

POSTMODERN NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN CERVANTES'S DON QUIXOTE

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There is need of a book showing in detail that every novel bears *Quixote* within it like an inner filigree, in the same way as every epic poem contains the *Iliad* within it like the fruit its core (Gasset, 292).

Abstract

Postmodernism is a recent intellectual movement which has a powerful influence on contemporary literary writings. World War II has been the last phase of the modern world. The ideas of individuality, identity, gender-relations are challenged and a new discourse is created to represent the disjunction of modern perspective. The postmodern influence also challenged the modern approach to literary texts. Postmodern writers seem to have new discursive practices to represent the present condition. However, not all the narrative techniques used by post-modern writers are new and original. It is possible to find out similar narrative techniques in the 18th century in which writers like Cervantes and Sterne used similar narrative devices. The present paper aims to illuminate how postmodern narrative elements are present in Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.

Keywords: Postmodern, Narrative, Metafiction, Parody, intertextuality

CERVANTES'IN DON QUIXOTE ADLI ROMANINDA POSTMODERN ANLATIM UNSURLARI

Öz

Post-modernizm günümüzde oldukça popüler ve etkili olan bir akımdır. II. Dünya Savaşı modern dönemin kapandığı tarih olarak kabul edilir. Modern sonrası akım ile düşüncenin ürünü olan birey, kimlik ve cinsel rollerin dağılımı ile ilgili fikirler sorgulanmış ve modern bakış açısı parçalanmıştır. Modern-sonrası [post modern] bakış açısı edebiyat metinlerinin yazılmasında ve değerlendirilmesinde de modern yaklaşımın tezlerine karşı çıkmıştır. Yeni durumu anlatmak için post-modern yazarlar yeni söylemler geliştirmişlerdir. Ancak, post-modern yazarları kullandıkları bütün anlatı tekniklerinin yeni ve özgün olduğunu söylemek oldukça zordur. 18.y yüzyıl romanlarında da benzer anlatı teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Özellikle, Cervantes ve Sterne gibi yazarlar post-modern yazarların yaygın olarak kullandıkları anlatı tekniklerine başvurmuşlardır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Cervantes'in *Don Quixote* adlı romanında günümüzde post-modern anlatı teknikleri olarak tanımlanan teknikleri nasıl kullandığını açıklamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Post-modernizm, anlatı, romanın romanı, parodi, metinler-arasılık

1. Introduction

The development of the postmodern novel as a narrative form owes much to the fragmentary form of the picaresque narrative, diversity of perspectives in epistolary novels, 18th and 19th century realism and the 20th century self-reflectory modern novel. The typical picaresque is a story that concerns the escapades of a 'rogue', or adventurer who lives by his wits. In the picaresque, episodic structure and satire are important and there is little character development. Robinson Crusoe and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn can be considered as picaresque narratives. The epistolary novel is a narrative conveyed by series of letters written after different characters. Pamela and The Expedition of Humphry Clinker were written in epistolary form. 18th and 19th century novelists preferred an alternative form of narrative. They first limited the narrative point of view to the first or third person, and gave realistic effect by developing complex characters with social motives. Characters in these novels interact with many other characters and change in the end. Great Expectations and Wuthering Heights belong to this tradition. After the first and second world wars, the focus on social reality was replaced by the focus on the psychology of the individual and fragmented self. Virginia Woolf and James Joyce write self-reflexive novels in which they depict psychological conflict and narrate the mental responses of characters.

Postmodern fiction makes use of almost every technique that has so far been employed in the narrative tradition. However, postmodern narrative theory invents a new terminology that deconstructs the whole narrative tradition, focuses on the fictionality of a work (surfiction), on the writing process (metafiction), on the ambiguity of meaning (narrative within narrative), on the lack of authenticity (intertextuality), and plays with the narrative language (parody and pastiche). The postmodern author uses different narrative elements to problematise the relation between fiction and reality, and argues that there is nothing outside the text that the may be supplied. That is, *reality is textuality*. Contemporary writers like Jorge Luis Borges, Orhan Pamuk and Samuel Beckett consciously and intentionally use postmodern narratives techniques. Although similar narrative techniques are used by Laurence Sterne in Tristram Shandy and by John Fowles in The French Lieutenant's Woman, Cervantes's Don Quixote is the predecessor of them in the sense that the same narrative elements are exploited in Don Quixote. However, Cervantes does not problematise the discrepancy between text and reality. He deals with contemporary issues in Don Quixote which embodies postmodern elements for a different purpose. The present paper analyses the postmodern narrative elements in Don Quixote. Before analyzing them it may be useful to explain the terms that are used both in the postmodern narrative and in Don Quixote.

Intertextuality is first used by Julia Kristeva to refer to the distinction between creativity and productivity. She argues that creativity does not assume the existence of an earlier process, material and model. Productivity, on the other hand, assumes a pre-existing raw material. Each so-called new text is a reworking of the

existing body of literature. Each so-called new text is a reworking of the existing body of literature. Texts have discrepancies and inconsistencies arising from the fact that their various elements, parts, and layers are brought together¹. Intertextuality signifies the inseparability and inter-involvement of one text with other texts through allusions, citations, assimilation of formal and substantive features of other texts or by participation in linguistic and literary conventions that have always existed. Any text, therefore, is in fact an intertext – an intersection of numberless other texts that have already been written and that are going to be written in the future². For instance, Homer's poems constitute a pretext for many other genres and texts in which ordinary and extraordinary happenings, adventures, irony, tragedy are included, and which, in this sense, embody raw materials for the productivity of many texts.

Metafiction, *self-consciousness* and *self-reflexivity* refer to the writing and narrative process. *Metafiction* refers to 'fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality'³. Metafiction violates the standard novelistic expectations by experimenting with subject matter, form, and temporal sequence; departs from the traditional categories of realist romance, insists on the fictionality or fabulation of the novels and betrays the construction of reality. A self-conscious narrative perspective often reveals a *self-conscious* narrator who declares the discrepancy between the work's fictionality and the reality it seems to represent either seriously or for a comic purpose⁴. For example, Proust in *Swann's Way* employs a self-conscious narrator to give a realistic effect, Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy* uses the self-conscious narrator for a comic purpose. *Self-reflexive* novel is one variety of self-conscious narrative. According to Abrams⁵ self-reflexive narrative incorporates into its narration reference to the process of composing the fictional story and openly refers to the writing process by exposing the process of composition. For instance, Iris Murdoch in *The Black Prince* uses the process of composition as an outcome of what is narrated in the novel.

Parody and *pastiche* rely on the imitation of an earlier text or object, and there is an impulse to 'imitate the serious manner and characteristic features of a particular literary work, or the distinctive style of a particular author, or the typical stylistic and other features of a serious literary genre'⁶. In a parody the author applies the imitation to a lowly or comically inappropriate subject. In a traditional parody there is ridicule by exaggerating the distance of the original text from the normal discourse. The postmodern writer no longer accepts the notion of normal discourse and makes use of *pastiche* in which there is no model followed and no

¹ Connor, Companion to Postmodernism, 208

² M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, p. 285

³ P. Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*, p.2.

⁴ M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 168

⁵ *ibid.*,

⁶ M.H. Abrams, 18.

sense of distance from any norm⁷. Instead there is eclecticism, which is used to indicate the interplay between different texts and narrators. The same story is narrated from different points of view to reveal the fictionality of the text. Different discourses may be included. History, calligraphy, architecture, poetry, drama, and scientific discourse can be incorporated within the same work without disturbing the structure of the textuality. For instance, John Fowles's The French Lieutenant's Woman is an eclectic work, which uses a history textbook to tell a love story.

The author of the postmodern text demands an active role from the reader. The reader participates in the narrative and brings his/her own comment. Sometimes there are blank pages to be filled by the readers; sometimes the reader becomes a textual element within the narrative. In Umberto Eco's If in a Winter Night a Traveler, for instance, the author uses different readers to betray the fictionality of the text and to indicate that the same story may have different meanings and interpretations for different readers.

2. Postmodern narrative elements in Don Quixote

The first volume of Don Quixote was published in 1605⁸. Don Quixote is a production, not a creation, and makes use of different texts in the construction of the content and form. It is an *intertext* in Kristeva's term. The intertextuality of the work is discussed and referred to by the narrator in the preface to the first book. When the narrator of Don Quixote was sitting in confusion and meditating upon the beginning of the book, 'an ingenious gentleman' surprises him with his assistance and explains the source of the novel and the relation between the earlier and later sources. He says:

Ovid's Medea can afford you a good example of cruelty, Calypso from Homer and Circe out of Virgil are famous instances of witchcraft and enchantment. Would you treat of valiant commanders? Julius Caesar has writ his Commentaries on purpose: and Plutarch can furnish you with a thousand Alexanders. If you would mention love, ... you may find a Leon and the Jew ready to serve you most abundantly. ... In short, it is quoting these authors in your book ... and for the citation of so many authors, it is the easier thing in nature (6).

The reference to the ancient Greco-roman writers reveals the influence of the former texts on Cervantes's work. It is obvious that Cervantes has an access to and works with the earlier available materials. Different works provides Cervantes a raw material to work on. For instance, before Cervantes's Don Quixote, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and *Arabian Nights Tales* make use

⁷ A.Bennet & N.Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, p. 237.

⁸ J.Smiley, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at Novels*, p. 296.

of multiple narrative voices in the same text. The journey to the underworld exists in Greek myth and in *Divine Comedy*. This myth is re-written by Cervantes in Don Quixote's quest in Montesino's cave. Sophocles's tragedy of *Oedipus Rex* also seems to provide Cervantes with material for the story of Sancho Panza in the eleventh chapter of the second book, where the Court of the Justice says: 'My Lord Governor, it is an ancient custom in this island that he who takes possession must answer some difficult and intricate questions ...'⁹. There are many pretexts that provide the author with raw materials to construct his artifact. Don Quixote, then, becomes a postmodern text in which intertextuality is manifested.

Don Quixote can be considered as a pretext (the first of its genre) in the sense that the parody of chivalry is first made in this book. The narrator's claim that it is 'absolutely new' work that mixes 'sacred things with profane' refers to the uniqueness and originality of Don Quixote. The writer's claim for the originality of his source and the pseudo-text are also discussed in the novel. Before the publication of the second book by Cervantes, another writer writes a similar book. It is referred to in Chapter XIV of the second book. Here Don Quixote argues that the so-called author of the second book 'attempted to usurp 'his name and annihilate his exploits in vain since the Don Quixote of this book (the wrong one) had been at Saragossa at a public meeting but he (the real Don Quixote) has not been and for that reason only will not set foot in Saragossa'¹⁰. In addition, the original text triumphs over the other texts for being the first text where the 'sacred and profane' are mixed and where different genres including tragicomedy, pastoral elegy, lyric poetry and romance are deconstructed, reorganized and represented with a complete alienation. Therefore, Don Quixote becomes a pretext for some other works. For instance, Henry Fielding admits that Cervantes's work constitutes a pretext for his work, Joseph Andrews. Likewise, Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy imitates the content and form of Cervantes's Don Quixote.

The metafiction, self-reflexivity and self-consciousness in Don Quixote are employed within the narrative structure of the novel. The narrator reveals the writing process (metafiction) of the first and second part. In the first part there is an omniscient narrator who tells the story of Quixada from a small village. The narration continues without any break until the end of the first part. The omniscient narrator suddenly breaks the narrative and admits that the second part is absent, after which 'who narrates the story' becomes uncertain considering that there is more than one writer and narrator referred to in the book. Officially the narrator is the Moor Cide Hamete Benegeli who is at the same time the first author whose chronicle is translated by another Moor and edited by Cervantes who later becomes the second author. Benegeli is introduced first in Part I, Chapter 9 as the writer of Don Quixote. The second writer buys the Arabic script from a boy who sells silk. He searches for an interpreter to translate the folder of papers. The Moor translates the

⁹ Don Quixote, 359

¹⁰ Don Quixote, 401.

manuscript and the second author compares the first version to make sure whether it is the original script:

Don Quixote's fight with the Biscainer was exactly drawn on one of the leaves of the first quire, in the same posture as we left them, with their swords lifted up over their heads, the one guarding himself with his shield, the other with his cushion (52).

In the second part the master and the squire learn about the existence of Benegeli's chronicle, and it helps them to differentiate between the authentic and the spurious one. For instance, in Chapter XIV (p, 401) of the second part they discuss the fairness of their portrayal and the reliability of the rival biography. Don Quixote says:

I have noticed three things for which the author deserves to be rebuked. First, I object to certain words in his prologue: in the second place, his language is Arogenese, for he sometimes omits the article; the third and most damaging objection is that he strays from the truth is essential point of the history.

This argument between Don Quixote and other characters puts the reality and reliability of texts into question. Don Quixote relates the reality of the original text to the language whereas other characters dwell on the historicity of the later text. Furthermore, the explicit reference to Benegeli as the original writer of the book brings certain points into questions. Firstly, the readers know from the narrator's statements in several different places of the book that Don Quixote is not written by the Moor, it may have been translated by him into Arabic, since the adventure takes place in De La Mancha, a Spanish region. In particular, Benegeli is a Moor and they are very much inclined to lie¹¹. It is natural that the writer of this adventure story be Spanish. Then, Benegeli, like the narrator, becomes another translator of the book. There appears a possibility that the book is written by an unknown writer. Amadis de Gaul is also exposed as a source of chivalry romance in the book. The narrator asks for a comparison between Amadis de Gaul and Don Quixote. The reality and reliability of the source is deconstructed and the intertextual aspects of the work is exposed by referring to different sources. The one (Benegeli's book) is imaginary like the adventures of Don Quixote and should be treated as the 'offspring' of the writer's brain. The second source (Amadis de Gaul) is the real source that gives rise to Don Quixote. Don Quixote, then, becomes a self-reflexive book, which reflects its own writing process and parodies chivalry romance.

The self-conscious narrator interferes in several parts of the text to remind the reader of the textuality and fictionality of the book. The epilogue is the first part where the reader is asked not to compare the text to any other genres, since 'the subject', being a satire on knight-errantry, is 'absolutely new' and such 'ex-

¹¹ Don Quixote, 51.

travagancies have nothing to do with the impartial punctuality of true history'¹². The writer of the book also states that there will be diverting stories kindled with 'mirth', 'melancholy', and 'humor'. The beginning statements of the self-conscious narrator reveals the reader what he/she will find in the book and the narrator's statements draw attention to the parody in the text. The scene where the barber, the priest and Don Quixote's nephew burn the books can be considered as a self-conscious trick of the writer. They burn most of the books including romances, poetries and pastoral books, which symbolically reflect the idea that the present book cannot be compared to any one of them. Don Quixote breaks the convention, deviates from the rules, mixes different genres, and practices metafictionality by using self-conscious narrator and self-reflexive narrative to draw attention to the fictionality of chivalry romance.

Don Quixote, as stated, parodies chivalry romances, pastoral and lyric poetry, and renaissance ideology concerning human vices and virtues. The chivalry romances are parodied by the introduction of a comic hero. The hero is a gentleman of at least fifty years old, wizened and gaunt-featured, and gives himself to reading of knight-errantry and sells many acres of land to provide the money for the purchase of the chivalry books¹³. The conventional knights in the romances are physically and mentally healthy, help the poor, and defeat the rivals. The hero in Don Quixote proves to be neither. First of all, he is not a knight but a reader and admirer of knight-errantry; he is too old to be a knight and to defeat his rivals. If we do not consider few coincidences (like the defeat of Samson Carasso by accident) he is defeated in almost every adventure, and his aim to right the wrongs always fails. In addition, as a result of being too much immersed in reading extraordinary and imaginative romances he loses the use of his reason¹⁴. Dulcinea is unlike the damsels of the romance. The damsel of this hero is an ignorant village woman who is famous not for her beauty but for salting. The hero and the damsel are as extravagant as the story itself.

Cervantes reverses the traditional pastoral image in several ways. In a traditional pastoral poetry there is a serious tone, and sheep symbolizes eternal bliss in the earth where man and nature are in harmony. The pastoral setting in Book II Chapter I gives rise to a comic effect. The sheep, in contrast to conventional symbol of peace, is seen as enchanted enemies and attacked by the hero. In Chapter VI of the first part there is a realistic and contradictory image of pastoral life. The hero and his squire hear a noise, which they first welcome. Darkness and deep silence frightens Sancho Panza. He says: 'the great hits allayed the pleasure of the first'¹⁵. The Frightened Sancho Panza does not want embark in any adventure, therefore, he ties Rozinante's [Don Quixote's horse] legs no to let the hero for a

¹² Don Quixote, 6-7.

¹³ Don Quixote, 15.

¹⁴ Don Quixote, 16.

¹⁵ Don Quixote, 113.

new adventure. Here, the night gives a realistic effect to the setting and deconstructs the conventional pastoral image. There is also a mockery of the pastoral hero. In the adventure of Don Quixote in Sierra Morena a goatherd does not tell the story of unrequited love or loyalty of the shepherd¹⁶. Cardino is not a shepherd but a nobleman from the upper class, and his friend is not loyal to him. He becomes mad and lives naked in the woods. The story of Cardino deconstructs the conventional image of pastoral life, pastoral hero and gives a realistic image to the narrative. Sierra Morena becomes a little cosmos where fortune, misfortune, adventure, pain and happiness converge.

Cervantes does not only parodies certain genres but also attacks Renaissance ideology. In the Book three Chapter VII Cervantes tells us how Don Quixote sets free some captives, who were carried into the prison against their wills. This instance is important in two ways. First, Don Quixote, unlike the other instances, does not confuse the right with the wrong and sees the captives and soldiers. His imagination does not play a trick upon his perception. In addition, the rhetorical speech upon the virtue of mankind is scholarly presented. In this instance Cervantes criticizes renaissance ideology and humanism concerning the freedom of man. Don Quixote draws attention to the distance between reality of everyday life and applicability of humanist ideals. He argues the case as follows:

Besides, it is not unlikely but that this man's want of resolution upon the rack, the other's want of money, the third's want of friends and favor, and, in short, the judges' perverting and wresting the law to your great prejudice, may have been the cause of your misery. Now, as Heaven has sent me into the world to relieve the distressed, and free suffering weakness from the tyranny of oppression, according to the duty of my profession of knight-errantry, these considerations induce me to take you under my protection – but, because it is the part of a prudent man not to use violence where fair means may be effectual, I desire you, gentlemen of the guard, to release these poor men, there being people enough to serve his majesty in their places; for it is a hard case to make slaves of men whom God and nature made free; and you have the less reason to use these wretches with severity, seeing they never did you any wrong. let them answer for their sins in the other world: Heaven is just, you know, and will be sure to punish the wicked, as it will certainly reward the good. Consider besides, gentleman, that it is neither a Christian-like, nor an honorable action, for men to be the butchers and tormentors of one another; particularly, when no advantage can arise from it (137).

The renaissance humanism tries to set man's thoughts free from every restriction and emphasizes the goodness of mankind. Man and nature are seen, after

¹⁶ Don Quixote, 162.

the classical era, in harmony. However, there is a difference between ideology and reality, between obligation and freedom, between man's virtue and vice. This difference becomes the subject of Don Quixote's speech in this scene. The hero makes a parody of renaissance humanism by applying it to an inappropriate case. It is inappropriate since such ideals cannot be applied to this case. It is parodied because renaissance humanism does not take human vice into account, thus, renaissance cannot be more than utopia. The scholars of renaissance are like the hero who saves the captives, preaches upon human virtue and freedom, and punished in return. Jale Parla thinks that Don Quixote, in the story of the captive, reveals the contradiction between Renaissance's humanism and social reality¹⁷. Like a Renaissance's man he resists the obligation put upon mankind. He thinks that 'it is neither a Christian-like, nor an honorable action, for men to be the butchers and tormentors of one another; particularly, when no advantage can arise from it'¹⁸. The presence of authority prevents him from what he wants to do; therefore he has to use 'force' to set the captives free. In turn, he is terribly punished by the free men. Having seen the difference between belief and practice, and having been punished for what he did for the goodness of mankind, the hero prefers death. The parody contributes to the overall structure of the novel and draws attention to the difference between the fictitious world depicted in literature and the real world outside.

Sometimes parody and pastiche are intermingled in the novel. Parody assumes the existence of original texts, pastiche, on the other hand, deconstructs the idea of authenticity [originality]. In Don Quixote there are certain works referred to as a model. Amadis de Gaul or Benegeli's script seems to provide the writer with the original model. However, Amadis de Gaul, or Benegeli are not the only works parodied. The narrator attacks the whole tradition of literature. Chivalry romance, pastoral and lyric poetry, and dramatic works are all parodied. In addition, the absence of the original texts deconstructs the idea of authenticity. In this sense, Don Quixote is also a pastiche in which the narratives within the narrative, and shift in the narrative perspectives create a postmodern eclecticism. For instance, there are various pastoral stories narrated by different narrators. In the story 'What passed between Don Quixote and Goatherd' there are different storytellers and different points of view. The goatherd tells about the beautiful shepherdess, Marcela who is represented as a merciless girl. In the story Antonio, the lover of Marcela, tells about his unrequited love and sings the lyric he wrote for Marcela¹⁹. In the next story the narrator and the point of view change twice. The goatherd becomes the narrator till the ceremony. After the funeral Marcela becomes the narrator and her story is given from her own point of view. She reveals her own case as:

¹⁷ Don Quixote, 145.

¹⁸ Don Quixote, 137.

¹⁹ Don Quixote, 62.

Therefore let none hereafter make it their business to disturb my ease, nor strive to make me hazard among men the peace I now enjoy, which I am persuaded is not to be found with them. I have wealth enough: I neither love nor hate any one. The innocent conversation of the neighboring shepherdesses, with the care of my flocks, help me to pass away my time, without either coquetting with this man, or practicing arts to ensnare that other. My thoughts are limited by these mountains (29).

She condemns the conventional image of woman in a pastoral poetry and argues that anyone has his/her own free choice to live and love. Her point of view ensures her intellectual enlightenment. Don Quixote argues that 'she ought to be esteemed and honored by all good man'²⁰. The shift of the narrative and points of view in the text anticipates the idea of eclecticism in postmodernism, and provide the readers with different views exposing the fictionality of the text. The narratives within the narrative in Don Quixote are eclectic in that different narrators with different points of view narrate the same story.

In Don Quixote there are different types of readers like in postmodern texts. There are readers within and outside the text. Don Quixote, Samson Carasso, duke and duchess with some other characters are readers within the text. Their responses to what they read differ. Don Quixote is an inexperienced, and naïve reader of the chivalry romances in that he mistakes the fictionality of chivalry romance with the reality of life. He also mistakes Amadis de Gaul with himself. The way he interprets what he reads delineates this. He thinks that his achievements are worthy to be graven on brass, carved on marbles, and delineated in masterpiece of painting²¹. Samson Carasso is another reader. He does not mistake the romance with the reality. He can be considered as a real romance reader when considering that he saves the hero with a wise trick and brings him to the world of reality. The duct and duchess are also readers. They are different from Samson Carasso Don Quixote. However, they are not able to fill in the gaps. Their violent trick upon the hero indicates that they misinterpret the text. Here the narrator creates an allegory of reading. That is, no one in the text realizes that it is not only a parody of a chivalry romance but also it is a text that tells an allegory or a sub-textual story about reading a romance. Therefore, the crucial question 'what happens to one who tries to act like the characters in the romances?' is not answered in the book, though there are different readers and different interpretations. Don Quixote, Samson Carasso, duct and duchess remain as constructs in the text and fill certain gaps.

The narrator wants the ideal readers outside the text interpret Don Quixote. Cervantes admits that the ideal reader helps the writer to complete the text. For instance, in Don Quixote the narrator [here author of the text] is in confusion.

²⁰ Don Quixote, 79.

²¹ Don Quixote, 14.

The ideal reader, which is referred to as a 'gentleman' in the prologue, assists the author. The *gentleman* and *the writer* work together to complete the writing process. The ideal reader interprets the book as follows:

Those fabulous extravagancies have nothing to do with the impartial punctuality of true history; nor do I find any business you can have either with astrology, geometry, or logic; and I hope you are too good a man to mix sacred things with profane (7).

This is the interpretation of the ideal reader. The *gentleman* is a mouth-piece for an ideal reader. He participates in the construction of the text in two ways. Firstly, he realizes that Don Quixote mixes the sacred things with the profane and has nothing to do with the 'punctuality of true story' because it is a parody of chivalry romance. The narrator in the text also reveals this. Secondly, the ideal reader knows that the text subverts the literary tradition and prompts different political, religious, and aesthetic implications. This reader takes the narrator's warning (don't be idle) into consideration and is able to realize the correlations between different stories. He finds the parody and satire, and exposes the religious and political controversies, because he reads the text as a subservience of literary tradition, as a resistance to and transformation of power.

The text leaves certain temporal, structural and thematic gaps and invites the readers to find the correlations by filling these gaps. The gaps are filled up within the text differently. Don Quixote, as a romance reader, subverts the meaning of the romance, duke and duchess subvert his reading, and the ideal reader subverts both. The *idle* readers follow the linear construction and consider how much the writer develops and reinforces the early impression of the main character in the text. Such a tendency leads to the interpretation, which considers Don Quixote as 'ingenious offspring of the writer's brain'. In this sense, it is difficult to discover the underlying meaning of a text and to learn what the author means by 'ingenious offspring of the brain'. Cervantes does not want this. He gives the readers responsibility in the construction of the meaning by introducing himself as a stepfather of the text. He has awareness that the text's construction belongs to the author but the construction of the meaning belongs to the readers. Therefore, he warns the readers not to be *idle* and draws attention to the deviation from the conventional narrative rules.

In conclusion, Cervantes becomes the predecessor of the postmodern narrative techniques. Don Quixote makes use of many postmodern narrative elements including intertextuality, self-consciousness and self-reflexivity; Cervantes also deconstructs the traditional rules, exposes writing process, uses different texts and points of view (eclecticism), and gives readers the responsibility and active roles in the construction of the text.

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