

CORSO DI LAUREA IN LINGUE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE  
LETTERATURA INGLESE I - CURRICULUM A (A. A. 2014/15)

*Great Expectations* (Part 1) - 12/11/2014

1. Teorie estetiche di Dickens

- Charles Dickens (1812-1870): “the exploration of community”
- Prefazione di *Bleak House* (1853): “I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things”
- Primo numero di *Houseworld Words* (1850): “To show to all, that in all familiar things, even in those which are repellent on the surface, there is Romance enough, if we will find it out: - to teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination; to bring the greater and the lesser in degree, together, upon that wide field, and mutually dispose them to a better acquaintance and a kinder understanding - is one main object of our Household Words.”
- Harold Bloom: il *free will* Dickensiano [citaz. 1]

2. *Great Expectations* e il “Bildungsroman”

- C. Swinburne: “the defects are as nearly imperceptible as spots on the sun or shadow on a sunlit sea”
- D. Trotter : “a story of moral redemption”
- *GE* come una parabola di redenzione morale e revisione cognitiva. [citaz. 2-3]

3. Coordinate Narratologiche

- Il **punto di vista della narrazione**: la narrazione è di tipo omodiegetico (autodiegetico) con focalizzazione interna alla voce narrante. [citaz. 4-6]
- la funzione di **regia** (metalinguistica): tramite cui il narratore interviene sull’articolazione del racconto attraverso considerazioni di natura metanarrativa [citaz. 7-9]
- la funzione **testimoniale** (emotiva): tramite cui il narratore mostra il suo rapporto morale ed affettivo nei confronti delle vicende narrate [citaz. 10]
- la funzione di **comunicazione** (fatica o conativa): tramite cui il narratore cerca di mantenere un contatto, anche sotto forma di dialogo, col narratario [citaz. 11-12]
- la funzione **ideologica** (poetica): il narratore commenta in maniera esplicativa l’azione [citaz. 13-14]
- **tempo** della scrittura e tempo della storia: l’età di Pip, le “great expectations” [citaz. 15-19]
- **spazio**: Londra (tra idealizzazione e “taint of crime”), Newgate e Satis House [citaz. 20-23]

4. Il motivo del tempo meteorologico e del paesaggio: la *Pathetic Phallacy*

- “Pathetic phallacy”: la nebbia [citaz. 24-25]
- Il ruolo del tempo atmosferico [citaz. 26-27]
- Il processo di reificazione: Magwitch e Wemmick [citaz. 28-29]

**Citazioni – Lezione *Great Expectations* (12-11-2014)**

- 1) "The aesthetic secret of Dickens appears to be that his villains, heroes, heroines, victims, eccentrics, ornamental beings differ from one another *in the kinds of will that they possess.*" (Bloom 2006, p. 4)
- 2) "He watched me as I laid my purse upon the table and opened it, and he watched me as I separated two one-pound notes from its contents. They were clean and new, and I spread them out and handed them over to him. Still watching me, he laid them one upon the other, folded them long-wise, gave them a twist, set fire to them at the lamp, and dropped the ashes into the tray." (*GE*, 1996, Ch. 39, p. 381)
- 3) "FOR eleven years, I had not seen Joe nor Bidley with my bodily eyes -- though they had both been often before my fancy in the kitchen, I laid my hand softly on the latch of the old kitchen door. I touched it so softly that I was not heard, and looked in unseen. There, smoking his pipe in the old place by the kitchen firelight, as hale and as strong as ever though a little grey, sat Joe; and there, fenced into the corner with Joe's leg, and sitting on my own little stool looking at the fire, was -- I again!  
'We giv' him the name of Pip for your sake, dear old chap,' said Joe, delighted when I took another stool by the child's side (but I did *not* rumple his hair), 'and we hoped he might grow a little bit like you, and we think he do.'" (*GE*, 1996, Ch. 59, p. 481)
- 4) "Since that time, which is far enough away now, I have often thought that few people know what secrecy there is in the young, under terror. No matter how unreasonable the terror, so that it be terror." (*GE*, Ch. 2, p. 15)
- 5) "'Why don't you cry again, you little wretch?' 'Because I'll never cry for you again,' said I. Which was, I suppose, as false a declaration as ever was made; for I was inwardly crying for her then, and I know what I know of the pain she cost me afterwards. (*GE*, Ch. 11, p. 86)
- 6) "I was to leave our village at five in the morning, carrying my little hand-portmanteau, and I had told Joe that I wished to walk away all alone. I am afraid -- sore afraid -- that this purpose originated in my sense of the contrast there would be between me and Joe, if we went to the coach together. I had pretended with myself that there was nothing of this taint in the arrangement; but when I went up to my little room on this last night, I felt compelled to admit that it might be so, and had an impulse upon me to go down again and entreat Joe to walk with me in the morning. I did not." (*GE*, Ch. 19, p. 159)
- 7) "Over and over and over again, we would make these journeys, and sometimes they would last as long as three hours at a stretch. I insensibly fell into a general mention of these journeys as numerous, because it was at once settled that I should return every alternate day at noon for these purposes, and because I am now going to sum up a period of at least eight or ten months" (*GE*, Ch. 17, p. 133)
- 8) "If my time had run out, it would have left me still at the height of my perplexities, I dare say. It never did run out, however, but was brought to a premature end, as I proceed to relate." (*GE*, Ch. 12, p. 95)
- 9) "A great event in my life, the turning point of my life, now opens on my view. But, before I proceed to narrate it, and before I pass on to all the changes it involved, I must give one chapter to Estella. It is not much to give to the theme that so long filled my heart." (*GE*, Ch. 37, p. 299)
- 10) "By the wilderness of casks that I had walked on long ago, and on which the rain of years had fallen since, rotting them in many places, and leaving miniature swamps and pools of water upon those that stood on end, I made my way to the ruined garden. I went all round it; round by the corner where Herbert and I had fought our battle; round by the paths where Estella and I had walked. So cold, so lonely, so dreary all!" (*GE*, Ch. 49, p. 401)
- 11) "I think it will be conceded by my most disputatious reader, that she could hardly have directed an unfortunate boy to do anything in the wide world more difficult to be done under the circumstances.." (*GE*, Ch. 8, p. 59)

- 12) "That was a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me. But, it is the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different its course would have been. Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day." (*GE*, Ch. 9, p. 72)
- 13) "According to my experience, the conventional notion of a lover cannot be always true. The unqualified truth is, that when I loved Estella with the love of a man, I loved her simply because I found her irresistible. Once for all; I knew to my sorrow, often and often, if not always, that I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be. Once for all; I loved her none the less because I knew it, and it had no more influence in restraining me, than if I had devoutly believed her to be human perfection." (*GE*, Ch. 29, p. 232)
- 14) "What have I done! What have I done!" She wrung her hands, and crushed her white hair, and returned to this cry over and over again. "What have I done!"  
I knew not how to answer, or how to comfort her. That she had done a grievous thing in taking an impressionable child to mould into the form that her wild resentment, spurned affection, and wounded pride, found vengeance in, I knew full well. But that, in shutting out the light of day, she had shut out infinitely more; that, in seclusion, she had secluded herself from a thousand natural and healing influences; that, her mind, brooding solitary, had grown diseased, as all minds do and must and will that reverse the appointed order of their Maker; I knew equally well. And could I look upon her without compassion, seeing her punishment in the ruin she was, in her profound unfitness for this earth on which she was placed, in the vanity of sorrow which had become a master mania, like the vanity of penitence, the vanity of remorse, the vanity of unworthiness, and other monstrous vanities that have been curses in this world?" (*GE*, Ch. 49, pp. 398-399)
- 15) "I WAS three-and-twenty years of age. Not another word had I heard to enlighten me on the subject of my expectations, and my twenty-third birthday was a week gone. We had left Barnard's Inn more than a year, and lived in the Temple. Our chambers were in Garden-court, down by the river." (*GE*, Ch. 39, p. 312)
- 16) "FOR eleven years, I had not seen Joe nor Bidly with my bodily eyes -- though they had both been often before my fancy in the East, I laid my hand softly on the latch of the old kitchen door." (*GE*, Ch. 59, p. 481)
- 17) "'Bear in mind then, that Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better. Bear that in mind, will you?' repeated Mr Jagers, shutting his eyes and nodding his head at Joe, as if he were forgiving him something. 'Now, I return to this young fellow. And the communication I have got to make is, that he has great expectations.'  
Joe and I gasped, and looked at one another.  
'I am instructed to communicate to him,' said Mr Jagers, throwing his finger at me sideways, 'that he will come into a handsome property. Further, that it is the desire of the present possessor of that property, that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman -- in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations!'" (*GE*, Ch. 18, p. 138)
- 18) "But the village was very peaceful and quiet, and the light mists were solemnly rising, as if to show me the world, and I had been so innocent and little there, and all beyond was so unknown and great, that in a moment with a strong heave and sob I broke into tears. It was by the finger-post at the end of the village, and I laid my hand upon it, and said, 'Good-bye O my dear, dear friend!'" (*GE*, Ch. 19, p. 160)
- 19) "But, before we went to bed, I had resolved that I would wait over tomorrow, tomorrow being Sunday, and would begin my new course with the new week. On Monday morning I would speak to Joe about this change, I would lay aside this last vestige of reserve, I would tell him what I had in my thoughts (that Secondly, not yet arrived at), and why I had not decided to go out to Herbert, and then the change would be conquered for ever. As I cleared, Joe cleared, and it seemed as though he had sympathetically arrived at a resolution too."

- 20) "No more low wet grounds, no more dykes and sluices, no more of these grazing cattle -- though they seemed, in their dull manner, to wear a more respectful air now, and to face round, in order that they might stare as long as possible at the possessor of such great expectations -- farewell, monotonous acquaintances of my childhood, henceforth I was for London and greatness" (*GE*, Ch. 19, p. 147)
- 21) "We Britons had at that time particularly settled that it was treasonable to doubt our having and our being the best of every- thing: otherwise, while I was scared by the immensity of London, I think I might have had some faint doubts whether it was not rather ugly, crooked, narrow, and dirty." (*GE*, Ch. 20, p. 163)
- 22) "I consumed the whole time in thinking how strange it was that I should be encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime; that, in my childhood out on our lonely marshes on a winter evening I should have first encountered it; that, it should have reappeared on two occasions, starting out like a stain that was faded but not gone; that, it should in this new way pervade my fortune and advancement. While my mind was thus engaged, I thought of the beautiful young Estella, proud and refined, coming towards me, and I thought with absolute abhorrence of the contrast between the jail and her. I wished that Wemmick had not met me, or that I had not yielded to him and gone with him, so that, of all days in the year on this day, I might not have had Newgate in my Breath and on my clothes. I beat the prison dust off my feet as I sauntered to and fro, and I shook it out of my dress, and I exhaled its air from my lungs. So contaminated did I feel, remembering who was coming, that the coach came quickly after all, and I was not yet free from the soiling consciousness of Mr Wemmick's conservatory, when I saw her face at the coach window and her hand waving to me." (*GE*, Ch. 32, p. 264)
- 23) "Within a quarter of an hour we came to Miss Havisham's house, which was of old brick, and dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it. Some of the windows had been walled up; of those that remained, all the lower were rustily barred. There was a court-yard in front, and that was barred; so, we had to wait, after ringing the bell, until someone should come to open it." (*GE*, Ch. 8, p. 55)
- 24) "It was a rimy morning, and very damp. I had seen the damp lying on the outside of my little window, as if some goblin had been crying there all night, and using the window for a pocket-handkerchief. Now, I saw the damp lying on the bare hedges and spare grass, like a coarser sort of spiders' webs; hanging itself from twig to twig and blade to blade." (*GE*, Ch. 3, p. 16)
- 25) "The mist was heavier yet when I got out upon the marshes, so that instead of my running at everything, everything seemed to run at me. This was very disagreeable to a guilty mind. The gates and dykes and banks came bursting at me through the mist, as if they cried as plainly as could be, 'A boy with Somebody-else's pork pie!'" (*GE*, Ch. 3, p. 17)
- 26) "It was wretched weather; stormy and wet, stormy and wet; and mud, mud, mud, deep in all the streets. Day after day, a vast heavy veil had been driving over London from the East, and it drove still, as if in the East there were an Eternity of cloud and wind." (*GE*, Ch. 39, p. 313)
- 27) "The June weather was delicious. The sky was blue, the larks were soaring high over the green corn, I thought all that country- side more beautiful and peaceful by far than I had ever known it to be yet. Many pleasant pictures of the life that I would lead there, and of the change for the better that would come over my character when I had a guiding spirit at my side whose simple faith and clear home-wisdom I had proved, beguiled my way. They awakened a tender emotion in me; for, my heart was softened by my return, and such a change had come to pass, that I felt like one who was toiling home barefoot from distant travel, and whose wanderings had lasted many years." (*GE*, Ch. 58, p. 477)
- 28) "Something clicked in his throat, as if he had works in him like a clock, and was going to strike." (*GE*, Ch. 3, p. 19)
- 29) "His mouth was such a post-office of a mouth that he had a mechanical appearance of smiling. We had got to the top of Holborn Hill before I knew that it was merely a mechanical appearance, and that he was not smiling at all." (*GE*, Ch. 21, p. 172)