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ELEONORA CAPRA

**P. R. MOORE-DEWEY'S "PREGIUDIZIO E
ORGOGLIO": AN ITALIAN REMAKE OF
AUSTEN'S "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE"**

1. *The many lives (and afterlives) of "Pride and Prejudice"*

In her introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to "Pride and Prejudice"*, Janet Todd comments on the immense fortune of "the Austen title everyone knows",¹ as well as on the popularity of all its adaptations and also, possibly, adulterations. She concludes by noting that the multiplication of titles paying tribute to *Pride and Prejudice* is so fast that the section devoted to adaptations "will be out of date by the time the volume is published".² As a matter of fact, new publications and re-mediations are published relentlessly, and it would be difficult, maybe even impossible, to keep track of all the examples stemming from Austen's

¹ J. Todd, *Preface*, in *The Cambridge Companion to "Pride and Prejudice"*, edited by J. Todd, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. XI.

² *Ibidem*, p. XV.

“darling Child”.³

The tradition of rewriting *Pride and Prejudice*, and in particular that of giving its characters a life beyond Austen’s tale, began when the author was still alive. In his *Memoir of Jane Austen* James Edward Austen-Leigh recollects how “dear Aunt Jane”⁴ would tell her family about the destiny of some of her characters, including those in *Pride and Prejudice*. Some two hundred years later, readers and viewers still cannot get enough of Elizabeth and Darcy, so much so that these characters continue to undergo radical makeovers for the screen, the stage, the printed page, digital and countless other media.

Contemporary authors, inspired by Austen, have taken in order to re-work or re-write the novel. These approaches are the most varied and questionable: displacing characters to different countries or continents, far from *merry England*; “re-targeting” Elizabeth and Darcy’s love story for a teenager audience; or stressing erotic features, thus “giving readers a chance to indulge in the guilty pleasure of undressing their favourite literary characters”.⁵ Also, readers who would like to explore the darker sides of the story, may find amusement in those re-workings which have re-imagined the plot as a crime novel or detective fiction.

Generally, one of the recurrent techniques is that of rewriting the story by shifting the narrator’s point of view, as if the whole plot were developed, filtered, and told through the eyes of another character. In this perspective, many have been the uses and abuses of Mr. Darcy as a

³ J. Austen, *Letters*, Collected and Edited by D. Le Faye, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 2011⁴, p. 201 (letter to Cassandra Austen, 29 January 1813).

⁴ J. E. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, in Id., *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by K. Sutherland, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 119.

⁵ E. Auerbach, *Pride and Proliferation*, in *The Cambridge Companion to “Pride and Prejudice”*, cit., p. 193.

narrator. Enthusiastic readers of prequels, sequels, and remakes will remember a host of more or less acclaimed titles including *Mr. Darcy's Diary: A Novel* (2007) and *Dear Mr. Darcy: A Retelling of Pride and Prejudice* (2012) both by Amanda Grange; *Darcy's Passions: Pride and Prejudice Retold by His Eyes* (2009) by Regina Jeffers; a trilogy by Pamela Aidan which goes under the collective name of *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman* (2003, 2004, and 2005); and again Mary Street's *The Confessions of Fitzwilliam Darcy* (2008) or Sara Angelini's *The Trials of the Honorable F. Darcy* (2012).

Within this virtually uncontrolled panorama of spin-offs, there stands one rare example of Austenian remake which is a special instance of this global phenomenon because, unlike the majority of rewritings, it developed in Italy. Its author is an Italian Austen enthusiast and admirer, Patrizia Murreddu, who writes under the pseudonym of P. R. Moore-Dewey. Her work, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, appeared in 2012, to coincide with the bicentenary celebrations of its model and source, and it constitutes a genuine literary effort that deserves the attention of Austen enthusiasts and fans for its many merits, in particular that of being an intricate patchwork of quotations and, thus, a thoroughly post-modern work.

Before illustrating the allusive and stylistic complexity of this text, however, it is necessary to describe briefly the cultural context where it developed. *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* was published during a phase of growing interest in Austen in Italy. If until some years ago "the works of Jane Austen, for all their popularity" could not "be considered to be among the most admired foreign classics in Italy",⁶ the contemporary panorama has undergone some relevant changes. Thanks to the Internet and, perhaps, also

⁶ B. Battaglia, *The Reception of Jane Austen in Italy*, in *The Reception of Jane Austen in Europe*, Edited by A. Mandal and B. Southam, London and New York, Continuum, 2007, p. 205.

to the ever-flourishing Austen film industry, the Italian public seems to have definitely embraced Janeitism and is nowadays as lost in the author as countless Janeites across the Channel (or the Ocean). Over the last seven years, web pages and thematic blogs have proliferated, and local or internet book clubs have been created. Most significantly, Italy can now boast its own Internet-based Jane Austen Society – the *Jane Austen Society of Italy* – gathering hundreds of fans, devotees, and scholars. JASIT has many merits, not least that of having been the first non-academic association in Italy to spread and popularize Austen criticism and translations.⁷ This has resulted in the possibility for the wider reading public to form a deeper and perhaps more accurate understanding of the author.⁸ The great merit of bridging the world of Janeites to that of scholars and academics is also visible in the association's journal "Due Pollici d'Avorio", the counterpart of The Jane Austen Society of North America's "Persuasions. The Jane Austen Journal On-Line". Its varied contributions from fans or academics celebrate Austen's work, lifetime, and culture with an eye to scholarly accuracy and a critical appreciation of the writer and her cultural and historical context.

Italy has also its own special fan club, *Il Club Sofà and Carpet di Jane Austen*, more focused on the celebration of Austen's times. The club's

⁷ The society has issued the first Italian translation of Rudyard Kipling's famous short story, *Janeites*, Constance Hill and Ellen G. Hill's early biography *Jane Austen: Her Homes and Her Friends* and a series of critical essays, reviews, and articles on the early reception of Jane Austen in England and Italy. Moreover, the society frequently translates articles from "Persuasions. The Jane Austen Journal On-Line", thus reinforcing the bond with its American counterpart association. See the list of the society's publications at the web address www.jasit.it/pubblicazioni/.

⁸ According to some critics, the Italian public has always been unable to understand the *real* Austen for many reasons. Its opinion has been traditionally influenced by the only Austen biography available in Italian, J. E. Austen-Leigh's *The Memoir of Jane Austen* (1869), and therefore the author has been read and seen as a Victorian writer, mainly relegated to her domestic sphere. Her novels, too, have been mostly analysed according to their romantic plot, where the quest for marriage predominates. See B. Battaglia, *The Reception of Jane Austen in Italy*, cit., pp. 205-223.

main activity revolves around its yearly three-day meeting at the seaside resort of Riccione, where fans get together and wear Regency costumes to re-create the atmosphere of Jane Austen's novels. Public readings, promenades along the seaside, theatricals, and dances are part of the schedule, along with tea parties and re-enactments of the scenes from Austen film adaptations. Of course, such celebrations of the author and her novels are entirely in line with the various performances given during the world-famous *Jane Austen Festival* in Bath, yet they seem rather surprising in a country where, only a few years ago, Jane Austen could be said to be among the less famous international authors.

2. *Eyes on Mr. Darcy: a change of perspective*

The foremost stylistic feature of *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* is the fact that narration is filtered through the point of view of Mr. Darcy and his sister Georgiana, whereas Elizabeth emerges as a narrator only in the last chapter. This strategy allows the author both to present the story through another perspective and to give prominence to characters which, in *Pride and Prejudice*, are only described by others and judged by readers according to their behaviour towards other characters (as is the case of Mr. Darcy, for instance). The opening pages of *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* start with Georgiana's description of her brother, focusing on the fact that he "sbrigava assorto la corrispondenza, la penna per aria, la mano sinistra semiaffondata tra i riccioli scuri".⁹ Thus, as readers, we immediately gain access to a private Mr. Darcy, with a "nobile profilo, la figura elegante".¹⁰ Further on, the narrative adds an insight into his social status:

⁹ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, n. p., PetitesOndes, 2012, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

“ [...] le amiche della scuola, nelle loro conversazioni bisbigliate dopo cena, lo avrebbero definito senza dubbio ‘un ottimo partito’, riassumendo con questa definizione le due qualità che tenevano nella massima considerazione: l’essere ‘di bell’aspetto’ e ‘facoltoso’.”¹¹

The idea conveyed here is not far from Austen’s initial description of Darcy at the Meryton Ball, where readers learn about his physical appearance and wealth through other characters’ conversations:

“Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year.”¹²

Still, Moore-Dewey’s perspective is perceptibly different from Austen’s, since the description is given by his innocent and adoring sister Georgiana. Tellingly, she refers to her brother’s fortune of ten thousand a year through the metaphor of the “incantato ‘regno di Carabas’”,¹³ a reference to a fairy tale that alerts readers to the naïve nature of Georgiana. The young girl, who literally venerates her brother Will (as she calls him), gradually pieces together an intimate and affectionate portrait:

“ [...] una persona seria, forse anche *troppo* seria, strapieno di capacità e di intelligenza, sempre in grado di tenere in pugno la situazione, e di prendere le decisioni giuste. [...] E, nonostante il suo carattere riservato, come tutti gli volevano bene! [...]”

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, edited by P. Rogers, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 10 (I, 3).

¹³ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 3. Here, Carabas could also signal a cross-reference to the Marquess of Carabas, a character in Benjamin Disraeli’s novel *Vivian Grey* (1826) which, upon publication, became famous in England. A *roman à clef* about fashionable and political life in the country, *Vivian Grey* is a novel where real life and fiction superimpose, and thus recalls Georgiana’s ideal of Pemberley as a fabulous realm. See A. Diniejko, *Benjamin Disraeli’s “Vivian Grey” as a Silver-Folk Novel With a Key*, in “The Victorian Web”, web address <http://victorianweb.org/victorian/authors/disraeli/diniejko.html>.

Era stato davvero 'il fratello migliore del mondo'."¹⁴

Georgiana's words conjure up Darcy as a good, loyal and noble man, always capable of taking the right decision and, most importantly, virtuous enough to continue his father's administrative work on the estate. Georgiana emphasizes further the good qualities of her brother by claiming that not a single person in the whole of Pemberley Park would have a bad opinion of him; on the contrary, everyone would demonstrate affection and gratitude. In this respect, we are very far from the first impression that Darcy gives at the Meryton ball. There, readers are not allowed to appreciate his amiable qualities. In *Pride and Prejudice*, through Austen's clever depiction of the scene, and especially due to Mrs Bennet's judgment, Darcy's "character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and every body hoped that he would never come there again".¹⁵ Observers of the scene inevitably share this first impression and sympathize with Mrs. Bennet, at least until the author gradually begins to unveil Darcy's true character. At this stage, readers are made to re-negotiate their impressions and re-interpret the author's intentions.

In *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, Darcy appears as a narrator in the second chapter. The setting has shifted from Pemberley to Netherfield and, thanks to the flashback technique, Moore-Dewey has him recall the events and feelings of the Meryton ball:

"[...] era stata un'orribile tortura. La sala, insopportabilmente calda, era gremita all'inverosimile di gente di ogni sorta e di ogni età; nell'abbigliamento pretenzioso, nell'atteggiamento affettato o chiassoso della maggior parte delle signore, predominava una totale mancanza di buon gusto; la musica era di scarsa qualità, ed era soverchiata dalla risate e dallo strepito... ma ciò nonostante tutti i presenti [...] si lanciavano nelle

¹⁴ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, cit., p. 11 (I, 3).

danze con uno zelo degno di miglior causa.”¹⁶

From the outset, we perceive how his reserved character and need for frequent isolation have been put to the test at Netherfield. His body and spirits have been overwhelmed (and almost suffocated) by the situation. Removed from his *terrain connu* of Pemberley and London society, he finds it difficult, almost impossible, to feel at ease in a different milieu. We feel Darcy’s nearly overpowering sense of physical oppression in the hot room, full of loud women. Most significantly, he is exasperated by murmurs of his having “diecimila all’anno!”¹⁷ Thus, unlike in *Pride and Prejudice*, where readers identify and agree with Elizabeth’s point of view, here we gradually enter Darcy’s mind and begin to understand, and possibly justify, why the source text painted him as “haughty, reserved, and fastidious” and why “his manners, though well bred, were not inviting”.¹⁸

In addition, Moore-Dewey goes as far as to give readers access to Darcy’s physicality as they are allowed to follow his daily activities such as hunting and walking through fields and woods. On the day after the Meryton ball, for example, Darcy tries to relax and forget the unpleasant evening by wandering in the woods, energetically “allontanando con il manico del frustino un ramo di rovo carico di more lucenti, che si protendeva a sbarrargli il cammino”.¹⁹ In examples such as these, Mr. Darcy is a reflection of, or a counterpart to, Austen’s Elizabeth. In point of fact, if we think about the original text, readers may remember that it is Elizabeth who tends to engage in physical exercise, the most relevant example being her walk from Longbourn to Netherfield. On that occasion, Elizabeth walks alone “crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping

¹⁶ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

¹⁸ J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, cit., p. 17 (I, 4).

¹⁹ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 9.

over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity".²⁰ And Elizabeth's journey is not just a walk, but an "act of relocation", more precisely, one of those "acts of translation" designed by Austen which serve as "movements beyond limits and boundaries and thus encapsulate the pervasive restlessness of many of her male and female figures".²¹ Viewed in this perspective, and figuratively speaking, the same happens to Mr. Darcy in *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*: during his walks he finds his path blocked by brambles, a metaphor for the obstacles he will have to overcome in order to come to terms with his feelings towards Elizabeth.

3. *Begli occhi scuri*

As in *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy is soon fascinated by Elizabeth's "begli occhi scuri", and dangerously drawn to her personality: "quel miscuglio di ingenuità e franca provocazione che costituiva il tratto più notevole del suo carattere".²² As Moore-Dewey's narrative progresses, Darcy reveals to his sister Georgiana to what extent he admires Elizabeth, and describes her as a woman in whom

"[...] cultura e intelligenza si uniscono a una naturale eleganza e a una speciale bellezza; gliene deriva nel complesso un notevole fascino, di gran lunga superiore a quello di molte signore di città di mia conoscenza."²³

However, Darcy is careful enough to describe also the less satisfactory aspects: Elizabeth's dreadful relations. Mr. Bennet is portrayed

²⁰ J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, cit., p. 36 (I, 7).

²¹ D. Saglia, *Austen and Translation: National Characters, Translatable Heroines, and the Heroine as Translator*, in "Novel: A Forum on Fiction", 46, Spring 2013, p. 11.

²² P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 38. "Begli occhi scuri" is the translation of Austen's words "dark [...] fine eyes": cf. J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, cit., p. 26 and p. 30 (I, 6).

²³ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 42.

as “un signore di scarse sostanze, che appare poco in società [...] la madre e le altre sorelle non mettono insieme tra tutte il buonsenso di un’oca da cortile!”²⁴ Inevitably, as readers know, Darcy’s feelings grow against his will and shall be openly revealed only at Rosings. In *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, it is only after listening to Elizabeth playing the piano, that Darcy considers his own sentiments: “dunque era così, non c’era più nulla da fare, inesorabilmente *l’amava?*”²⁵ Though he is initially unable to become reconciled to his own feelings, Darcy soon gives in and realizes that Elizabeth “occupava in quel momento completamente la sua mente e il suo cuore”.²⁶ At this stage, readers cannot say whether Darcy is conscious or not of his profound emotions but the proposal – “un’eventualità che aveva deliberatamente eluso”²⁷ – is, in reality, a few steps away.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen dedicates a whole chapter to this pivotal moment and gives readers a complete picture of the scene as experienced by the female character. In contrast, she merely offers readers a few glimpses of Mr. Darcy’s feelings: “he came towards her in an agitated manner [...] He *spoke* of apprehension and anxiety, but his countenance expressed real security”.²⁸ Austen’s transcription of Darcy’s impatience and ardent emotions through body language reminds readers that the physical dimension is always present in her novels, even though the narratives tend to depict it through subtle and minute references or forms of indirection:

“His complexion became pale with anger, and the disturbance of his mind was visible in every feature. He was struggling for the appearance of composure, and would not open his lips, till he believed himself to have attained it. [...]

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 51.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 108.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 116.

²⁸ J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, cit., pp. 211-212 (II, 11).

As she pronounced this words, Mr. Darcy changed colour; but the emotion was short, and he listened without attempting to interrupt her while she continued.

[...]

'You take an eager interest in that gentleman's [Mr. Wickham] concerns,' said Darcy in a less tranquil tone, and with a heightened colour."²⁹

In *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* the proposal is spread over two chapters. The former sets the scene and readers perceive Darcy's contrasting feelings before he proposes to Elizabeth. However, the whole scene is fully re-told in retrospective in the following chapter, as Darcy recalls the most delicate moments and reconsiders Elizabeth's harsh words. The section presents frequent references to and quotations from the hypotext, in particular from the dialogues. For instance, Elizabeth's famous reply is presented in *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* as a free translation of the original text:

"In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of obligation for the sentiments avowed, however unequally they may be returned. It natural that obligation should be felt, and if I could *feel* gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot—I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly. I am sorry to have occasioned pain to any one. It has been most unconsciously done, however, and I hope will be of short duration."³⁰

"[...] in simili circostanze [...] è buona norma manifestare la propria gratitudine per i sentimenti che sono stati espressi, per quanto possano essere ricambiati. Ma io non posso. Non ho mai cercato il vostro apprezzamento, e certamente me l'avete offerto molto malvolentieri. Mi dispiace di essere causa di sofferenza per chiunque, ma è stato fatto inconsapevolmente, e spero che la cosa non durerà a lungo."³¹

Moreover, Moore-Dewey interestingly borrows Austen's comments on Mr. Darcy's facial expression, and translates the body metaphor with "un violento rossore".³² Drawing on the hypotext, also Moore-Dewey focuses on Darcy's physical features, thus reinforcing his passionate and

²⁹ Ibidem, pp. 212-214 (II, 11).

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 212 (II, 11).

³¹ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 123.

³² Ibidem, p. 125.

emotional image. At the same time, Moore-Dewey's technique of retelling everything through the point of view of the male hero, rehabilitates the proud Mr. Darcy Austen has initially presented. Indeed, her narrator gradually reveals to the reader his difficulties in overcoming his pride, his sense of humiliation (and possibly shame), his feeling of powerlessness and immense distress, especially when he ponders over Elizabeth's opinion of Mr. Wickham:

“Wickham! Al sentire quel nome si era sentito soffocare. Ancora Wickham, sempre Wickham, per tutta la vita, a mettersi di traverso tra lui e quello che aveva di più caro! In un istante, rivisse l'umiliazione provata nel vedergli occupare un posto immeritato nell'affetto del padre – al quale mai si sarebbe abbassato a denunciarne il carattere – il senso di impotenza che l'aveva colto davanti al tentativo di sottrargli l'affetto e la fiducia di Georgiana... e adesso, Elizabeth!”³³

4. *Georgiana: Catherine Morland under false pretences?*

As already mentioned, Georgiana is the second main narrator of the novel, where she functions as a counterbalance to Darcy's voice, or better, as an external observer of the plot. She is the first reader and interpreter of her brother's feelings, and, even though her interpretation is not objective, it is thanks to her point of view that readers gradually become sympathetic to the male hero. In particular, Moore-Dewey's rewriting develops Georgiana through sustained intertextual references to *Northanger Abbey*: “una libertà maggiore l'ho avuta con Georgiana [...] le mie lettrici più avvertite troveranno in lei qualche indebita somiglianza con Catherine Morland”.³⁴ Georgiana shares Catherine's fascination with old abbeys and castles. In *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* Miss Darcy spends part of her summer holidays at Dunsmoore Castle and she soon voices her excitement: (“un

³³ Ibidem, p. 124.

³⁴ Id., *Nota dell'Autrice*, ibidem, p. 242.

vero castello, con le torri, e le segrete!")³⁵ And later, having arrived at Dunsmoore:

“[...] se Georgiana avrebbe preferito scoprirvi ancora qua e là qualche porta che cigolava, qualche antico lampadario fuliginoso in ferro battuto, qualche muro diroccato, ebbe il buon gusto di tenere per sé questo inopportuno rammarico.”³⁶

As an innocent young girl, she likes to compare Pemberley to the enchanted realm of Carabas, an ideal place where everything is calm, beautiful, and virtually uncontaminated: she goes as far as to define herself “la più fortunata delle donne, per aver ricevuto dalla sorte il privilegio di vivere in quel mondo incantato”.³⁷ Moore-Dewey repeatedly and skillfully exploits the dimension of the fairy tale to give voice to the thoughts of a young adolescent for whom reality and fiction superimpose and even coalesce. Georgiana is terrified by the idea that someone could spoil this perfect place: she is afraid that Elizabeth Bennet, this outsider, might have captured more than her brother's eye and, therefore, finds her presence most alarming. While considering what might have happened at Rosings between her brother and Elizabeth, she compares her thoughts to a tangle that she cannot unravel: her misgivings and her assumptions seem to converge into the plot of a detective novel, which might be entitled “Il mistero di Rosings”.³⁸ She therefore tries to become an investigator herself, echoing young Catherine Morland's aspiration to play the detective,³⁹ and,

³⁵ Id., *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 144 and J. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, edited by B. M. Benedict and D. Le Faye, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 83 (I, 11): “‘What, is it really a castle, an old castle?’ [...] ‘But now really—are there towers and long galleries?’”

³⁶ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 148.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 193.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 132.

³⁹ For an interpretation of *Northanger Abbey* as a proto-detective novel, see L. M. Dresner, *The Female Investigator in Literature, Film and Popular Culture*, Jefferson, North Carolina, and London, McFarland, 2006.

as soon as she gathers enough clues, she starts to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

In *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* Georgiana shares another feature with the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey*, one which is also typical of most Austen heroines: the fondness for reading (Austen never refers to Georgiana as an avid reader of fiction, only as an accomplished young woman).⁴⁰ Often seeking a silent place to read and be alone, she has her own secret place in Pemberley's garden, a tiny "cabinet"⁴¹ where she can read, enjoy moments of solitude and let her imagination run free. Moore-Dewey reprises Austen's distinctive preoccupation with reading,⁴² a theme that appears clearly in all her six novels: the romantic Marianne from *Sense and Sensibility* is an avid reader of Shakespeare's sonnets, while the same love for poetry is displayed by the mature and more rational Anne in *Persuasion*; Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* is a subscriber to a circulating library, "a renter, a chuser of books".⁴³ Among Austen's heroines, however, Catherine Morland embodies the most innocent and naïve type of reader; it is because of her deeply imaginative mind that she gets carried away with plots, and ends up superimposing real people or events on to fictional characters and happenings. Austen believed that literature could afford

⁴⁰ Female accomplishments included dancing, singing, playing music, drawing, painting, fashionable modern languages, decorative needlework, the art of conversation and letter-writing. Knowledge of the *belles lettres* was also desirable, and included approved essays, drama, poetry, travelogues and historiography, as well as the knowledge of the books of the day. See G. Kelly, *Education and accomplishments, in Jane Austen in Context*, edited by J. Todd, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 252-261.

⁴¹ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., p. 190.

⁴² See C. Farese, *Le eroine di Jane Austen e l'ambiguo incantesimo della lettura*, in *Jane Austen. Oggi e ieri*, a cura di B. Battaglia, Ravenna, Longo, 2002, pp. 181-193 and O. Murphy, *Jane Austen the Reader. The Artist as Critic*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

⁴³ J. Austen, *Mansfield Park*, edited by J. Wiltshire, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 461 (III, 9).

much deeper insights into the “knowledge of human nature”,⁴⁴ but she was also conscious of the risks of misreading: in *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, Moore-Dewey spares Miss Darcy from the experience of misreading, since the young woman is most of the time innocently caught up in her fictional plots, but eventually reads her brother’s mind (and, consequently, his relationship with Elizabeth) correctly.

5. *Paratexts and afterword*

Another outstanding feature of *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* is its use of paratexts,⁴⁵ which bear on and direct our interpretation of the novel. The first paratextual element we come across is the author’s pseudonym: readers are initially drawn to think that the novel is written by an English-language writer and this undeniably locates it in the much wider context of rewritings and re-mediations of Austen from the English-speaking world. Other frequently used paratextual elements are epigraphs, which introduce each chapter. Epigraphs boast a long history and have been a recurring feature of novel writing, virtually from the eighteenth-century onwards. As an instance, for those novels belonging to the Gothic tradition, such as Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* – those literary creations which Austen mocked in her *Northanger Abbey* – epigraphs were a staple feature. Contemporaries of Austen, such as Walter Scott, were keen on epigraphs: he used them liberally in his historical novels.

In this rewriting epigraphs play a fundamental role on two levels. Besides their significance in terms of setting the atmosphere of each section

⁴⁴ Id., *Northanger Abbey*, cit., p. 31 (I, 5).

⁴⁵ See G. Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1987.

of the rewriting, epigraphs show in fact Moore-Dewey's legacy with the literary tradition of the long eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. Thus, the author aligns herself with those novelists who sought to make use of epigraphs to demonstrate their public of readers that their work was part of the literary conversations and debates. The sentences quoted in the epigraphs are all taken from nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature in English: several belong to Austen's works, but many are from Elizabeth Gaskell (*North and South* and *Wives and Daughters*), Charles Dickens (*David Copperfield* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*), George Eliot (*Middlemarch*), Lewis Carroll (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*), Francis H. Burnett (*Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *The Secret Garden*), Virginia Woolf (*Night and Day*). Epigraphs are chosen to function as an introduction to the chapter, as well as a cross reference to another text or novel featuring a similar scene. In some cases, the epigraph is not merely an introduction to and a preview of the chapter, it is also alluded to in the chapter itself. Chapter X, for instance, is introduced by an epigraph taken from Austen's *Persuasion*:

“An hour's complete leisure for such reflections as these, on a dark November day, a small thick rain almost blotting out the very few objects ever to be discerned from the windows, was enough to make the sound of Lady Russell's carriage exceedingly welcome.”⁴⁶

What follows, in *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, reads like a continuation of the epigraph. Mr. Darcy is in the same meditative situation as Anne in *Persuasion* and realises that Mr. Bingley has just arrived (in Anne's case, it was Lady Russell). In *Persuasion*, Anne is tormented by “anxious feelings”⁴⁷ owing to her fear of meeting Captain Wentworth after Louisa's accident in Lyme. The same happens to Mr. Darcy who is anxiously

⁴⁶ J. Austen, *Persuasion*, edited by J. Todd and A. Blank, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 133 (II, 1).

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 139 (II, 1).

thinking about a way to escape this unwanted situation, as well as trying to persuade Bingley of Jane Bennet's indifference towards him. Interestingly, the chapter ends with some sentences that clearly echo Anne's feelings in *Persuasion*: "Darcy si trovò da solo, a contemplare dalla vetrata il paesaggio invernale, quasi completamente cancellato dalla fitta pioggerella sottile".⁴⁸ These last words clearly echo those which appear in *Persuasion* and which Moore-Dewey chose for her epigraph.

Other outstanding paratextual devices in *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* are the illustrations, which function both as a supplement to and as an expansion of the written narrative. The images provided in Moore-Dewey's re-working are taken from the second Dent edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, illustrated by the brothers Charles Edmund and Henry Matthew Brock, and published in 1898. The ten-volume Dent edition was immensely popular and the illustrations – "pen and ink drawings tinted in watercolour and reproduced [...] by six-colour lithography" – were much appreciated by readers because they offered an "exact representation of period costumes and interiors"⁴⁹ in Jane Austen's times. Moore-Dewey's choice to select the six Brock illustrations might have different reasons. In a way, it seems to reinforce an uninterrupted dialogue between her text, the hypotext and one specific predecessor, the illustrated second Dent edition of *Pride and Prejudice*. Furthermore, they certainly satisfy the need of some readers to enrich their reading experience with a visual aid. Moreover, since such illustrations never appeared in print in an Italian edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, they are popularised among the great public of Austen admirers for the first time, thanks to this rewriting. At the same time, it should be noted that this choice seems to demonstrate to what extent modern

⁴⁸ P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, cit., pp. 68-69.

⁴⁹ D. Gilson, *Later publishing history, with illustrations*, in *Jane Austen in Context*, cit., p. 138.

rewritings are indebted to and inspired by the numerous and wide-ranging re-mediations of the author and her works.

Finally, a further, distinctive paratextual device is the afterword. In Austen's production, the author rarely seems to reflect on her own activity of being a writer, and her narrators never openly addresses her audience (in contrast to, for example, Charlotte Brontë's characteristic addresses to her readers in *Jane Eyre*).⁵⁰ It is mainly in Austen's private correspondence that we sense (and read about) her preoccupation with her readers' opinions of her works, and it is thanks to her family's recollections that we are allowed some glimpses into her working habits.⁵¹ *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* features a *Nota dell'Autrice* that reveals a great deal about the nature of this re-working, starting from the author's choice of language, voice and style. Moore-Dewey states that she had the disadvantage of "non poter mai giocare con l'effetto sorpresa", ending up with a text that would constantly invite the reader to return to the hypotext: "un costante confronto con il libro – o piuttosto, con *tutti i libri* nati dalla *sua* penna",⁵² a clever game dedicated to fervent Austen admirers in scattering her own narrative with quotations from the six novels as a way of creating her own "patchwork".⁵³ The author discusses here her own decisions about the reshaping of characters; we have already mentioned the re-modeling of Georgiana, however it is the figure of Mr. Darcy who poses the most significant problems: Moore-Dewey works rather extensively on the dialogues,

⁵⁰ There is perhaps one example in the famous opening lines of the last chapter of *Mansfield Park* ("Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can"), where the author seems to address her audience and this comment might be intended as a self-conscious reflection on her own activity. However, nothing of this kind survives in her narrative. Cf. J. Austen, *Mansfield Park*, cit., p. 553 (III, 17).

⁵¹ See J. E. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, cit., pp. 81-89 and pp. 116-119.

⁵² P. R. Moore-Dewey, *Nota dell'autrice*, cit., p. 240.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

carefully chooses the words and expressions that the male protagonist would have said. The author's strong devotion to Austen's characters, in particular with Darcy, reveals the degree of proximity that may develop between a reader and a literary character.

The afterword also offers reflections on the tone and language of the novel. For instance, Moore-Dewey admits that she had to decide how to address her characters. As the English language lacks the difference, typical of Italian, between the use of the informal "tu", the more formal "lei" and the old-fashioned "voi" form, she has had to decide on the degree of (in)formality in her dialogues. Another concern was the linguistic register of her narrative, and especially the need to avoid anachronisms, metaphors, idioms and common sayings that are now part of everyday language but were unknown to Austen's readers.

It is now clear enough to what extent these issues lay bare the metafictional import of *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*. They also disclose the wide range of considerations and second thoughts that lie behind the process of rewriting a classic text, and more specifically the crucial questions at the core of contemporary rewritings of Austen. Twenty-first century readers perceive the works of Jane Austen as extremely modern, especially for their themes. Thematically speaking, they address recurrent questions and problems which are still relevant today – from gender hierarchies to the subversion of norms and social conventions, the *Bildung* of the female characters who strive to find their own place in the world, or controversial aspects such as the marriage market, and money as the main engine of society. If these, in being present-day issues, can work as strong points or "resources of the narrative text", the composition of any rewriting, also

inevitably reveals the “limits”⁵⁴ of the source text, those aspects which are culturally, temporally and linguistically bound. In the case of *Pregiudizio e orgoglio*, however, readers do not find such a clash between past and present; the rewriting, instead, reveals the author’s ability to take on the challenge and turn those limits into strong points and lay bare Moore-Dewey’s great capacity of telling the story through another point of view and translating it for another culture, another language, and another time.

Pregiudizio e orgoglio is a remarkable pastiche, borrowing from the vast world of Jane Austen – from her narrative and style to her choice of language (all the more difficult because ‘translated’ into Italian) and sharp ironic tone. Moreover, the author makes plain her debt to the great English tradition of novel writing, from the Victorians to the Modernists. The frequent interactions of texts signal the extreme richness of this rewriting, which puts together scenarios from several novels, creating a dialogue between different texts and traditions, overcoming boundaries of time and space and demonstrating how works that have their own specificity (and that may seem to have nothing in common) can instead be pieced together to generate new meanings. Furthermore, a re-writing such as *Pregiudizio e orgoglio* compels readers to become detectives and gain pleasure from identifying the dispersed references and quotations that are woven into the chapters. Perhaps, this skillful game resembles Austen’s in *Emma*, “a comedy of mystery and puzzles”,⁵⁵ where, at each new reading, readers are challenged to guess and find new elements to decode the characters’ intentions.

⁵⁴ A. R. Scrittori, *Rewriting Jane Austen*, in *Re-Drawing Austen: Picturesque Travels in Austenland*, edited by B. Battaglia and D. Saglia, Napoli, Liguori, 2004, p. 262.

⁵⁵ D. Lodge, *Reading and Rereading “Emma”*, in *A Truth Universally Acknowledged. 33 Reasons Why We Can’t Stop Reading Jane Austen*, Edited by S. Carson, London, Penguin, 2009, p. 181.

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