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Words, Words, Words[1]

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The title of your conference this year indicates an issue that is fundamental to literary studies, that is, the way in which we approach the relationship between words and literature. This relationship is also fundamental to all language studies insofar as it is, more basically, about the relationship between words and the meanings we give to them. My understanding of this is very simple point was summed up centuries ago in Hamlet's devastatingly true reply to a question about literature posed by the characteristically verbose Polonius: " What do you read, my lord?", he asks. To which Hamlet famously responds "Words, words, words." (*Hamlet* II:ii, 191-192)

Whatever we read, or say, is always a matter of words. In fact, whatever we consciously think, too, is almost always a matter of words; it is hard to imagine thinking without words.[3]

Because the relationships between words and the meanings that we find associated with them are complex, it is possible that no two people find exactly identical meanings for any word. The differences may be so small that they make no practical difference in communication, but the differences may at other times be rather important. Another way of looking at this is to recognize that many words have multiple meanings and shades of meanings, and—separately—that each of us is an individual who also belongs to various social groups. Groups and individual's associate words

[1] This paper is mainly based on KTUDELL Student Conference, Karadeniz Technical University, May 14, 2014

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[3] Neuroscientists agree that there are some non-verbal mental activities that can be defined as "thought," but the question of what is or isn't a non-verbal thought is still not entirely resolved

and meanings in slightly different ways; as we develop us also accumulate differing, wider, associations, or personal implications, for many words too.

The meanings we find in literary texts are presented to us in the first instance as most particularly verbal, in fact most literature is highly self-conscious about its use of words, and it is one of the ways that we distinguish between literary and non-literary texts. Writers know that words mean much more than dictionary definitions and they know that they are dependent on words for their art. In the creation of their art they strive to create meanings by using the power of words' multiple associations. Like Shakespeare, many writers like to remind readers of the special and flexible quality of words to make new meanings, using all the tricks and tropes available for various effects. Some writers show us that new words can be made, and they can be made meaningful by context and reader-participation: James Joyce's famous ten "thunderclap words" in *Finnegans Wake* quite literally *make* sense as we struggle to read and understand them. This is the first:

bababadalgharaghtakamminaronnonnbronntonnerronnuonnthunntrobarrhounawnskawntoohoohoordenenthurknuk

Not just writers, wise men too know that words will communicate meanings only if the recipients are willing to open their minds to meaning; sometimes we just can't or won't respond with our meaning-making minds. There are times when talking is just a waste of breath: if your listeners are tired, hungry or excited, for instance. Here's Professor Dumbledore making a joke out of ill-timed speech-making to the newly arrived students, in Rowling's first Harry Potter book:

"Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak!" (123)

As you will have gathered from this introduction, this talk is using a simple model of the literary creation of meaning that relies on the words in the texts and in the minds of the readers working together to make that meaning. Many scholars provide deep interpretations of literary texts while taking for granted the input of the words—their contributions to the subject focus on other aspects of literary meaning. Other scholars provide close analyses of the language of literary texts for the sake of understanding the individual styles of those texts, and learning more about language and its functions. Here we will try to do both. We need to pay attention to how the vocabulary of literary

texts both makes and adds to the complex interaction of webs of meanings and associations that are known as semantic networks.[4]

As literary scholars we ask what the work of literature means as a whole, that is we may think of the text as a mega-semantic network that is made up of and includes a multitude of smaller semantic networks.

A link between vocabulary, associations and deeper literary meaning is implicit in all interpretations of literature, and—without explicitly using the semantic network model—has been openly investigated in various studies for many years. For instance, one famous study[5] of 1935 noted how the jealous and evil character Iago in Shakespeare's *Othello* very frequently uses animal or beast imagery when he's talking about people. He refers to Othello as an ass (1.3.395-6), a beast, a ram, a horse (all in Act 1 and again in Act 2), and a monster, for example. He also refers to Cassio as a fly (2.1.165-6), and to Roderigo as a dog (2.1.294); in addition to an unusual amount of animal imagery, Iago was found to reveal his obsession by repeatedly using words and expressions that refer to sexual acts, even when they are not the topic of his conversation.

Shakespeare does not directly tell us that Iago feels no respect for other humans and that he is sexually obsessed; Iago's own words show it. Psycholinguists would easily explain how it is that a person's (or a fictional character's) psychology reflects itself in his speech, often by his or her use of certain favoured words or expressions, and as members of society readers and writers already know this – we consciously or unconsciously judge people according to the ways they express themselves, because we judge people on what we know of their personal semantic networks (Iago is the sort of person who associates humans with animals, not the sort of person who, like Hamlet, considers humans as wondrous, inexplicable, even angelic).

I wish now to report some parts of two studies I have done that use analysis of vocabulary to explain deeper meanings of texts. With the first report, about the novels of Jane Austen and Charlotte

[4] See John F Sowa for definitions and explanations of different types and histories of semantic network models. The wide field of semantics to which I am applying this concept means that I am referring to hybrid semantic networks that include a large amount of implicational links or pathways.

[5] Spurgeon, Caroline. "Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us." *Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. D. F. Bratchell. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Bronte, we will investigate possible links between present-day readers' reactions to these novels and use of the word *smile* within them. The second report is based on a loosely deconstructive reading of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, and we will look at one of the semantic networks in the novel, a network related to the word *old*.

Responses to the novels of Austen and C. Bronte.

Both Austen and Bronte are presently among the most popular writers of classic fiction. Ask book lovers about Austen's novels, and they smile. It's almost guaranteed.[6] Ask book lovers about Charlotte Bronte's novels, and you get a much more mixed reaction, even though her novel *Jane Eyre* is considered to be just as great as any of Austen's productions.[7] Favourite Austen novels tend to be *Pride and Prejudice* or *Emma*, the novels which feature Austen's merriest protagonists; *Jane Eyre* is by far the best known and favourite novel by Brontë, and its protagonist/narrator is mostly sad and troubled.

Surveys of readers' comments about Austen's and Bronte's novels came up with the following frequent adjectives: Austen's novels are considered to be ""charming", "pretty", "exquisite", "Light, bright and sparkling" (Austenprose.com), "delightful", "witty" "graceful" "charming", and "brilliant." Bronte's are seen as ""wonderful", "poetic", "deep", "existential," "great", "moving", "passionate", "emotional", "dark", "gloomy" "epic." Responses to texts are of course based upon very many elements; the relatively high frequency of terms relating to light and darkness in these lists could be investigated to see if they reflect readers' memories of actual light and darkness images in the novels, for example. Bronte certainly uses the affective fallacy very often, with the weather and quality of light inside her settings being directly related to events in the novels and the emotional states of her protagonists. The question that I will concentrate on here, though, is whether Austen's reception as "bright", "witty", "sparkling" and "charming" —all adjectives that are also used to describe smiles—could be related to the frequency of smiling characters in Jane Austen's novels, and Bronte's reception to a possible absence of smiling. Initial study of the novels

[6] In lists of best-selling novels worldwide at least one, if not two or three of her novels are usually in the first hundred – even today (on Saturday evening the Amazon.com hundred best sellers, that is updated hourly, had Austen at number 36 in the Classic Literature section and at number 55 of the All British Literature section).

[7] (but it is almost always lower down in the lists than Austen: the Guardian 100 Greatest Novels puts two Austen novels at number 9 [*Emma*/*Pride and Prejudice*] and *Jane Eyre* at number 18).

from this point of view revealed that Austen displays a fine and detailed understanding of the psychology of smiling, while Bronte is more likely to describe nature as smiling than people.

There are 237 direct references to smiling in Austen's novels (that is nearly 40 per novel) , compared to 113 (or 28 per novel) in Bronte's. The discrepancy in frequencies is notable, and there is also, as indicated above, a significant difference in what these writers do with these words. Some examples are given in figure 1 below.

Austen's novels (40 smiles per novel) Only people smile.	C. Bronte's Novels (28 smiles per novel) Often it is nature that smiles, not people.
Positive modifiers include : "sweet", "agreeable", "attractive", "playful" , "kind", "tender", "good humoured", "arch", "satisfied", "gaily" [and more].	Positive modifiers include: "soft", "friendly", "luminous", "exulting", "amused", "smile of approbation" (twice); "kind", "not unkind", "smile of pleasure" [and more]
Ambiguous modifiers: : "the usual" "reluctant", "relenting", "reproachful", "incredulous", "serious", "conscious", "little", "faint", "half", "half a sigh and half a smile" .	Ambiguous modifiers: "involuntary", "grateful", "extraordinary", "not unkind", "a smile of feeling" "peculiar", "slight", "strange", "slow", "rare", "faint", "provocative".
Negative modifiers: "set", "forced" [only these]	Negative modifiers: "bitter", "mocking", "sardonic", "a quiet sarcastic smile", "a smile, slight and brief, but bitter, distrustful"; "a half smile" (x 5).

Where many of Austen's smiles are shown depicting pleasure, humor and dynamism, Bronte's smiles tend more towards the undefined, ambiguous, or constrained. Only Bronte has frankly unpleasant smiles. Similarly, while absences of smiles in Austen are noted frequently in the form of characters trying to hide a smile of pleasure, in Bronte characters can be described as "unsmiling" (4 times), a word that is never used in Austen's novels.[8]

[8] ("trying not to smile" (twice), "endeavouring not to smile", "suppressed a smile" "hardly knew whether to smile or sigh", "Emma would not have smiled for the world", "Elizabeth could hardly help smiling", "Marianne could not help smiling", "Elinor could not help smiling", "Elizabeth could not help smiling"). On one occasion each Colonel Brandon (SS, Chapter27) and Emma valiantly "tr[y] to smile" (Chapter 49), but maybe with less success than those characters who manage 'forced' smiles. Slightly fewer are the examples of miserable

Studies have revealed many effects of smiling in interpersonal interactions, and we find that for almost every one of these there are clear examples in the Austen corpus. The effects of smiling that can be seen in Austen's novels include the following: more than half of the people we smile at will smile back (Hinsz and Tomhave); "smiling makes us more attractive" (Stibich, Walsh and Hewitt); smiling increases trust, likeability and cooperation between smilers and smilees (Godoy; Mehu *et al*.), it induces greater helpfulness, tolerance and forgiveness in the smiles, even where crimes have been committed (Guegen, Solomon *et al*, LaFrance et al); and smiling in response to one's own embarrassment renders witnesses less judgemental (Keltner et al.); it even increases one's financial earnings (Tidd and Lockard; Godoy; Scharlemann et al.).

Why, though, should a high frequency of smiles in Austen's novels make her works liked in the particular way that we have found, and make readers respond with adjectives like "delightful", "witty", and "enchanting"? It is possible that there is a connection between these novelistic smiles and the readers' affectionate: all the findings about smiling in real life, the ones that have been listed above, could be adapted to a long-distance effect between words and readers, and such a long-distance effect is explained by what is called "the Halo Effect".

This describes the fact that one (or more) perceived trait will often distort a perceiver's judgment of the whole person displaying that trait, for instance the physical attractiveness of a person's face encourages a perceiver to see that person as pleasant and intelligent. Thus we could posit that frequent encounters with attractively smiling characters in novels cause readers to respond to the whole novels in much the same way as they would respond to the smiles. We may thus adjust the list of findings given above to suggest the following:

- more than half of the readers will smile back at smiling characters;
- smiling characters are found by readers to be more attractive;

withholding of smiles: there are two in MP, two in NA, and once each in P, SS and Emma. There are none at all in PP. It is the other way around in Bronte's case: there are only two half-way cases, where smiles are noted as "rarely" or "seldom" given (both in Shirley), all other absent smiles are simply miserable: in Jane Eyre (Chapter 26) we have "… without speaking, without smiling, without seeming to recognize in me a human…" and in Chapter 27 "you gave me no smile in return", and there is one miserable withheld smile in each of The Professor and Villette.

- smiling characters increase trust, likeability and cooperation between novels and readers;
- smiling in novels induces in readers relaxation and greater openness to them: tolerance for parts they do not appreciate and forgiveness for aspects they do not agree with;
- smiling characters create happier and less judgemental readers;
- Smiling in novels may increase their popularity, sales and consequent financial earnings

To summarise this chain of thought: Austen uses smile words significantly more frequently than other writers like Bronte, and smile research informs us that we react positively when faced with smiles, and these effects include such pleasant experiences as a lowering of stress levels. We know that reading, like all understanding, involves responding to semantic cues, so the claim that textual semantic cues (eg reading about people who smile) can affect readers in a way similar to other meaningful experiences (like meeting people who smile) is uncontroversial. The halo effect explains that our reactions smiles are likely to be extended to other aspects of the smiling person or smiling text. Therefore we respond to Austen's extraordinarily "smile-full" novels with more smiles and less stressful emotions than we do to less "smile-full" novels.

The research upon which the foregoing was based put Austen's choice of words to work in answer to a rather non-literary question about the continuing widespread popularity of her works, although it indicated also some other areas of possibly fruitful textual research. My second and last report is more evidently connected to literary studies, and it concerns a reading of *Great Expectations*, a novel that traces the successful escapes from their confined lives of three young orphans: Pip (who is also the narrator and protagonist), Biddy and Estella. Readers always know that the protagonist will survive because he narrates his own story from a retrospective perspective. Furthermore, the title prepares readers for positive changes, new things and optimism, and the plot is geared towards progress and improvements in these orphaned characters' lives. And yet the ending – which Dickens found very troublesome and rewrote 6 times – provides only a muted sense of success, and certainly none of the triumphal type of victory over adversity that conventional Cinderella plots provide. A study of the novel's use of the semantic network of *old* showed how and why this is the case. Here is a summary of the study's argument:

> Exploring the narrator's descriptions of various historical, old or degenerating elements that surround his younger and forward-moving protagonist, investigation of uses of the word *old* provides evidence of conflicted and contradictory views of the past and of things belonging to the past in this novel, and indicates that, on balance, the novel's stance towards the past is part of a deeper and more pervasive oppression of the awareness of death in the midst of life. (Sönmez 2014)

Old things are everywhere in this novel, and the word old is used to describe them and also to describe old habits, old times, old people, and even people and things that are not old but are referred to affectionately as "old", anyway.

First of all, the setting is old in the sense of historical, as it has to be in any retrospectively narrated novel. The narrator is keen to remind us of just how old-fashioned the world he describes is: "Pip's parents lived, we are told, "long before the days of photographs," before striking matches were invented (*GE* Ch. 2) and steam power "was yet in its infancy" (Ch. 7), an older schooling system was still in place (Ch. 35) and there were prison ships in Kent (the last hulk was destroyed in 1857[9])." (Sönmez "Old *Expectations*").

Then, in addition, Dickens' narrator . . . presents most of the novel's [physical] settings as being already old at the time of the action: Joe's house is of an old wooden type (Ch. 2), and the local landmarks include "old marsh churches" (Ch. 8), the Old Battery (frequently mentioned throughout the novel), which supports an "old gun" (Ch. 3). In town Satis House is described as old and grim (Ch. 12) or dull and old (Ch. 17); its very bricks, even its garden and garden wall are old (Chs 8 and 29), and the ivy that grows up the walls of the house is described as "sinewy old arms" (Ch. 29). Out beyond the marshes lie the dreadful hulks, ships that have been put to use as prisons because they are defunct and rotting, and not sea-worthy any longer.

Other places that are old include the ancient coach in which Pip makes his first journey to London. That is, while he thinks he is moving forwards towards the future and his great expectations he in

[9] *Victorian Crime and Punishment*. E2BN, 2006. Web. Accessed 3.8.2010. <http://vcp.e2bn.org/justice/page11361-types-of-punishment-imprisonment.html>

fact has to step backwards in time in order to get there. To emphasize this irony, London— the most fashionable city and the place in which he believes he will be starting his new and wealthy life—is found to contain only old and dusty or even decaying structures, with mentions of such old institutions as the Inns of Court, Newgate prison, the Tower of London, and places whose names proclaim their antiquity: the Old Bailey, the Old London Bridge, and Old Green Copper Rope-Walk. In Jaggers' chambers Pip finds himself so "oppressed" by "by the dust and grit that lay thick on everything" that he has to go out (Ch. 20) [. . . .] Pip is accommodated in rooms . . . [where he finds everything in a state of "dusty decay, and miserable makeshift" (Ch. 21). Even the Wemmicks' relatively new abode is built in the form of an ancient castle. There are very many more examples of places that are emphatically described as old. Here is just one instance:

> We came to Richmond . . . a house by the Green; a staid old house, where hoops and powder and patches, embroidered coats rolled stockings ruffles and swords, had had their court days many a time. Some ancient trees before the house were still cut into fashions as formal and unnatural as the hoops and wigs and stiff skirts; but their own allotted places in the great procession of the dead were not far off, and they would soon drop into them and go the silent way of the rest.
>
> A bell with an old voice—which I dare say in its time had often said to the house, Here is the green farthingale, Here is the diamond sword Here are the shoes with red heels and the blue solitaire,—sounded gravely in the moonlight, . . . (*GE* Ch. 33)

Three other important types of oldness are found regularly in the novel. These are the following:

- Pip's life is regulated by old institutions like that of the old system of dame schools, apprenticeship, the legal institution, the old class system
- Pip's life is also controlled by old people: Miss Havisham and Magwitch; his emotional life is largely shaped by his old love for Estella
- "Old" is used as a term of affection (still commonly used in Present Day English, although in Dickens's time it was a feature of the dialects of Essex and Kent—that is, of Pip's marshes—(Sönmez "Authenticity")).

What meaning does this insistence on old things have? Actually, many meanings. The following interpretations are taken from the forthcoming article "Old *Expectations*":

"Pip when we first see him is in search of the 'authority' [. . .] that would define and justify—authorize—the plot of the rest of his ensuing life" (Brooks 115), and for this authority he turns to the past and to old things: the tombstones in the graveyard. He reanimates and rejuvenates the dead through his imaginative faculty, creating for himself a sturdy father, a freckled and silly (youthful looking) mother, and five unthreateningly inert brothers. Pip will continue to see the old, dead and dying as instructive but also as oppressive. He seeks authority among the old graves, just as he tries to learn from a ragged book, an old seed catalogue and an old letter form resembling a buckle (Ch. 10), but in all these cases he finds that the decaying shells of structures, the aging and dying posturing of things, people and places have been long emptied of authoritative or fertile substance.

Pip's search for his own beginnings in a way never ceases, or at least we can say that he feels the need to reassure himself of his origins at regular intervals of return (both mental and physical) throughout his maturation. This is one way of explaining the almost fatalistic attraction and repulsion that the past holds for him. It is felt to hold the secret to the core of himself and perhaps even to the truth of things: when Pip returns to Joe and the forge, hoping to marry Biddy and settle into the old life there, he feels "a sense of leaving . . . untruthfulness further and further behind" (Ch. 58).

III. Romantic, sentimental and nostalgic perspectives on things of the past

Connected to personal myths of origins is the Victorian idea of truth adhering to old, simple, and unspoiled rural ways of life, an idea directly inherited from Rousseauian and then Wordsworthian Romanticism (Sönmez "Authenticity"). It is alluded to by the narrating Pip in the later chapters of the novel, in his descriptions of his old home ("the old kitchen" and "my own old little room" in Ch. 35, the second quotation being repeated in Ch. 57; "the dear old forge" and "the old place" in Chapter 57, "the old deal table" (58), the "old kitchen door" and "the old place by the kitchen firelight" (59)); he even sentimentalises that site of so much suffering and fear, Satis House, as "the old spot" , exclaiming over the faint outlines of the razed house "Poor, poor old place!".

Any tendency to elevate such sentiments to a genuine Romantic admiration of a more innocent past are very notably negated by the novel's association of such old days with violence, abuse, misery and

the urgent desire to escape, and the frequent reminders of these miseries that Pip's reported thoughts, memories and guilty conscience present to the readers. Nevertheless, in spite of great unhappiness in the days of their youth. Pip, like Joe, clings to old places and routines with the desperation of a soul adrift in an unknowable world. Pip's adherence to the familiar is covert, mental and implied by his inability to stop comparing himself and all around him to his earliest memories. For all Pip's willed rejection of the Forge and its way of life, he constantly returns to it in his mind from the first moments of leaving it until the final physical return in the last Chapter. . . . however much he struggles to distance himself from his childhood environment he remains in thrall to the idea of a lost innocence. The adult narrator constantly implies that Pip is actually searching his memory for a primal state of peace of mind—something that he is shown never to have – actually - had.

IV. Habituation, familiarity and affection

The word "old" has many meanings, all associated with each other. In using the word very frequently, even when it refers to a meaning that is not directly to do with age, the ubiquity of the past is indirectly emphasized. The colloquial use of "old" as an epithet of familiarity or affection is a characteristic of some dialects of England, and in the nineteenth century it was noted as being particularly frequently used in Kent. As Parish and Shaw (111) note, it was so frequently used as to be almost completely bleached of its age-related meaning, and even sometimes to mean almost nothing at all:[10] the "Old Clem" of the blacksmith's song is "old" for reasons of historicity, affection, familiarity and tradition, a much as, or perhaps more than, for reasons of the patron saint's age when alive; at the age of seven, Pip is already—poignantly—an "old chap" to Joe, and is addressed by him in this way throughout the novel, often three or more times in one paragraph.

Other characters use the word in the same way, too.

V. The oppression of the old

While old places and older people pervade the novel, as they do in so many of Dickens's novels, in *Great Expectations* they are frequently shown as oppressors of the protagonist.

[10] They give the amusing example of 'this old baby' to show how the word could be (and can be) used in even the most unlikely of conjunctions.

Young Pip's maltreatment by so many people older than him forms a large part of the novel. Even when oppressive characters are not particularly aged, their relative seniority, and their physical signs of ageing are lingered upon enough to present them as older than they are. Mrs Joe and Miss Havisham are not very elderly people, Pip's sister being, presumably, not much more than 20 years older than Pip (which makes her 27; according to Dickens' calculations Joe is 29 at the opening of the story (Dickens 446)), and Miss Havisham at the end of the novel is 56 years old, and yet in them are invested all the weight of years of bitter disappointment and dreary routine life. Miss Havisham especially, with her physical decrepitude is presented as a very old woman.

In addition, we are also constantly made aware of Pip's exceptional sensitivity to the looming presence of old objects and places. To name most, but not all, there are: the graveyard, the marshes, Satis House and Miss Havisham, the deserted brewery; the Old Battery, the return of Joe's old file, the old paper money given to Pip in the Three Jolly Bargemen, the old shoes that Joe and Biddy throw after him when he leaves home, the old coach, the glowering casts of dead (old) criminals in Jaggers' office and his old clerk, the old parts of London named in so many places throughout volumes two and three, and finally the 'old marshes' that Old Orlick lures Pip to.

VI. Reminders of mortality [memento mori]

In *Great Expectations*, almost all these old things, people and places, together with the plentiful signs of decay that accompany these images of oldness, are constant reminders of the final "stage" of life: they function as memento mori.

The novel is, for a start, well populated with ghosts. Pip's first reference to Magwitch is that he has "start[ed] up from among the graves" and his last thought on running back home that evening is that he was a hanged "pirate come to life" (Ch. 1). Later that night he dreams of "a ghostly pirate calling out to me . . . that I had better come ashore and be hanged there at once, and not put it off" (Ch. 2). Miss Havisham, in addition to having the long white robes and corpse-like attributes of a gothic ghost, lives a death in life that renders her, effectively, a ghost. She reminds him of "a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress" (Chapter 8); it is no surprise that Pip thinks he sees her ghost. The Bernard of Bernard's inn is referred to as "a disembodied spirit" and when Estella fleetingly reminds Pip of someone (Molly) but he can't remember who, he calls the image in his mind a ghost (Ch. 29); on a comic note, both Pip (Ch. 31, 27) descriptions of Wopsle's rendition of Hamlet concentrate on the

ghost scene and the graveyard scene. Wopsle's dresser also chooses to talk about the ghost scene while bringing Pip and Herbert to Wopsle's dressing room.

Several living people act directly as uncanny reminders of death. Miss Havisham is again the most striking example, but there are other, most subtle instances, too. Bentley Drummle and the Richmond house owner's daughter both look old in spite of being young (and the house-owner, a widow, has a young face in spite of being old, an equally uncanny appearance); Magwitch, with his visible injuries and ageing, and all his references to the earth, mud, and hunger . . . , remains throughout the novel much the same as Pip had, in more innocent days, perceived him: an escapee from the grave.[11] By far the most unusual of human memento mori in this novel is Wemmick, however, with his collection of "portable property", all reminders of executed prisoners, many of them worn about his person: "he appeared to have sustained a good many bereavements; for, he wore at least four mourning rings, besides a brooch representing a lady and a weeping willow at a tomb with an urn on it. I noticed, too, that several rings and seals hung at his watch chain, as if he were quite laden with remembrances of departed friends" (Ch. 21).

The passing of time and generations is powerfully evoked in many descriptions of old, decaying objects and buildings. Which has already been mentioned.

I'll finish this summary of the meanings of "old" in Great Expectations by mentioning its close association with a set of images associated with death, and specifically with burial: earth, dust and ashes. Earth, or soil, in the form especially of mud is exaggeratedly prevalent in powerful scenes connected with Magwitch. I have discussed these elsewhere ("Authenticity"), and concluded that Magwitch is an uprooted figure, "always on the verge of being sucked back down into the bowels of the earth". Dust is simply everywhere in *Great Expectations*, sometimes alternating with the less frequent but ultimately more threatening ash, both words powerfully associated with Christian burial rites.

[11] Dickens gave him such an exceptionally peaceful and saint-like death perhaps for that reason: for Abel Magwitch (whose name is that of the first murder victim), death would be a home-coming.

Even ignoring the many dusty and ashy things in Satis House, because they are too numerous to detail,[12] there are many instances in this novel of Pip singling out dust or ashes as representatives of feelings, or of dirt or age, and always, somehow, of death. Here, for example, [he starts] to describe the depression that fell upon him with his apprenticeship: " I only felt that I was dusty with the dust of small coal, . . ." (Ch. 14), and here he is in Ch. 19, praising the honesty and relief of tears, . . . "we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts". Jaggers' casts of dead criminals . . . , are "stuck [. . .] on [a] dusty perch for the blacks and flies to settle on", and Pip finds his spirits greatly "oppressed by . . . dust and grit that lay thick on everything" (Ch. 20). Pip's first impressions of Bernard's Inn are described in terms redolent of burial, dust and ash, decay and death: the place, he says, "looked to me like a flat burying-ground" and everything in and around if is in a state of "dusty decay". Having understood that the "Bernard" of the place's name, is no living person, he sees this "miserable" setting as a place where "the vengeance of the soul of Barnard were being slowly appeased by the gradual suicide of the present occupants and their unholy interment under the gravel. A frouzy mourning of soot and smoke attired this forlorn creation of Barnard, and it had strewn ashes on its head, and was undergoing penance and humiliation as a mere dust-hole"(*GE* Vol II. Ch. 2)

Out of the several functions of the word "old" in *Great Expectations* that have now been discussed, two dominate the novel. Examples serving these functions are by far the most numerous and frequently repeated within the novel. These functions belong to the last two categories to have been discussed: the oppression of the old, and old elements acting as memento mori.

In addition to this finding, I should mention that there was a surprisingly t weak support for any Romantic, sentimental or nostalgic use of images of the past. In fact, any such connotations of oldness are rendered ineffective or even ironic by the contents and contexts of their appearances (Joe's violent and abusive past, the desires of both young Joe and Pip to escape from their pasts, the fact that Pip's memories haunt and disturb him rather than offering solace or a sense of home; the overall tendency of memories as well as old objects to oppress. In this reading of the novel, the

[12] Though the repeated associations made between Miss Havisham and ash, foreshadowing her burning, merit a goo paragraph in themselves. Note, for instance, how in Ch. 49 she has been contemplating an "ashy fire" when Pip finds her in his last visit.

background to the narrator's lapses into sentiment or nostalgia completely deconstructs any Romantic version.

Counter-movements in the novel were revealed or emphasized in the analysis of the novel from the perspective of the old. The greatest of these is the not very original observation that the further away in time Pip moves from his village the more powerful is the hold of his imagined past on him: by the time that he has taken on the writing of his own story the narrator seems to believe that it is only through internalizing Joe's conservative steadfastness, work ethic and a dignity based upon integrity that he has become a mature gentleman. Deeper than this, though, the text conceals—or rather reveals only to those examining the issue—an almost fatalistic submission to the oppression of passing time and abusive authority of the old, and an omniscient, great fear of death.

Conclusion

I hope the investigations of literature through language that I have presented in the second half of this talk have shown that it is not necessary to consider oneself as either a "language person" or a "literature person" when it comes to writing about either topic, for indeed they do overlap and become one and the same thing when seen through the perspectives of meaning-making. I based the talk on a simplified model of semantic network theory, and found that in answering different questions about texts I had also to make use of theories from different disciplines, although not all of them could be mentioned today: these included social psychology (Smile Theory), business and management (the Halo Effect), philosophy (Derrida's ideas of Deconstruction, Origins, Archive, Trace and Mourning), and psychology (Freud's theories of Trauma, Spectrality and the Death Drive).

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