

‘Half Sign, half Ad’: Literary and Commercial Functions of Paratextual and In-Text Titles in the Novels of Pietro Chiari

Abstract

This article builds on studies by Claude Duchet and Franco Moretti on the function of novel titles as literary and commercial signifiers, but argues that the scope needs to be extended further, to what we may call paratextual and in-text titles: book titles that appear in prefaces and within novel texts. The article examines a set of novels written by Pietro Chiari (1712-1785) that make use of such title references. In the early stages of his novel production, Chiari mobilised French and British novel titles in an appropriation of these novelistic traditions. The Brescian writer then gradually abandoned the project of appropriation and began to reference only his own titles. Thus, the use of paratextual and in-text titles primarily took on an advertisement function. The article argues that these title references are embedded into a marketing strategy based on establishing a serial aspect to Chiari’s novels.

Keywords

Literary appropriation

Book advertisement

Paratexts

Book history

Textual criticism

The eighteenth-century novel

At the end of the second volume of Pietro Chiari’s novel *La Ballerina onorata* (1754), the eponymous protagonist describes her encounter in Milan with a woman who ‘porta il nome di *Filosofessa italiana*’.¹ This woman was the protagonist of another of Chiari’s novels, his very first, published the year before, *La Filosofessa italiana* (1753). The narrator of *La Ballerina* further relates how, having come across the memoirs of this acquaintance, ‘un Libro intitolato *la Filosofessa Italiana*’, she had been inspired to write her own memoirs.² Thus the name *Filosofessa italiana* appears twice in the passage, first referring to the character, then to the object of the book that contains her life story. This appearance of a specific novel title in the main text of another novel is what we could call an *in-text title*, a title taking the shape of a literary motif. In this case, the motif is a dual entity, a name that simultaneously denotes a book and a character. The name establishes a double intertextual connection, between the two novels, *La Ballerina onorata* and *La Filosofessa italiana*, as well as between the two eponymous protagonists.

The intertextual connection is a literary device that has a potentially strong influence on how the reader perceives the novel she or he is reading. Provided that the reader of *La Ballerina onorata* has previously read, or has knowledge of, *La Filosofessa italiana*, the

¹ Pietro Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata, o sia, Memorie d'una Figlia naturale del Duca N.V.* (Venice: Angelo Pasinelli, 1754), vol. 2, p. 162.

² Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata*, p. 162.

reference evokes associations, parallels and/or contrasts between the two texts, which all have an impact on the reading process. At the same time, the in-text title can be said to have a commercial function: it acts as an advertisement for any readers unfamiliar with the novel that is referenced, by making them aware of its existence and similarity with the book they are holding in their hands.

According to the French critic Claude Duchet, the title of a novel is a ‘coded message’ in the market, and constitutes simultaneously a literary and a commercial utterance.³ Building on Duchet, Franco Moretti has taken up this idea in order to carry out a study of seven thousand British novel titles from the eighteenth century.⁴ Looking at the titles in quantity and in their relationship to each other, Moretti is able, without going into the main texts, to make interesting points about the evolution of the novel in this period. As this article will show, however, if we are to say something about the relationship between the title as a literary and as a commercial signifier, we need also take into account the presence of title references within the texts themselves, as well as in other parts of the paratextual apparatus than the title page, notably in prefaces.

For Moretti, novel titles are ‘[a] code, in the market: half sign, half ad, [...] where the novel as language meets the novel as commodity’.⁵ I would like to argue that this applies for all titles, not only those visible in bibliographical metadata readily usable for quantitative analyses. Our study of the interplay between paratextual and in-text title references will allow us to go beyond Duchet’s and Moretti’s arguments, which imply treating the title of a novel, as it appears on the title page or in a catalogue, as a ‘self-sufficient microtext’ (‘microtexte autosuffisant’) that depends more on its intertextual relationship with other titles in the social sphere than with the text it gives name to.⁶ For, if the title of any given novel forms a part of what Genette has termed the ‘threshold’ of a book⁷, it is precisely one that marks the passage between, on the one hand, the social world of the market, and, on the other, the literary universe of texts. In those cases, then, where titles appear also in prefaces, or indeed in the novel’s main text, the title can no longer be treated as a ‘self-sufficient microtext’ that

³ ‘Le titre de roman est un message codé en situation de marché; il résulte de la rencontre d’un énoncé romanesque et d’un énoncé publicitaire’. Claude Duchet, “‘LA FILLE ABANDONNÉE” ET “LA BÊTE HUMAINE”’: éléments de titrologie romanesque,’ *Littérature*, 12 (1973), 49-73 (p. 50).

⁴ Franco Moretti, ‘Style, Inc. Reflections on Seven Thousand Titles (British Novels, 1740–1850),’ *Critical Inquiry*, 36, 1 (2009), 134-58.

⁵ Moretti, pp. 134-35.

⁶ Duchet, p. 51.

⁷ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

corresponds mainly with other titles, but as an element that acts as an intermediate between the paratext and the text, to the point of breaking down the barriers that separate them.

In this article, we are going to look at a series of novels written by the Brescian abbot Pietro Chiari (1712-1785), novels that all contain title references, either in the main text or in the publishers' prefaces, the latter being what I refer to as paratextual titles or title references. The novels that will be treated in particular here are the following: *La Filosofessa italiana* (1753), *La Ballerina onorata* (1754), *La Cantatrice per disgrazia* (1754), *La Commediante in fortuna* (1755), *La Giuocatrice di lotto* (1757), *La Bella Pellegrina* (1761), and *Le Due Gemelle* (1777).⁸ Looking at how these novels make use of paratextual and in-text titles will allow us to study the complex relationship within the eighteenth-century Italian novel between the title as a literary and as a commercial signifier, as it develops in the play between the paratext and the main text.

Furthermore, as we will be looking at Chiari's novel production over a longer period, we may observe how the title references became key elements of a distinct appropriative and commercial project that developed over time, in relation to its success in the market. The Italian novelist made use of novel titles as motifs, taken from the French and British traditions, as well as from his own production; in the one case, to signal a particular relationship with precursory novelists, and, in the other, to (primarily) advertise for his own novels. Because this takes place in and between prefaces and main texts, we will also be able to study how the function of titles in Chiari's novels destabilizes the relationship between the paratext and the main text – if ever it was stable in the first place.

In the first part of this article, we will look at the use of paratextual and in-text titles in Chiari's first novel, *La Filosofessa italiana* (1753). As the very first, this novel stands out from the rest of Chiari's production, particularly marked by his concerns of entering a novel market dominated by imports from France and, to a certain extent, Britain. The titles referenced in *La Filosofessa* are mainly French, and are mobilised in an attempt to appropriate the French novel tradition to an Italian cultural and linguistic context. The second part of the article will focus on a number of his succeeding novels, were Chiari gradually

⁸ The years noted here correspond to the original publications. For some of these novels we will look at other editions, since many of the first have not survived, and also because the differences between editions are important to the argument I will develop here. For a complete list of the 23 novels that have been attributed with a relative certainty to Chiari, see Luca Clerici, 'Best-seller del Settecento: I romanzi di Pietro Chiari,' *Acme: Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Milano*, 48, 2 (1995), 73-101 (pp. 86-89). See also, by the same author, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento: il caso Chiari* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1997), pp. 27-28, note 25. However, Clerici's list is not without errors. For example, the existence of a 1762 version of *La donna che non si trova* has been dismissed, amongst others by Carlo A. Madrignani in his *All'origine del romanzo in Italia. Il 'celebre Abate Chiari'* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 2000), p. 288.

abandoned the references to French and British titles, and began an extensive practice of self-referencing. The general impression is that the appropriative and literary function of the title references identifiable in the early stages of Chiari's novel production is gradually overtaken by an advertising function. We will see how this practice of self-referencing, along with the way in which Chiari constructed his novel titles over a particular formula, contributed to establishing a serial aspect to his novels, one that was important to his commercial success.

Title References in *La Filosofessa italiana* as Signs of Appropriation

Novels from mid-eighteenth-century Venice constitute a particularly interesting object of study with regard to appropriation of foreign novel traditions, as well as to the development of strategies of book advertisement and marketing. In this period, the Venetian book market was in crisis, as far as the established publishers and major genres – religious and scholarly – were concerned. As a result, new publishers established themselves, basing their success on such minor genres as periodicals and novels.⁹ The success of translations of French and British novels had revealed the commercial potential of this kind of 'minor' literature.¹⁰ It was in this market that novelists such as Pietro Chiari and Antonio Piazza could become best-selling authors and professional writers, albeit in a continuous struggle with publishers who did what they could to get as much as possible of the profit themselves, as unauthorized reprints flourished all over Italy.¹¹

La Filosofessa italiana was not only Chiari's first novel, but also probably the first example of a modern novel written originally in Italian, not as a translation or direct adaptation of French and British novels.¹² But his debt to particularly the French tradition becomes apparent when we look at the use of title references in the novel. In a scene from the fifth part of the book, the protagonist and first-person narrator is reflecting upon the process of writing her memoirs, which leads to her comparing herself to the heroines of two popular French pseudomemoirs, *La Paysanne parvenue*, written by the chevalier de Mouhy, and Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne*:

⁹ Tatiana Crivelli, '*Né Arturo né Turpino né la Tavola rotonda*': romanzi del secondo Settecento italiano (Roma: Salerno, 2002), p. 130.

¹⁰ Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel: Venice 1753-84,' *Italian Studies*, 67, 1 (2012), 37-55 (p. 40).

¹¹ Crivelli, p. 134.

¹² On this topic, see the two following studies: Carlo A. Madrignani, 'Introduzione,' in Pietro Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana* (San Cesario di Lecce: Manni, 2004 [1753]), p. 5; Ann Hallamore Caesar, 'Bagatelle, Bambocserie, and Bordellerie: the Critics and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century Italy,' *Italian Studies*, 60, 1 (2005), 22-41 (p. 24).

[Io] scrivo le avventure mie, non quelle degli altri. Se la *Contadina ingentilita*, e la sventurata *Marianna* avessero fatto anch'esse questo riflesso, non avrebbero dato luogo nelle loro memorie a tante lunghissime istorie di persone affatto straniere; e facendo meno voluminosa la loro vita, l'avriano forse resa più bella.¹³

The same identification between characters and books that we saw in our initial example from *La Ballerina onorata* is at play here. Typography, in the form of italics, is used to the effect of signalling that we are dealing with book titles; or rather, the *Contadina ingentilita* and *Marianne* are simultaneously characters and books. Furthermore, as references to books, these titles have double value: they are *memoirs* in the fictional universe, and in that sense entertain a synecdochic relationship with their narrators; but they are *novels* in reality, and enter as such into a metaphorical relationship with the characters. In practical terms, this means that the critique addressed by Chiari's heroine to the character-authors that are the *Contadina* and *Marianne*, conceals a critique of Chiari's French colleagues: my novel is better, the author appears to be saying, on the account of being shorter and more focused. Although the references do indicate that there is a kinship between Marianne, Jeanette and Chiari's heroine, the main goal seems rather to be to mark the difference between the present text and its French precursors. Or, to be more precise, Chiari is inscribing his novel into the lineage of the French novelists Marivaux and Mouhy, while simultaneously marking a certain distance to them, a duality of dependence and distancing that seems to be characteristic of the practice of appropriation.¹⁴

Chiari's choice of referencing *La Paysanne parvenue* and *La Vie de Marianne* together becomes interesting when we take into consideration that Mouhy's novel is an overt appropriation of Marivaux's. In the ninth part of *La Paysanne parvenue*, the protagonist, Jeanette, goes to bed with a book that she has found in her library, and which turns out to be *La Vie de Marianne*. The book quickly captures her interest, as she finds a strong affinity between her own situation and the life narrated in the book: 'Je m'oubliai moi-même, pour ainsi dire, en faveur de l'aimable Marianne que je lisais; il me semblait trouver un rapport

¹³ Pietro Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana, o sia Le avventure della Marchesa N.N. Scritte in francese da lei medesima* (San Cesario di Lecce: Manni, 2004 [1753]), p. 300. Chiari knew the two French novels well. Prior to the publication of *La Filosofessa*, he had made stage adaptations of both *La Vie de Marianne* and *La Paysanne parvenue*, as well as of Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Richardson's *Clarissa*. These plays were published by Angelo Pasinelli in 1753. See Ted A. Emery, 'Tom Jones on the Italian Stage: The Orfano Trilogy of Pietro Chiari,' *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 18, 1 (1988), 311-322 (p. 312 and note 5).

¹⁴ According to Julie Sanders, appropriation entails 'a posture of critique, even assault' towards the hypotext(s), which distinguishes it from the practice of adaptation. Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

parfait de sa vie avec la mienne'.¹⁵ The reference appears as the sign of an appropriation through which Mouhy draws upon the similarities between his novel and that of Marivaux, admitting, in an act of self-reflexive playfulness, his debt to the latter, similarly to what Chiari later does with the two French novelists.¹⁶

However, a closer comparison between the title referencing in *La Paysanne parvenue* and in *La Filosofessa italiana* reveals interesting differences. Whereas Mouhy's heroine Jeanette is devouring *La Vie de Marianne* in an intense reading scene, the two French novels have no physical presence in the fictional universe of *La Filosofessa italiana*. The protagonist is never seen reading these 'memoirs' – although we are to assume that she has read them at some point; nor is she entering into any form of direct contact with their authors. Referring to the character-authors as well as to their memoirs, the names *Contadina ingentilita* and *Marianne* are pointing toward something outside of the narrative situation. In fact, the presence of these titles in Chiari's text is almost completely detached from the development of the plot, motivated only, one could argue, by their function in the appropriative project that Chiari's debut novel constitutes, in situating his text in relation to its French models.

Appropriation is a literary phenomenon, certainly, but does also tie in with commercial and other extra-literary concerns.¹⁷ The appropriative project visible in Chiari's text contains, for cultural, political, and financial reasons, significant differences from the appropriation done by Mouhy of Marivaux's novel. As the first proper Italian novel in a book market dominated by foreign imports, Chiari's appropriation is linked to concerns specific to the situation of Italian letters and its relationship with French literature (and to a certain extent also with British, as we will see). This situation is a fundamental subtext underlying the metaliterary motifs in the novel, such as the one we have just seen: Chiari is arguing for the value of an original Italian novel to a public avid for anything that comes from France.¹⁸

The stakes of Chiari's appropriative project become clear in a metaliterary scene set in a Bolognese bookstore, in which the heroine of *La Filosofessa* discusses the situation of the Italian book market with the bookseller and with an unnamed abbot, who may be read as an

¹⁵ Charles de Fieux chevalier de Mouhy, *La Paysanne parvenue, ou Les Mémoires de Madame la Marquise de L.V.*, ed. by Henri Durantou (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2005 [1739]), p. 289. This modern edition is established from the 1739 Amsterdam edition.

¹⁶ The title of *La Paysanne parvenue* also signals the appropriation of another Marivaux novel, *Le Paysan parvenu*.

¹⁷ See Sanders, p. 30.

¹⁸ On the great interest in French novels in Italy, see Maria Rosa Zambon, *Bibliographie du roman français en Italie au XVIIIe siècle. Traductions* (Florence: Publications de l'institut français de Florence, 1962), pp. X-XI.

avatar for the abbot Chiari himself. The characters lament the current situation of the Italian novel market, completely dominated by bad translations from French:

Ecco la ragione, Signore, perché si amano le traduzioni in Italia: anzi queste ragioni sono due. Chiunque legge, è prevenuto in favore della vostra nazione, quasi che in Francia nulla mai si stampasse di cattivo, e di scellerato. Chiunque stampa, è prevenuto in favore della sua borsa; e s'attacca alle traduzioni, perché costano meno.¹⁹

Booksellers prefer translations because they are cheaper, and the Italian readership is throwing itself at all things French. The scene reveals how Chiari would have experienced the challenge of entering this novel market, and also serves as an argument for the need for an original Italian novel, in other words for *La Filosofessa italiana* itself.

In the light of this scene, which closely precedes the comparison with the two French novels in the text (by ten pages in the modern edition), it becomes even clearer how Chiari uses the title references to position his own text and argue for the value, not only of his own, but also of an Italian novel as such.²⁰ Moreover, if we take into account the formidable success of French novels on the Italian book market, we can argue that the appropriative function of the in-text titles is to a large extent commercially motivated. The discussion in the bookstore as well as the in-text comparisons with French novel titles operate as arguments for the quality of the book, both in contrast and in similarity to established bestsellers of the Venetian book market.

The title of Chiari's novel is in itself a marker of his appropriative project: it employs a construction of 'philosopher + adjective' that was a well-known device in the contemporary French novel: two of the bestsellers of the first half of the eighteenth century were Prévost's *Cleveland ou Le philosophe anglais*, and *Thérèse philosophe*, usually attributed to Boyer D'Argens.²¹ The case of *Le philosophe anglais* is particularly interesting here. The first Italian translation of Prévost's novel appeared in 1751, only two years before the publication of *La Filosofessa*, achieving great success.²² The popularity of the novel seems to have turned 'philosopher' titles into somewhat of a fashion: in 1753, the same year as Chiari published *La Filosofessa italiana*, the Brescian abbot also published a play entitled *Il filosofo veneziano*,

¹⁹ Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana*, p. 291.

²⁰ For more on this, see Marius Warholm Haugen, 'Appropriating the Novel: Pietro Chiari's *La Filosofessa italiana*,' *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 51, 2 (2015), 212-28.

²¹ Nathalie Ferrand has made an interesting analysis of the figure of the female philosopher in *Thérèse philosophe* and *La Filosofessa italiana*. See Ferrand, "'C'est en habits d'homme qu'une femme peut philosophe": figures féminines du philosophe dans *Thérèse philosophe* et *La Filosofessa italiana*" in *La figure du philosophe dans les lettres anglaises et françaises (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, ed. by Alexis Tadié (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris, 2010), pp. 171-87.

²² Zambon, pp. xiv, 67.

whereas his great rival playwright Carlo Goldoni wrote the comedy *Il filosofo inglese*, staged the following year. Chiari also makes a playful nod to the fashion for the ‘philosopher’ titles by having one of the minor characters of his first novel work on a play entitled *Il Filosofo ammogliato*.²³

It is likely that Chiari’s choice of title was made in large part to draw upon the success of Prévost’s bestseller. Furthermore, by attaching the adjective ‘italiana’ to the ‘philosopher’, Chiari gave his first novel a title that attested to the intention of domesticating a French genre for the Italian market; in the terms of Nathalie Ferrand, the title of *La Filosofessa italiana* signals a ‘naturalisation de la philosophie en terres italiennes.’²⁴ As pointed out by Duchet and Moretti, a title signifies in an intertextual relation to other titles, through which it marks both its resemblance and its difference. In this case, it is noticeable that *La Filosofessa italiana*, by its reference to the French ‘philosopher novel’, does so in synergy with in-text titles referring precisely to the French novel tradition, thus signalling overtly and consistently the model with which it asks to be measured.

If the title of Chiari’s novel already on the title page signals its appropriative project to any reader familiar with the successful French ‘philosopher novels’, the preface to the first volume, ‘Lo stampatore a chi legge’, does so in even more explicit terms:

Chi ebbe la benignità di mandarmelo [questo Romanzo] con tanta attenzione, m’assicura; e può per la capacità sua assicurarmelo; esser egli migliore di quanti ne sono usciti fin ora: più istruttivo della *Marianna*, più tenero della *Pamela*, più intrecciato della *Contadina*, più vago, e, dirò così, filosofico del *Filosofo Inglese*, che pur fu ricevuto con tanto compatimento.²⁵

This preface operates in relation to the title, the in-text titles, and the metaliterary bookstore scene, contributing to their common appropriative and commercial function. As in the main text, references to bestsellers of the Venetian book market are mobilized in order to give legitimacy and value to Chiari’s own novel. With the exception of one title, *Pamela*, the titles mentioned in the editor’s preface are all French, a distribution that says a great deal about the French dominance in the market. Moreover, while British novels were also popular in Italy, they often arrived there by way of quite liberal French translations.²⁶ This was the case of

²³ Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana*, p. 326.

²⁴ Nathalie Ferrand, ‘Un roman plus philosophique que *Cleveland*? *La Filosofessa italiana* de l’Abbé Chiari (1753)’ in *Fictions de la pensée – pensées de la fiction. Roman et philosophie aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, ed. by Colas Duflo (Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2011), pp. 207-21 (p. 211). For the gender issues concerning the figure of the female philosopher, see also Ferrand, ‘“C’est en habits d’homme qu’une femme peut philosopher”’.

²⁵ Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana*, p. 29.

²⁶ Zambon, p. X.

Pamela, which circulated on the Italian market in a translation by the aforementioned Prévost.²⁷

According to Maria Rosa Zambon, the French influence was such that Italian authors would sometimes even attribute French origins to their texts.²⁸ The paratext of *La Filosofessa italiana* does in fact contribute to construct a fictional pact that presents the text as having been written originally in French: its complete title was *La Filosofessa italiana, o sia Le avventure della Marchesa N.N. Scritte in Francese da Lei medesima*. The book is, in other words, a pseudotranslation as well as a pseudomemoir, making use of the familiar eighteenth-century technique of playfully presenting the book as authentic memoirs, with the real author being presented, if at all, as the middleman and/or the translator. This is what Herman, Kozul, and Kremer have referred to as a ‘pact of playful feint’ (‘pacte de feintise ludique’), an editorial strategy not really aimed at fooling the readers, but rather at creating a framework for the text that legitimizes its existence as fiction.²⁹ The publisher’s preface is mobilized in this ‘playful feint’, with the publisher claiming that he has received the book ‘da Parigi a foglio per foglio.’³⁰ Similar to, and together with the title references, the pseudotranslation *topos* serves here an appropriative function. As Paolo Rambelli has argued, the ‘stratagem of pseudotranslation was aimed’, in Italy in general, and in the case of *La Filosofessa* in particular, ‘at legitimizing the introduction into Italy of a new literary genre and of some aspects of the foreign literatures from which the genre originated’. With its title references, the preface of *La Filosofessa* also ‘highlighted the immediate filiation of Italian novels from the most authoritative works from beyond the Alps’.³¹

However, as already indicated, Chiari’s appropriation of foreign models also consisted of marking a certain distance to them. The ‘playful feint’ of the pseudotranslation is mobilized to this effect. In the preface to the second volume, the publisher ‘reveals’ that the book had indeed been written in Italian:

Dando questo Romanzo per una traduzione dal Francese, l’ho dato quale l’ho ricevuto. Anch’io sono stato ingannato dalla modestia dell’Autore, che per conciliare un po’ più di credito all’Opera sua volle fingere, che fosse straniera, perché godesse del privilegio delle cose, che vengono da lontano. Il Romanzo è nato in Italia; un Italiano l’ha scritto; e l’ha

²⁷ Crivelli, p. 92.

²⁸ Zambon, p. XI.

²⁹ Jan Herman, Mladen Kozul, and Nathalie Kremer, *Le Roman véritable: stratégies préfacielles au XVIIIe siècle*, SVECS (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2008), pp. 11-12.

³⁰ Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana*, p. 29.

³¹ Paolo Rambelli, ‘Pseudotranslations, Authorship and Novelists in Eighteenth-Century Italy,’ *Translating Others*, 1 (2006), 181-95 (p. 191).

scritto per far vedere alla nostra Italia, che non c'è sempre bisogno di ricorrere a Traduzioni servili, per dar alla luce un Libro da passatempo.³²

In fact, it is not only the illusion of pseudotranslation that is completely undermined by this preface, but also that of the pseudomemoir form; it is indicated here that the text was not written by a French woman, as the title claims, but by an Italian man. The text thus tears down what it had carefully built up in the first volume, doing so for rhetorical effect. This second preface comes in direct response to the scene in the Bolognese bookstore at the end of the first volume, where the characters discussed the lamentable situation of Italian letters and the dominance of translations on the book market. The novel was presented as French, the preface seems to claim, as if to benefit from the favourable inclination of the Italian readership towards French novels. The 'revelation' of its true Italian origin is an argument for the capacity of Italian letters to produce novels of their own, not simply turning to 'Traduzioni servili'.

If the paratextual prefaces are so intertwined with key scenes of the main text as the current example would suggest, this brings up the question of who authored them. Were they the work of Chiari himself, posing as a fictional editor, or were they indeed written, as Paolo Rambelli has argued, by the 'stampatore', Chiari's Venetian publisher Angelo Pasinelli?³³ I will shortly come back to this question. We need first to take into consideration that the prefaces are, in any case, fictionalized texts that play on the *topoi* of pseudomemoirs and pseudotranslations, and that, regardless of who was responsible for the paratextual apparatus, it interacts in significant ways with the main text. Interaction is a key concept here: for not only do the paratexts contribute to the fiction; the main text in return also aids the paratextual apparatus in constructing an appropriative project that points outward from the book, reflecting commercial concerns of responding to the demands of a market insatiable for French novels.

Furthermore, this interaction is not superficial, touching a few in-text titles and a single metaliterary scene, but it in fact also extends to the core of the plot. The appropriative project that appears through the paratexts and their in-text correlates is doubled by the story of the protagonist, who starts out her adventure believing herself to be French, but later discovers that she is of noble Italian descent. Her coming to terms with her Italian origin and with the value of Italian culture runs parallel to the 'revelation' of the true origin of the text

³² Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana*, p. 362.

³³ Paolo Rambelli, 'Sulla princeps de La filosofessa italiana di Chiari,' *Italianist: Journal of the Department of Italian Studies, University of Reading*, 24, 1 (2004), 20-30 (pp. 24-25).

itself.³⁴ Thus the main plot is interwoven with the appropriative project developed in the paratexts, and, by extension, with the commercial concerns that lie behind the production of the novel.

This brings us back to the question of who wrote the prefaces. The strong interconnection between a central, and highly literary, element of the novel – i.e. the evolution of the main character – and the appropriative and commercial concerns of the paratext has profound implications for the authorial attribution of the prefaces. If it is true that Pasinelli wrote, or even just contributed to, the prefaces, *La Filosofessa italiana* appears as a good illustration of the notion of multiple authorship. The role of Pasinelli indicates how, in the terms of Jerome McGann, ‘[l]iterary production is not an autonomous and self-reflexive activity; it is a social and institutional event’.³⁵ The publisher’s contribution is in this case deeply interconnected with the plot, and has important consequences for how we read the novel. For Carlo A. Madrignani, Pasinelli should be considered as the ‘[c]oautore della *Filosofessa*’.³⁶ The appropriative elements, in the title and the prefaces as well as the in-text titles and metaliterary scenes, appear as the result of a collaborative rhetorical strategy, aimed at presenting *La Filosofessa italiana* as similar to, and even better than, best-selling French and British novels.

This rhetorical strategy may well have been first and foremost commercial, with the title of the novel and its reference to the French novelistic tradition being what Duchet calls an ‘utterance of advertisement’ (‘énoncé publicitaire’).³⁷ However, the appropriative project that it relies on also has potential literary effects. The title is also a ‘novelistic utterance’ (‘énoncé romanesque’) evoking associations that influence our reading, for example by associating it with Prévost’s *Philosophe anglais*.³⁸ The fictionalized prefaces and title references in the main text can be said to operate in the same way, evoking associations to the novels they point to in the minds of the readers. In that sense, Pasinelli’s contribution to the book makes him a ‘coautore’ in the strongest possible sense of the term, as a co-creator of the novel’s literary universe.

³⁴ For more on this topic, see Haugen, pp. 218-20.

³⁵ Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 100. See also Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 199.

³⁶ Madrignani, ‘Introduzione,’ p. 9.

³⁷ Duchet, p. 50.

³⁸ For an analysis of the relationship between Chiari’s *Filosofessa italiana* and Prévost’s *Philosophe anglais*, see Ferrand, ‘Un roman plus philosophique.’

What seems clear, in any case, is that the publisher and the author were both invested in the commercial success of the book: Pasinelli shared with Chiari the ‘comune ambizione lucrativa di arrivare ad un pubblico più largo di quello dei lettori acculturati’.³⁹ And they did in fact succeed in finding a place for an Italian novel among the many commercially successful translations and originals coming from France and Britain. Chiari was to become a best-selling author, and one of the first, if not *the* first, example of an Italian novelist who could benefit from the birth of consumer literature and live by his pen.⁴⁰ As Tatiana Crivelli has pointed out, the development of the novel in the second part of the century was intimately connected with that of the book market.⁴¹ Chiari’s first four novels came out in a total of 42 editions, whereas the total print-run of his novels at the end of his career has been estimated to around 200,000 copies.⁴² The 23 novels that Luca Clerici has attributed to him amounted to a total of approximately 130 editions.⁴³

The success experienced by Chiari over many years is attested by the opening lines to one of his later novels, *Le Due Gemelle* (1777), where the narrator refers to the success of a ‘Scrittore Italiano assai noto’, responsible for the insatiable thirst amongst readers for similar ‘donesche avventure’.⁴⁴ It is interesting that the rhetoric of self-publicity via references to the author now appears in the main text, not in the publisher’s preface, an indication of the blurry boundaries between them. Through the voice of his narrator, Chiari now also revisits the topic of bad translations of French novels dominating the Italian market before he himself entered the scene:

Non si vedeano prima di lui che delle cattive traduzioni di qualche grazioso Romanzetto Francese, che gli destarono in petto l’emulazione di far conoscere al Mondo, che gl’ingegni Italiani non ancora perduti aveano i loro antichi diritti di non esser semplici Copisti, quando farsi poteano Originali, per tentare qualche cosa di meglio.⁴⁵

In other words, we see Chiari creating his own myth as the redeemer of the honour of Italian letters, moving from being ‘semplici Copisti’ to becoming ‘ingegni Originali’.⁴⁶ The

³⁹ Madrignani, ‘Introduzione,’ p. 9.

⁴⁰ The novel of the second part of the eighteenth-century represents the first example of what we could call a ‘consumer literature’ [letteratura di consumo] in Italy. See Crivelli, p. 98.

⁴¹ Crivelli, p. 123.

⁴² Clerici, ‘Best-seller del Settecento,’ p. 90.

⁴³ Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento*, p. 19. To this, of course, we must add a considerable number of readers who would have read the books second-hand. See Crivelli, pp. 102-03.

⁴⁴ Pietro Chiari, *Le Due Gemelle. Memorie Scritte dall’una di Loro, e pubblicate dall’Abate Pietro Chiari* (Genova: Giovanni Franchi, 1777), p. 1.

⁴⁵ Chiari, *Le Due Gemelle*, p. 2.

⁴⁶ In the scene of *La Filosofessa italiana* set in the Bolognese bookstore, the protagonist mourns the era when Italy was, in matters of letters, ‘la maestra del Mondo’. Chiari, *La Filosofessa italiana*, p. 290.

argument here is almost identical to the one he made in *La Filosofessa italiana*, with the difference that he can now add to the myth the honour of having been succeeded by poor imitators:

Dopo di lui l'esito non infelice de' suoi tentativi tal fanatismo in altri destò d'imitarlo, senza averne sufficiente talento, che si arrivò a saccheggiare l'opere sue delle migliori invenzioni, e fino a ricopiarne le intere pagine, per abbagliare i lettori meno avveduti, e farseli correr dietro come altrettante mosche al mele di sì vergognosa impostura.⁴⁷

What emerges from these passages, separated by twenty-four years from *La Filosofessa italiana*, is the feeling of continuity in the strategy of self-publicity. The use of paratextual and in-text title referencing would become a common feature of Chiari's novel production. However, as we will see, Chiari would gradually stop signalling his debt to foreign traditions by means of title references, and rather use these to establish connections between his own works. Thus, the title references seem to move from an appropriative to an advertising function.

From Appropriation to Advertisement: Chiari's Practice of Self-referencing

In the publisher's preface to the second edition of *La Ballerina onorata*, Chiari's second novel, the argument for the need for an original Italian novel is more explicitly articulated than in his debut. The preface establishes a connection to *La Filosofessa italiana* from the very beginning, as if to draw upon its success, and, as opposed to the latter, immediately underlines the Italian 'birth' of the text: 'Alla *Filosofessa Italiana* vien dietro con una seconda edizione *La Ballerina onorata*, altro Romanzo moderno, compreso in due soli Tomi, e nato dentro la nostra Italia dalla penna medesima'.⁴⁸ The preface then develops further the arguments presented in the bookstore scene of *La Filosofessa*, on the need for Italy to begin producing her own novels:

Era tempo, che l'Italia nostra aprisse finalmente gli occhi, per non mendicare dagli stranieri delle Opere, che contribuiscono per sì gran modo alla civil società occupando utilmente gli Oziosi; [...] Perchè [*sic*] daremo agli Oltramontani la gloria d'inventare, di filosofare, di scrivere, quando già tutto questo l'impararon da noi; ed oggi pure, se lo volessimo, seco loro la potremmo far da maestri?

⁴⁷ Chiari, *Le Due Gemelle*, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata*. The following quotes, until otherwise noted, are from the publisher's preface, 'Lo Stampatore a chi legge', not paginated.

Again, the issue of bad translations dominating the Italian novel market is addressed, with the argument that a good novel written in Italy will be better suited to Italian customs:

Quanto a me, risparmiar ponno i Libraj la fatica, e la spesa di tante cattive traduzioni di Romanzi francesi, che la massima approvo dell'Autore di questo, di stampare degli Originali Italiani, che, quando siano scritti come si deve, saranno sempre più adattati a' nostri costumi; de' quali in Opere somiglianti si desidera veder la pittura.

As with *La Filosofessa italiana*, Chiari's second novel is presented as constituting an appropriation of the French model. The Italian writer takes from this tradition what he deems good and makes it his own, which the preface insists is an act distinct from simply reproducing the same under a different name: 'Ne' suoi egli [Chiari] trasporta di fatto quanto trova di buono, e di meglio ne' Romanzi francesi; e il volerli tradurre oggidì non farebbe, che, replicare sotto più Torchj, e sotto titoli differenti la cosa medesima.' As in Chiari's first novel, moreover, preface and main text operate together in the appropriative project. In the opening chapter of the novel, the first-person narrator reflects upon her decision to write her memoirs, placing herself in a proud tradition:

Una Ballerina, che scrive le proprie avventure; e si mette in riga colle *Marianne*, colle *Gianette*, colle *Figlie di qualità*⁴⁹, colle *Pamelle*, co' *Filosofi Inglesi*, e colle *Filosofesse Italiane*, egli è, per vero dire, un oggetto, che allettare può la curiosità degli oziosi, non meno che delle persone di spirito.⁵⁰

Similarly to what the publisher's preface does in *La Filosofessa italiana*, the opening chapter of *La Ballerina onorata* places the book in relation to novels by Marivaux, Mouhy, Richardson and Prévost, but also adds Chiari himself to the list, as if to prove his success in appropriating the new novel genre into the Italian cultural context.

This brings us back to our initial example from the end of *La Ballerina onorata*'s second volume, where Chiari's heroine evokes her encounter with *La Filosofessa italiana*, and describes how reading the *Filosofessa*'s 'memoirs' inspired her own writing: 'Essendomi capitato alle mani un Libro intitolato *la Filosofessa Italiana: o sia le Avventure della Marchesa N.N. scritte da lei medesima*, m'invogliai d'imitarne l'esempi, e scrivere anch'io queste breve memorie della mia vita.'⁵¹ In *La Ballerina onorata*, then, Chiari's first heroine, *la Filosofessa*, plays a similar role to what the heroines of *La Paysanne parvenue* and *La Vie*

⁴⁹ The work referenced is the *Mémoires d'une fille de qualité*, by the chevalier de Mouhy, itself an appropriation of Abbé Prévost's *Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité*.

⁵⁰ Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata*, p. 4.

⁵¹ Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata*, p. 162.

de Marianne did in his debut novel: on one level, she is a metaphor for the book, and, on the other, she serves as a model, a previous memoir writer with whom the narrator can compare herself.

This time, however, there is no question of appropriating a foreign model, but rather of promoting the author's own work. Nor is there any critique embedded in the comparison, only an implied wish expressed by the heroine to reach the same success as her predecessor, making 'cosa grata al pubblico'. The passage reads as a playful intertextual reference that sustains the *topoi* of pseudomemoirs and pseudotranslations developed in *La Filosofessa*. The *Ballerina* points to how 'la Dama, che porta il nome di *Filosofessa italiana*', had in fact played the role of 'Ufficiale Francese' so well that she was also fooled.⁵² Chiari is here playing on the dual stratagem of his first novel, where he presented both book and protagonist as French, before 'revealing' their common Italian identity. It is, in one way, simply a statement of his success in creating an Italian novel.

We may also note, in passing, that this hint to the success of *La Filosofessa* illustrates another recurring trait of Chiari's novels, how the author would often, either explicitly or more covertly, build in references to contemporary Venetian cultural life. For instance, in those of his novels that take the world of the theatre as its subject-matter, of which *La Balleria onorata* is the first, Chiari draws heavily upon his own experience as a playwright by referring covertly to people and episodes from Venice's rich theatre life, thus catering to a readership largely consisting of theatregoers, who would be able to pick up the references.⁵³ As Ann Hallamore Caesar has pointed out, this is likely to have increased the interest in his novels and to have 'contribute[d] to the creation of a reading public'.⁵⁴ In other words, Chiari showed great awareness of the market he wrote for; his practice of self-referencing should be seen in the light of this commercial sensibility.⁵⁵

La Ballerina onorata is in one way a transitional book, in the sense that its references to French and British novels continue the appropriative project of *La Filosofessa italiana*, while at the same time signalling the success of this project by referencing the latter, and also functioning as an advertisement for the author's own work. In Chiari's following novels, the

⁵² Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata*, p. 162.

⁵³ For more on this, see Valeria G. A. Tavazzi, 'Nota al testo,' in *La Commediante in fortuna, O Sia, Memorie Di Madama N.N. Scritte Da Lei Medesima* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2012 [1755]), pp. LIII-LXIV. Chiari's second, third and fourth novels, *La Ballerina onorata*, *La Cantatrice per disgrazia* and *La Commediante in fortuna*, all deal with the world of theatre. Modern scholars have tended to treat them as a trilogy.

⁵⁴ Caesar, 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel', p. 55.

⁵⁵ Caesar also indicates that the financial prospects of novel writing may have been an important factor in Chiari's move from theatre to fiction. See 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel', p. 40.

shift in the use of paratextual and in-text title references become more and more noticeable. The appropriative, and therefore partly literary, function of the titles is replaced by an almost entirely commercial function. The preface of Chiari's third novel, *La Cantatrice per disgrazia*, testifies to the success of the two preceding ones, and discloses the need for new editions. That way, it gives credit to the present text, by assimilating it to the success of the author, while at the same time informing the readers about the new editions of *La Filosofessa italiana* and *La Ballerina onorata*:

Esce finalmente alla luce il terzo Romanzo Italiano da me promesso fin dall'estate passata, col titolo della *Cantatrice per disgrazia*, di cui questo è il primo tomo; e sarà presto seguito dal secondo. L'esito fortunato, che ebbero in pochissimo tempo gli altri due, cioè *La Ballerina Onorata*, e *la Filosofessa Italiana*, cui deggio omai [*sic*] ristampare, essendo presso che finita la prima edizione, mi fa sperare, che anche il presente non sarà da meno degli altri, sì perchè egli è dell'Autore medesimo, come altresì, perchè l'ha composto con una attenzione particolare, e se ne promette con sicurezza l'aggradimento del pubblico.⁵⁶

To the appropriative function that the title references served in the first two novels is here added a clear advertisement function, the publisher signposting the author's 'novel portfolio'. It is significant that the French and British novels have disappeared completely, a sign, I would argue, of Chiari and Pasinelli's confidence that their success and status were now sufficient to assure the readers of the value of the product without explicitly attaching it to these foreign novelistic traditions.

With his fourth novel, *La Commediante in fortuna*, Chiari would again refer to his own previous novels in the main text, as he had done in *La Ballerina onorata*. This time, however, the use of in-text titles has also changed. For while the protagonists of *La Filosofessa italiana* and *La Ballerina onorata* had both put themselves in line with French and British heroines, the *Commediante* compares herself *only* to her Chiarian precursors: Ho detto di voler scrivere io pure le mie avventure, perocchè l'esito favorevole avuto nell'Italia nostra', e fuori della medesima dalle Memorie della *Filosofessa Italiana*, della *Ballerina onorata*, e della *Cantatrice per disgrazia*, mi hanno fatto invidiarne la lode invogliandomi a non esser da meno di loro nella memoria de' Posterì.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Pietro Chiari, *La Cantatrice per disgrazia, o sia, Le Avventure della Marchesa N.N. Scritte da Lei Medesima* (Venice: Angelo Pasinelli, 1755 [1754]), p. ix.

⁵⁷ Pietro Chiari, *La Commediante in fortuna, o sia, Memorie di Madama N.N. Scritte da Lei Medesima* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2012 [1755]), p. 8.

This is the same kind of double marketing that we saw in the publisher's prefaces: the title references are signalling the value of the current book by putting it in line with previous successes, as well as revealing the existence of the latter to any new readers of Chiari. This kind of in-text advertising was not uncommon in the eighteenth century. In fact, one of Chiari's French models, the chevalier de Mouhy, had introduced in-text references to his own *Paysanne parvenue*, as well as to other books sold by his publisher, in the novel *Paris ou le Mentor à la Mode* (1735).⁵⁸ In the British context as well, publishers had advertisements inserted, for their services as well as for their products, within the plot of a novel.⁵⁹

In the case of Chiari's *Commediante in fortuna*, the in-text title referencing that appears in the opening chapter is repeated later in the text. The protagonist meets a rich English nobleman (who afterwards turns out to be her conman father), described as an 'intimate friend' of the heroines of Chiari's first three novels: 'Era intimo amico delle più celebri avventuriere del nostro Secolo, quali sono quelle tre che scrissero le loro memorie col titolo di *Filosofessa Italiana*, di *Cantatrice per disgrazia*, e di *Ballerina onorata*'.⁶⁰ It is no longer the Mariannes, the Jeanettes and the Pamelas who are the 'most famous' of 'our Century', Chiari is telling us through the voice of his narrator, but his own heroines. Again, the fact that the references to foreign novels have disappeared completely may indicate that there was no longer any need to establish a link to the French or British tradition, and that Chiari's success had been such that the Italian novel could now stand on its own feet. The appropriative function has been completely replaced by the advertising function, by an extensive use of veritable 'product placements'.

⁵⁸ '[...] le chevalier de Mouhy introduit dans le texte [de *Paris ou le Mentor à la mode* (1735)] la publicité des œuvres publiées par son éditeur Pierre Ribou et loue son propre roman *La Paysanne parvenue*'. Alexandre Stroev, 'Livres et bibliothèques dans le roman et dans la vie des aventuriers,' in *L'épreuve du lecteur: livres et lectures dans le roman d'Ancien Régime: actes du VIIIe colloque de la Société d'analyse de la topique romanesque*, Louvain-Anvers, 19-21 mai 1994, ed. by Jan Herman and Paul Pelckmans (Louvain – Paris: Peeters Publishers, 1995), pp. 272-78 (p. 274). Nathalie Ferrand has shown how, in the first edition of *La Paysanne parvenue*, an advertising insert was added to the second volume, listing other books by the same publisher. The list includes *La Vie de Marianne*, and the mention of *Marianne* in the text of the third volume may in that context be interpreted as having not only a literary, but also an advertising function, for the benefit of the publisher. For Ferrand, '[l]'effet promotionnel recherché par des éditeurs très doués dans ce domaine [...] est relayé de l'intérieur de la fiction par un romancier qui ne répugne pas à ce type d'appel publicitaire, dans le cas présent pour le roman d'un confrère imité et admiré, ailleurs pour ses propres œuvres'. Nathalie Ferrand, 'La Mise en fiction de l'imprimé dans les romans du XVIIIe siècle (textes et illustrations),' *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 14, no. 3 (2002), 415-39 (p. 438, note 46).

⁵⁹ James Raven, *The Business of Books* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 285. I would like to thank Dr Siv Gøril Brandtzæg for pointing me in the direction of this book.

⁶⁰ Chiari, *La Commediante in fortuna*, p. 132.

That said, it may in certain cases be argued that Chiari's self-referencing goes beyond the function of advertisement to have literary effects. In *La Bella Pellegrina*, for example, one character-novel operates as a warrant for the 'authenticity' of another:

[...] alla mia *Viaggiatrice* assai conosciuta per le lettere, che ne pubblicai l'anno scorso son io debitore di queste Memorie, che sottometto presentemente agli occhi del Pubblico. Ella me le inviò dalla Germania, dove allora trovavasi col titolo di *Bella Pellegrina*, che portano in fronte, assicurandomi nella Lettera sua, che contenevano esse le avventure assai strane d'una Giovane Dama Moscovita da lei conosciuta alla Corte di N.N. dove godeva la protezione di quella amabilissima Principessa, in grazia della quale scritte le avea con particolare attenzione.⁶¹

Although the same potential publicity effect as in other Chiari novels can be observed here, we are at the same time faced with a preface strategy that participates directly in constructing the fictional universe of the novel. The heroine of the preceding novel, *la Viaggiatrice*, serves as the publisher's correspondent, becoming 'garante dell'autenticità del patto narrative di *La Bella Pellegrina* [...]'.⁶² The preface thus proposes to the reader another 'pact of playful feint' that interacts with the fiction of the main text.

It is interesting to observe that, in certain later editions of *La Bella Pellegrina*, this preface would not be included. Neither Filippo Carmignani's Parmesan edition from 1763,⁶³ nor Giuseppe de Bisogno's Venetian edition from 1775⁶⁴ remobilize, as it were, the playful narrative pact. Furthermore, unlike Pasinelli's editions, they include Chiari's name on the title page, presented as the middleman and publisher of the text. With the fictional 'threshold' of the book having thus been altered, we enter, in the terms of Jerome McGann, 'the world of textual versions where intentions are plainly shifting and changing under the pressure of various people and circumstances'.⁶⁵ By removing Pasinelli's preface, the other publishers take away a central element of his co-authorship, thus creating their own versions of the novel.

⁶¹ 'A' lettori benevoli Il Publicator di queste Memorie,' in Pietro Chiari, *La Bella Pellegrina, o sia Memorie di una dama Moscovita, scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'abate Pietro Chiari poeta di S.A.S. il sig. Duca di Modona [sic] E dedicate al signor dottor Carlo Goldoni poeta di S.A.R.S. il sig. Duca di Parma*, quoted from Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento*, p. 96. Unfortunately, I have been unable to access myself this particular edition of the novel.

⁶² Clerici, *Il romanzo italiano del Settecento*, p. 97.

⁶³ Pietro Chiari, *La Bella Pellegrina, o sia, Memorie d'una dama Moscovita. Scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'abate Pietro Chiari Poeta di S.A.S. Il Sig. Duca di Modena* (Parma: Filippo Carmignani, 1763 [1761]).

⁶⁴ Pietro Chiari, *La Bella Pellegrina o sia Memorie d'una dama Moscovita, Scritte da lei medesima, e pubblicate dall'abate Pietro Chiari Poeta di S.A.S.* (Venice: Giuseppe de Bisogno, 1775 [1761]).

⁶⁵ McGann, p. 62.

When it came to the use of paratextual and in-text titles as a marketing device, however, publishers reprinting Chiari's novels were often eager to exploit them and adapt them for their own benefit. Valeria G.A. Tavazzi has pointed to how the Neapolitan publishers Di Domenico and Manfredi, in their edition of *La Commediante in fortuna*, changed the reference to Chiari's first novel, from *La Filosofessa* to *La Filosofante*. The latter was the title of the novel in its Neapolitan reprint.⁶⁶ Similarly, a 1763-edition of *La Commediante* published in Parma replaced two of the titles with the two most recent of Chiari successes.⁶⁷ All three titles referenced by the protagonist corresponded with novels previously printed and sold by the same publisher.⁶⁸ In other words, later publishers would draw upon Chiari and Pasinelli's marketing device of showcasing previous novels in the text, altering it to fit with their own catalogues.

Before concluding, we need to look at Chiari's self-referencing in light of the serial aspect of his novel production.⁶⁹ Significantly in our context, this aspect becomes clearly visible when studying how Chiari constructed his novel titles. They are, almost all of them, built on the same model: a name, usually female,⁷⁰ and a corresponding adjective, followed by a secondary title that establishes the *topos* of pseudomemoirs and, in some cases, pseudotranslation.⁷¹ By building his titles as variations over this model, Chiari would assure his readers that they were to get more of the same product that they had already so greatly enjoyed.⁷²

At the same time, the variations in the titles needed to be evocative and surprising in order to intrigue prospective readers. This was something that Chiari and Pasinelli would underline in several of the prefaces and opening chapters of the novels. In *La Giuocatrice di lotto* (1757), for example, the preface not only advertises openly for another, up-coming novel, but also does so by pointing to its 'bizarre' title:

⁶⁶ '[...] l'edizione napoletana di Di Domenico e Manfredi sostituisce la 'Filosofessa' con la 'Filosofante', evocando il romanzo non con il suo titolo originale, ma con quello che gli viene attribuito proprio dalla ristampa napoletana di Venaccia del 22 giugno del 1755'. Tavazzi, p. LVIII.

⁶⁷ I.e. *La Bella Pellegrina* (1761) and *La Viniziana di spirito* (1762).

⁶⁸ Tavazzi, p. LIX.

⁶⁹ For an extensive analysis of this 'serialità', see Crivelli, pp. 173-176.

⁷⁰ Of the 23 novels that Luca Clerici has attributed to Chiari, only one has a male protagonist-narrator, *L'Uomo d'un altro mondo* (Parma, Carmignani, 1760). Clerici, 'Best-seller del Settecento,' pp. 86-89.

⁷¹ The three novels following *La Filosofessa italiana* are, as already indicated, also thematically linked, all three being set in the world of the theatre, well known to Chiari as a playwright.

⁷² At the same time, one could ask whether the similarity between Chiari's novels is also partly due to the author possessing a limited set of novelistic and stylistic techniques, something that Ann Hallamore Caesar has pointed to: 'The heroines of these early Italian novels are almost indistinguishable the one from the other. Whether they be performers, travellers, or philosophers ('filosofesse'), or combine all three, they share the same characteristics and the vocabulary they draw on to describe themselves rarely changes'. Caesar, 'Theatre and the Rise of the Italian Novel,' p. 44.

Se questo Romanzo è breve, la brevità sua sarà compensata da un altro di maggior estensione, che io pubblicherò dopo questo in pochissima differenza di tempo; ed avrà un altro titolo niente meno bizzarro [sic], quale si è questo: *La Zingana: Memorie Egiziane di Madama N.N.*⁷³

Similarly, in the first chapter of *La Ballerina onorata*, the narrator reflects upon the unusual combination of words that make up the title: ‘Il solo titolo, che metto in fronte a queste Memorie, a quanti parerà un Paradosso! *La Ballerina onorata* è una combinazione di due parole, che alle orecchie mal accostumate del Mondo ha molto del ridicolo, e del stravagante’.⁷⁴ A title should, in other words, surprise and intrigue the reader, as well as point to the novel’s similarity with other titles, signalling that it was simultaneously new and more of the same. Tatiana Crivelli has finely analysed the rhetorical effect of passages such as this, pointing to how they mobilize a dynamic of novelty and resemblance:

[l]’effetto più immediato di queste affermazioni, che promettono evoluzioni e novità, sì, ma garantiscono nel contempo delle qualità ‘secondo il solito’, è appunto quello di rafforzare la sensazione di familiarità e di confidenza che il pubblico ha acquisito e catturarne fiducia e disponibilità all’acquisto: creando un’abitudine s’insinua un’aspettativa.⁷⁵

With his model of adventurous pseudomemoirs by female narrators, Chiari had found a formula for success, which entailed creating habits and expectancies in his readership. As he writes in the opening lines of *La donna che non si trova*, ‘[u]n bel titolo fa non di rado la fortuna di un libro’.⁷⁶

The serial aspect was something that publishers reprinting Chiari’s works could also exploit. Eighteenth-century Italian publishers often printed works of a specific author, such as Chiari, his colleague Antonio Piazza, or the French novelist Baculard D’Arnaud, in series, following veritable ‘progetti editoriali’,⁷⁷ something which would often be signalled in the paratextual apparatus of the books. For example, in a Parmesan edition of *La Filosofessa italiana* from 1765, the publisher justified the reprint by showing to the warm acclaim of the novels he had already reprinted, and followed up the justification by listing exactly these novels.⁷⁸ Thus, Chiari’s first novel had in a way come full circle: from being put in relation

⁷³ Pietro Chiari, *La Giuocatrice di lotto o sia Memorie di Madama Tolot Scritte da Lei Medesima colle regole con cui fece al lotto una fortuna considerabile. Pubblicate dall’Abbate Pietro Chiari* (Venice: Angelo Pasinelli, 1757), pp. V-VI.

⁷⁴ Chiari, *La Ballerina onorata*, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Crivelli, pp. 175-76.

⁷⁶ Pietro Chiari, *La donna che non si trova, o sia, Le avventure di Madama Delingh scritte da lei medesima* (San Cesario di Lecce: Manni, 2007 [1768]), vol. 10, p. 39.

⁷⁷ Crivelli, p. 175.

⁷⁸ Crivelli, p. 175.

with French and British bestsellers, its own success and that of the following novels had occasioned numerous reprints, resulting in the Parmesan publisher in turn using Chiari's other novels to publicize for *La Filosofessa*.

I would argue, in light of the serial aspect of Chiari's novel titles, as well as of his expressed awareness of their impact on the readers, that the practice of self-referencing ought to be seen as part of a sustained publication strategy. Chiari's use of paratextual and in-text references to his previous works points to what we would today have referred to as the creation of a 'brand'. By seeing the different titles juxtaposed in prefaces and main text, the readers were made aware, not only of the existence of Chiari's other novels, but also of the connection between them: *La Bella Pellegrina* is similar to *La Viaggiatrice*, *La Ballerina onorata* to *La Filosofessa italiana*. With the evocative power of the novel title in mind, it would seem that Chiari employed references to his own titles in order to strengthen his readers' awareness of the formula, and perhaps even of the 'brand' that was Pietro Chiari. The strategy proved effective: his novels became so popular, in fact, that, when reprinted in Naples, the novels of his contemporary colleague Antonio Piazza were attributed to Chiari, the publisher '[...] coinvolgendo un autore nell'eco del successo di vendite dell'altro'.⁷⁹ The very name of Pietro Chiari, as those of his heroines and his novels, had itself become 'half sign, half ad': it signalled a new form of literature, an original Italian novel, and denoted novels with specific characteristics with regard to form and plot.⁸⁰

Conclusion

This study of Pietro Chiari's novels substantiates the claim, put forward by both Claude Duchet and Franco Moretti, that titles can inform us about the development of the novel, with regard to its commercial as well as literary conditions. It has also shown, however, that the scope needs to be extended further, to the function of titles as they appear within the novels themselves, in prefaces as well as in the main text. Such paratextual and in-text titles, a largely unexplored phenomenon, also contain a dual message, literary and commercial, as markers of appropriation and of marketing strategies. An extended title study, or 'titrologie' (to borrow a key term from Duchet's article), has enabled us to explore the connections

⁷⁹ Crivelli, p. 135.

⁸⁰ The popularity of Chiari's novels would not, however, survive the century. As Luca Clerici writes, 'dopo tanta celebrità all'epoca dei lumi, nell'Ottocento se ne perde il ricordo [dei romanzi chiariani].' Luca Clerici, 'L'ingegnosa ricetta dell'abate Chiari romanziere,' *Belfagor: Rassegna di Varia Umanità* 51, no. 4 (1996), 403-16 (p. 403). On the history of the reception of Chiari in Italy, see also Carlo A. Madrignani, *All'origine del romanzo in Italia*.

between the eighteenth-century Italian novel and its French and British models. As we have seen, *La Filosofessa italiana*, Chiari's debut, mobilized title references in a project of appropriating the contemporary French and British novelistic traditions, as well as of arguing for the value of creating an original Italian novel. Furthermore, Chiari's following novels testified to the success of this appropriation, as the Brescian novelist gradually abandoned the appropriative function of the title references and replaced it, almost entirely, with an advertising function, in what appears as a sustained strategy of self-promotion.

Both functions, appropriative and advertising, are developed in the paratextual apparatus as well as in the main text, with the result that the textual and the paratextual begin to operate in synergy, and the barriers between them start to break down. It seems clear, therefore, that an extended title study can also serve as a method for analysing the complex relationship between writers and publishers, in their struggle for a place in the book market, revealing, in turn, how this relationship influences the conditions for doing literary analyses. The important role of paratextual elements such as publishers' prefaces, and their interconnectedness with the main text, illustrate how much the objects we deal with as literary critics are complex and unstable, as they differ significantly from one edition to another, altering, as it were, the hermeneutical object.

To study paratextual and in-text title references is, in other words, to explore how the novel developed in the borderland between the social sphere of the market and the literary universe of texts. In the case of mid-eighteenth-century Italy, where a new, modern novel emerged in response to, and struggle with influential foreign models, this borderland provides a particularly interesting object of study. Exploiting the whole apparatus of the book, from title page via preface to main text, Pietro Chiari and his publishers actively used titles and title references as a literary and commercial tool, with the result of giving birth to a successful Italian 'consumer literature'.