



Rewriting Fiction: Why *Pride and Prejudice*?

Youcef Zineddine MOSTEFAOUI¹, Wassila HAMZA REGUIG - MOURO²

¹ University of Tlemcen, Algeria; youcefzineddine.mosteafaoui@univ-tlemcen.dz

² University of Tlemcen, Algeria; wassila.hamzareguig@univ-tlemcen.dz

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Abstract

*Fiction is, for once, a means to communicate ideas, process lives and study individuals. It is mostly based on daily life experiences, witnessed by individuals on a quotidian basis. Accordingly, experiences mutate and are altered and so does fiction that reports them. At times, as in life, multitudinous happenings and seem to be a Déjà vu, yet, the angle of perception changes which requires going back to ancient writs with similarities necessitated to grasp the matter and substitute the lenses with which these specific writings are seen and discussed. A grand instance is Jane Austen's most re-imagined *Pride and Prejudice*. The present article holds the attempt to clarify retellings as well as to find responses as to what end are reworks utilized? And why this unending set of re-imaginings of *Pride and Prejudice*?*

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1. Introduction

Ever Literature has always found particular pathways to exhibit the conceptions of individuals' judgments, motifs or intellects. It has started with its two fundamental sections to end up with the novel as the main messenger being a fictitious work that comprises imaginary characters and scenes to grant actualities of laymen's daily life. However, reworks and re-imaginings of previous

writings are not of novelty though their goal should be of royalty. Factually, people's experiences differ accordingly with the place, time and the social surrounding within which they are ensnared if to say. Supposedly, as some thinkers share, including Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and many others, nothing is original, for everybody's ideas are but unadulterated memories from those who dwelled in the past since some witnessed events seem to be lived anciently in time. Here, one finds it an obligation to go back in time either to witness and understand matters that are to be dealt with or for other purposes that are to be answered respectively. One would only ask for which of the aims does one recreate an already existing section of literature and if to take a vivid example that is of the undying *Pride and Prejudice*, one would question the usefulness of an undetermined number of re-penned works on it.

2. Literary Fiction versus Genre Fiction (Ongoing Combat)

Many a good scholar deem it important to submit one's will to writing for its purpose is to assess, discuss and deliver ideations. the writer, hence, ought to be "teachable" or "receptive" according to Jane Smiley who noted in a work edited by Checkoway (2001, p. 244) that the process of writing does not show one how to be teachable but the will to learn is what does. The control of characters, style and language use is what steers the writer towards a good monitoring of the re-imagined fiction. Through this, the writer could control the function of characters, their development and their gigantic role when it comes to serving the primary ideas of the themes that were set right from the beginning and even before writing the initial notes and first drafts. Writers tend to question the strength of their key scenes (the scenes that do most of the work in the amalgamation of explications that are concerned with the primal theme).

The thought to be embraced amongst most thinkers and researchers of novels is that one could be divided into Literary Fiction and Genre Fiction. The combat between the two is an everlasting one. Some scholars claim the former to be monotonous while describing the latter as meaningless, while others shape a kind of hierarchy and inferiority depending on the lens and angularity from which one looks. Differences between the two sections pop out of the blue while studying the defining characteristics of each.

Carolina Duque (2019) classifies Literary Fiction as writs with literary traits and worthiness; Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and George Orwell's *1984* are conspicuous instances of this section. She describes Genre Fiction as that which encompasses Popular, Commercial or Fictitious

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descriptions, and is, also, known as Category Fiction (Para, 2) such as *A Game of Thrones* or *Harry Potter* Series.

The debate over which of the two deserves literary merit and which does not will mainly be enduring if not perpetual. Arguments are mainly subsisting because of the constant change in point of views and dogmatism in matters of the reading decorum. Genre Fiction is usually put at disposal in an attempt for the reader to flee reality while Literary Fiction is the exact opposite for it is there to help readers not escape but better understand the world and everyday life incidents along with delivering better comprehension of human emotions. This might be a compelling reason for those who prefer Literary over Genre Fiction.

Steven Petite (2014, Para, 4-5) remarked that each and every year, the luxuries of writing awards are granted to those making part of Literary Fiction with almost utter rejection of Genre Fiction which gives critics a terser reason to utter their own scale of preferences as he noted that no preferences should be made on that basis to claim one superior to the other. Instead, he noted that in the stead of that comparison saying “Better writers” Referring to Literary Fiction novelists, better it be to say “Different writers”. The claim that comes from literary critics for departing from Genre Fiction is that the latter is rather Pauper and is penned by escapists.

What has been noted beforehand does not prove anything as to the poverty of the opposite section of Fiction since amongst the lists of bestsellers readers would encounter writs composed by novelists dominating the Genre Fiction. This, thus, proves them to be competent enough to be classified and put at the same level of aptitude and artistry such as Margaret Atwood and George Simenon who is considered as the creator of Maigret Detective Novels and was described as the most novelistic of novelist in French literature as remarked Laureate André Gide in the AP news of 1989 These novelists with such particularity in moving their fingers found a way to provoke readers and inflate the value of what they deliver to readership.

Oppositely, Literary Fiction writers such as William Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Charles Dickens, James Joyce and other outstanding modernist writers created a slit out of their writings, through which they could envision society on which they unintentionally imposed this section of fiction. This part of Fiction enticed if not magnetized readers for it dealt with everyday life experiences along with the fact that it mentioned exactly what they needed be dealt with.

Unlike Genre Fiction, Literary Fiction entangles a sense of seriousness as to the accomplishment of what should be considered fleeing towards reality instead of running away from

it. Concluding, Genre Fiction ensnares great combinations of utterances along with a tremendous vent from which story-telling is sensed, yet, Literary Fiction has always found strength in comprising the Writer's mind with their soul to weave a net of ideations that instigate readers' sensations. The idea is not of comparison after all, but of what both portions of Fiction share in heartening readership's consciousness through a very well-played symphony of words.

3. Re-writing Fiction

It is undeniable that rewriting fiction has been a manner of exploring ideas and a form of literature, a successful form of literature one would dare say, ever since the first appearance of the latter, which means that it is as old story-telling being considered part of it. Re-imagining traditional writs has received a grand amount of attention amongst writers and novelists. Didier Coste was supportive to Jane Smiley's idea which states in the respect that reshaping ancient writs is a "tradition" as old as writs themselves and this manifests itself in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* which was a copycat of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.

Contemporary authors attempted to merge the current time-period of literature and the traditional one and incorporate both literatures to born these contemporary re-imaginings of classics that are to be defined as "Hybrid Writs" if one tends to use the approximately proper words that suit the bridge installed by both literatures.

Rewriting fiction involves sectioning, adding, eliminating, shifting and altering characters, their roles, settings, atmospheres, themes and even tones. To a certain extent every work of literature is rewritten differently to have a separate meaning just as shared by Kristeva (1986) who said that there was no original work in itself and shared that any given text is built as a mosaic of allusions to prior writs. She noted that any text is the ingestion and alteration of a different one (P. 37). Kristeva's idea was concerning the originality of writings and mainly different works that share similar utterances, yet authenticity affects re-imagined works of literature as well.

On the other hand, Rewriting could be considered as re-conceptualization since it entangles altering contexts as it ensnares deconstruction and rebuilding since the writer or novelist breaks the granted work down to pieces and reshapes it the way that suits his content. Didier Coste (2004) described Rewriting or "réécriture" as a double-faced coin: on one side one could perceive the fact that it is about "repetition and "recycling" since it has a "Conservative and stabilizing function"

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while the other side of the coin holds that rewriting is deemed as “distortion” recreation and mutation (P. 9-11) for a text is dealt with as such.

Reviewing a work stands for scrutinizing it to be certain that every single part of it advances as to make sure major characteristics of the original work are not copied and pasted in the rewritten one. It is when the rework gives its writer a sense of satisfaction and pleasure out of accomplishment, that the latter should cease making change to aim for the first major step that is of facing proof readership with it for authenticity and flaw-detecting. Out of scientific trusteeship, a rework is a quaint collection of quotations wordplays extracted from the original text and others that are unintentionally included. Yet, there will be a question that always comes to mind and leads to sub-queries; to what end do novelists sustain distress of rewriting an already subsistent work of literature?

Any novelist, prior to holding the pen and before s/he starts weaving ideas, needs to set a purpose behind rewriting what the focus is on just before aiming for the content. Goals and attempts behind such reworks wander not aimlessly just like strings of spider web that spread from the very center towards diverse objectives. Some of the novelists aim for a special antique work to rewrite, according to what they see lacking or what they deem, needed to be noted

Ancient literature and philosophies are known for their weaving and woven legends in the form of news, epics, poems or writings in which they filmed their ideas and narrated them in ways that are easily accessible by the public to learn about their customary, rational and even spiritual principles. Since then, peoples and societies have begun to change. They were also liberated from their unified and shared view of life so that their intellectual approaches differed and their angle of view deviated from the basics of literary and theatrical works, including cinematography in our contemporary time, which they considered a boring mimicry of cultures of other nations to other branches or forgotten marginal issues that were seen by literary makers as complementary touches in their works and achievements.

These viewpoints were reconstituted in a new suit and publications highlighting all those digested values and concepts that would not have been manifested in the world had it not been for the tendency of man to renew thought as required by time and imposed by the environment. This desire was not only born of instinct but also a criticism of producers and authors that they have shown what they wanted to show in their eyes and neglected what human society in general wants to see in all its categories and spectra. The intellectual renewal noted beforehand obligated critics and

intellectuals to respond to the whims and aspirations of peoples and to keep pace with the changes imposed by the times, eras and cultures of diverse societies to re-evoked many literary works. They kept the curricula, but ignored and manipulated the artistic methods and the known form contained in these works.

Reshaping fiction in literary writings and achievements may be deemed a criticism of intellectual void and cultural distress in comprehending mentality and reason changing constantly from a generation to another. From this perspective, criticism has given more than it took, and it has satiated that insatiable curiosity and unfairness of multitudinous and numerous ideas by reviving them and revving them to life in different and varied forms, abolishing, thus the monopoly in examining topics and dealing with them from one side or slit that some may understand while others may not. This consequently brings out a contradicting notion that is of this criticism aching literature in matters of literary richness.

The circle of thought and the making of literature expanded insofar as the concepts of diverse and broad cultures did. Yet, hitherto, the world is still not convinced and does not yet understand if pioneers of fictitious rewriting could, in publications and accomplished literary works, establish and dock a novel front and a new interface for the cultures of different societies having kept the original methods and approaches cognized in research and intellectual and cultural production. Additionally, they replaced the traditional data as well as familiar visions and scenes with new pictures and meanings inspired by those remodeled works, which gave them the modern solution that coalesces with contemporary generations.

From a critiquing lens, no single work whatsoever is void of criticism, which is defined according to Dickinson librarians (2020, para.1-2) as an opinion backed up by proof; these will not cease and the inspiration spreading out of fiction would not sever evicting renewed ideas for the sake of breaking loose from stereotypical limitations that writers and thinkers got used to, for understandings may collide, and judgments and values may differ in a single work. But, from an angle of creativity, Fiction is seen from a simple viewpoint as an infinite perception and an event created and formed by the writer as a creator in his imagination, taking new foundations, not in reshaping it based on the ruins of previous works and ideas.

Consequently, these works that have been remodeled and reshaped for the sake of criticism are subjected to criticism per se. This does not mean that what is intended through these messages and precise and concise texts is to stir dust in a gravel land as it does not stand for sentencing. The wish

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is to bring up issues to be picked up by thinkers and collected by scholars who are cut off-with all due respect- from literary giving.

This weakness and inaction, which paralyzed the intellectual movement of producers and creators, pushed all groups of society, both public and private, to deviate to other simple means through which the human world meets in easy spaces that are addressed by everyone so that the various achievements of literary and contemporary arts, short novels, Cinematography and all literary works are presented, thus reducing effort, time factor, and research hardship.

It is somehow tremendous to read something novel that is considered as a reproduction, a re-imagination or a recreation of an ancient writer's masterpiece. That could be easily noticed in some reconstructions and adaptations of literary works such as Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. These Reworks that were a distortion of the revelation that the writer had, include some differences in the happenings of the original story for one reason or another. The difference might partially be in the sex of characters, Viewpoint, Style of writing, alteration of protagonists and anti-heroes or a shift in focus to different characters or incidents rather than those in the original work.

From what was noted beforehand, it may be understood that Reworks were brought to life for apparent reasons; to criticize, which makes the latter the king of writs that settles on the throne and on either side the rest of what pens draw, even though it holds the positive and its opposite when it comes to judging its effect. Another use that could be ascribed to Reworks is that of substitution which works accordingly with time and environment. This leaves the third option that is describing Reworks as the nee of a submissive, supplicating pen, barren in matters of originality and fashion. Which of them is correct and which is not better be left for scholars and thinkers who weigh and measure.

4. Re-writing Process:

As discussed previously, writing is a receptive and responsive act of teaching and learning. Smiley defines it as a process by which writers "assimilate what is seen, heard, touched and felt" [Mentioned in Checkoway (2001, p.245)]. What is collected as past experiences, feelings and acts, gets redacted down into words to incarnate something novel to be handed to readership, including the writer who, if one embraces Barthes' notion, dies as the writ is done which was highlighted as a price to be paid in exchange of the birth of the reader (1977, p. 148).

Now, in the process of re-writing and re-imagining, the new work itself becomes “receptive” if to borrow Jane Smiley’s words.

The re-writing of a work of literature goes through phases. It starts with the reading of the primary source and thoroughly comprehending it. Once the writ is understood, few momentous notes are to be put aside. These notes are divided into parts as well;

- The first part is about the notes that are to remain in the work that is to be rewritten.
- The second set of notes includes those that are to be altered and discussed.

Once a writer is done reading the primal source and installed his/her ideas, s/he moves to another section that is re-vision and revision. The former is about re-viewing the traditional work and reproaching it by a different yet critical lens, whereas the latter is about the various probable versions that could serve the need for rewriting a particular work of fiction.

It is agreed upon that the rewriting of a work starts in mind. The writer shapes a general idea that is considered a generalized theme of his/her own novel work. Then, he/she specifies it either in mind or more thoroughly in the notes. It is after this that the writing process begins. Usually, writers face the calamity of being at fault for they fail to control their point of views, but once this is controlled (and it should be before starting the writing), what hardship comes afterwards is mitigated to a good extent.

Some of the writers declare that revising a work of fiction is tiring for it is not creative and ascribe creativity to the liberty of using material which is at times correct. This does not necessarily mean that revised fiction is void of creativity since the writer aims at inserting novel themes, ideations and techniques that aid them grandly in completing the work they find, sometimes, cold and boring. One would therefore claim that revision is a sub-component of the process of creativity.

Re-writing fiction constitutes of destruction, cutting, rebuilding, reconstructing, reshaping and merging the data at disposal with what one deems appropriate. The rewriting activity is a kind of (re)production and a renewing process through which the writer does what his predecessor failed to do, which includes proposing and neglecting crucial ideas and failing to address and defend the worth mentioning ideations or correct the wrongfully put ones.

Many things are to be held important while rewriting a literary work such as the point of view for the potentials of each chosen technique differ and with them differ the ideas and the use of

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language along with many other aspects that shape a specific work of art since many things could be said and done through a particular technique or a method that would never be delivered similarly by the utilization of others (for instance some techniques allow the writer as the primary reader to have access to every angle of the writ he/she is working on while others only allow glimpses to some sides of the story for the focus is on particular scopes).

At times, writers tend to include some passages with ideas that do not only add to the literacy of the work but also imbed some sort of personal understandings. This set of information is to be discerned by the reader who compares the traditional work to that which he/she holds before him/her. It is up to them to figure out whether these understandings are judgmental, critical, and additional or just a hopeless attempt from the author to make his/her work more interesting.

5. *Reworks on Pride and Prejudice*:

Classics have such a nomenclature for a particular reason. Yet, astounding things take place when a specific writer decides to take the original writ into a whole different level, for the original work had its way to appeal to readership and so do these re-imaginings. These reworks tend to collect incidents from original writings and recite them in a different manner that serves as a window which goes from and to the first piece of art that even uncompromising fans of the authentic work would express nothing less than their liking of these retellings. Best instance of it is what Jane Austen brought to the world and is considered the undying legacy or her “Favorite Child” as she called it.

Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is inevitably a masterpiece with abundant imagery and glaring expressive romance, which stands out compared to other romances either of that time or the modern one. Reworks on this widely read writ are numerous and multitudinous, each with a specific contextual use. Examples may include *Longbourn* that is told from the servants’ viewpoint; *Second Impressions* that is a sequel to the original *First Impressions* and explores what could have happened to the characters of the original story; *Eligible* in which characters shift to modern-day Cincinnati; *Mr. Darcy Vampyre* that goes to the underworld of supernatural creatures and *Unmarriageable* that speaks of the “Binats”; the Pakistani version of the Bennets. These re-imaginings and plenty of others hold strong notions within their folds for they were not written just for the sake of writing but for higher purposes that are to be discerned through a meticulous

eye. Rewritings and Continuations of *Pride and Prejudice* have been known for years now and are uncountable. Consequently, the question rises again; Why Reimagining *Pride and Prejudice*?

6. Why Reimagining *Pride and Prejudice*?

The original story is narrated from Elizabeth's perspective, and shows incidents and involvement in the story from the viewpoint of the Bennets. This differs in some of the reworks including *Longbourn* in which the angle of storytelling shifts from Elizabeth to Sarah, the servant of the family. This shift occurs for a specificity which may be a criticism of Austen's original work in which the servants were only mentioned once or twice. In *Longbourn* the Bennets are only mentioned to set events into context. This re-imagination of *Pride and Prejudice* shares the very idea that readers know all along that Darcy loves Elizabeth but both have to go through all obstacles to finally be together, reincarnated in Sarah and James who went through different hardships to finally be together by the end of the story.

Pride and Prejudice shows that a good marriage was the only option available to women in England by the time while *Longbourn* for instance defies this idea and shows the struggle of women for good life conditions and not only marriage. These ideas were displayed within the events of the story and through debates that Sarah had with Mrs Hill. Consequently, Criticism is mostly the basis of rewritings but it is not the only reason behind them. Other aspects of criticism are class distinctions, motives and goals behind marriage and traditional values that are to be seen and discussed implicitly and explicitly through characters.

Readers tend to shift from a category to another depending on their preferences and their taste in writing. Die-hard Austen fans for instance, are obstinate when it comes to Jane Austen and her unforgettable pieces and mainly *Pride and Prejudice*. They reject any idea of a writer being better than her and hence reject any writ as being better than hers which puts them in a state of tenacity when it comes to reading equitably. This created a vent to this kind of writing and an aperture to readers to have a whiff of Austen's air and a sniff of words that transport them back in time to live the scenes described in her works differently but with the same scent of antiquity and Austenian style. Such re-imaginings of *Pride and Prejudice* is the née of readers' needs and is ecstatic as to Austen fans as a particular audience.

Many critics claim that mid twentieth century up to now is to be deemed an era of decadence. This age is one of alteration and constant transformation, but what if this is just the front of it, what

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if this sense of progress is just an illusion summoned by our need to change constantly. What if we dwell within a world where recurrence and duplication take over concoction and fabrication? That could be the case for literary writs. It is noticed that ancient novels and classics are being rewritten, it could be for the sake of criticism or to appeal to readers' minds, as it could be due to the shortage in creativity be it creative in one way or another.

The age of decadence in literature specifically is usually seen as an age that follows an era of great success which could mainly be seen as an age of deterioration. Taken for granted the end of the nineteenth century up to now, authors and writers with respect to those who made literature much more pleasant than it could ever be like Hugo, Hemingway, Bronte, Woolf, Joyce ...etc. have given no particularity to literature for all studies and most of the researches done and conducted, were found to have existed in previous writs and this, thus gives their findings no sense of novelty which could be found in the seventeenth up to nineteenth and even the first half of the twentieth centuries.

What could be said as a reason for such decline is that writers have found no newness to ascribe to their writs so they turned back to ancient writings to rework, mimic or parody them for the reasons mentioned beforehand. In a nutshell, *Pride and Prejudice* has been reworked for multiple reasons, either to be criticized, to grant readers what they need and especially Austen lovers, or to cover up for the failure that literature is dwelling within in the late century. In either ways such re-imaginings added to literature and created a vent from which ancient works could be looked at.

7. Conclusion

Seeking for what literature carries of meaning is as constant as writing itself. Writers write for various reasons with the extra spices known as personal experiences. The smartest and possibly the most intriguing ingredient in writing is that one would never be sure of what a writer intended and intended not to convey and display, and for that, interpretations vary and understandings differ. In that respect, one comes to know that even motives change accordingly. Some authors aim to write to display their particular comprehensibility of a certain area of interest, others plan to uncover hidden portrayals while a group is individualized by their need to write to fill in the blank created by the lack of authenticity although re-writing the written is itself authentic in some sense. Generally, Re-telling is God's gift to the reader and repayment to the writer who thoughtfully shaped his/her masterpiece and respectfully claimed price for it (readership).

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