

Commentary for II.viii *Pride and Prejudice*
 Instructor: Thomas Dutoit

The operative words in the title of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are maybe nowhere more sharply delineated than in the aggressive altercation between Elizabeth and Darcy in II.viii, when there is almost nothing left holding them apart, other than the ineffective meddling of Lady Catherine and somewhat bemused mediation of Colonel Fitzwilliam. For pride and prejudice, if for Elizabeth especially, are at their height here, they are also on the very verge of collapsing, as this scene serves to precipitate the text into the profound misunderstanding of Darcy's declaration of love and Elizabeth's of scorn (II.xi).

The passage proposed for our commentary belongs roughly to middle of the descent phase of the novel, in Volume II (after its ascent in Volume I, and resurrection mainly in Volume III. Things for the Bennet sisters have been getting worse throughout the second volume as Jane's hopes disappear, as Jane is stuck in London not doing anything, as Elizabeth goes to Charlotte's and sees the best (standard of living, material comfort) she, Elizabeth, no longer even has to hope for or look forward to (because she is most likely not going to get another offer of marriage, even as bad as Mr. Collins's is from the perspective of amorous sentiment). After this scene of Chapter viii, Darcy virtually offers her marriage in an ambiguous way in Chapter x, where after all is downhill: after the explosion of Chapter xi and the letter of xii, Elizabeth has nothing to do besides take the full measure of her disaster: to have turned down a man who loved her worth 10,000 pounds per annum, to realize how ridiculous her parents and wild sisters are, to go back to Longbourne saddled with idiotic Lydia (who will, however, be Elizabeth's salvation), to witness how derelict her father is in his duties, how the situation will only go from bad to worse, until, in the moment of miraculous reversal, the Gardiner's pull her out of the miasma with the trip (proposed in II.xix), not to the Lakes (to the rocks and mountains, i.e., not to men), but rather to Darcy Country, to Derbyshire, to Darcy by her, Darcy for her, for hire, and for sure (Darcy/Derby/shire). The passage, therefore, belongs to the descent, especially to one of the last moments that precipitates the protagonists to the nadir of the novel, bottom it must hit before it can begin to ascend, as it does as of II.xix, and thenceforth in volume III. The irony of this descent consists in part in how, despite the negative overtones of the passages, despite the fact that Darcy and Elizabeth are misunderstanding each other, despite the nuances of meaning that, if they exist at a textual level, are not (fully) grasped by the characters, [The irony ... consists in part, then, in how] the two are engaging in a lively way that does attest their (entangled, gnarled, caged) amorous sentiments: it is a descent that foreshadows a rebound.

If everyone (or almost, in the papers) pushes the idea of signs of their nascent love (and it's because Elizabeth is wrong, is making gaffes, that she is loveable; Lady Catherine wd be horrified, but Darcy loves her because of it), almost no one insists on the very near explosion in chapter 11, very odd that everyone overlooks that (the passage is the sharpest conflict between them, prior to the rejection) to see to the still faraway happy end.

The purpose of the passage – no doubt to sharpen the pending catastrophe, while preparing it, taking the book down, so that it can subsequently rise from its ashes – is subtended by the social structure it depicts, a structure in which the protagonists are on a collision course that only the resources of language they subsequently have access to can retrieve them from bitter solitude.

The purpose of the passage in the economy of the book

Very few state what the interest of the passage is, and its situation in the economy of the book. There is also the real aggression in the passage. This is right before the explosion. The irony is that Colonel Fitzwilliam (whom Elizabeth is inclined towards) will give Elizabeth the

information about Darcy's role with Bingley (stopping the Bingley-Jane marriage). The aggression found in irony that becomes sarcasm, "True; and nobody can ever be introduced in a ball room" (32). Although for stiff upholders of social decorum, this might be true – Mr. Collins commits a *faux pas*, according to Elizabeth and apparently to Darcy, when he introduces himself to Mr. Darcy, in Volume I – Elizabeth also shows that people can in fact be introduced even if some people scorn such openness (herself included! When it comes to Collins). Elizabeth *is* ridiculing Darcy (even if Darcy is loving it, much to her consternation...).

The really "dreadful" thing is something other than what Elizabeth explicitly names: the really "dreadful" thing remains alluded to but unsaid, and it is Darcy's treatment of Wickham, not to mention Darcy's treatment of Bingley. The irony of her unstated "dreadful" news is that she's completely wrong (if we believe Darcy), and even Colonel Fitzwilliam knows already all about it (being the other guardian of Darcy's sister). The gap between her threat to say things about Wickham (the irony being that Colonel Fitzwilliam is the only one to know it, but Lady Catherine would find out then), and her actually only saying that he didn't dance, this gap shows the difference between what can be said in public, when there are witnesses, and what two adults can say face-to-face, when *en tête à tête*. That difference between public and private has to be set up here, through understatement, so that in II.xi and II.xii, the novel can attain a degree of intensity, rawness, and deep-felt pain. The purpose of her both over-stated ("dreadful") and under-stated (just not dancing) examples in this scene is to give more power to her punch when she says what she really means and thinks two chapters later, slamming Darcy not only for disregarding her family but for wronging Jane and Wickham. The purpose of this scene is in its preparing a later scene, making the later rejection all the more violent and powerful.

The "dreadful" thing of not dancing, however, does name the fact of Darcy's inability to desire others outside his own clan. To desire those who are already acquired, those with whom there is no risk, is an avowal of his incapacity to "perform to strangers," to approach people outside his family circle. A further purpose of this passage in the economy of the text is that it marks a decisive separation of Darcy from his family circle, his excursion into a zone of risk, his equivalent of walking three miles in the mud.

The social structure

Lady Catherine, although the only aristocrat among the group, is the worst-behaved, because she talks during the musician's performance, she is nosey, interfering in the conversations of others, and even displays poor breeding, in a touch of Austenian irony directed at her supposed good 'blood': "his aunt's ill breeding" (1) and "Lady Catherine listened to half a song, and then talked, as before" (3-4). "Here they were interrupted by Lady Catherine, who called out to know what they were talking of. Elizabeth immediately began playing again. Lady Catherine approached, and, after listening for a few minutes, said to Darcy." (52-54). One purpose of the passage is to represent the separation in Darcy between, on the one hand, his "Lady Catherine" side (the high born, the supercilious, the supposedly superior, rank) and his "Fitzwilliam" side (the side that fits his will, where "I" "am" my "will," and adequate to it, it fits me). This separation is represented by the diptych that are the two secondary characters (Colonel Fitzwilliam, who "cried" [24] and Lady Catherine, who "called out" [52]). Colonel Fitzwilliam, who is the difference between Elizabeth and Darcy (Colonel Fitzwilliam is the mediation, the link and the separation, between man and woman), is both Lady Catherine (as the L and the C in his colonizing attribute, the Colon-el, indicate, just like the grounds around Lady Catherine are as if her colonies) and Darcy (Darcy signs his letter in II.xii "Fitzwilliam Darcy"). Colonel Fitzwilliam is thus part woman, part man, part old world, part new world, partly where Darcy comes from (Lady Catherine) and partly where Darcy is going to go to (Elizabeth). The purpose of the character symmetry (the two main characters, mediated by, on the inside, the minor

character of Colonel Fitzwilliam, and by, on the outside, the minor character of Lady Catherine) is to represent the threshold upon which the novel is balanced: Darcy's taking the step to ask for Elizabeth, a step that is at first a *faux pas* and an *il ne faut pas*, but is an error that is the possibility for a correction and a real rectitude in both the protagonists.

A contest of wills, a semi-public match to see who is superior to the other (numerous papers intelligently analyzed the sort of courtroom scene, with Elizabeth as a sort of prosecutor ["Mr Darcy, you cannot deny the fact" {30}, "Shall we ask your cousin the reason of this" {36}, foreboding how Elizabeth stands her ground in II.xi]), and with Colonel Fitzwilliam as judge), the encounter between Elizabeth and Darcy shows their playful aggression, their pride, too.

- ; till the latter walked away from her, and moving with his usual deliberation towards the piano forte, stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance. Elizabeth saw what he was doing, and at the first convenient pause, turned to him with an arch smile, and said,

- "You mean to frighten me, Mr. Darcy, by coming in all this state to hear me? But I will not be alarmed though your sister *does* play so well. There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me."

- Mr. Darcy, it is very ungenerous in you to mention all that you knew to my disadvantage in Hertfordshire – and, give me leave to say, very impolitic too – for it is provoking me to retaliate, and such things may come out, as will shock your relations to hear."

"I am not afraid of you," said he, smilingly.

These challenges show the protagonists almost as boxers, as sparring partners, in a dominator-dominated logic. Who will dominate? Who will be dominated? What Elizabeth presumably does not imagine is that the more she stands up to Darcy, the more he is excited by her and attracted to her. What Elizabeth also does not, in this scene, register (although readers and the narrator do), is that Darcy acquiesces, concedes, apologizes, gives in (31, 34, 41, 49, and when he says, "I should have judged better," he is saying, I should have judged you to be sexy and not barely tolerable, back in Volume I, so that he is trying to undo his wrongdoing). Elizabeth's latter self-accusation (in II.xiii, how blind she was, etc.) will retroactively cringe at her determination to win these mini-battles that assured her losing the war (turning off, she thinks, the 10,000 pound man).

There is in all of that a triangle, and Elizabeth (almost saucily) plays to two men. There is a rivalry not only between Elizabeth and Darcy (that continues everything from the beginning of the book [one could recall quickly here the major scenes where Elizabeth and Darcy converse and verbally fence with each other, notably Elizabeth saying she must get impertinent or else she'll become fearful and intimidated]) but also between Colonel Fitzwilliam and Darcy. Elizabeth at this point in the book thinks that perhaps Colonel Fitzwilliam may be interested in her, and so she is still angling towards him. It is not until the end of II.x that Colonel Fitzwilliam tells her explicitly that he needs to find a woman worth 50,000 pounds or so, when she thus realizes that he is not going to be interested in her, just as he will inform her inadvertently about the Bingley-Jane situation that Darcy prevented from happening. Part of the purpose of this passage is in using Colonel Fitzwilliam to increase the misunderstanding between Elizabeth and Darcy, since we may assume that Darcy knows that Colonel Fitzwilliam is not interested, cannot be, interested in Elizabeth, whereas at this point in the text, Elizabeth still entertains the illusion that the Colonel fancies her.

Elizabeth's grandstanding (gateway to the narrator's 'correction')

Elizabeth humiliates severely, at least at first, Darcy, when she refuses to continue to talk to him, and re-directs her speech from him to Colonel Fitzwilliam, disdaining Darcy

explicitly, treating Colonel Fitzwilliam as worthy of her address but not Darcy: “Well, Colonel Fitzwilliam, what do I play next? My fingers wait your orders.”

“Perhaps,” said Darcy, “I should have judged better, had I sought an introduction, but I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers.”

“Shall we ask your cousin the reason of this?” said Elizabeth, still addressing Colonel Fitzwilliam. “Shall we ask him why a man of sense and education, and who has lived in the world, is ill qualified to recommend himself to strangers?” (32-38). Elizabeth delivers a serious put-down to Darcy: he is not worthy of her address. In addition, she treats his self-characterization as seriously insufficient, poking holes in it, by emphasizing that of all people he is the one most able and trained to make conversation with others. When Darcy persists, trying to justify himself (“I certainly have not the talent which some people possess,” said Darcy, “of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done.” [41-43]), he indicates to the reader, and to Elizabeth, that with someone like her, who he thinks he knows, he *can* “catch” her “tone of conversation” and is really “interested” in her “concerns.” A subtle communication is occurring between them but neither of them fully understands it. The interruption of Lady Catherine, to find out what they are talking about, is meta-textual, since she, like the reader, interrupts, would like to know what it is they are (really) talking about, talking about while seeming to address something else or someone else (obviously Elizabeth speaks to Darcy even if she ostensibly addresses Colonel Fitzwilliam). Like Lady Catherine, the reader wants to know what they are talking about; and just as the fact of Lady Catherine’s noticing their little ménage à trois indicates her getting suspicious about a impertinent woman being in between two eligible bachelors, so too the reader starts belatedly to “catch their tone of conversation.” The passage illustrates just how ambiguous speech can be when words addressed to one person are in fact meant for another person, when people speak by analogy and innuendo, when pride and prejudice, aggression and passion, mingle with civil conversation.

The narrator’s “corrections” and preparation for Volume III

Very little in the extract is provided in the words of the narrator. By such scarcity, the narrator’s indications take on greater significance. From 8 to 51, virtually the totality of the text is in direct speech. If this open microphone captures the vivacity of their exchange – and one of the specificities of Austen’s writing is the liveliness of her dialogues, those between Darcy and Elizabeth being no doubt the most breathtaking in her oeuvre, and what constitute, literally, the status of this extract as a “conversation piece” or “dialogical non-peace/ war” as it were – in contrast the sparseness of narrative filler (1-7; 52-54; and a smattering of proper names – Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy, Colonel Fitzwilliam, Lady Catherine – a handful of “said” he or she, a rare variation as in “cried”) does show readers that Elizabeth is more or less the centre of focalisation. Apart from sentence one (1), devoted to Darcy’s appearance, all the narrative precisions (except “said he, smilingly” [23] and “Darcy smiled” [49]) give information about Elizabeth, and even “Darcy looked a little ashamed” [1]) informs us that this is how Elizabeth sees him, perceives him, so that the objects perceived are perceived through the eyes of Elizabeth (there is “laughed heartily at this picture of herself” [15] and “still addressing” [34] to make it clear that perception is centred in Elizabeth). Thus, lines 2-7 take on special importance. At the word “usual,” narration shifts into free indirect speech, reaching no doubt an apex in “Elizabeth saw what he was doing ... arch smile.” At stake here is not simply that the narration is prejudged, biased, distorted, by being under Elizabeth’s influence. At stake is that the cruel pleasure the narrator (and we readers) take in thrashing Elizabeth, as double meanings testify to a slicing judgment on Elizabeth, unbeknownst to her, it seems: Elizabeth maybe makes the narration skewed, but the narrator wrests back her critical independence on her character. Take the example of “stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer’s countenance” (5-6): this will be picked up by Elizabeth in her own speech, with “coming in all

this state to hear me” (8), the “state” being a recurrence of “stationed,” so that the reader has proof that we are still inside Elizabeth’s “mind.” The word “state” probably has to do with the fact that the man has a large “estate.” But the cruel irony of the narrative is in the words “fair performer’s countenance”: does this mean that Elizabeth thinks that Darcy wants to admire her pretty face (“fair countenance”) or does it mean that her pitiful talent is being remarked upon (“fair performer” as in not a very good one)? Darcy apparently only wants a “view” of her, not a good place to *hear*. (He is not interested in her piano playing, he is interested in seeing her from a higher vantage point, presumably to look down her dress or to look at her hands and arms, in short to ogle her, even if the text only says “a full view of the fair performer’s countenance” (6). Darcy, we know, is at this point falling in love, as is confirmed by his intrusion into Rosings and Hunsford (to see Elizabeth away from her family), his showing up impromptu at Charlotte Collins (“what can be the meaning of this?” she asks, surely he is in love, she supposes), and of course his hypothetical and real proposals in II.x and II.xi; plus, Darcy does not think that she plays the piano *to* Colonel Fitzwilliam [who is basically a stranger], but rather to Darcy [who is not]. So, Darcy thinks that her talking to Fitzwilliam is really talking to Darcy. When she performs, she actually performs to Darcy, not to others; in other words, all the others are “strangers,” which means that Darcy is, he imagines, the privileged interlocutor.) So is it correct for Elizabeth to think he’s smirking at her lack of talent, compared to his sister (9)? Or does it mean that Elizabeth has not understood that if Darcy wanted to hear his sister (or marry her), he’d *listen* to his sister and not *look* at Elizabeth? By focalizing the narration in Elizabeth, all the while opening up a critical distance on her, the narrator appears to be making the point that Elizabeth, if she has a certain advantage by “controlling” the scene, is also stuck in her own prejudiced way of seeing things (as indicated by her very bitter “to my certain knowledge ... one young lady” [29]). The scene therefore is programmed to set up the explosion in II.xi, and Elizabeth’s subsequent self-castigation in II.xiii.

The literary resources and springs of Austen’s fictions, i)

Darcy’s speech and Elizabeth’s also are heavily laden with *double entendres*. From lines 44 to 51, Elizabeth criticizes Darcy’s refusal to converse and to dance with people he doesn’t already know by a comparison (and contrast) with her acceptance to play piano in front of others, even though she does not play well (unlike Darcy, who if he does not know well the other, won’t talk or dance with her). When Elizabeth says “I have always supposed it to be my own fault – because I would not take the trouble of practising,” she criticizes Darcy for making no effort. But Darcy displaces the thrust of her critique onto another area. Although he grants her perfect rightness, he does not take the criticism, because he establishes a comparison between himself and her: “We neither of us perform to strangers.” To understand what Darcy is doing in this verbal joust, we have to understand the nature of displacement that occurs in speaking through analogies. Elizabeth uses the analogy of her piano playing to illustrate Darcy’s failing. But the point in these verbal thrusts is that analogy opens up the fact of talking about something different from what one thinks one is referring to by analogy (if I can talk about your dancing through the analogy of my piano playing, then you can continue the process by taking my piano playing to be an analogy of something else, and so on *ad infinitum*). The listener, the other, is free to re-direct the analogy to where he or she chooses, not to where the speaker may (or may not) have intended it to refer to. When Darcy answers Elizabeth (“You are perfectly right. You have employed your time much better. No one admitted to the privilege of hearing you, can think any thing wanting”), he turns what she says to another meaning than the one she intended. For Darcy shifts the poor piano playing to Elizabeth’s excellent speaking capacities: the one who hears Elizabeth is the one who hears her talk, not play piano. And her talking lacks nothing. And moreover, because of her double entendres, she does not perform to strangers. To strangers,

what she means is that if she wants to play better, she should practice. But to non-strangers, to those familiar with her capacity for saying other things than what she explicitly says, what she says is that her “hands” are very good “moving over” the “instrument”; she “believes” *her* “fingers” “as capable as any other woman’s”. These words used by Elizabeth can easily be taken to have another referent, a different referent, than that of the piano. The “instrument” upon which her fingers and her hands could be really, really, good if she practised, could refer to something that Darcy thinks he, the man, is master of (“masterly man-ner”): the instrument might be something other than the piano. Darcy takes Elizabeth to be performing intimately, not to a stranger, because he can mis-read (or accurately read) her analogy to mean something other (or not other) than what she means. “My fingers,” said Elizabeth, “do not move over this instrument in the masterly manner which I see so many women’s do. They have not the same force or rapidity, and do not produce the same expression. But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault – because I would not take the trouble of practising. It is not that I do not believe *my* fingers as capable as any other woman’s of superior execution.”

Darcy smiled and said, “You are perfectly right. You have employed your time much better. No one admitted to the privilege of hearing you, can think any thing wanting. We neither of us perform to strangers.”

Here, hearing is ambiguous: to what does “hearing you” refer? Her words here, how he hears her words, or to piano playing?

Literary resources and springs, ii)

Despite the fact that, as readers, we must not neglect, must not fail to read, the primary purpose of the passage, which is to sharpen the misunderstandings, the agonistic and competitive nature of Darcy and Elizabeth just prior to II.x, II.xi and II.xii, despite this fact we can still, we can also, in this negative or aggressive exchange, detect signs of the book’s final volume based on their coming-together respectfully and graciously. The foreshadowing of a union of Darcy and Elizabeth may be glimpsed in Darcy’s use of the second person plural pronoun, “we” and “us,” in “We neither of us perform....” Up to this point, “I” and “you” had structured the relation of Darcy and Elizabeth. Darcy insists on the “we,” since it would have been enough to say only, “Neither of us.” If Darcy’s switch to a “we” and an “us” is perhaps the scriptor’s way (not the narrator’s, since Darcy’s speech is relayed directly) of foreshadowing Darcy’s proposal, what Darcy says, i.e., not “perform to strangers,” is very complex in its implication: Elizabeth had criticized Darcy for not addressing strangers. Darcy agrees (he is “ill-qualified to recommend himself ...”) with her: he feels that he cannot address strangers. But Darcy claims that Elizabeth also does not *perform* to strangers. Given that Elizabeth does play music to strangers (at Rosings), and converse with strangers (at Netherfield), Darcy’s implication seems to have to be that Elizabeth does not *act*, does not *pretend*, with strangers: she is authentic, herself. Darcy wants to believe that he too is not false, which is why he cannot address strangers. When Darcy switches to the “we” and “us,” he tries to establish their similarity and compatibility. What shows that attempt is the fact in Darcy’s speech that he, Darcy, picks up on the repetition of the word “trouble”: Fitzwilliam had said Darcy “will not give himself the *trouble*” (line #), and this is what Elizabeth – perhaps unwittingly – says of herself, “I would not take the *trouble* of practising” (line #). Darcy misunderstands what Elizabeth says here, and his misunderstanding is contained in his notion of *performing to strangers*, but the happy ending of the book depends on his correcting his understanding. Darcy’s words (not perform to strangers) mean, for him, that they neither *act*, *pretend*, *put on a show*, *wear a mask*, *adopt another persona*, with strangers (“perform” taken here in that acceptance). His words mean, for him, that both he and Elizabeth are *real*, *authentic*, *true*, etc. But Elizabeth does “perform” to strangers, in the other sense of *step up to the challenge*, *go outside of herself*, *assume her social responsibility* (the other acceptance of “perform”). This misunderstanding by Darcy of the two senses of “perform” announces how the book and its

story will change as Darcy corrects his understanding: Darcy will *perform to strangers*, all throughout Volume III: he will perform to the Gardiners, he will perform to the lawyers in London, he will negotiate the marriage of Wickham and Lydia. This performance to strangers indeed requires him precisely to put on masks, to take on another persona (than the one he believes is “naturally” his, but which only is “his” by laziness and habit), but it also requires him (other sense of “perform”) to step up to the challenge, the danger, the risk. One obtains nothing if one does not risk losing something. Darcy’s “We neither of us perform to strangers” has meaning beyond the moment when he says it, and its meaning is delivered throughout the rest of the book. “We neither of us perform to strangers” comes to have, for Darcy, a meaning opposite to the one he intends at this point in the book, showing therefore his capacity to change and, moreover, to move closer to Elizabeth, just as when Elizabeth refuses to back down and stands her ground to Lady Catherine in III.xiv, she, Elizabeth refuses to “perform to strangers” in the sense of behaving authentically: she acts like a Darcy (from Volume I), she acts authentically to who she believes she is, no longer professing opinions not her own. Both protagonists undergo a revolution tantamount to how words can have opposed meanings.

Literary resources and springs, iii)

“I shall not say that you are mistaken,” he replied, “because you could not really believe me to entertain any design of alarming you; and I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance long enough to know, that you find great enjoyment in occasionally professing opinions which in fact are not your own.” (11-14)

When Darcy says that he does not think she is mistaken, he says that he does think that she is saying something *other* than what she is saying. He is isolating a general principle of irony, far greater than local irony. He is isolating the fact that they are talking *all the time* about something other than what they are talking about. Or so he wants to believe. He introduces the general principle of constant *double entendre*. If she is not mistaken, it is because she does not believe what she says. If she does not believe what she says, then her tongue is forked: he accuses her of being if not a liar at least facetious. Therefore, he thinks she knows he is coming to check her out because he likes her, and therefore he thinks she knows he likes her. So, he thinks it is female game, like Mr. Collins thought she was playing female games by refusing when she meant to accept. Men think women are liars, and that turns them on, because when a woman says “No” they think it means “Yes” and when a woman says, “you are intimidating me,” they think she says, “you are making love to me,” and therefore the men think they are being encouraged when such is not the case. Indeed, Darcy thinks he is being encouraged, and his proposal is only two chapters away (and throughout these chapters Elizabeth is, supposedly, or at least the narrator tells us that Elizabeth cannot figure out why Darcy keeps showing up out in the woods in her path when she is outside taking a walk, after telling him that she likes to take walks). Thus, Darcy is trapped in a male attitude towards woman, which it will take Elizabeth’s explosion two chapters later to change.

A conclusion would almost certainly insist on the situation of this passage in the general economy of the book: it must prepare for the catastrophic marriage proposal that turns into humiliation (on both sides) and raw open wounds coming from the blindness, prejudice and pride rightly identified, and these catastrophe is partly an effect of a social structure or cage that the protagonists are still prisoners of. Elizabeth’s over-confidence throughout the passage is undercut by a narrator who keeps her/ his independence in writing. Such writing is the resource of almost countless turnarounds that, if they properly belong to Volume III, are here set, like the springs of a mechanism that only needs to be tripped for it to set into motion the protagonists’ rewriting of their destiny.