

Style in Fiction Revisited: the Beginning of *Great Expectations*

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1. *Style in Fiction Revisited*

In the early 1980s, which saw the publication of *SIF* (our abbreviation for *Style in Fiction: An Introduction to English Fictional Prose*), the study of fictional prose style using the methods of linguistics was an immature field of research. In those days, with notable exceptions such as Fowler's *Linguistics and the Novel* (1977), most research on stylistics focused on poetry.

Now, twenty-five years later, the situation has changed, and the linguistic analysis of prose fiction has reached considerable maturity (see Emmott, Fludernik *Fictions*, Hardy, Hoover, Hori, Simpson, Stockwell *Science Fiction*, Toolan *Stylistics, Narrative*, and Verdonk and Weber). Partly this has been due to a shift in the centre of gravity of linguistic research – away from a core of syntax, phonology, lexicology, semantics, and towards wide-ranging interdisciplinary studies of text and discourse. Neighbouring and overlapping sub-disciplines such as cognitive science, pragmatics and discourse analysis (including critical discourse analysis) have featured in this expansion of interest. For example, Carter and Simpson argued for discourse-analysis-oriented approach and Sell for a pragmatics-oriented approach to the language of literature. On the other hand, the ability to explore whole works of literature from a linguistic viewpoint, rather than to confine attention to short gobbets and passages, has been enhanced through the methods of corpus linguistics, harnessing the power of the computer.

These broader perspectives on style were already opening up when *SIF* was written (1981), as can be noted from its chapters with such titles as “Mind style”, “The rhetoric of text”, and “Discourse and discourse situation”. However, at that stage the applications of such themes to literary style were somewhat tentative and unsophisticated relative to what is happening today. And one research domain was totally lacking in *SIF*: that of narratology, which the authors felt could be omitted because of its relative independence from the choice of language. Since then, narratology has not only developed into a major research field, but has increasingly

concerned itself with the cognitive themes on which much recent work on fictional style has centred. The “logic of the story” (Herman *Story Logic, Narrative Theory*) is no longer something “out there” in the fictional world, but is “in here”, in the minds of the reader, the narrator, the characters (Fludernik “*Natural*” *Narratology*). This growing emphasis on cognitive linguistics (the “cognitive turn” as it has been called) has been accompanied by more sophisticated theorizing about the conceptual models needed to explain the construction of meaning in literary works. One of the most promising cognitive theories is that of mental spaces and conceptual blending (Fauconnier, Fauconnier and Turner, Coulson and Oakley) which has been applied increasingly to literary texts, witness Dancygier (“Blending and Narrative Viewpoint”) and other articles in the number of *Language and Literature* that she edited. In her article in the present number of *Style*, Dancygier takes this theory further, using “narrative anchors” to show how blending of mental spaces can explain a reader’s construction of coherence for Atwood’s *The Blind Assassin* – a novel apparently broken into disjoint episodes, narrators, and texts.

Related kinds of mental modelling which represent the “cognitive turn” include theories of mental processing and how the mind represents reality. In her article on “Mind Style 25 Years On”, Semino shows how improved models involving such constructs as conceptual schemata, mental space blending, and cognitive metaphor have advanced our understanding of how the mind represents the fictional worlds of literary texts.

This emphasis on the mind does not mean, of course, that stylistics has no need to relate the cognitive world to the formal features of texts. To some extent, the remarkable growth of corpus linguistics (see McEnery and Wilson, Kennedy), alongside cognitive linguistics, has been a healthy influence, helping to achieve a balance between what is observed on the page of text and what is represented in the mind. As a corpus (in the electronic sense), the works of a great novelist reduce to nothing but a vast array of letters, spaces, and punctuation marks. Yet computational research provides tools for searching, analysing and classifying this mass of data in ways that could barely be contemplated in 1980. Hoover’s article suggests how corpus linguistic techniques can be employed to reveal the answers to large questions such as elements of continuity and change in the oeuvre of a single writer, in this case Henry James. However much cognitive linguistics and corpus linguistics seem to be at the opposite ends of a scale of abstraction, they are in fact increasingly seen as

collaborators (Gries and Stefanowitsch). The power of the computer in finding patterns of recurrence and variation can support (or challenge) the models we build to explain the cognitive workings of language in literature: for example, the patterns that can be said to form a mind style. “Corpus stylistics” and “cognitive stylistics”, two terms that have come into use since 1981, are not so compartmentalized as might be supposed.

There is another way in which advances in empirical methods can go hand-in-hand with advances in cognitive linguistics and cognitive science. The article by Emmott, Sandford and Dawydiak takes up the stylistic concept of foregrounding (in *SIF* related to psychological and linguistic salience), and shows how prominent features of text can be experimentally correlated with increases in the reader’s attention. Intriguingly, however, the text-altering technique of attention-tracking employed does not appear to register signals salient from a narratological, as opposed to a linguistic standpoint: perhaps an indication of the psychological difference between the *manner* of speaking and the *matter* spoken of. Can it be, after all, that the age-old dualist model of style (see *SIF* chapter 1) cannot be totally dismissed?

The article by Short illustrates a further meeting-ground between the empirical world of corpus stylistics and the cognitive world of meaning construction and interpretation. By compiling and annotating a corpus of both literary and non-literary texts, Short and Semino and their team (see Semino and Short) exhaustively tested out the twin scales of speech and thought presentation put forward in the last chapter of *SIF*, and showed how these needed correction and refinement by the addition of extra types of speech and thought presentation, and a whole extra scale for the presentation of written texts. The field now needs to be renamed (more awkwardly) as “speech, writing and thought presentation” (SW&TP). In the present article, however, Short focuses on the scale of thought presentation, complementing the cognitive themes of other contributions by concentrating on the way different modes of presentation characterize the narrative viewpoint.

2. The Beginning of *Great Expectations*

The themes above need to be located in texts. For this purpose, I turn to the analysis of a small piece of prose writing: an example of the “practical stylistics” that was a prominent feature of *SIF*. To those who have used *SIF* as a textbook, this section will

recall Chapter 3 of the book, which presents a method of analysis exemplified with three short passages from the beginnings of short stories. My own choice here is another opening: that of Dickens' *Great Expectations*, focusing especially on the third paragraph. The opening page of a novel may be thought too easy a choice: indeed, the selection of any passage from a long novel is unrepresentative, rather like studying the Mona Lisa by contemplating her left eyelid, and the first page of a novel is especially so, because of its scene-setting concentration of thematic interest. But choosing the start of a work of fiction does have the advantage of freedom from prior context, and for pedagogical purposes, is a handy way of giving students immediate access to issues of style.

One reason for attempting this piece of practical analysis is to illustrate what I hope are the strengths of a now somewhat neglected method, found in *SIF*, of focussing stylistic analysis first and foremost on the formal features of the text, letting these develop into a springboard for interpretation. (This is what Dancygier in her contribution describes as “constructing meaning(s)”, and I suggest that it is in systematizing this construction that cognitive stylistics has advanced the field. But a drawback of *SIF* was that such interpretative comments rested primarily on an appeal to the reader's intuitive understanding.) A second reason is to exemplify how the various themes to be explored in the other articles in this number can be integrated in application to fiction writing – something that cannot be realistically attempted except with a short extract. Constraints of space, however, mean that I will need to deal cursorily with these stylistic models, leaving many of their details to be explained in the articles that follow.

In the following extract, the third paragraph is highlighted, with lines numbered. The first two paragraphs and the beginning of the tumultuous fourth paragraph are given as context.

CHAPTER I

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister – Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above,*" I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine – who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle – I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river	1
wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first vivid and broad impression	2
of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a	3
memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found	4
out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the	5
churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also	6
Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that	7
Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant	8
children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the	9
dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes	10
and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the	11
marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that	12
the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea;	13
and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and	14
beginning to cry, was Pip.	15

“Hold your noise!” cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. “Keep still, you little devil, or I’ll cut your throat!”

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. Margaret Cardwell, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, pp. 3-4 (first edition 1861).

2.1 Foregrounding, prominence

My starting point is foregrounding: the identification of stylistic effect in what is salient or unexpected or abnormal in the use of language. Examples of norms against which the abnormal may be foregrounded are the twin principles (or maxims) of end-focus and of end-weight. End-focus is a matter of how we package information as we progress through a text:

It is based on the general fact that different parts of utterances have different communicative values. . . , and that normally NEW or important INFORMATION is reserved for the end . . . e.g. *Good food costs less at Sainsbury's*. (Wales 126).

Let us first look at a normal example of the working of end-focus (*SIF* 212-14), at the beginning of the third paragraph of the novel: *Ours was the marsh country*. The sequence of predicative complement, copula and subject is in the fitting order, because *Ours*, referring presumably to Pip and his family, is something already given by context, whereas *the marsh country* is something new to the narrative.

Syntactically, the reverse order subject – verb – predicative complement would be standard: *The marsh country was ours*. However, this would make this clause pragmatically “unhappy”, i.e. unsuited to its context – with new information placed where given information ought to be, and vice versa.

The second constraint of prose style, end-weight, is the principle (Wales 145) that “‘complex or ‘heavy’ sentence constituents will tend to follow simpler or lighter ones”. We can again illustrate this principle, end-weight, with that opening clause *Ours was the marsh country*. A rough-and-ready way to measure the weight of constituents is to count the number of words.¹ The first complement consists of just one word – *ours* – and the predicative complement consists of three words: *the marsh country*. It would thus be contrary to end-weight, as well as end-focus, if we were recast the sentence as *The marsh country was ours*. Generally end-focus and end-

weight work together, as they do here, and a violation of one is often a violation of the other.

Incidentally, from a syntactic viewpoint, one can argue that the above reordering is based on an incorrect way of analysing the text. The noun phrase in final position is not just *the marsh country*, but *the marsh country* followed by its modifiers: *the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea*. And if the whole of this is the noun phrase, then reversing the order of the noun phrases would lead to something even more contrary to end-weight: *The marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea, was ours*. This sounds awful, we would say. Surely Dickens would never write anything like that!

But, in a way, he did. Consider the last part of the third paragraph (in the box):

...the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was
Pip.

Scarcely anything could be so inappropriate, by the standards of end-focus and end-weight, as this. The subject of the clause is very heavy – 14 words – compared with the single monosyllabic word *Pip*. Moreover, *Pip* is one of the briefest monosyllables in the English language – in the British variant of it at least – a “short i” vowel /ɪ/ surrounded by two instances of one of the shortest of consonants, /p/. The vowel, moreover, is a short, high, front vowel, which, mimics smallness and lightness in many languages (Wales 363). *Pip* is phonetically about the smallest, most piffling and contemptible little monosyllable imaginable. Dickens here has produced an extreme reversal of the normal end-weight principle. The same can be said of the end-focus principle: *Pip* has been mentioned before, in the first paragraph. But this is the first mention of *the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of its all and beginning to cry*. So a much more appropriate piece of writing, according to this argument, would be:

Pip was the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry.

Furthermore, this is by no means the only part of the paragraph that violates end-focus and end-weight. It happens to be the last part of a very long sentence indeed, beginning on line 4 of the quoted passage, which contains a parallel set of similar violations (underlining marks the subject noun phrases, and a box surrounds each predicative complement):

... that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard;
 and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above,
 were dead and buried;
 and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children
of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried;
 and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and
mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes;
 and that the low leaden line beyond was the river;
 and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea;
 and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry,
 was Pip.

This prodigious sentence is a grand illustration of Dickens's penchant for parallelism. Without spending time on the details of it, let us simply note that the same pattern of contravening end-weight (and to some extent, apparently, end-focus) is repeated seven times in this one sentence. The number of words in the subject is in every case much greater than in the complement, the ratios of subject to complement being as follows: 6:2, 13:3, 10:3, 20:2, 5:2, 10:2, 14:1. In every case the subject is more than twice as weighty as the complement, and in two cases 10 times and 14 times as weighty.

Why does Dickens indulge in this "improper" style of writing? One clue to the reason can be noticed in the use of the definite article: for example, in *was **the** sea* and *was **the** marshes*. The definite article indicates something that is familiar, known: normally something a speaker typically presents as knowledge shared between speaker and addressee. But sometimes it indicates what is known to the speaker/writer, but new to the addressee. For example, at the beginning of the long sentence, in line 4, we find

*Ours was **the** marsh country, down by **the** river.* The two *thes* here suggest that these features, the marsh country and the river, were definite, identifiable aspects of Pip's environment. Similarly, the subject NPs in the parallel patterns also tend to have the definite article: ***the** dark flat wilderness, **the** distant savage lair. . . , **the** small bundle of shivers. . . so* – although these things are new information for the reader who has just picked up Dickens's novel, it is implied that they are not new, they are familiar territory – to the narrator or focalizer. Surely in this case to Pip himself?

Consider all seven parallel clauses of the form “subject *was* complement”. All the subjects beginning these parallel clauses are definite – they either begin with *the*, or *this* (another definite word) or they are names (referring of course to definite individuals) such as *Philip Pirrip, Georgiana* and *Alexander*). So although they still violate end-weight, these clauses, referring apparently to *given* information in the eyes of the narrator or focalizer, accord with end-focus. But why are these initial NPs so long? One obvious reason is that the subject NPs are old information for Pip, but new information for us, the readers. For us, Dickens has to get out his descriptive paintbrush, and tell us as newcomers what the environment of Pip was like. And, of course, he uses these long heavy NPs to give us a vivid impression of the bleakness and savagery of nature as Pip experienced it, and the forlorn atmosphere of the lonely churchyard in which Pip's parents and brothers are buried.

So we can explain the long subjects: but what about the short complements? What about *the churchyard, the marshes, the river, the sea*? These begin with the definite article, and yet are presented as if they are important, new information, both for the reader, and presumably for Pip, the lonely boy on the marshes. But why are these generic and definite features of his environment presented as new information for Pip? Surely he must have experienced these things before, and the long NPs preceding the copula show what a telling impression they made on him. I can find two reasons why “the marshes”, for example, is presented as “new”. One is that Pip has just learned the names of those landscape features; in which case, we interpret “the marshes” and similar phrases as if enclosed in quotation marks:

. . . that dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard. . . was “the marshes”.

But this makes little sense, especially when we reach the end of the sentence, and have to interpret “Pip” as if Pip were learning his own name for the first time. I prefer a different explanation, prompted by Dickens’ own words: “my first . . . impression of the identity of things” (lines 2-3). It is that this paragraph captures the stage of concept formation in Pip’s childish development, when he conceptualizes these familiar melancholy experiences; grasping them as categories of meaning. He has heard his foster-parents and his community talk before about “the churchyard”, “the river”, “the marshes”, but now he learns how to link his own vivid sensory and emotive experiences to these categories. Last but not least in the list, he becomes conscious of his own identity against the background of his environment. In brief, the textually foregrounded features of end-focus and end-weight, reinforced by the further foregrounding of parallelistic elaboration, beg the question “Why”, which leads to another level of explanation: a level on which a blending of points of view takes place (see 2.3 below).

2.2 Mind style, viewpoint

But first this new level of explanation, in terms of the cognitive development of Pip, needs careful examination in itself, in terms of two recurrent themes of prose stylistics: viewpoint and mind style. *Great Expectations* purports to be an autobiography, narrated by Pip as an adult, recalling and reliving the events of his childhood. There are three people’s viewpoints to bear in mind, and these can be conceived of as mental spaces à la Fauconnier, which blend together in an overall experience of the fiction:²

(a) That of the **reader**, who knows nothing about Pip and his environment at the beginning of the novel, and for whom the details in the subject NPs, although marked as definite and known, are actually newly-evoked experiences.

(b) That of the “I-person” **narrator**, adult Pip, remembering and recounting his early life, entering again into the experiences of childhood, but describing them in adult language far beyond the range of young Pip (“My first vivid and broad impression of the identity of things” could scarcely issue from the lips of a seven-year-old child).³

(c) That of the **focalizer**, young Pip, experiencing the terrors and discoveries of childhood, and whose intense learning experience we are invited to share. Although

the words are those of the Pip the man, the consciousness through which they are experienced is that of Pip the boy.

The concept of “mind style” is typically associated with unusual habits of consciousness, by the standards of ordinary writers and readers (see Semino’s article). Therefore it can be readily applied (using third-person narration) to a direct representation of a young child’s consciousness, such as we find in the famous opening of Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo ...

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

But there is nothing in Dickens’ renderings of childhood at all comparable to this – because, in keeping with the first-person narration, Dickens’ narrative gives us Pip’s childhood experience filtered through the experience of the adult Pip. In any case, one rather short paragraph cannot really expound a mind style: there is no space for what Fowler calls “cumulatively consistent structural options”[[insert page numbers]]. Yet there is one interesting thing to note about the depiction of the boy Pip’s consciousness in this paragraph: the use of metaphor. Semino in her article reveals the importance of cognitive metaphor to the understanding of mind style: how, for example, metaphor (in the form of personification) can be used to portray “a heightened perception of nature as a conscious, living being”. Something of this kind occurs in the depiction of Pip’s mind:

and that the low leaden line beyond was the river;

and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea;

and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

The last three clauses of the paragraph each contain metaphors. The first of the three is a visual metaphor, reflecting Pip's physical viewpoint and perhaps suggesting a horizontal line drawn by a lead pencil; the second is an animizing metaphor, rendering the wind as some kind of wild animal, and the sea as its lair; the third is something of a climactic reversal, de-animizing Pip and making him into a "bundle of shivers". But what is particularly interesting about these metaphors is that they are presented back-to-front. A canonical way in which a metaphor or a simile is expressed is "Target Domain is (like) Source Domain", e.g.: "The river is a low leaden line..."; "The sea is a distant savage lair..."; "Pip is a bundle of shivers...", the opposite of what we find in this paragraph. This reversal, which of course mimics the reversal of end-focus and end-weight discussed in 2.1 above, makes it seem as if fundamental reality, for Pip, consists of the imagery of leaden lines, lairs, and bundles of shivers, something he has to learn to map on to the categories that adults talk about. In this way, Dickens seems to bring out the truism that children learning language naturally think in metaphors alien to the adult mind.⁴

2.3 Mental spaces, blending

A further set of clues to the threefold conceptual network is the shifting use of deictic items, including tenses (cf. deictic shift theory: Galbraith, Stockwell *Cognitive Poetics*). Obviously the present tense belongs to the mental space of adult Pip, and the remoter past or perfect tense to that of young Pip. It is the interaction of these viewpoints that is interesting. Both are combined in a single sentence in: "My first vivid impression *seems* to me to *have been gained*...". The "seems" warns us that adult Pip's testimony is based on somewhat hazy memories, and the deictic expression "At *such* a time" (line 4) allows for more latitude and inaccuracy than "Then" or "At that time". Some degree of temporal vagueness is natural enough for a man recalling a distant childhood. On the other hand, other aspects of this paragraph (and particularly of the paragraph that follows) compel the view that we are projected, as if by time machine, into the consciousness of young Pip. Deictics again have a diagnostic role: the word *this* (in *this bleak place overgrown with nettles*, line 5) requires us to imagine ourselves in the churchyard, with Pip. Other words of deictic import signal an awareness of more distant features seen from Pip's point of view: "the dark flat wilderness *beyond* the churchyard", "the low lead line *beyond* was the river" and the "*distant* savage lair". In contrast, the last clause "that the small bundle

of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip” has the effect of alienation from the boy’s deictic centre. Instead of the deictic pronoun *I*, up to now shared by adult Pip and child Pip, the distancing third person proper noun *Pip* ending the paragraph seems to place the viewpoint outside Pip, mimicking his own discovery of his separate identity, and giving culminating emphasis to his solitude. In this overlapping of three, if not four, viewpoints we have a rich example of what Dancygier develops much further in her article: conceptual blending triggered in the mind of the reader by foregrounded features of the text.

2.4 Speech, writing and thought presentation (SW&TP)

However, the role of deixis has not yet been exhausted. In “late of *this* parish”, “wife of the *above*” and “children of the *aforesaid*” three more deictics appear, of which two, *above* and *aforesaid*, have a textual function in referring to a preceding part of a written message. The language changes again to the kind of epitaph language we infer to be quoted from the gravestone, as already foreshadowed in the second paragraph by: “*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*”. Here a further impersonal viewpoint – that projected by the gravestone inscription – is in play, embedded in that of the adult Pip, and presumably of the boy Pip, referring with stony matter-of-factness to Pip’s lost parents and brothers. Technically this is “free direct writing” (FDW) in the terminology of Semino and Short’s typology of SW&TP. This whole sentence beginning “At such a time I found out for certain that...” (and containing the seven parallel clauses contravening end-focus and end-weight) belongs arguably to another category: that of indirect thought, with the repeated *that* complementizer giving access to Pip’s mind, though not (as already noted) to his words. Hence there is a two-level embedding of SW&TP:

(Adult Pip’s narrative)

→ Indirect thought presenting young Pip’s consciousness

→ FDW presenting the gravestone inscription

The overt signals of the change into the gravestone quotation are archaic or formal register features – borrowed features of style that would be out of place in Pip’s recounting of his childhood memories, particularly the deictic expressions already noted: *the above*, *the aforesaid*.

This brings up a curious question of verisimilitude in the mind of the reader: at the young age when he was just making out “the identity of things”, how could Pip be expected to read and make sense of the language on the gravestone? Are we still in the mind of the boy Pip? If so, he must have been a precocious lad, learning to read gravestone language before he had learned the truth about his dead brothers and siblings, before he learned “for certain” the “identity of things”.

But we do not need to take this view. At the purported age of seven (see Note 2) he could be expected to have a limited reading ability, as is explained at the beginning of *Great Expectations* Chapter 7:

At the time when I stood in the churchyard, reading the family tombstones, I had just enough learning to be able to spell them out.

There is no implication at the beginning of the book, in the gravestone quotations, that young Pip could make good sense of what he read. But, from the reader’s point of view, we share with adult Pip the poignancy of the boy’s predicament: his only knowledge of his parents being through his encounter with their gravestones.

Nevertheless, a related question of verisimilitude is: Was it really the same seven-year-old Pip who was subsequently scared out his wits by the “terrible” voice of Magwitch whose “first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things” took place on a “raw afternoon towards evening?” I suggest this is implausible, and that the Pip whose consciousness we enter at the beginning of the paragraph must be younger than the Pip who can spell out the inscription. The admitted vagueness of the third paragraph (in *seems, at such a time, etc.*) allows licence for the telescopic compression of adult Pip’s hazy memories of young Pip into a single afternoon. Here is yet another kind of blending: the blending in the mind of adult Pip of the mental spaces of Pip at different times in his childhood.

2.5 Corpus stylistics

I have tried to show that this short passage from *Great Expectations* contains material relating to themes of four articles to follow: material relating to foregrounding, blending, mind style, and speech/writing/thought presentation. The fifth theme – that of corpus stylistics – cannot be illustrated from a short passage, as the strength of corpus stylistics (as will be seen in David Hoover’s contribution) lies in its ability to

show stylistic phenomena recurring or developing over whole texts or text collections. One small example, however, finds its starting point in the gravestone quotation just discussed. Twice in the first three paragraphs the words “*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*” occur, once with word-initial capitals, as if imitating the graphology of the gravestone, and once without: “and also Georgiana wife of the above”. The interest in this is that Dickens repeats the same phraseology, often with variation, elsewhere in the book (italics indicate the repetitions):

From the character and turn of the inscription, “*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above*,” I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. (ch. 1)

and that *Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above*, were dead and buried; ... (ch. 1)

“There, sir!” I timidly explained. “*Also Georgiana*. That's my mother.”
 “Oh!” said he, coming back. “And is that your father alonger your mother?”
 “Yes, sir,” said I; “him too; *late of this parish*.” (ch. 1)

And now, the range of marshes lay clear before us, with the sails of the ships on the river growing out of it; and we went into the churchyard, close to the graves of my unknown parents, *Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and Also Georgiana, Wife of the Above*. (ch. 35)

And I took him down to the churchyard, and set him on a certain tombstone there, and he showed me from that elevation which stone was sacred to the memory of *Philip Pirrip, late of this Parish, and Also Georgiana, Wife of the Above*. (ch. 58)

The habit of ringing the changes on repeated phraseology, highly characteristic of Dickens’ style, is something that can be investigated in detail by corpus linguistic methods (see Mahlberg).⁵ Such intratextual cross-references become, as it were, leitmotifs, which undergo variations in different episodes of the novel, accumulating thematic significance as the novel progresses. In *SIF* (61) we mentioned the example

from *Dombey and Son* of young Paul Dombey's *strange, old-fashioned, thoughtful way*, repeated a number of times in various guises until it finds its place in Paul's death scene: *The old, old fashion ... The old, old fashion – Death! .. that older fashion yet, of immortality!* One of Mahlberg's examples is the phrase *The young man of the name of Guppy* occurring 10 times in *Bleak House*, with variations such as change of the initial article (*the/a young man...*) or with no article at all, used as a vocative (*Young man of the name of Guppy!*), or with an interpolated vocative (*The young man, my lady, of the name of Guppy*).

This leitmotiv in *Great Expectations* focuses particularly on his mother's name, and recurs at points in the novel where Pip returns home. It therefore becomes a poignant reminder of the parental love and care that Pip has lacked, ensuring our sympathy for him even when his later behaviour is unsympathetic – as in his snobbish treatment of Joe Gargery and Magwitch.

2.6 Conclusion

Through stylistic analysis, I have tried to illustrate how the different themes explored in the following articles, representing innovative research developments, are capable of being closely integrated in the study of prose fiction. To bring this integration to the fore in my conclusion, I refer again to blending theory, a framework that captures the creative, meaning-constructive, nature of language processing. Triggered by foregrounded features in the reading process, the reader constructs a conceptual integration network incorporating the three chief mental spaces associated with reader, narrator (adult Pip), and focalizer (young Pip). The blending process is complex, and what comes out of it is the multi-faceted *emergent structure* (Coulson and Oakley 178-80): a reader's cognition of the interrelation between the three viewpoints of reader, narrator and focalizer, involving a characteristically Dickensian combination of irony, humour and pathos.

Notes

¹ To measure end-weight, other proposals are that one should count morphemes or syllables, or calculate syntactic complexity by the number of sub-constituents a constituent has. However, in practice these would have more or less the same outcome as counting words.

² Dancygier in “Blending and Narrative” shows how the theory of mental spaces and blending can be revealingly applied to viewpoint in fiction.

³ According to Dickens’s working notes (under the heading “Dates”) Pip was considered to be “about 7 at the opening of the story” (Cardwell, 485).

⁴ Relevant here is Coulson and Oakley’s observation that “children seem to readily produce and interpret blends without much domain-specific knowledge (182).”

⁵ Another particularly relevant publication is Hori’s study of collocation in Dickens.

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