own passion that is never revealed there is a constant lookout for opportune moments to disclose the same. This occasion comes with the event of the glass church and its transportation to Bellingen. Lucinda bets her entire fortune on it so that when it is delivered, Oscar can be her master. Oscar, on the other hand, sees this as an accomplishment that will make him worthy of Lucinda's love. The end, however, is unexpected. Oscar, on arrival in Bellingen, with the glass church in tow, meets Miriam Chadwick and under unforeseen circumstances is forced to marry her. He then meets his end by drowning alongwith the glass church. Lucinda loses her love and her fortune to Miriam, and continues her life, becoming in turn famous among the students of the Australian labour movement.

In 1989, Carey left Australia and moved to Greenwich Village, New York, where he conducted creative writing classes at New York University. It was in New York that Carey completed his fourth novel, *The Tax Inspector* (1991). *The Tax Inspector* takes us to "a decayed, corrupt outer Sydney, whose streets are infested with packs of feral children with 'lighter fuel breath' and precocious appetites for violence, with homeless individuals inhabiting concrete pipes". It is as Veronica Brady claims 'darker, more serious and less ironic than anything he [Carey] has written so far'. The novel is set around Sydney, amongst the Catchprices, an accursed family of car dealers.
Compressed into four days, it focuses on this family threatened with ruin by a tax audit. The themes also include family violence, or more specifically, child abuse, and the origins of psycho-pathological behavior. The three strands of the story are: the Catchprices, Maria Takis, the tax inspector, and a young Armenian called Sarkis.

The reader is provided a deep insight into the character of Benny, the youngest Catchprice, his seeming efficiency, and more so his closeness to his aunt, and his subsequent dismissal from his job by his aunt.

Amidst all the financial and personal problems dominating the lives of the Catchprices, enters Maria Takis, the idealist tax inspector who is eight months pregnant. Maria is an idealist trying to survive in corrupt surroundings. Her sincerity works against her and consequently she is 'sent out on insignificant investigations such as the one into the Catchprice business.' Though she later realises her folly and manages to get herself pulled off the job, she is invariably linked to the Catchprices, moreso because of her close friendship with Jack Catchprice.

The Armenian Sarkis, representing the immigrant generation in Australia, is carried away and consequently trapped in the dreams of the psychotic Benny Catchprice. As is the case with the immigrant communities that are non-Anglo/Celtic, Sarkis and his mother are trying to ‘reinvent’ themselves as
‘Australian’. In his fear and insecurity, Sarkis turns into a victim who has to undergo excessive torture at the hands of Benny Catchprice. He becomes the guinea pig for all of Benny’s ventures till Vish, Benny’s brother comes to his aid. Although the novel has a violent end where Benny is killed in a most gruesome manner, the birth of Maria Takis’ child in the cellar, where Benny has imprisoned her, is like an affirmation of life despite all the destruction and violence that goes on for several generations.

Though *The Tax Inspector* did not get the reception that his novels had received till then, in America and England the reception was favourable. In Australia the book received, as some critics say “little enthusiasm and indeed some dismay”. 15

Carey also tried his hand at writing film scripts, one such being Wim Wenders’ *Until the End of the World*, which was released in 1992. Around this time he also commenced work on two novels, one provisionally titled “The Dog, The Duck, The Mouse”, and the other, “Magwitch”, the latter dealing primarily with Magwitch, (from Dickens’ *Great Expectations*) in Australia. “The Dog, The Duck, The Mouse” eventually appeared as *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith*, in 1994 and won the 1994 *Age* Book of the Year award.

The fifth novel by Carey, *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* (1994) takes the reader to two imaginary lands: the domineering high-tech Voorstand and the
archipelago of islands called Efica, populated by rebellious and nationalistic people. The first half of the novel takes place in the republic of Efica, beginning in the year 426 EC (by the Efican Calendar). The second half is situated in a continental Voorstand some years later. The protagonist Tristan Smith, three foot six inches tall, bandy-legged, club-footed, rag-faced, referred to as a monster and a mutant searches for his father's identity while struggling to come to terms with a birth defect. Born into a leftist Efican theatrical company, Feu Follet, Tristan has observed his mother Felicity in her attempts to subvert any attack on the cultural integrity of Efica by the Voorstand Sirkus. However, as the novel progresses, with their superior wealth and technology, the Voorstanders swamp Efica with their Sirkus centred on Bruder Mouse, Dog and Duck. The ultimate humiliation for Tristan is when he gains fame not as Tristan, but in the guise of Bruder Mouse. It suggests the final takeover of Efica by Voorstand signifying the latter's cultural hegemony.

The story of Magwitch appeared as *Jack Maggs* in 1997 and won the Commonwealth Writers' prize in 1998, the 1997 *Age* Fiction Book of the year and the Miles Franklin Award. *Jack Maggs* (1997), as suggested by most critics, is regarded as a play on a British novel, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. It is a character study of the first Australians, the English convicts who were banished to what was then a penal colony. Carey takes his protagonist from Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Jack Maggs is Carey's version of Magwitch, the convict in *Great Expectations*. The prowler in London, Jack
Maggs, is an illegal returnee from the prison island of Australia, hoping for a welcome from the son he has supported back in England, and subsequent acceptance into a society, the English society, that he yearns for. He has the demeanour of a savage and the skills of a hardened criminal. The stark reality that he was living in an illusionary world, dawns upon him when his own son, Henry Phipps, attempts to shoot him.

Carey also includes a few other characters, such as Tobias Oates, a successful writer of novels who attempts or at least purports to cure Maggs of the phantom that troubles him. The novel travels over the travails of Maggs, in his search for Henry, sometimes in the company of Oates. The reader can clearly trace how Maggs has been cast out, treated very badly, and all he can think of doing, at great risk to his own life, is to go and live with his abusers. A resolution is reached when Maggs finally realises that England has severed ties with him. All his dreams of returning to a respectable life in England are non-existent, as England looks down on him as dangerous. He returns to Australia and to prosperity accompanied by Mercy, who marries him, and who plays a major part in his reconciliation with the truth. Maggs, a banished convict, is shown trying to achieve the impossible, i.e., coming back to England, back to a respectable life. Trevor Byrne\textsuperscript{16} substantiates:

For most of the novel Maggs is so obdurate in his identification with the nation that has transported him, flogged him and would hang him
if given the opportunity that he says things such as “I’d rather be a bad smell here than a frigging rose in New South Wales” (*Jack Maggs* 250). It takes not just Phipps shooting at him to change his mind, but the realisation that the man he considered his son is prepared to be a soldier of the regime that has so brutalized him.

The realization enlightens the protagonist Maggs and as Hassal interprets his fate is an escape “to the place of a respected citizen surrounded by a loving family”. Here also, as Hermione Lee states, “Maggs gets the better of his author and goes back to Australia to look after his own children and to lead a happy, successful and wealthy life”

Between these two books, Carey also wrote a book for children titled *The Big Bazooohley* (1995), which won the Children’s Book Council Honor Book award.

In 2001, Carey once again proved himself to the world when his novel *True History of Kelly Gang* (2001), won him his second Booker prize, thereby joining the band of a select few who have achieved this rare feat. His latest novel, the eighth one, is *My Life as a Fake* (2003).

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1 For all further references to *Jack Maggs*, (JM followed by page number) will be inserted in the text.
ii) Carving a Literary Tradition

The major historico-cultural inheritance of Australia is founded on forced human displacements. However the nation has a double heritage. While it remains historically a penal colony, it was also a “Promised Land” to the immigrants. This inheritance, along with the particular physical realities of its environment have, from early times, provided writers with enough of inspiration for their works. Being a penal colony, Australia absorbed unwanted elements of 18th century England. This led to the “cleansing” of the undesired Aboriginal population. Thus as Djelal Kadir19 puts it in his article in World Literature Today, “Australia and its culture are marked by a legacy of banishments, exclusions, circumspect interest and vested circumscriptions.” A brief historical sketch of the nation of Australia is most relevant to a fuller understanding of “Australian National Identity trapped in its historical processes.” By itself, the history of Australia makes a fascinating study as it is founded on diverse cultural legacies. It makes even more enjoyable a study when trapped in Peter Carey’s fiction.

More than 40,000 years ago, several groups of people from Southeast Asia emigrated to Australia and are now regarded as that country’s indigenous population - the Aboriginals. Prior to the European influx in the nineteenth century, the Aboriginals structured their existence around nature. Their ability to endure depended on a widespread knowledge of Australia’s flora and fauna, as well as an aptitude to get accustomed to different areas of the land. When the
number of people in a group became too profuse for the land to support them, the group would segregate and move to the next appropriate piece of land. Although differences often came up amongst these groups, over time, a core culture, language, and approach to life endured. Their communal co-existence with nature suffered a permanent alteration and near extinction with the arrival of the Europeans beginning in the late 1700's.

As early as the second century AD theories of a great southland or "Terra Australis" to balance the land-masses of the northern hemisphere were proposed in Europe. Nonetheless, Australia remained unexplored by the West until the 17th century. European contact with the Australian continent was a by-product of 16th and 17th century mercantile expansion in Asia by Portugal, Spain and Holland. In 1606, the Spanish navigator Luis Vaez de Torres sailed through the strait which now bears his name. In the same year, a Dutch ship, Duyfken, at Cape York made the first authenticated landing in Australia. In 1642, Dutchman Abel Tasman reached Tasmania, which he named Van Diemen's Land. Other sightings and landings occurred, but it was not until 1770 that Captain James Cook, of the British Royal Navy sighted the more fertile east coast. Captain Cook's account of his discovery provoked much attention in England.

The European settlement of Australia was initiated in 1788 when a British penal colony was established on the east coast. From this starting point
Australia grew rapidly and continually, expanding across the entire continent. A number of reasons contributed to Britain's decision to colonise Australia. The most important factor was Britain's need to relieve its overcrowded prisons. On 13 May 1787, the first fleet of 11 ships sailed from England under the command of Capt. Arthur Phillip and reached Botany Bay on 18 January 1788 with 1530 people on board, out of which 736 were convicts. Finding the bay a poor choice, the fleet left eight days later to establish a settlement at Port Jackson, a few kilometers north. Here, Phillip began the first permanent settlement on January 26, now known as Australia Day. The settlement grew to be Sydney, Australia's biggest city with one of the world's best natural harbours. It was named Sydney in honour of Britain's home secretary, Lord Sydney (1733-1800) who was responsible for the establishment of the colony. After the establishment of the colony at Port Jackson, further settlements began at Hobart (Tasmania) in 1803; on the Brisbane River (Queensland) in 1824; and on the Swan River (Western Australia) in 1829. Melbourne was established at Port Phillip Bay (Victoria) in 1835, and Adelaide at the Gulf of St.Vincent (South Australia) in 1836. Explorations into and along the coast, helped the growing settlements expand and endure the unknown land and its climate and surroundings. Transportation of convicts from Britain to most of Australia ended in 1840 and to Tasmania in 1853. Western Australia continued receiving convicts until 1868. By 1868, more than 100,000 convicts had arrived in Australia since the settlement began.
The Europeans who moved to Australia claimed the better land for themselves. Though the Aboriginals struggled to keep their land, the fighting was unequal and they were inevitably forced to adjust to the new arrivals, becoming paupers in a land that had previously been theirs. Those who lived near the European settlements had to depend less on the land that earlier provided for them, and more on an improper diet given to them by the new settlers. The Europeans also forced them to cover their naked bodies, providing clothes and blankets which the aborigines used unhygienically and ended up suffering from various new diseases. These factors contributed to a demoralization and despondency within these groups which caused their gradual extermination. A few other groups survived by managing to retain much of their traditional customs, but ended becoming a menial part of this new world by working for the foreigners.

In 1945, as a result of the Second World War, there were large numbers of displaced people and refugees to whom Australia beckoned as a land of opportunity. The result was a huge wave of immigrants, most of them from Great Britain, and also from Austria, Greece, and other parts of Europe. Southern Europeans and people of colour were discouraged from immigrating. Jews were often less accepted than Germans, even though Germans were considered ‘the enemy’ during World War II.

In 1947, the Australian Government offered to pay for Europeans to immigrate under certain conditions. The immigrants would have to work for a period of
two years at a job assigned by the government, irrespective of their skills and qualifications. This meant that skilled immigrants were often employed at menial jobs. Alongside this development, there was evident an increasing anti-immigrant prejudice. The national workers feared that immigrants would take their jobs. Immigrants had many adverse effects on the developing post-war Australia. One of the most effective was the increase in Anti-Labor sentiment which caused the overthrow of the Labor Party in 1949.

In the mid 20th century, the Australian government began to redress the wrongs that were wrought on the aborigines. In the 1950s and 60s the aboriginals were finally enfranchised. Later governments have also committed to a programme of Aboriginal self-determination, and have given grants to Aboriginal-run organizations which provide legal and medical assistance to the groups. In addition, a process of land reclamation began in 1976 with the passing of the Aboriginals Land Rights Act. This Act has enabled some former reservations to be returned to original hands.

The distinct and peculiar features of Australia’s historical and cultural past find its representation in its literature. Australian writing reflects the ambiguities of the masses as well as the conditions of the aboriginal population, immigrant women, etc. A major share of the intensity in Australian literature is derived from the subtle as well as not-so-subtle contrasts, human and geographic, that characterize the country today. Australian literature seeks to examine and
articulate, if not to harmonise, a people for whom one common factor is a salient shared experience of displacement.

Australian literature from the very beginning has reflected its social and political history. In the first hundred years from 1788, writers wrote about the countryside, their living conditions and their surroundings. All writing was in the form of memoirs, descriptive accounts and fiction. The basic objective of this writing was to acquaint people back in Britain with the new land and the challenge faced by the convicts, squatters, and other settlers. Prominent among these were Rolfe Boldrewood, Marcus Clarke, Joseph Furphy and others.

All writing of the 19th century can be considered as the first phase of writing in Australian literature. Writing in Australia began with mapping the difference and distinctiveness of a new society establishing itself in the antipodes and at a large imaginative distance from the rest of the world. The writing of this phase was designed for the benefit of the readers back in England. Thus, the writers tried to put forth their experiences and travails in this new land. The first novel written in Australia was in Hobart, in 3 volumes called *Quintus Servinton. A Tale, Founded upon incidents of Real Occurrence* (1830-1). In this novel, Henry Savery drew on his own experiences of transportation to Australia and life imprisonment there for other offences.
Of special interest is the period from 1840-1860 referred to as the Guidebook Period. There was a whole sequence of novels providing information of life in the penal colonies. A few novels were didactic in nature written with the purpose of reformation or moral exhortation. Noted writers of this period were Charles Rowcraft, who tried to provide details of the colony and show that life in these penal colonies was not all that pleasant; Alexander Harris, whose book can serve as social history and whose comments on the conditions prevailing there are more like brief official reports; Mary Theresa Vidal, whose book aimed at reformation; Catherine Helen Spence, who tried to give a woman's point of view of life in the colony; William Howitt, who depicts Australian life and character and almost provides a source-book of life in the colony; and, Caroline Atkinson, who initiates the use of the Australian idiom in the numerous conversations she has in her work.

Australian fiction in this century had three staple themes or typical Australian themes. They were Convictism, Pastoral life, Bushranging. Writers were concerned with movement and action and violence and adventure. Four well-known novels were *Ralph Rashleigh* by James Tucker (1844-45), *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* by Henry Kingsley (1859), *For the Term of his Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke (1870-1, 1929) *Robbery Under Arms* by Rolfe Boldrewood (1882-3, 1888). Early colonial writers in the 1890s viewed the world with European eyes and wrote of Australia as an untamed land devoid of culture, tradition, and ripe for exploitation. Earlier, while much had
been spoken of the barrenness of Australia, with the passage of time, the talk about the development of its geography and society began to take centrestage.

The beginning of the 20th century produced writers like Rolfe Boldrewood, Marcus Clarke, Joseph Furphy, Henry Lawson, and Barbara Baynton. This could be considered the second phase in the flowering of Australian literature. The writers of this century, while following European traditions tried to devise ways to tell things as they were, within the context of romance. Maintaining a Eurocentric view as the earlier phase of writings, these writers attempt deviations from the earlier writings in subtle ways, without upsetting the prevalent norms. Baynton’s claim to fame lies more with her short stories than her novels. In her novel *Human Toll* (1907), she tries to show people who are all victims of the outback. Hadgraft comments appositely,

Baynton hates the bush and even, one is tempted to think, the people who live in it. There are few kindly characters in her writing, practically all being portrayed as malicious or stupid or drunken, and there is no opportunity for redemption. The mateship in Lawson’s stories is a thing not found in hers. With their grim and sordid tones they read almost as if they were a deliberate counterblast to the heroic or cheery or humorous accounts of bush life written by other storytellers of the period.21
Henry Lawson is considered as the “most Australian” of contemporary authors. With characters drawn from the smaller classes, like the squatters, he constantly tries to be “just in his portraiture”. Hadgraft\textsuperscript{22} notes, “the humour and humours of the types are caught, the turns of phrase, the outlook — it is a little world, and nowhere but in Australia at a certain time could it all exist together”. The one relation that he lays most emphasis on, is that of loyalty, the conception of “mateship”\textsuperscript{23}. Lawson was the most articulate voice of this Australian version of comradeship.

Joseph Furphy’s book, \textit{Such is Life} (1903) is supposedly diary extracts from the diary of Tom Collins, a government official with the rank of Deputy-Assistant-Sub-Inspector. The theme is that of a child lost in the bush and the story is told from the point of view of one of the men in the search party. Hadgraft claims that the book is a landmark as even to this day “an outsider would probably get a better insight into Australians from it than from any other single book”\textsuperscript{24}.

Henry Handel Richardson was another novelist in the long European tradition and, by common critical consent, is considered as the greatest novelist. Born in Australia, she wrote and lived abroad. The three novels she has to her name are \textit{Maurice Guest} (1908), \textit{The Getting of Wisdom} (1910) and \textit{The Young Cosima} (1934).
By the 1930s indigenous novels began to be written. e.g. Prichard’s *Haxby’s Circus* (1930). The 1930s saw the appearance of a series of historical novels. The 1940s and 50s were marked by a generation of conservative writers with a strong sense of traditional literary forms. The 1940s saw an increasing interest in the plight of the aborigines. There was an increase in the number of novels and short stories that reflected the growth of immigration, industrialization, and a more secure sense of cultural independence from Great Britain. Literature of these times mirrored the anxiety and doubt of the age.

Patrick White, Martin Boyd, Christina Stead and Hal Porter were other formidable literary figures. Patrick White had published three novels in 1950s; Martin Boyd had composed *Langston Quartet*, Stead had written her masterpiece and Porter was acclaimed as a short story writer and a memoirist. Patrick White, a Nobel Laureate in 1973, proved to be a great asset to Australian Literature, and gained international recognition.

Fiction writers like White, Stead, Boyd changed the trend in the 1960s. During the 1960s Australian Literature was devoted principally to a nationalistic tradition looking back to the ‘barren anecdotal realism of local literature’ found in the tradition of Henry Lawson’s bush stories. The 1960’s also witnessed the emergence of aboriginal writing. Around the 1960s and 70s, aboriginal people also begin to make their presence recognized. Ken Goodwin claims that in the last twenty five years there have been two new groups of writers visible, the
aboriginal writers in English and migrant writers in English or in European and Asian languages. All these writers too share the themes of displacement, alienation, loneliness and withdrawal like the early 19th century writers.  

Migrant writers from non-English speaking countries express feelings of alienation, loss and rejection like aboriginal writing. Made to feel like outsiders by the white Australians, who were themselves the first migrants or descendants of migrants, these writers revealed their voice around the same time as the aborigines. Amongst these writers, a few like Judah Waten and David Martin, writing in English, have been accepted by the Australian readers and are popular. Some, like the Greek writer, Dimitris Tsaloumas, write in their native language for their country of origin. With the huge waves of immigrants coming into Australia from other countries, one noticeable phenomenon is the emergence of communities of bilingual writers and readers from specific countries, sometimes even with their own publishing outlets.

Mudrooroo Narogin (Colin Johnson, whose Aboriginal identity, however, was questioned) published his first novel, *Wild Cat Falling*, in 1965. Sally Morgan, with her autobiography, *My Place* (1987), provides a poignant account of her discovery of her identity and family history, in the process narrating their social and cultural history. Kim Scott, with his novel *Benang* (1999), became the first Aboriginal writer to win the prestigious Miles Franklin Award (which he shared with Thea Astley). With these and other Aboriginal writers, Aboriginal
people thus entered into history to assert their claim to the imaginative territory of Australia—a claim especially significant in the last decade of the 20th century as Australians attempted to effect a process of mutual understanding and reconciliation. Sam Watson also gained attention with his writings. Watson in *The KadiatchaSung* intermixes intricately mythology and reality, where black and white Australians stand juxtaposed in a deadly hunt positioned in a timeless past and uncertain future.

The late 1960s saw a shift away from the mythopoeic, away from the symbols of the bush country reflected in Patrick White's books. White (*The Solid Mandala*—1966) experiments with black comedy and kitchen-sink realism. Frank Moorhouse is another writer who presented a new way in which life could be represented in fiction. His stories *Futility & Other Animals* (1969) and *The American Baby* (1972) are pioneering. He allows the world of the bars to speak and manages to treat sex as a glittering obsession. Peter Carey also gained attention with his short stories around this time. He has two collections to his credit, *The Fat Man In History* (1980) and *War Crimes* (1979). Helen Garner with *Monkey Grip* (1977), a book that takes a fresh look at the world of sex and entanglement and of love, seems to sum up the changes of the 1970s.

By the 1970s, the disillusionment of Australian writers with European traditions led the younger generation of writers to international writers like Beckett, Bellow, Kerouac, Faulkner, etc. This created a new experimental
environment in the literary field. The result was a plentitude of experimental writing. With writers like Patrick White and Hal Porter, and others, experimental writing emerged with a flourish on the Australian scene.

The changing economic and political climate boosted a new interest in experimental writing. Literary fictional publishing received a shot in the arm due to the vast sums of money allocated to it by a new Labour Government in Australia. Thus, the dominant trend was increasingly reversed. The result was that Australian writing severed itself from the essentially derivative, European traditional writing.

A new kind of writing was championed where there were "no more formula bush tales, no more restrictions to the beginning, middle and end story, no more preconceptions about a well-rounded tale". Rather, it dealt with liberalized subject matter. The writings were "often urban, inner city- dealing with things that in the 1960's had been taboo: sex, then drugs". The fabulatory tendencies of non-Australian writers like Jorge Luis Borges, Calvino, Donald Barthelme, also gained attention. These experimental writers shared a love of the bizarre, a fascination for the nightmarish, a delight in the sordid, the surreal, and the lurid. A noticeable factor was the turning of many younger writers to these international models. Writers like Frank Moorhouse, Michael Wilding and Peter Carey who were provocative and scandalous in the manner of the 1970s, broke free from all restraints and explored the many possibilities of
fantasy—sexual, science fiction, gothic. Allowing for the liberalism of their values, their stories in fact display an almost moral preoccupation with social and political attitudes. They are each highly alert to the ironic possibilities of personal encounters. In the 1980s Carey extended his range and began writing novels, still exploiting fantasy and, as much postmodernist fiction does, the interpolation of stories within stories.

The 1980s also witnessed the surfacing of a number of accomplished women writers like, Kate Grenville, Helen Garner, Glenda Adams, prominent voices which lasted through the 1990s. In all her work Grenville treads a precarious line between darkness and superb comedy in novels like *Lillian's Story* (1985) and its sequel, *Dark Places* (1994), to *The Idea of Perfection* (1999). Garner's work consists of *The Children's Bach* (1984) and *True Stories: Selected Non-Fiction* (1996), which draws upon fact as well as fiction. Among male writers, Brian Castro, Robert Drewe, David Foster, and Tim Winton similarly emerged as significant writers. Of these Winton and Foster are particularly notable for their volumes *Cloudstreet* (1991) and *The Glade Within the Grove* (1996), respectively. The contemporary Australian literary scene is dominated by fiction. Glenda Adams with her novel *Longleg* took the Book Council Prize with Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*.

Thea Astley was another highly successful novelist. Although droll and amusing, she wrote about serious issues. Astley's later novels, *Drylands: A*
Book for the World's Last Reader (1999), for example—were increasingly concerned with the dominant, two-sided problem in late 20th century Australia; firstly, how to bring about a resolution between Aboriginal and European Australians and secondly, to resolve the dilemma of white Australians vis-à-vis the dark side of their past.

Angelo Loukakis, born and educated in Australia, is a short story writer who sets his works in Greece or in the Greek communities of Australia. His volume of short stories For the Patriarch (1981) focuses on the migrant communities of Sydney. Spiro Zavos, a writer of Greek ethnic origin, sets a few of his stories in Greek communities of New Zealand. Serge Liberman, a short story writer of Russian Jewish origin, in his collections On Firmer Shoes (1981) and A Universe of Clowns (1983), writes about Jewish migrants who are confounded by human problems they face. Banumbir Wongar (real name Streten Bozic) was the most prolific and widely published migrant writer. His best known work being the stories of The Track to Bralgu (1978), most of his writing has aboriginal themes. The feature of writing the most horrendous account of the migrant experience is supposed to be that of Rosa R. Cappiello. Written in Italian and later translated into English, her Paese Fortunato (1981), a tale of a vile migrant hostel succeeded in attracting a lot of literary and political attention and added the theme of bitterness to migrant writing.
To sum up, the rise in experimental fiction in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s, intensified in 1980s and 1990s, saw many new writers gaining prominence. Peter Carey was one among these writers who came to the fore with his brand of experimental writing. In the literary climate of Australia, Carey gained attention with his short stories only by the early 1980s, the period standing out in the literary history of Australia. Peter Carey was among the first Australian writers to reverse the dominant trend in Australian literature, who along with writers like David Malouf and Rodney Hall tried to experiment with his writings and was also among the first writers to have his work published with success in Australia. Initially, Carey gained attention with his short stories titled *The Fat Man in History* (1980) and *War Crimes* (1979). However, his reputation was established and consolidated on his “crowded, fabulistic novels of the later 1980s”.29
iii) Of Influences and Views

Carey’s writings, be it his short stories or his novels, have always elicited responses that are diverse. His fiction is always inhabited by hybrid characters who live “in between spaces or on the margins”. This world that he projects is in his own words “quite normal to them (i.e. the people). Not nice, but normal”. Like all the other experimental writers who emerged in great numbers due to the characteristic conditions of the times, Carey shared too “a love of the bizarre, a fascination for the nightmarish, a delight in the sordid, the surreal, the lurid” as is evident in his works.

When at the agency, working with Barry Oakley and Morris Lurie, Carey got to read works by American and European masters such as Samuel Beckett, Saul Bellow, Vladimir Nabokov, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Jack Kerouac and William Faulkner who left lasting impressions on him. All these were experimental writers who defined and set new standards in literature. On the influences that shaped his writings, Carey reveals that “…Borges certainly did, and García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude must have - a wonderful book. ………. But earlier influences than the ones I’ve named were Faulkner and Kafka and the novels of Beckett”.

Carey has acknowledged that “García Márquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude had a huge effect on him.” Carey happened to read Gabriel García Márquez and it “just knocked me right off my bloody head – such a beautiful,
fantastic, perfect book'.

He further described Márquez as "the writer I probably most liked in retrospect" for "his ability to blend elements of fantasy and reality on a big scale". Hassal states that Carey incorporates a lot of "Márquezian transformations". There are apparent similarities in "Carey’s ability to tell a character’s story with unnerving insight in a few sentences, as García Márquez characteristically does".

Carey’s writing amply demonstrates that Márquez’s novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* had a seminal influence on Carey’s later writing, more markedly in *Bliss* and *Illywhacker*. The acknowledgement of the influence of Márquez, led him to be associated with ‘magic realism’. This concept of magic realism gained precedence with the Latin American fiction of the 1960’s. The storyteller performs the duty of conveying the community’s sense of identity and often required extremes of fantasy for adequate expression. This freedom, due to him, when practiced by the leading exponents of the times like Marquez, led to magic realism.

Around the late 1960s and early 70s, Carey began to read the work of Donald Barthelme, an American writer. Carey was “particularly affected in terms of ways of talking about things” in Barthelme’s story *The Balloon*. Bizarre incidents abound in Barthelme’s world and characters in his stories take the wildest dislocations for granted. An influential American writer of short fiction, he was known to reject traditional chronology, plot, character, time, space, grammar, syntax, metaphor, and simile, as well as the traditional distinctions between fact and fiction.
In 1972, the *Tabloid Story* magazine was launched, edited by Michael Wilding, Frank Moorhouse and Carmel Kelly. *Tabloid* championed a new sort of writing, ones that dealt with things that were considered hitherto taboo. It was this magazine that drew the attention of Australian writers by expressing an interest in the “fabulatory tendencies of non-Australian writers like Borges, Calvino and Barthelme”.

Michael Wilding, an English fiction writer and academic, was instrumental in having Carey’s first book published, the book that appeared as *The Fat Man in History*.

Carey has been described as a fabulist and his work likened to “that of Jorge Luis Borges and Donald Barthelme, a blend of surrealism and realism” thereby creating “a compelling, often nightmarish world which is mysterious and serious, fantastic yet real”. Borges, in his writings is known for his ability to take characters and ideas from other published works and reinvent or redo them. Blending fact and fiction, often mythic in resonance, many of the Borges’ stories have a vague feeling of surrealistic genuineness; and later more than a few Latin American ‘magical realists’ cited Borges as their primary inspiration. Borges showed the possibilities in narrative of presenting forking paths and thus alternative realities by cunningly mixing philosophy, fact, fantasy and mystery. In a manner akin to Borges, Carey creates “a fictional world which juxtaposes the familiar and the unexpected with the maximum suggestive effect”.

Woodcock confirms that, Carey himself has often recalled the impact of Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* with its structural divisions in a manner that the story is ‘told from different points of view... and people often contradict each other’. In the Bold Type interview Carey named James Joyce (*Ulysses*), William Faulkner (*As I Lay Dying*) and Samuel Beckett (*Malone Dies, Molloy, The Unnamable*) as “writers who would influence (him) forever”. In another interview broadcast in Australia, Carey confided that “his reading of Kafka’s *America*, Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, and *Beauty and the Beast* all influenced [him]”. In Franz Kafka’s writings the themes of alienation and persecution are repeatedly emphasized and it is a well-propounded idea that his works are considered emblematic of existentialism. Emile Zola, most famous for his long series called *Les Rougon Macquart*, was noted for his very natural portrayal of history of a family written after intense study, ranging in subject from the world of peasants and workers to the imperial court. Zola prepared his novels carefully. The result was a combination of precise documentation, dramatic imagination and accurate portrayals. Zola interviewed experts, wrote thick dossiers based on his research, made thoughtful portraits of his protagonists, and outlined the action of each chapter, thus lending immense credibility to his works. One can’t help but notice the conglomeration in Carey’s fiction of the “Kafkaesque nightmares of terror and imprisonment”, the “stomach-turning Zolaesque physicality”, lending its Latin American style magic realism as well as the influence of Samuel Beckett, Jonathan Swift and Jack Kerouac.
“Like Beckett and Kafka... and also like Swift, Carey defamiliarises the stories from which 'reality' is constructed... his satiric purpose, like Swift's, is unmistakable”.49 Beckett, an Irish novelist and playwright, one of the great names of Absurd Theatre, wrote plays that are concerned with human suffering and survival, and his characters are struggling with meaninglessness and the world of the Nothing. Beckett was obsessed by a desire to create what he called 'a literature of the unword.' He waged a lifelong war on words, trying to yield the silence that underlines them. His search for meaning drawn from silences, served to defamiliarise ordinary everyday reality that found favour with Carey. Carey found enticing the “odd use of language” in the stories of writers like Kerouac, which he found “very liberating, exciting, wonderful”.50

Graham Huggan51 notes that Carey's work “is much indebted to (Günter) Grass” and his works like The Tin Drum. Grass, in his works attempts to confront history, not by dehistoricizing it, but by locating historical events in a specific time and place. One finds in Carey's fiction surreal elements which resemble Grass' art, e.g., the omniscient narrator's narration of events in the form of a confession, the shifts in narrative voice, etc. in novels like Illywhacker and Oscar and Lucinda. Bruce Bennet, in World Literature Written in English, found similarities “between Carey's work and that of Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Evelyn Waugh...”52 Evelyn Waugh, an English writer, was
regarded by many as the leading satirical novelist of his day. He provides a very severe indictment of issues around that affected him.

In 1980, when Carey won his first major award for fiction, he also helped establish the McSpedden-Carey, an advertising agency, which did very well and was a major source of Carey’s income. The stabilization of his financial position gave the necessary boost to Carey’s literary career, for as Woodcock puts it "he was freer than most writers to maintain his ongoing commitment to take risks and experiment in his work, without having 'to worry if something sells or not'". Carey’s mixtures of lifestyles and the transitions he made from science to advertising and literature was the defining factor for his writings. Clearly, the influences on Carey are multiple. While being influenced by writers such as Marquez, Borges, Faulkner, Beckett, Kafka, Grass, the writings of The Tabloid, and the American fiction of the 1960s, Carey remains a literary giant in his own capacity.

Carey once said: “Almost everything I have ever written has been concerned with questions of ‘national identity’, a seemingly old-fashioned project that seems, to me, an alarmingly modern concern.” In the same interview he also comments that “my fictional project has always been the invention or discovery of my own country.” To Carey, confronting the Australian past which drastically affects the present, assumes prime importance. Whereas Australians do not like to celebrate the instant when the nation was born, Carey
emphatically states that "it has been something of a passion for me to do just that [celebrate Australia's inception]." Thus Carey, whose preoccupations remain centrally Australian, admits the impact of Australia, its past, its history, its developments and its present and the people, as a moulding power in his works.

In an interview with Robert Birnbaum, Carey affirmed a particular immigrant experience that an Australian has:

as an Australian writing in English, the first thing you go to do is discover your own country and present your own country in a way that it's not been presented before to your people. Secondly, if you are going to be honest, you are also writing for the metropolitan centers, as part of Anglophone literature, you have to think about those readers as well. But you can not patronize or betray your first readers.

Carey clearly patronized his first readers. He tried to discover and present his homeland in a manner unlike any other earlier representation. Australia's convict history, even though it was a relatively brief period when it transpired, in Carey's own admission, has always held his interest and also "really shaped us to an extraordinary degree - far more than we acknowledge - and in all sorts of good ways." He also acknowledges the negative side of Australia's history,
the side that he “like[s] a little bit less, as well.” Wanting to give due credit to both the positive and negative impact of Australia’s convict past, Carey takes it up with passion and enthusiasm.

More than any other Australian writer, Carey, shows an ardent concern in creating viable Australian origin myths. “We’re the only country on earth that has its beginnings in a concentration camp, a penal colony, and genocide, too” 59, Carey had once acknowledged. It is for this country that he tries to create and recreate myths using storytelling as an implement. Accepting the presence of the native indigenous aborigine and their 40,000 year old culture that was systematically wiped out, Carey seeks to draw our attention to the plight of the convicts too. These were people who also had to endure extreme hardships, and what Carey tries to foreground is their fortitude and grit in all their travails which finally led to the creation of the Australian nation. Thus instead of attracting shame, the penal past projects tales of tenacity and determination, traits any country would be proud of. He projects the myth of the Australian as a “battler”, and the real people of Australia as the working class. Carey has always asserted that keeping aside a few of his stories, the rest of his writings have been “writings about Australia”. 60

Carey shares with other experimental writers of his times a disposition for exploring the periphery of human experience. He presents characters that are as normal as any person could be. However, what draws these people apart are
their peculiarities of either experience or personality, or at times even both. The result is a transformation of the most ordinary into the most 'insane idea', that is built upon until it finally turns out to be the worst nightmare possible. The feeling that these nightmarish possibilities exist in normal everyday life is by itself chilling to the bone.

Carey believes that there is a part of the Australian national psyche “that really doesn’t like success... the Australian culture seems one that usually celebrates defeat and feels most uncomfortable with success. All our great stories are ones of defeat”.

Success is disparaged in a society like Australia. The characters in Carey’s works “tend not to understand each other ... tend not to know each other ...they don’t even get themselves right”. It is this basic misunderstanding that leads to the evolution of the narration in the novels. Disruption, disturbance and menace are interests that show forth in all of his writings. He wants to disrupt our complacent view of normality, and add new dimensions to it. He desires to drastically alter our view of normality, which he attains by a clever blend of science fiction, fable, fantasy and satire. He wishes to awaken and familiarize us to the possibilities of human experience.

Woodcock gleans out four important concerns other than national identity, divulged in Carey’s fiction. One is American imperialism and culture that has such a drastic and overpowering effect on all it comes in contact with, the same as occurred with Australia. He also attends to the hegemonistic concerns that
America indulges in, and the culture that it propagates and nurtures in its conquests like Australia. Capitalism and all its prevailing evils of corruption, bribery, nepotism, etc. Carey explores their probable fallout in terms of power and authority which affects all in the normal course of time. He also provides a damning critique of the obsessive culture of tourism.

Carey, once he gained success as a writer, has always claimed enjoyment in the wearisome work of writing novels or stories. In an interview with Nona Walia for the Times News Network, Carey states that “my mind is always working overtime. I’m self-absorbed, self-obsessed with my characters and plots. Yet, rarely are my writings autobiographical”. He denies having any interest in writing autobiographical fiction, but also admits enjoying the work of other fiction writers who use autobiographical elements in their works. In the Bold Type interview, Carey states that “For [him], the pleasure in fiction is to invent, to elevate myself, to end up discovering things I did not know when I set out. I enjoy writing autobiographical non-fiction every now and then, although it would feel unseemly to make a business of constantly confessing.”
Notes


5 Jean W. Ross, “CA Interview with Peter Carey,” Contemporary Authors 127: 74.


7 Thwaites, 402.


12 Oxford Companion, 152.


15 Hassal, Macadam 3.


21 Hadgraft, 95.

22 Hadgraft, 101.

23 Hadgraft, 103.

24 Hadgraft, 149.


26 Woodcock, 7.

27 Woodcock, 7.

28 Goodwin, 269.


30 Woodcock, 1.

31 Woodcock, 1.

32 Woodcock, 11.

33 Ross, 75.

34 “Peter Carey Books and Writers,” Ozlit, ed. Mareya Schmidt and Peter Schmidt, 22 May 2001 <http://www.Ozlit@Vicnet/AustralianLiteraryresources/AustralianBooksandWriters/Peter  Carey.htm>

35 Woodcock, 7.

36 Woodcock, 7.


38 Hassal, *Macadam* 74.

39 Woodcock, 5.

40 Woodcock, 7.

41 Ozlit, <http://www.Ozlit@Vicnet/AustralianLiteraryresources/AustralianBooksandWriters.htm>

42 WildeHootonAndrews, 151.

43 Woodcock, 20.

45 Peter Carey, Interview, Bold Type, 28 January 2003 <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0399/carey/interview.html>


47 Hassal, Macadam 29.

48 Hassal, Macadam 29.

49 Hassal, Macadam 71.

50 Woodcock, 3.


52 Ross, 73.

53 Woodcock, 8.

54 Bold Type Interview.

55 Bold Type Interview.

56 Bold Type Interview.


59 Powells Books Interview.

60 Ross, 75.

61 Woodcock, 13.

62 Ross, 76.

63 Birnbaum Interview.

64 Woodcock, 18.


66 Bold Type Interview.