



Proper Words in (Im)proper Places

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According to Jonathan Swift, the 'true definition of style' is 'proper words in proper places'. True; but proper words may also be in *improper* places, and this is the more interesting and challenging aspect of stylistic analysis. I will explore this conundrum with reference to the third paragraph of Dickens' *Great Expectations*, beginning 'Ours was the marsh country...' How does Dickens set up the narrator's world of his fictional autobiography by contravening the principles of End Focus and End Weight?!