The Proximate Dream: A Comparative Approach to The Tale of Genji and Two Western Literary Counterparts

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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Abstract

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The subject of this comparative study is a trio of novels, *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu, *Don Quixote* by Cervantes, and *The Idiot* by Dostoyevsky. Though they differ widely in cultural/historical background, language, style, and tone, they share numerous thematic preoccupations, structures, and metafictional elements.

The heroes of the novels are Messiah-like figures, offering various forms of enlightenment to humankind, including concepts of beauty, of art, of poetry, and the wisdom of irony. All are exiles from an original harmony or innocence, and ceaselessly wander, seeking to restore that ideal state of original harmony. None of the heroes are entirely successful in their idealistic endeavors due to a bifurcation at the heart of their consciousness which they continuously struggle against.

While comparing the novels, the author explores the epistemological questions of the relationship between truth/reality and fiction, and world and language.
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The Proximate Dream: A Comparative Approach to *The Tale of Genji* and Two Western Literary Counterparts

I Introduction

The subject of this comparative study is a trio of novels, the first of which, *The Tale of Genji*, was probably written early in the 11th century A.D. Its author, Murasaki Shikibu, was a scholarly Japanese aristocrat who spent most of her life at court. There is evidence to suggest she was always somewhat of an outsider at court however, perhaps due to her scholarly bent, which was considered unbecoming for a woman in that period. Still, court life provides the setting of her work, but court life during the Golden Age of the Heian Period, approximately seventy-five years before Murasaki’s own time. In the figure of Genji, the hero of *The Tale of Genji*, is reflected Murasaki’s own connoisseurship of the arts, as well as her unstable outsider status as a courtier, and in the novel’s attention to the hero’s many romantic exploits we witness the politics of courtly romantic love in Murasaki’s time.

The second novel in the trio, *Don Quixote*, was written by a Spaniard named Cervantes, whose life spanned the middle of the 16th to the early 17th century. When Cervantes was born in 1547, Spain was the dominant European power, but by the time *Don Quixote* was published in 1604, its status had declined considerably, in part due to the growing might of England and France. The publication of *Don Quixote*, then, marks the end of Spain’s Golden Age, but also the high point of the Renaissance, during which the
exploration of the New World and the rediscovery of the Classics brought a new awareness to Europeans.

*Don Quixote* reflects not only the Spain of Cervantes’ time, but also his personal experiences as a veteran soldier, a captive of pirates, a prisoner in a debtor’s jail, as well as a writer who, significantly, never achieved financial success until very late in his life. It was not until he was fifty-seven years old that he published *Don Quixote* and, for the first time, enjoyed a measure of critical acclaim and financial success. The character of Don Quixote, the hero of *Don Quixote*, may be defined by his audacious, over-active imagination. These qualities of character are probably derived from Cervantes’ five years of captivity, during which only his imagination was free, and from his remarkably varied, adventurous life of travel and hardship.

The third novel in the trio was written by a Russian named Dostoevsky who lived approximately eight hundred years after Murasaki, in a, by European standards, relatively backward Eastern European country, namely, Russia. His life was full of conflicts and disruption. He suffered from epilepsy and had an addiction to gambling. He was poor and, for a time, was forced to live abroad for political and financial reasons. He also participated in radical politics and later ultra-conservative politics.

His radical activities led to a prison term which significantly affected him. A certain critical experience he had in prison saw him before the Russian Emperor’s firing squad, about to be executed. Just moments before he was to die, a soldier suddenly appeared on a horse waving a pardon from the Emperor, who, to prove his generosity and thereby win over Dostoevsky to the royalist side, had staged a mock execution and salvation. Dostoevsky’s philosophical preoccupation with freedom and salvation was certainly,
powerfully stimulated by his proximity to death, the manner in which he escaped, and by his years of incarceration.

In contrast to Murasaki's life of comfort, peace, and scholarly endeavor, his life was exceptionally tumultuous. Indeed during Dostoevsky's time, Russia itself was hardly experiencing a Golden Age. Modern materialism, industrialism and revolutionary socialism were rapidly eroding Russia's feudal political structure, Russian Orthodox religion, and traditional culture. The mid 19th century was an age of dramatic change and great social conflict in Europe, and Dostoevsky was one of the most representative spokesmen of it.

Consequently, Dostoevsky's work is imbued with tremendous tension and a strong, almost frenetic sense of urgency. Murasaki's work, on the other hand, displays a passive nostalgia and slow pace, as it looks back about seventy-five years to the peak of the Golden Age, and evokes a mood of 'mono no aware,' or sadness, over the evanescence of living things. Cervantes also looks back to a Golden Age with some nostalgia, but most of all with shrewd comic laughter at the irreconcilability of the past and the present.

To compare The Tale of Genji, Don Quixote, and The Idiot, three works differing, sometimes widely, in cultural/historical background, language, style, and tone is an alluring challenge, in that these three remarkable works have much in common, for they share numerous thematic preoccupations, structures, and metafictional elements. The three works exhibit a lyrical integrity varying from the poetic lyricism of The Tale of Genji, to the comic lyricism of Don Quixote, and to the tragic lyricism of The Idiot. Constituting the lyrical vortex of the novels is the Messiah-like figure of the heroes, who
quest to realize an impossible dream of purity and the absolute, and though they invariably fail in their quest, the reader, by following their peregrinations through all manner of love and adventure, is reminded their dreams are as indispensable as they are impossible. Questing, then, shapes the essential plot structure of the three novels. Various forms of enlightenment are indicated by the heroes in the course of their relentless pursuit of the ideal, such as beauty, irony, wisdom, and egolessness.

Genji, the hero of *The Tale of Genji*, Don Quixote, the hero of *Don Quixote*, and Myshkin, the hero of *The Idiot* more or less fail to realize their idealistic dreams due to a bifurcation at the heart of their consciousness and at the center of their concept of the ideal, considered the restoration of or return to an original innocence transcending the conflicts defining the heroes’ divided mode of consciousness. Aspiring to heaven but bound to the earth, the heroes’ predicament is recognizable as universally human.

Love motivates the heroes’ actions and, because they tend to reify the love object, this reification, reflecting their own bifurcated consciousness, creates further obstacles to the restoration of an original harmony. Genji, for instance, isolates the women who interest him from their social context or finds them already isolated and isolates them even further. Don Quixote cannot help but see Dulcinea del Toboso, a simple peasant girl, as an idealized character from a chivalric romance, separating her from her obviously far from ideal, lowly social status. Myshkin’s inability to see women as a psychological whole causes him to separate opposite moral qualities so that each of the two women whom he pursues come to represent either goodness or evil.
Another form of reification underlying these works and their heroes’ actions is an objectification of the written word or literary text. In a significant way this practice of the heroes motivates the plot action. Don Quixote, for instance, originally sets out on his adventures to prove the truth of the old chivalric romances-literary texts—which are clearly described as having fictional content. However, to Don Quixote the form and content are confused. Thus, a whole genre of literature is used as a springboard for Cervantes’ parody of the reification of the word and text so common amongst the learned and the naive.

We know from Dostoyevsky’s notebook for The Idiot that the central character, Myshkin, was consciously created as a parody of Jesus. The Idiot displays many structural parallels to the Jesus story, but parodies the story extensively. Myshkin’s fate results from the reification of the Gospels.

In The Tale of Genji, the reader witnesses the baleful implications of characters being too closely allied with a fantastic literary forebear. Genji is clearly patterned after Kaguyahime, the heroine of The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, which is acknowledged by Murasaki to be ‘the ancestor of all romances.’ Not only is The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter subject to reification, the historic, tragic romance of a Chinese princess, Yang Kuei-fei, also informs both Genji’s and his father’s extremely powerful attachment to an original love. Additionally, there are almost eight hundred poems quoted in the text and much of the action is accompanied with reference by quotation to previous works of literature relevant to the situation.

The obverse of the heroes’ reifying entails the imprisonment of the heroes within their subjectivity. Consequently, they tend to display qualities of contemplativeness and impracticality, as well as being unhistorical and
socially isolated. Furthermore, the heroes lack a substantial sense of time and space, living in an abstract, subjective world, that is, having an altogether dream-like existence. Their actions, according to this, would be expressions of paradoxical efforts to wake up from their dream-like existence and yet to remain dreaming at the same time. The Tale of Genji, Don Quixote, and The Idiot navigate a course of awakening to the light of consciousness, however shadowy that light may be.

In Literary Theory Eagleton notes that ‘the literary work, indeed, is a continual generating and violating of expectations, a complex interplay of the regular and the random, norms and deviations, routinized patterns and dramatic defamiliarizations.' This quotation formulates the fundamental structural rhythm of the three works - essentially a set of expectations is either assumed or set up, and then violated/transgressed according to a regular rhythm. Hence, the theme of transgression figures large, and the heroes’ conflict with social, psychological, or literary norms has either tragic or comic consequences. Another way to view the underlying structural antithesis is to consider it as the clash between order and disorder/chaos, consciousness and dream, or truth and fiction.

Also useful for gaining a thematic orientation is Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, according to which,

...it is an original lost object - the mother’s body - which drives forward the narrative of our lives, impelling us to pursue substitutes for this lost paradise in the endless metonymic movement of desire. For Freud, it is a desire to scramble back to a place where we cannot be harmed, the inorganic existence which precedes all conscious life, which keeps us struggling forward: our restless attachments (Eros) are in thrall to the death drive (Thanatos). Something must be lost or absent in any narrative for it to unfold: if
everything stayed in place there would be no story to tell. This loss is
distressing, but exciting as well: desire is stimulated by what we cannot
quite possess....³

This theory may be applied to The Tale of Genji, Don Quixote, and The
Idiot in so far as their heroes seek the restoration of a lost ideal object or
world: in Genji’s case, it is his dead mother and his lost political prestige he
wishes to recover in a series of romantic conquests beginning with his own
stepmother, who physically resembles his dead mother. Similarly Don
Quixote begins his adventures with the declaration of his intention to prove
the truth of the incredible ideal world depicted in the antiquated chivalric
romances, believing it to be not only real but restorable. And Prince Myshkin
returns to Russia from a kind of exile abroad to attempt restoration of his
aristocratic family’s fortunes as well as his own psychological integration.
Having fallen both socially and psychologically, Myshkin’s life in exile was
confined to a sanitarium. The Yepanchin family with whom he allies himself
is distantly related to him, which suggests they represent a paradise regained.

Disruption, discontinuity, and transgression are key to an understanding of
these works and help to explain their mainly episodic form and structural
rhythm. As a corollary of discontinuity the theme of madness runs like a red
thread through the weave of these narratives. Don Quixote, Myshkin, and
even Genji all labor under different forms of disorders of reason: The Idiot
ends with Myshkin in yet another sanitarium, more ‘out of his mind’ than
ever. Don Quixote displays a willful obliviousness to reality, and is often
called a madman by other characters, and Genji’s persistent pursuit of
substitutes for his mother bears striking similarities to an extremely neurotic
compulsiveness, perhaps bordering on madness.
But it is important to note that not only do the heroes display those symptoms, other, secondary characters also fit the pattern, adding further evidence to the argument that these stories concern the undermining of psychological, social, and linguistic worlds. Indeed, the novels are replete with vulnerable, or insubstantial, or disintegrating, or simple-minded characters carried along by the momentum of the heroes’ dilemma.

It is possible to interpret the heroes’ wanderings through various reified determinations, their fixed forms of consciousness, as attempts to free themselves from the confines of binary antitheses, and to find a way to the indeterminate, conceived of as a free flow of original consciousness. Love is the ostensible motivation of the heroes’ actions and through the agency of love the hero traces the mobile parameters of truth as well as fiction. All three works address the central epistemological question of the relationship between truth/reality and fiction, conflating erotic love, philosophic quest and frequently aesthetic delectation.
II Thematics

A quasi-divine hero forms the foundation of the multi-faceted mythic structure common to The Tale of Genji, Don Quixote, and The Idiot. The power of the myth of an individual savior combined with the elegance of the protagonist’s example points to a promise of salvation. But real salvation evades the heroes’ grasp like the horizon line which recedes as one approaches, ever remaining a proximate dream. Murasaki’s variety of salvation derives from Taoism and Japanese folklore, Cervantes’ from romances of chivalry, and Dostoevsky’s from Russian Orthodox Christianity. Indeed, in his notebooks for The Idiot, Dostoevsky wrote he wanted his hero to be Christ-like,4 and Don Quixote’s chivalric predecessors are always on his lips. Murasaki, describing the folktale, The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, as ‘the ancestor of all romances,’5 suggests a second structural model for The Tale of Genji, derived from folklore. In The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter, a miniature woman, only four inches tall, is discovered by a poor childless bamboo cutter. He takes her home, names her Kaguyahime, and raises her. Within four months, she is adult and must find a husband, but not even the noblest suitor in the land, the Emperor, can satisfy the impossible demands she makes in order to test her suitors’ worthiness. Finally, she is revealed as a moon goddess when moon gods come to take her back to the moon, but before she departs, she leaves a gift to the bamboo cutter of the elixir of life. Thus, Kaguyahime, the moon goddess, clearly has a Messianic function comparable to the roles of Myshkin in The Idiot, Genji in The Tale of Genji, and Don Quixote.
To be sure, the mythic structure of the three stories includes a hero who is spiritually superior and sometimes physically as well. Stemming from this is a second common characteristic- the divine or extraordinary origin of the protagonists. Genji’s sobriquet is ‘shining one,’ and he is renowned for his exceptional beauty, ‘He had grown into such a beauty that he hardly seemed to be meant for this world.’ His close affinity to light and life is his hallmark. Moreover, he is a consummate artist, excelling in all the arts. Myshkin, the hero of *The Idiot*, possesses extraordinary perceptiveness and spirituality, ‘...he was noticing everything instantly and eagerly now, but perhaps also what was not there at all...’ and, like Genji, he is of noble lineage. And Don Quixote at first believes he continues the noble lineage of knights errant: ‘Fortunate the age and fortunate the times in which my famous deeds shall come to light, deeds worthy to be engraved in bronze, carved in marble and painted on wood, as a memorial for posterity.’ However, on his deathbed he comprehends the folly of his earlier extravagant claims, affirming with rare wisdom, ‘I was mad, but I am sane now. I was Don Quixote de la Mancha, but to-day, as I have said, I am Alonso Quixano the Good.’

Due to their possessing an innate superiority, the protagonists come closer than other characters to a utopian state of redemption. Myshkin, the hero of *The Idiot*, acts throughout the book in a Messianic manner, consoling, aiding, and protecting Marie, a cripple, Nastasya, a social outcast and fallen woman, Aglaya, an outcast from her family, Ippolit, a tubercular student, and others. However, none of Myshkin’s efforts results in permanent salvation. Genji also operates in a utopian salvational mode, rescuing his main wife, Murasaki, and numerous other abandoned or distressed women from
loneliness, abandonment, or poverty. Don Quixote’s avowed mission is to correct ‘wrongs and injuries.’

The superiority of these Messianic heroes is at first hidden in their lowly state, and only gradually revealed. Genji, whose very name connotes the lowly status of commoner, is a poet, musician, painter, and politician, yet must live as a commoner without real political power. Myshkin, whose Russian name means ‘little mouse,’ is an aristocrat, yet is mainly thought of by others as an ineffectual idiot. Don Quixote’s obvious foolishness and his general physical dilapidation render him a dubious hero. As their natural superiority is disguised by an apparent inferiority, the characters act within the lacuna between their reality and their appearance, a paradoxical mode of action conducive to the dream-like quality of the texts.

When the protagonists depart or die, they leave behind an invaluable gift. Genji leaves an example of an artistic, if morally questionable, life. Myshkin confers the ideas of beauty and harmony, while Don Quixote offers the healing balm of ironic laughter. They are, if not quite divine themselves, at least divine emissaries, embodiments of our transcendental aspirations.

Furthermore, the protagonists are marked by their making humanly impossible demands on others, and therefore causing tremendous suffering. This phenomenon is well described in the famous debate in The Brothers Karamazov, where Dostoevsky castigates Christ for demanding the impossible. In the words of the Grand Inquisitor,

You chose what is utterly beyond the strength of man, acting as though you did not love them at all... You...burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind forever with its sufferings... they could not have been left in greater confusion and suffering than you have caused, laying upon them so many cares and unanswered problems.
Genji demands that his lovers conform to his mother’s image, regardless of their individuality, and that they should not feel jealousy and sadness when he pursues other women. Myshkin demands saintliness, especially of Rogozhin. In particular, he insists Rogozhin deny his passion for Nastasya and ignore his jealousy of Myshkin as his rival. He demands of Nastasya that she miraculously recover her ruined pride and peace of mind, and of Aglaya that she not feel any jealousy towards her romantic rival, Nastasya. Lastly, he counsels the tubercular, moribund Ippolit to believe in eternity and not to fear death. Don Quixote demands nothing less than miracles from everyone, especially Sancho, and above all from himself.

A further point of comparison can be made regarding the protagonists’ manner of existing insubstantially, that is to say, their manner of living abstractly. Genji, Don Quixote, and Myshkin\textsuperscript{17} function more as ideas than as renderings of anything ostensibly real. Genji, for instance, is useless in domestic affairs and affairs of the state, yet he is a consummate practitioner of ‘\textit{miyabi}.’ Myshkin never works, indeed, he seems to have ‘...dropped from the sky,’\textsuperscript{18} sustaining himself by unknown means.\textsuperscript{19} Don Quixote has no notion of the physical limitations of his strength, or the philosophical limitations of his idealism, neither does he seem to comprehend the meaning of money.

The heroes’ tendency to exist in the margins of everyday life indicates another structural feature common to the stories. Each of the protagonists departs from the text in a quasi-miraculous or inexplicable manner.\textsuperscript{20} Genji gradually withdraws from earthly attachments, appearing less and less in the text until he disappears completely. Murasaki simply reports his final vanishing, his death, without elaboration, almost as a passing thought.
Myshkin’s departure, on the other hand, is the subject of an elaborate coda in a separate chapter. Not only is he physically removed from Russia, the setting of the story, ending up in a sanitarium in Switzerland, but his epilepsy inexplicably degenerates into complete madness. Myshkin and Genji disappear from human society, both physically and mentally. Don Quixote dies in his home, thoroughly wise and free of any madness, an unlikely conclusion to his many mad misadventures, and a highly ironic one.

Two other features of the mythic structure of these novels should be noted. First, the protagonists are in exile because of a committed sin, one that is either their own or inherited. But they redeem themselves, in a physical or symbolic return to an original state devoid of sin. Second, their returning reunites their divided identity, i.e., the discrepancy between their high and low natures, between their appearance of inferiority and their real superiority. Returning from exile transcends the contradictions within their psychological and social identity, and in the process of returning to an original point they reestablish a unified self. Genji, for instance, has been demoted to a commoner - a form of exile from political power - by his father the Emperor. His father’s political sin of having favored a lesser concubine is inherited by Genji, the fruit of that relationship. Yet he attains a kind of apotheosis, winning inner peace and respect as a great man. The exile of Kaoru, the protagonist of the last ten chapters, is in part due to his father Kashiwagi’s sexual transgression, as well as his own ambivalent spiritual quest. Ukifune, the daughter of the Eighth Prince and a low-ranking consort, lives as an outsider in exile, the heir of her parents’ transgression. The Eighth Prince resides in remote Uji, in political, social and economic exile, having failed in his attempt to secure political power. Of these only Genji and Ukifune
achieve a kind of redemption. And Myshkin grows up as an orphan, exiled from society by his illness and from Russia by the sanitarium in which he lives, finally being recognized as superior, but in an ironic way.²¹ Don Quixote effectively exiles himself from the comfort and security of his home to embark on a mission, and permanently returns when he has ‘rescued’ and ‘redeemed’ Dulcinea, his imaginary beloved. Once this is effected, he becomes psychologically whole again, and is ready to die.

Return and reconciliation, characteristic of the mythic structure, defines the circular plot structure of the three books. The exiled characters are separated from society and from themselves. For example, Genji is forever exiled from his mother’s love by her dying when he was three. Afterwards, the Emperor, Genji’s father, exiled Genji from supreme power by demoting him. Barred from imperial power, Genji is the product of his parents’ transgression and with his guilty inheritance, he seduces Fujitsubo, his stepmother, and has an affair with his half-brother’s betrothed, Oborozukiyo. Hence he is exiled not only by birth but also by deed, first from Imperial power and then from court. He finally goes to the island of Suma, where his exile is psychologically, politically and socially complete.

Myshkin’s case is somewhat similar. An orphan, suffering from epilepsy since childhood, he spent a few years convalescing in a sanitarium in Switzerland. When he goes back to Russia, his native country, he is without job, status, money, and even family. Due to his illness, lack of conventional family ties, money and proper education, his ineptitude is thought idiotic. He returns to Russia from exile, but remains an outsider. And Don Quixote’s ridiculous madness marks him as different and separate from others who also
do not share, to the same degree, the psychological divisions which Don Quixote’s madness presupposes.

Most of the heroines are also in exile. The women in *The Tale of Genji*, such as Yugao, Murasaki, Suetsumuhana, Oigimi, and Ukifune, live secluded, humble lives, largely abandoned by society. Yugao’s house is extremely neglected, causing Genji to remark, ‘Who in this world had more than a temporary shelter.’ Ukifune is abandoned by her father, the Eighth Prince, due to her mother’s low rank and also is an unwelcome daughter, an ‘outsider’ to her stepfather and society.

Nastasya in *The Idiot* is orphaned by the tragic death of her parents, and later is violated by her foster father, Totsky, and becomes his mistress for a time. She thus becomes a fallen outsider, considered by society a kind of prostitute. There are numerous other examples of exile in both novels, such as Ippolit and General Ivolgin in *The Idiot* and Murasaki and Kaoru in *The Tale of Genji*, to name a few prominent ones. Don Quixote’s beloved Dulcinea, though not in exile, is believed by Don Quixote to be in a state of enchantment, a form of exile from reality.

Finding themselves in exile or falling into a condition of exile, characters consequently begin to wander in an attempt to return ‘home,’ considered as any longed-for object, the possession of which promises a salvational unity.

In *The Tale of Genji*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Idiot*, exile is the background of the characters’ incessant attempts to realize an ideal which proves to be unattainable. The action of wandering, then, or, in *Don Quixote*, of adventuring, is an endeavor to restore an original unified state, that is, to retrieve a lost spiritual harmony, and the heroes’ wandering assumes a circular structure, with exile the beginning point and return the terminal point.
But the circularity is a spiral circularity, since the terminal point proves to be only indirectly approachable, and each stage in its realization repeats on another level what has previously occurred. Repetition and circularity are key to the structural rhythm of these novels.

This structural--thematic mechanism can be seen at work in the cases of Genji, Kaoru, Don Quixote, and Myshkin. Kaoru, the protagonist in the last ten chapters of The Tale of Genji, not knowing his true father's identity, wishes he "...knew the truth about his own birth." He has a sense of guilt about his origin, feeling himself "the uninvited guest" at court, and tries to discover the secret of his origin. Genji's aspiration is to ultimately restore the innocence of love first experienced with his mother, and Myshkin aspires to a kind of innocent, pantheistic love. At the Yepanchins' party, Myshkin speaks of "essential mind", and naturalness, "...I'm not able to put it into words, but...think how many beautiful things there are at every step...Look at a child, look at God's sunset, look at the grass...look at the eyes that gaze at you and love you...," and seeing a mother, rejoicing at her baby's first smile, "...religious feeling has nothing to do with any reasoning, or any crimes and misdemeanors or atheism." When Myshkin is in Switzerland, he longs to know his motherland, Russia, and is "anxious to go back to Russia as to an unknown country, a promised land."

Genji first tries to recover a lost harmony by pursuing women. Women in The Tale of Genji function as symbols of an unattainable ideal. As such, they have no power to act according to their will, suffering, for the most part, as passive instruments of the hero's will. But Genji is not the only one who looks for substitutes for a lost love. Genji's father, the Emperor, after the death of his favorite consort, Kiritsubo, Genji's mother, takes a new wife,
Fujitsubo, who closely resembles her. All the women Genji involves himself with somehow remind him of his mother. When Genji grows up, he has an illicit affair with his stepmother, Fujitsubo, and even impregnates her. Subsequently, every other woman he loves has an affinity to Fujitsubo. He marries the Third Princess because she is a niece of Fujitsubo, and therefore, by association, a substitute for her. Murasaki, who is also a niece of Fujitsubo, and who becomes his favorite consort, is also, by association, a substitute for Fujitsubo. Even the names Fujitsubo and Murasaki have the same meaning-purple-which also means affinity in Japanese.

For Genji, physical resemblance to Fujitsubo is not the only criterion of substitution and therefore of attraction. Like Fujitsubo, women who offer opportunities to transgress his psychological or social separateness by being either inaccessible or socially forbidden can also become substitutes. That his attraction to Murasaki is psychologically transgressive is evidenced by, ‘No one even knew who Murasaki was. It was as if she were without place and identity.’ The Rokujo Lady, Oborozukiyo, Yugao, Utsusemi, Suetsumuhana, and the Akashi Lady also function as substitutes, because they are inaccessible or forbidden like Fujitsubo. In another form of substitution, Genji becomes a surrogate father to Murasaki, Akikonomu, and Tamakazura. The latter two are, significantly, daughters of former lovers, and as such, represent those former lovers as surrogates of surrogates.

Genji repeatedly attempts to revive an ideal harmony through sexual love, but is thwarted in his efforts. His frustration leads him to half-heartedly adopt a substitute harmony offered by the Buddhist monastery, according to which life is viewed as an insubstantial dream and should be renounced. After the death of Murasaki, his favorite consort, Genji actually prepares to renounce
the world, but never succeeds completely. However, some characters for whom renunciation is also an issue do succeed. Fujitsubo, the Third Princess, the Eighth Prince, and Akashi Lady’s father, all retreat from the world.

The setting of the ‘Uji chapters’ is the lonely, monochromatic, humble world of the religious retreat. There the characters who are already aware of the evanescent, dream-like nature of the world struggle to achieve harmony by renouncing the world, in accordance with the above-mentioned Buddhist view. They avoid worldly attachments and passion in order to reach the eternal realm of Pure Land, i.e., perfection and purity. Although they are able to avoid the world, renunciation and salvation are beyond their reach. The Eighth Prince, for example, who, as a lay priest, leads an ascetic, religious life as a recluse in Uji, cannot sever his ties to his two daughters, Oigimi and Nakanokimi. Even after his death, his soul wanders, appearing in dreams of an abbot and his daughter. In the abbot’s words, “The other night I dreamed of him [the Eighth Prince.] He was wearing secular dress, and he spoke with great clarity “I had persuaded myself from the depths of my heart to renounce the world...but now a small worry has come up, to ruffle the calm. I must pause on my way to the land where I long to be....” 32 Oigimi inherits her father’s ascetic, rigid disposition. After the Eighth Prince’s death, she is faithful to his memory and stubbornly rejects the frequent proposals from Kaoru whose appearance and status would seem to suit her. She is constrained by her faith and sense of duty. She adheres to the Buddhist belief that desire only perpetuates suffering and obstructs salvation. The best way to avoid desire, according to this view, is to free oneself from worldly things, such as marriage, love, and society in general. ‘On one score her resolve was now firm: she would not allow any man to bring this sort of uncertainty into
The only way for her to realize it is to escape into death. Though Ukifune takes vows after her attempted suicide, her attachment to the world still lingers.

‘My soul may have left the shores of this gloomy world. But on driftwood it floats, who knows to what far shore?’

She still cannot find her destination, or salvation, and remains drifting in uncertainty.

More so for Genji than any other character, there are substitutes for a lost paradise accessible to the living. Unlike Ukifune, desire and ‘miyabi’ distract him from a sustained commitment to monastic asceticism. ‘Miyabi,’ or courtliness, includes painting, sensitivity to nature, dress, poetry, prose fiction, calligraphy, incense, and music. In all of these he excels. Indeed, the Rokujoin, Genji’s palace which he himself designs on the pattern of the four seasons, creates an earthly paradise where the natural disharmony of nature, including Genji’s own passionate, conflicting nature, is brought into harmonic balance under his quasi-Imperial control.

Genji’s, Kaoru’s, Don Quixote’s and Myshkin’s dreams of restoring an original harmony, innocence, and freedom are repeatedly sabotaged by real obstacles. Particularly, an inclination to recreate that which was lost meets with dramatic opposition, which is sometimes external, such as a rival, and sometimes internal, such as a psychological impediment. The characters repeatedly encounter contradiction in both the objective world and in their subjective worlds. These encounters partly motivate their vacillating between religious quest and profane quest. Their complex wanderings and vacillations would therefore be attempts to definitively resolve the contradictions associated with loss and exile, to release themselves from the psychological
tensions of duality. The restless vacillating displayed by the protagonists is symbolized in *The Tale of Genji* by the Uji River, in *The Idiot* by a waterfall, and locomotives, and in *Don Quixote* by Don Quixote’s restless watchfulness, ‘You may sleep, Sancho…but I was born to watch…’

A good illustration of this dynamic is provided by Kaoru, the hero of the last ten chapters of *The Tale of Genji*, known as the Uji sequence. Kaoru means ‘fragrance’ in Japanese, suggesting incense used in Buddhist ritual, and yet Kaoru himself is a child of Kashiwagi’s transgression. From his youth, he lacked a strong sense of identity due to doubts about his real father’s identity. Being burdened with a feeling of evanescence, and with a long-standing desire for a religious life, he goes to Uji to ask for Buddhist instruction from the Eighth Prince, for Uji and the Eighth Prince promise release from the agonizing questions surrounding his doubtful birth and its metaphysical implications. The double nature of Kaoru’s quest for identity is expressed in the name ‘Uji,’ which is a pun on ‘ushi,’ meaning ‘gloomy’ in Japanese. Not only is Uji a source of potential unity, but it also offers the competing erotic attraction of the Eighth Prince’s two daughters who live with him. Indeed, after the death of the Eighth Prince, whom Kaoru adored as a religious mentor, his adoration is transferred to the Eighth Prince’s eldest daughter, Oigimi, and is shortly transformed into love. When Oigimi dies, Kaoru advances to her sister, Nakanokimi. Again, when he finds that Nakanokimi is inaccessible, he shelters her half-sister Ukifune as a consoling substitute. Kaoru even wants to have a statue of Oigimi or a picture of her to set out offerings before it, as if she were an idol. Thus, Oigimi becomes Kaoru’s new Buddha, an idealized woman. But no woman measures up to his ideal. Though he originally came to Uji to discover his identity, his
psychological quest takes on a romantic dimension. As the story develops, Kaoru, quite like Genji, seeks his salvation in the pursuit of women. Kaoru may be considered an essential continuity of Genji’s character. He represents a heightening of Genji’s dilemma, which is intensified even further in Myshkin’s case.

Myshkin, an orphan exile, is a great wanderer like Genji and Kaoru. Like Uji for Kaoru, Russia represents a spiritual ideal for Myshkin. Quoting an Old Believer with approval, he claims, ‘He who has renounced his native land has also renounced his God....’ But once back in Russia, Myshkin’s good and innocent convictions clash with an array of evil characteristics: Rogozhin’s murderous jealousy, Nastasya’s infernal pride, Ganya’s pettiness and vengefulness, Lebedef’s scheming, Radomsky’s vanity and skepticism, to name only a few. Though people praise him for his idealism, ‘You are the first human being I’ve seen!’ at the same time, they castigate him for his unworldliness. In Prince Sh.’s words, ‘...heaven is a difficult matter, Prince, much more difficult than it seems to your excellent heart.’

As with Genji, women represent an unattainable ideal for Myshkin who, tantalized by the promise of a substitute harmony, wanders back and forth between Nastasya and Aglaya without ever satisfying his erotic desires. Just as Nastasya and Aglaya are unattainable, so is any reconciliation between his idealism and his erotic desire. But Myshkin’s idealism is neither based on an image of lost love like Genji’s, nor on a question of identity, like Kaoru’s. Rather his idealism is rooted in his glimpses of ecstatic enlightenment which he typically experiences just before his epileptic fits. He analyzes the feeling, in a state of health, describing it as ‘...harmony and beauty brought to their highest point of perfection,...completeness, proportion, reconciliation, and an
ecstatic and prayerful fusion in the highest synthesis of life.\textsuperscript{43} The experience of this feeling, the insight into universal harmony it gives him, becomes the model and goal of his quixotic efforts to reconcile his psychological contradictions. Both Nastasya and Aglaya remind him of his perception of an almost primeval harmony. In Nastasya’s portrait, he sees familiar contradictory values, a dreamlike image of ideal love and the impossibility of its attainment. Aglaya’s beauty conveys something mysterious, ambiguous, and unattainable, ‘...Beauty is a riddle.’\textsuperscript{44}

Myshkin realizes he is conflating an erotic quest with a spiritual quest. When he reads letters from Nastasya to Aglaya, he comes to the logical conclusion that he loves both women and both loves are equally impossible.\textsuperscript{45} He loves them spiritually like a ‘disembodied spirit.’\textsuperscript{46} What he loves, evidently, is not the individual women but the utopian dream they represent. Myshkin’s ultimate insanity surely reflects the violence and impossibility of his dilemma, and is not to be interpreted literally.

Likewise, echoing Myshkin, Nastasya wanders between Rogozhin and Myshkin, representing physicality and spirituality respectively, or between erotic desire and spiritual desire. Her unhappy life as a kept mistress and social outcast leads her to a dream of absolute freedom, ‘She strongly insists on that. I’m absolutely free...she was boasting to Kolya about her freedom.’\textsuperscript{47} After vacillating between Myshkin and Rogozhin, she chooses to marry Rogozhin, which choice leads to her own murder. It may be reasoned that, like Oigimi, Kaoru’s great love, she believes it is only through death that she can achieve her complete freedom. In Myshkin’s view, her proud seeking for god-like perfection is itself a sign of depravity. In Don Quixote the dynamic of uncertain wandering between the polarities of the ideal and the real, or the
spiritual and the physical, is represented by the relationship between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Each gradually acquires qualities of his opposite while diminishing the extreme of his own separateness. Genji, Myshkin, and Kaoru repeatedly wander from woman to woman, between carnality and spirituality, and their dreams of harmony, innocence, and freedom are repeatedly undermined by the obstacles, complications, and divisions both within themselves and in objective reality. Don Quixote, however, does not wander from woman to woman, but from adventure to adventure, each one driving him a little farther along the path to reconciling the ideal and the real.

The duality characterizing Myshkin and Kaoru is manifested in their search for knowledge of their true origin, which reveals the guilt obstructing their enlightenment. Kaoru sets out to solve the mystery of his birth, like a detective investigating a crime, only to find that he is the culprit, by inheritance, of his parents’ sin, and by conflating worldly romantic desire with his religious quest. What he finds in Uji is not his salvation but his divided, sinful nature. Similarly, what Myshkin finds in Russia is not salvation but the evil in his own nature, which initiates the destruction of Nastasya, the ruin of Aglaya and Rogozhin, and his own madness.

In *The Idiot*, Dostoevsky compares Myshkin to Don Quixote, a great dreamer who, despite incessant failure, relentlessly pursues his unattainable, impractical ideals and, together with his companion in adventure, Sancho Panza, embodies the many forces of contradiction between his idealism and the objective world. By extension, Genji and Kaoru, both divided characters, may be said to share the same quixotic predicament.

Besides Myshkin, Kaoru, and Genji, there are numerous other characters who display the quixotic dilemma. The Eighth Prince’s conflict is whether to
devote himself exclusively to the religious life, severing his ties to the world, or take care of his daughters. Ukifune vacillates between two desires, first between Niou and Kaoru, then the capital and Uji, as Nastasya vacillates between Rogozhin and Myshkin, or love and freedom. Pride and self-abasement clash violently in Nastasya and Myshkin. In Nastasya’s portrait, Myshkin sees his own pride and humility. Myshkin’s pride believes in goodness and moral perfectibility, and it is his humility that is open to evil. Christian love and emotional coldness coexist in Myshkin. When he discusses Ippolit’s behavior at his birthday party, Aglaya accuses him of being a cruel judge, “You have no tenderness.” Nastasya and Rogozhin restlessly shift back and forth between opposite emotions. Nastasya loves and hates both Myshkin and Rogozhin and Rogozhin’s love for Nastasya is easily transformed into hatred. And after vowing eternal brotherhood with Myshkin, he tries to kill him, echoing the story recounted by Myshkin of a merchant who, while praying to God for forgiveness, killed his best friend for a trinket. Characters vacillate, then, between attachment to the world and detachment from the world, between physical love and religion/spirituality, between impulse and self-control.

The duality or ambivalence of these characters’ natures is emphasized by the contradiction between the natures of pairs of characters, including Kaoru and Niou, a crown prince, Genji and To no Chujo, son of a Minister of the Left, Yugiri, Genji’s son, and Kashiwagi, son of To no Chujo, and Myshkin and Rogozhin, and of course the most famous example, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Each character in a pair represents a one-sided, partial view of life and the other holds a similarly one-sided, opposite view, like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. However, the plot action demonstrates that each
is not completely separate from the other, but rather they are essentially, dynamically unified. Niou, for example, is described thus, ‘The pampered darling of the whole world, he was not very keenly aware of its sorrows and frustrations...and life was a gay parade of style and elegance,’\textsuperscript{50} and ‘...he had a remarkable way of spying out everyone in the household who was even moderately young and attractive.’\textsuperscript{51} Carefree, flighty, amorous, passionate, and impulsive, Niou contrasts with Kaoru, whose orientation is intensely spiritual. The name kaoru, fragrance, is suggestive of incense used in Buddhist ritual. ‘And there was the fragrance he gave off, quite unlike anything else in this world. Let him make the slightest motion and it had a mysterious power...’\textsuperscript{52} There is something almost divine about Kaoru: ‘...but there was a compelling gentleness that was unique and suggested limitless depths....’\textsuperscript{53} And Kaoru is a commoner, while Niou is a crown prince. Niou’s smell comes from perfumes and is artificial, and Kaoru’s is natural.\textsuperscript{54} Thus, Niou and Kaoru are quite antithetical, Niou suggesting carnality and superficiality, while Kaoru’s intense spirituality suggests an otherworldly holiness. Regarding the contrast between Kaoru and Niou, Haruo Shirane points out that ‘Niou becomes a type of alter ego, the uninhibited carnal self denied by Kaoru in his quest for salvation.’\textsuperscript{55} In other words, in Kaoru, two opposite selves, the ascetic and the carnal, are divided and each part tries to suppress the other. Sensuous desire and asceticism compete for supremacy in Kaoru, as they do in the relationship between Kaoru and Niou.

The same conflict is evident between the ecstatic Myshkin and the murderous Rogozhin, as well as within Myshkin himself. Myshkin is a prince who believes in Christian love while Rogozhin is a commoner and atheist. Dostoevsky suggests Rogozhin’s character through the depiction of his house
as gloomy, inhospitable, and greedy. In contrast to the gentle Myshkin, Rogozhin is also violent and '...beat Nastasya black and blue.' Paralleling the relationship between Kaoru and Niou, the good-natured Myshkin and the malevolent Rogozhin are clearly antithetical.

In *The Idiot*, violent psychological conflict results in Myshkin’s epilepsy, Ippolit’s tuberculosis, and General Ivolgin’s alcoholism. These characters, frustrated idealists like Don Quixote but lacking the moderating influence of a Sancho Panza, have no means of integration, and thus fall sick in one way or another. Their dualism is echoed in the dramatic structure of *The Idiot* as well, according to which two sets of characters enact the drama from opposite perspectives, with opposite tones, comic and serious. General Ivolgin, Lebedef, Kolya and sometimes the Yepanchins play comic roles while Nastasya, Myshkin, Rogozhin, Ippolit and Aglaya play serious roles.

One further pattern of contrasting sets of characters is evident in *The Idiot*. Myshkin, Nastasya, Aglaya, General Ivolgin and Mrs. Yepanchin are idealists and dreamers, while General Yepanchin, Radomsky, Rogozhin, Lebedef, Ganya, Ptitsyn, and Varya are practical characters, repeating the contrast between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Dostoevsky’s admitted models for *The Idiot*.

Furthermore, the positive character, Myshkin, is opposed to the other characters, each one of whom represents a sin, while simultaneously bearing his own psychological contrasts. And Genji himself reflects a fluctuating balance of the two contrasting forces or tendencies of *yin* and *yang*, or submissive and willful, passive and active.

A striking depiction of the dynamics of duality is seen in Chapter Five in *The Idiot*, and the ‘Lavender’ chapter in *The Tale of Genji*. In Chapter Five,
after Myshkin leaves Rogozhin’s, feeling anxious, depressed, and disoriented, he wanders, searching for Nastasya whom he cannot find. He has an unexpected encounter with Rogozhin who attempts to kill him but fails, triggering an epileptic fit. On the one hand, the reader assumes Myshkin’s experience of the highest good, his consciousness of a final cause and universal harmony during the presumed pre-epileptic ecstasy and, on the other, this is juxtaposed with an image of the lowest form of humanity, an attempted murder. Good and evil are clearly, unequivocally intermingled in this episode, just as in the ‘Lavender’ chapter in The Tale of Genji, where Genji seduces his stepmother, Fujitsubo, thus suggesting an equation of the highest happiness - the revival of an original harmony - with incest.

Other contrasts also echo and reinforce the dynamic of opposition in the novels. In The Tale of Genji, there is the contrast between Uji and the capital, the mountain temple and the Eighth Prince’s residence, mountains and the River Uji, the present and the past, the court and the monastery, and miyabi and monastic asceticism, while in The Idiot, contrasts between Russia and the mountain village in Switzerland, between static mountains and a dynamic waterfall, present and future, beauty/freedom and practicality, pride and self-abasement, and love and hatred can be seen. Most outstanding is the contrast in The Tale of Genji between the capital where the earlier part of the novel unfolds, and the setting of the ‘Uji chapters’ where the latter part unfolds. The story suddenly shifts from the luxurious world of miyabi - the cultured, artificial, very public setting of court society, to the lonely, monochromatic, humble world of the religious retreat.

Generalizing, one might say that underlying the three novels is the contradiction between two concepts, the sacred and the profane, or moral
asceticism and profane love. The contradiction is expressed in the clash between the main characters’ restless searching to realize an ideal and their repeated encounters with an objective foil to that ideal. The dramatic clash between the ideal and the real occurs within a dialectic of subject and object, and involves terms (e.g. good and evil) flowing into their opposites. Terms in the dialectic are not absolutely fixed or static such that opposites are completely and irrevocably separate from each other, but rather are dynamic qualities that invariably entail their opposite qualities. Thus, in the novels, opposite qualities are shown to be inextricably connected in human nature, which is the reason Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, though representing opposite principles, always function as a unit, and why transgression figures so prominently as a means of overcoming boundaries between binary opposites. Transgression against the insular limits of any fixed quality is a consequence of the heroes’ paradoxical quest. As Ippolit says in The Idiot, “extremites se touchent.” Elsewhere it is said of Nastasya that “...with such beauty one [Nastasya] could turn the world upside down.” Both Genji and Myshkin elevate and humiliate the very women who come closest to their ideals. Indeed, to an extent the plots of both The Tale of Genji and The Idiot develop from the troubles caused by an incestuous transgression between stepmother and stepson, in Genji’s case, and foster-father and foster-daughter in The Idiot. Nastasya, foster-daughter, is violated by her foster-father, Totsky, and later is murdered by Rogozhin. Genji is a child of transgression and also he himself transgresses against social taboos by seducing his stepmother, Fujitsubo, and his half-brother’s betrothed, Oborozukiyo. Kaoru is also a product of transgression.
Genji’s aesthetic finds beauty and hidden charm in social, psychological, or physical transgression: “The house [where Yugao lives] was what the guardsman would have described as the lowest of the low, but Genji was interested. What hidden charms might he not come upon!”59 The deserted lodging where Genji hides Yugao after abducting her is described thus: “The sun was high when he arose. He opened the shutters. All through the badly neglected grounds not a person was to be seen. The groves were rank and overgrown. The flowers and grasses in the foreground were a drab monotone, an autumn moor. The pond was choked with weeds, and all in all it was a forbidding place.”60 Yugao, like the other lovers and Fujitsubo, is a forbidden lady for Genji. Kaoru too, in the combination of his divine bodily fragrance and his illegitimate birth, synthesizes the sacred and the profane, the beautiful and the transgressive.

Several passages from the Tao Te Ching are relevant to the dialectic of transgression. “The Tao is the extreme to which things conduct us,”61 suggesting the Tao operates at a point of transformation where a thing or concept becomes its opposite. “Turning back is how the way moves;”62 and, 

Who knows the limit? Does not the straightforward exist? The straightforward changes again into the crafty, and the good changes again into the monstrous....63

The notion of a paradoxical unity of opposites suggested above informs the aesthetic that dominates The Tale of Genji.

In the three novels, the transgressive is not only what is forbidden, it also appears as that which is peripheral, forgotten, or impossible to attain, and is yet the primary objective of the heroes. Dulcinea for Don Quixote, Nastasya and Aglaya for Myshkin, and Fujitsubo, above all, for Genji,64 are
transgressive objects. But for all three heroes the dream-like, irretrievable past forms the transgressive background to their romantic pursuits.

If transgression is necessary for the heroes' returning, it implies a dream-like notion of time. The Tale of Genji abounds with images of impermanence which suggest the dream-like nature of time, including the broom tree, which fades as one approaches, yugao, a flower that fades at dawn, the locust, an insect with a very short life span, and cherry blossoms, which last a very short time.

In an aesthetic linking the unreality of time with evanescent beauty, one finds the corresponding notion of the beauty of evanescence. Things fragile or delicate, things that pass away, or that show an inclination to do so, are considered beautiful. In The Idiot, Myshkin often takes Nastasya, a symbol of beauty, as an apparition, an unreal, immaterial thing, and in Don Quixote, Dulcinea's psychological function for Don Quixote is to exist as ideally, as immaterially, as the enchanting and enchanted dream image of her that Don Quixote sees in the cave of Montesinos.

Such an aesthetic helps to explain why Myshkin and Genji are attracted to vulnerable, weak women. In The Idiot, pity of weakness motivates Myshkin to love. He loves Nastasya for her weakness, Aglaya for her childlikeness, and also loves children for their vulnerable innocence. And Don Quixote's avowed mission is to protect and lift up the weak and downtrodden.

The close association of beauty and death\textsuperscript{65} is illustrated in The Tale of Genji.

'The cherry blossom is dearest when it falls.
Nothing is meant in this world to last forever.'\textsuperscript{66}
and, ‘...the cherry blossoms of spring are loved because they bloom so briefly.' Furthermore, in *The Idiot*, Nastasya, a symbol of supreme beauty, suffers a singularly tragic death, and in *Don Quixote*, the death of Don Quixote occurs when he finally achieves the supreme beauty in the Cervantean aesthetic - self-consciousness devoid of madness.

The aesthetic of unity in opposition is the basis of the heroes’ dream-like approach to love and time. Upon first seeing Nastasya’s portrait, Myshkin surmises a hidden contradiction within her, the source of her ambiguous, unattainable beauty, and is literally entranced, falling into a dream-like state, one which, together with his pre-epileptic ecstasy, animates his pursuit of her. In *The Tale of Genji*, we read, ‘It was only yesterday, you think, and already thirty years and more have gone by. That is the sort of world we live in, and we cling to a life that is no more substantial than the evening dew,’ suggesting the unreality of time. Furthermore, one of Genji’s poems reads,

> Year after year unchanged the orange blossom.  
> Unchanged a thousand years, the voice of cuckoo.

And to underscore his insight into the eternity of the moment, Ippolit says in *The Idiot*, ‘I should turn every minute into an age.’ In *Don Quixote*, while Sancho sleeps, Don Quixote sings a mournful song:

> And so by life I’m slain,  
> Unwelcome state that mingles life and death!  
> Living I die, and as my breath  
> Dies, death recalls me into life again.

And Cervantes adds, ‘With each line he sighed and shed some tears, groaning as if his heart were pierced through...by his absence from Dulcinea.’

The heroes’ objective of dream-like unity, beyond opposition, is founded on two opposed concepts of dreaming. The heroes longing to return to an
ideal past corresponds to one concept, and their skepticism or despair in the face of the mutability of reality corresponds to the other.

The opposed concepts are, first, a view of the dream as the memory of a wonderful event whose revival is the object of intense and persistent longing. According to this, characters attempt to provoke a backward flow of time in which they would again experience the supreme happiness associated with a person or event from the past. The opposite concept depicts the flow of time as unreal. As a consequence of the unreality of time, *The Tale of Genji* is replete with instances of *mono no aware*, a 'vague,' 'delicate' sadness for the evanescence of all living things. In order to overcome a sense of *mono no aware*, Genji and Kaoru flee into a past understood as superior to the present: 'It is with scents as with brocades: the old ones are more elegant and congenial...New fabrics did not compare with the damasks and red and gold brocades which an embassy had brought from Korea early in his[Genji’s] father’s reign.' And Genji says, 'We live in a degenerate age,' and 'Everyone agrees that your learning and accomplishments are more than we deserve in this inferior day of ours,' according to Tono Chujo. This flight from the present into the past represents a tentative attachment to the past, if only through a surrogate and the memories evoked by the surrogate. For instance, after Genji’s father’s favorite consort Kiritsubo dies, he subsequently takes a new wife, Fujitsubo, who closely resembles her, and Genji’s many loves function as mementos of an ideal love, allowing him to link the present with the past, in a sense to cross the boundary separating the past from the progressive linear flow of time.

For the heroes, love promises to bridge the division between subjective or dream time and objective, linear time, to transform their dividedness into
wholeness. Displaced from an ideal past through the forward movement of linear time, the heroes pursue substitute harmonies in love, or in *miyabi*, especially music, or in religion. From exile in the present, these substitute harmonies evoke the past when the past is considered an original state of oneness.

The heroes, then, exiled from the past, pursue love by wandering or adventuring. In *The Tale of Genji* we are told that the soul wanders off, separated from the body, when we dream,⁷⁹ or ‘When you let your worries get the best of you,... they say your soul sometimes leaves your body and goes wandering. I imagine that’s why she has these dreams....’⁸⁰ The soul wanders from the body in search of a solution to some grave worry, according to this belief, just as the heroes wander in search of an original state of harmonic oneness, transcending their differentiated state.

The Taoist notion of namelessness, prior to differentiation, suggests that birth, the first instance of differentiation, is itself a form of exile. In the *Tao Te Ching* we read:

> Turning back is how the way moves; [returning to one’s roots, emptiness.]
> Weakness is the means the way employs.
> The myriad creatures in the world are born from Something, and Something from Nothing.⁸¹

I do my utmost to attain emptiness;
I hold firmly to stillness.
The myriad creatures all rise together
And I watch their return.
The teeming creatures
All return to their separate roots.
Returning to one’s roots is known as stillness.
This is what is meant by returning to one’s destiny.⁸²
Throughout *The Tale of Genji* there is ample evidence of this complex of Taoist ideas, as seen in the following poem:

‘In what spring tide will I see again my old village?
I envy the geese, returning whence they came.’

The poet, weary from wandering, and pining for renewal, expresses a wish to return to his origin.

Other instances of exile in *The Tale of Genji* include Genji’s mother who, being of an inferior rank, is alienated from the highest ranks even though she is the Emperor’s favorite concubine. Genji, of course, is forever exiled from his mother’s love by the fact of her dying when he was three. Genji is indeed a wandering exile: ‘...he was like a solitary, nameless wanderer.’ Most heroines whom Genji and Kaoru love are somehow in exile too. When Genji sees Yugao’s house, he remarks, “Who in this world had more than a temporary shelter?” They live separate from society in a humble place. Ukifune’s situation is especially indicative, as she suffers a four-fold exile. Her father, the Eighth Prince, abandoned her because of her mother’s low rank, moreover, she is an unwelcome daughter, an ‘outsider’ to her stepfather. Like Genji and Kaoru, she inherits the sin of her parents’ transgression. Compounding her exile even further, she attempts suicide, a grave, almost unredeemable sin in Buddhism. For these reasons she takes vows, rejecting all worldly desire.

Wholeness, the inverse of exile, is indicated by means of symbols such as the bridge, music, and birds in *The Tale of Genji*, and the meeting point of sky and earth in *The Idiot*. Myshkin says in *The Idiot*:

It was there that I seemed to hear some mysterious call to go somewhere, and I could not help feeling that if I went straight on and on, and kept going for a long, long time, I should reach the line where
sky and earth met and find the key to the whole mystery there and at once discover a new life, a life a thousand times more splendid and more tumultuous than ours.88

The Uji Bridge linking the banks of the Uji River in *The Tale of Genji* reflects the love linking Kaoru and Ukifune. The bridge’s power as a symbol is supported by details of the setting, such as the mist which blurs distinctions/contradictions,

‘He went to the verandah railing and sat gazing at the new moon. They were both lost in thoughts, he of the past, of days and people now gone, she of the future and her growing troubles. The scene was perfection: the hills were veiled in a mist, and crested herons had gathered at a point along the frozen strand. Far down the river, where the Uji bridge cut its dim arc, faggot-laden boats were weaving in and out. All the details peculiar to the place were brought together. When he looked out upon the scene it was always as if events of old were fresh before his eyes. Even had he been with someone for whom he cared nothing, the air of Uji would have brought on strange feelings of intimacy. How much more so in the company of a not unworthy substitute for Oigimi. Ukifune was gaining all the while in assurance and discernment, in her awareness of how city people behaved, and she was more beautiful each time he saw her. At a loss to console her, for it seemed that her tears were about to spill over, he offered a poem...’89

Music serves as a bridge linking separate lovers in the following, ‘And so music answered music across the river,’90 and music and love are connected in, ‘On such nights he and the dead lady had played the koto for each other. Her koto had somehow had overtones lacking in other instruments, and when she would interrupt the music to speak, the words too carried echoes of their own...’91

Birds are employed in *The Tale of Genji* and *The Idiot* to suggest hope, innocence, and transcendental resolution. In *The Idiot*, Myshkin says, ‘When that pretty little bird looks at you so happily and confidingly, you can’t help
feeling ashamed to deceive it...there is nothing better than a bird...’

And in *The Tale of Genji*, we read,

‘In the sky, as birds that share a wing.
On earth, as trees that share a branch.’

A concept of transcendental unity or utopian enlightenment forms the background to *The Tale of Genji*, although no main character in the story directly discusses and represents it with the same emphasis and passion as Myshkin in *The Idiot*. Murasaki probably absorbed a concept of utopian enlightenment from Taoism. In the ‘Fireflies’ chapter, during a discussion of the aesthetics of fiction, Genji notes that good and evil are aspects of a single phenomenon, which is reminiscent of passages in the *Tao Te Ching*. *The Tale of Genji* may owe its dream-like atmosphere to the Taoist concept of transformation, expressed by Chuang Chou,

‘Once I, Chuang Chou, dreamed that I was a butterfly and was happy as a butterfly. I was conscious that I was quite pleased with myself, but I did not know that I was Chou. Suddenly I awoke, and there I was, visibly Chou. I do not know whether it was Chou dreaming that he was a butterfly or the butterfly dreaming that it was Chou. Between Chou and the butterfly there must be some distinction [But one may be the other.] This is called the transformation of things.’

*The Tale of Genji* begins with Genji’s figurative exile and ends with his figurative return. *The Idiot* begins with Myshkin’s return to Russia and ends with his exile in a Swiss sanitarium, but the return to Russia assumes a previous exile in Switzerland, and the exile, at the end, according to Mrs. Yapanchin’s statement, implies a spiritual return. If madness is taken to be an ironic variation of Myshkin’s pre-epileptic ecstasy, then Myshkin ends where he begins and the circle of exile and return is completed. Don Quixote
sets out and returns three times in the course of the novel, his last return being definitive. As circular structures indicate wholeness and completion, the three novels’ structural circularity would suggest the heroes have attained their longed-for return.

Despite the common circular structure, the heroes’ struggles differ, and these differences are reflected in the approaches of the authors to the same questions. Genji’s story is presented from birth to death. We see him in a wide variety of situations, in the capacity of poet, lover, politician, painter, husband, father, musician - in short, he is a fuller, more rounded character than Myshkin. Compared to Genji, Myshkin is more abstract and lacks a certain human verisimilitude. Don Quixote’s story traverses the beginning of his madness to his ‘cure’, a journey replete with absurd situations in keeping with Cervantes’ theme, and rendering Don Quixote less and less of a caricature as it progresses.

Moreover, the action in The Idiot grows to a frenzied climax leading to Nastasya’s murder, and throughout, the pace of the action is nervous. The Tale of Genji and Don Quixote, on the other hand, tend to be slower, more lyrical, and static in comparison, creating a strong impression of idyllicism combined with ‘mono no aware,’ or sadness.

Finally, with five potential marriages the focal points of the action, the narrative energy of The Idiot is directed to the future, and this contributes to its agitated narrative pace. Due to the past-directedness of the narrative energy of The Tale of Genji and Don Quixote, the pace is slow, episodic and the mood almost serene in both novels. All three books have elements of past and future-directedness, but the emphases differ. The Tale of Genji and Don Quixote stress the past, while The Idiot stresses the future. These differences
probably correspond to the differences between Christian Messianism and Taoist salvationism.

After wandering through the quiescent *The Tale of Genji*, the sharp-witted, light-hearted *Don Quixote*, and the nightmarish *The Idiot*, and noting a few of their correspondences, one arrives at a recognition of a marked thematic and structural unanimity in these novels which, in numerous ways, are yet quite different.
III Metafictional Perspectives – Introduction

A strategy of discontinuity, in the form of authorial intrusions, points to the fictionality of the text while disrupting its narrative logic. The shock the reader experiences when his expectations are violated/transgressed stimulates an awareness of the objective nature of the text as well as the subjective nature of the reading experience. These intrusions serve as necessary components of the apparatus of transgression, since they work hand in hand with the heroes’ questing, and presuppose the dichotomy which characterizes the heroes’ mode of consciousness. Transgression and disruption, then, take place both within consciousness and without consciousness, subjectively, within the hero, and objectively, between the hero and society, and finally metafictionally, within the text itself.

Tracing the instances of direct and implied intrusion will illustrate the ironic reflexiveness common to the three narratives in varying degrees. It will also demonstrate how the metafictional dimension is evoked by the thematic of transgression, which in turn reinforces that thematic.

Frequent authorial intrusions are to be found in Don Quixote. Indeed, Cervantes, sometimes appearing in one or another ironic disguise and sometimes as a character in the narrative, plays a major metafictional role in his story. Many direct authorial intrusions are found in The Tale of Genji as well, likewise contributing to its ironic metafictionality, but the narrator lacks a substantial persona since most of the intrusions are restricted to only a few statements. Relative to The Tale of Genji and Don Quixote, The Idiot includes a minor authorial presence which, though minor, is yet an important
component of the apparatus of discontinuity characteristic of metafiction and of *The Idiot*. 
Metafictional Perspectives, Part 1: *Don Quixote*

The author Cervantes appears naked, as it were, in *The Author's Dedication* in the First Part. There is no attempt to disguise his identity and he even signs the *Dedication* with his full real name. The purpose of the *Dedication* is to preempt the critics of his book, acknowledged by him to be his own creation. The only irony employed here is in his parrying the thrusts of his imaginary critics. Already in the *Dedication*, the initial terms of a dialogue are established between the author and his somewhat unsympathetic readers. Most importantly, from the very beginning, Cervantes openly attests to the fictionality of his creation and the dialogic nature of his fictional enterprise.

In the *Prologue*, Cervantes again appears as the unadorned author of the tale and addresses the reader directly by name, ‘idle reader.’ However, a little farther along Cervantes calls himself *Don Quixote’s* author only in appearance, claiming he is really the ‘step-father’, thus introducing an element of freedom into the rigid formula of ‘author creates character for reader’s consumption,’ and introducing the question whether *Don Quixote* is not somehow at least partly authored by the character himself and/or by the reader, or perhaps even by some other unnamed author.

Cervantes goes on to state that he has nothing to quote and no notes to add at the end, thus rejecting the typical apparatus of scholars. There will be no appeals to any authorities, either from the past or from the present, religious or non-religious. There will be only the bare story itself, and when appeals to authority are necessary, those appeals will be to the authority of the common
experience of every man, which will assume the form of proverbs. Thus, Cervantes immediately declares the democratic nature of his intentions, implying his democratic strategy will extend to the dynamic relations amongst author, characters, and readers. The truth Cervantes seeks to demonstrate, he suggests, cannot be found in words or texts from the past, but rather it evolves from the dialectic of author, character, reader, and text.

Cervantes' refreshing directness, however, is hardly of the uncomplicated sort since, for one, all of *Don Quixote* is effectively a parodic quotation of the formulae used in the chivalric romances. Moreover, the entire *Prologue* itself is a preliminary instance of Cervantes' self-reflexive irony. The *Prologue* takes the form of an imaginary conversation Cervantes is having with a friend regarding the problem he is having writing the *Prologue*. His friend gives him the advice he needs, telling him to imitate in a parodic manner the typical apparatus of scholarship, hence exposing the falseness of that apparatus. The *Prologue*, therefore, has as its subject matter the writing of itself, its essence embodying simple truth in the form of complex irony. The meta-fictional strategy employed in the *Prologue* will serve as a model for the considerably more complex tale which is to follow.

The story proper begins in an indefinite time and place and concerns an indefinite person, 'In a certain village in La Mancha, which I do not wish to name, there lived not long ago a gentleman....' They say that his surname was Quixada or Quesada - for there is some difference of opinion amongst authors on this point. One of Cervantes' key themes, the relationship between fiction and truth, is announced in the very first chapter, '...enough that we do not depart by so much as an inch from the truth in the
The, so far, unnamed character’s dilemma is described by Cervantes thus:

In short, he so buried himself in his books that he spent the nights reading from twilight till daybreak and the days from dawn till dark; and so from little sleep and much reading, his brain dried up and he lost his wits. He filled his mind with all that he read in them, with enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, wooings, loves, torments and other impossible nonsense; and so deeply did he steep his imagination in the belief that all the fanciful stuff he read was true, that to his mind no history in the world was more authentic.

Also,

In fact, now that he had utterly wrecked his reason he fell into the strangest fancy that ever a madman had in the whole world. He thought it fit...to turn knight errant and travel through the world with horse and armour in search of adventures...he hastened to translate his desires into action.

To this end, the character, as yet unnamed, finds suitable chivalric names for himself and his horse, Don Quixote de la Mancha and Rocinante, respectively. Cervantes seems to set himself up as a kind of chief editor rather than the author, collating the various accounts of Don Quixote for the benefit of the reader. Finally he resolves to call himself Don Quixote, ‘and that is no doubt why the author of this true history, as we have said, assumed that his name must have been Quixada and not Quesada, as other authority would have it.

Following the pattern established by the great heroes of the romances, Don Quixote creates himself in an ironic parody of the independent, self-creating hero of chivalry. With an antique set of armour, two new high-sounding names, and a damsel to win, a local peasant girl, Don Quixote sets out on his first adventure. Hence, the problem of truth is to be scrupulously examined through the course of Don Quixote’s adventures and it will be approached
from the standpoint of Don Quixote's unreason/madness. Specifically, the
great significance alleged by Don Quixote to inhere in his chivalry, in the
idealist illusions he displays, will be tested in the objective world outside his
narrow literary enthusiasms.

Suddenly, on page thirty-six, the character Don Quixote addresses the
author Cervantes, 'sage, enchanter, whoever you may be,' even putting words
into his mouth,

who can doubt that in ages to come, when the authentic story of my
famous deeds comes to light, the sage who writes of them will say,
when he comes to tell of my first expedition so early in the morning.\textsuperscript{108}

Don Quixote, the character, directs Cervantes, the author, '...not to forget
my good Rocinante,'\textsuperscript{109} In effect, by addressing his creator, fiction usurps
the authority normally possessed by truth in this early stage of a prolonged
struggle for supremacy between truth and fiction.

Thus far, we have a fictional character who reads fiction,\textsuperscript{110} mistakes the
fiction for truth, and sets out to prove the truth of the fiction he has read.
Moreover, the fictional character not only intends to prove the truth of fiction,
but also, in admonishing his author, attempts to prove the fictional dimension
of truth. All the while, the reader, that is the contemporary reader, subsumes
these complex ironies under the reality of his own real reading experience.

This complex irony is intended by Cervantes as a warning to the reader to
avoid the pitfall Don Quixote falls into. In Don Quixote's mad attempt to
mirror the fantastic exploits of chivalric heroes, we see by negative example
one who avoids the vital truth of direct experience, and lacks a healthy
skepticism towards the creations of fantasy, indeed towards the imaginary
world.
Cervantes continues his parody of the chivalric romance in Chapter Three when Don Quixote receives his ‘knighthood’ from an innkeeper. In this hilarious incident the innkeeper, a crafty, earthy character, using an account book as if it were a religious text, plays a practical joke on the credulous Don Quixote, conferring a false knighthood on him. Don Quixote, sure that his quasi-divinity is established, falls into raptures. At the end of this event, the narrator states,

So, saddling Rocinante at once, he mounted; then, embracing his host, he thanked him for the favor of knighting him in such extravagant terms that it is impossible to write them down faithfully.\(^{111}\)

Reflecting Don Quixote’s rapturous condition as well as ironically undermining his alleged allegiance to the truth, the narrator shows the reader his doubleness, ‘...it is impossible to write them down faithfully,’\(^{112}\) which parallels the conflict not only between truth and fiction but also, in another manifestation, that between the real and the ideal as represented by the innkeeper and Don Quixote respectively.

Don Quixote meets with near fatal disaster and finally ends up back home, where his misfortune inspires his two friends, a priest and a barber, to discuss his library and what to do with it. They decide that two books, *Amadis of Gaul* and *Palmerin of England*, should be preserved and all the rest destroyed. However, when they come to *History of the Famous Knight Tirante the White*, they conclude this should also be spared because ‘Here the knights eat and sleep and die in their beds, and make their wills before they die, and other things as well that are left out of all other books of the kind.’\(^{113}\) In other words, a more faithful reflection of reality, rather than pure fantasy, is one of the characteristics most valued by these literary ‘critics.’
books are added to the list as they go through Don Quixote’s library. Book after book is spared the flames of what was to have been a comprehensive purging of the negative influence of fictional romances.

Finally, they come to a book by Cervantes, called ‘Galatea,’ which is evaluated in the same fashion. It is determined that at least temporarily it should also to be spared. This playful incident is a good example of the complex irony at which Cervantes excels. Within Cervantes’ main story another Cervantean story appears: Cervantes writes about Cervantes writing about Cervantes. In other words, Cervantes’ character, Don Quixote, becomes a knight errant under the influence of romances of chivalry including one of Cervantes’ own books, ‘Galatea,’ which is, then, treated as fiction by the barber and the priest, two characters in another Cervantean fiction, although it is a historically real book of fiction. Sometimes fiction is treated as reality and sometimes reality is treated as fiction. This scene provides a potent example of how Cervantes’ meta-fictional preoccupations help shape the text of Don Quixote.

Don Quixote’s first idealistic expedition ends in failure and humiliation just short of death, and his second expedition is the subject of the next series of chapters. The priest, the barber, and Don Quixote’s niece are able to comprehend what Don Quixote himself cannot comprehend, which is well defined by his niece with the words, ‘Wouldn’t it be better to stay peacefully at home, and not roam about the world seeking better bread than is made of wheat, never considering that many go for wool and come back shorn?’ Don Quixote’s folly may simply be that he takes to an extreme degree the truth that idealism is as much a part of reality as is practicality, and that at an extreme point truth shades into fiction and parody. Indeed, the height of his
folly is his belief that an antique form of fictional idealism, the adventures of knights errant, should be revived, realized, and moreover ‘in his person.’

With the introduction of Sancho Panza, near the end of Chapter Seven, the two major elements in the dominant conflict between truth and fiction are joined together as travel companions in what is to be a series of adventures which in the end will prove the interdependence of the ideal and the real, represented by Don Quixote and Sancho Panza respectively.

In Chapter Eight, at the climax of a major battle between Don Quixote and a Basque, the narrative is interrupted thus,

But the unfortunate thing is that the author of this history left the battle in suspense at this critical point, with the excuse that he could find no more records of Don Quixote’s exploits than those related here. It is true that the second author of this work would not believe that such a curious history could have been consigned to oblivion, or that the learned of La Mancha could have been so incurious as not to have in their archives or in their registries some documents relating to this famous knight. So, strong in this opinion, he did not despair of finding the conclusion of this delightful story and, by the favor of Heaven, found it, as shall be told in our second part.

At this point, Cervantes claims the story being related was found in an archive and not invented, which would make it true history and not fiction. Cervantes himself therefore would be twice removed from the events related. Cervantes, then, goes on to detail how he discovered the continuation of the story.

Following the breaking off of the story, the narrator explains how he accidentally came across its continuation in the form of a manuscript written in Arabic by one Cide Hamete Benengeli, an Arabic historian. But in order to convey the story to the reader, the narrator must first have it translated. There is an interesting narrative strategy at work here. The narrator, in relating a
story he claims to have found and not invented, strengthens the sense of truth. However, what the narrator presents to the reader is not the original but a translation, and therefore the reader is three times removed from the events described. Narrator, Benengeli, and translator collaborate in the presentation of the tale, and the reader’s distance from the original events tends to weaken the truth value of those events. The likely purpose of Cervantes’ narrative irony, in keeping with his thematic interest, is to blunt the sharpness of the opposition between truth and fiction such that the fictional elements within truth and the truthful elements within fiction are brought to the fore.

Now, if any objection can be made against the truth of this history, it can only be that its narrator was an Arab - men of that nation being ready liars, though as they are so much our enemies he might be thought rather to have fallen short of the truth than to have exaggerated...In this history I know that you will find all the entertainment you can desire; and if any good quality is missing, I am certain that it is the fault of its dog of an author rather than any default in the subject.¹¹²

This quotation suggests Benengeli is Cervantes’ alter ego and in it Cervantes blames his narrator for any untruthfulness there may be in the story.

The sharing of the narrative task amongst Benengeli, translator, narrator(Cervantes as himself), and Don Quixote echoes the theme, ‘Eat from my plate and drink from the vessel I drink from; for it can be said of knight errantry as of love: that it puts all things on the same level.’¹¹³ These words of Don Quixote said to Sancho Panza argue for the dialectical elimination of strict barriers separating binary opposites such as truth and fiction, master and servant, lover and beloved, story and author, narrator and reader.

Furthermore, Cervantes’ meta-fictional strategy, with its complex ironies, equivocating narrators, stories within stories, having no definite beginning or
ending, his democracy of storytelling means, and the constant drone of Don Quixote’s longing, the inaccessible infinite in the background, forever eluding definition like desire itself, all these characteristics can be seen as a function of Don Quixote’s impossible longing for a lost paradise.

After Don Quixote had sufficiently satisfied his hunger, he took up a handful of acorns and, looking at them intently, gave utterance in the following strain: ‘Happy the age and happy the times on which the ancients bestowed the name of golden, not because gold, which in this iron age of ours is rated so highly, was attainable without labour in those fortunate times, but rather because the people of those days did not know those two words thine and mine. In that blessed age all things were held in common. No man, to gain his common sustenance, needed to make any greater effort than to reach up his hand and pluck it from the strong oaks, which literally invited him to taste their sweet and savoury fruit. Clear springs and running rivers offered him their sweet and limpid water in glorious abundance. In clefts of the rock and hollow trees the careful and provident bees formed their commonwealth, offering to every hand without interest the fertile produce of their fragrant toil. Spontaneously, out of sheer courtesy, the sturdy cork-trees shed their light and broad barks, with which men first covered their houses, supported on rough poles only as a defense against the inclemencies of the heavens. All was peace then, all amity, all concord. The crooked plough had not yet dared to force open and search the kindly bowels of our first mother with its heavy coulter; for without compulsion she yielded from every part of her fertile and broad bosom everything to satisfy, sustain, and delight the children who then possessed her. Then did the simple and lovely shepherdesses go from valley to valley and from hill to hill, with their tresses loose, and without more clothes than were needed to cover modestly what modesty requires, and has always required, to be concealed. Nor were there such ornaments as are in fashion today, all trumped up with Tyrian purple and silk in so many contorted shapes. Yet, with only a few green leaves of dock and ivy plaited together, they must have looked as splendid and elegant as our court ladies with the rare and outlandish inventions which idle curiosity has taught them. In those days the soul’s amorous fancies were clothed simply and plainly, exactly as they were conceived, without any search for artificial
elaborations to enhance them. Nor had fraud, deceit, or malice mingled with truth and sincerity. Justice pursued her own proper purposes, undisturbed and unassailed by favour and interest, which so impair, restrain, and pervert her to-day. The law did not then depend on the judge's nice interpretations, for there were none to judge or to be judged. Maiden modesty roamed, as I have said, wherever she would, single and solitary, without fear of harm from strangers' licence or lascivious assault; and if she was undone it was of her own will and desire. 119

And, when speaking of Dulcinea del Toboso, Don Quixote says,

...her beauty superhuman, for in her are realized all the impossible and chimerical attributes of beauty which poets give to their ladies; that her hair is gold; her forehead the Elysian fields; her eyebrows rainbows; her eyes suns; her cheeks roses; her lips coral; her teeth pearls; her neck alabaster; her breast marble; her hands ivory; she is white as snow,... 120

One could say, then, that the goal of Don Quixote's adventures is to attempt to realize the infinity of an ideal world and an ideal love, to revive the golden age, the age of innocence and purity. 'Sancho, my friend, you must know that, by the will of Heaven, I was born in this iron age of ours to revive the age of gold...' 121 Don Quixote is dominated by a restless imagination, 122 one which does not easily succumb to the necessities of reality and which, a victim of tyrannical desire, 123 causes him to wander in search of the ideal freedom that the satisfaction of that desire would bring.

In Chapter XII, a new narrative strategy emerges involving a story parallel to Don Quixote's. Just as there are parallel narrators and characters, so Cervantes includes various stories, subplots, within the main story to echo and reinforce his main story, of which the story of Marcela, the shepherdess, and Chrysostom, the student shepherd, is the first. And while the adventures of Don Quixote parody the picaresque and chivalric romances, and the story
of Marcela and Chrysostom parodies the pastoral genre, both genres give prominence to an exaggerated, fantastic form of love.

Both Marcela and Chrysostom come from wealthy families, and are anything but the simple rustics they appear to be, Chrysostom being a scholar and Marcela possessing a keen intelligence. Chrysostom adopted a pastoral lifestyle to pursue Marcela with whom he had fallen in love, and Marcela adopted it because, tormented by unwanted suitors, it offered her a ‘free and unconstrained’ life. Chrysostom is rejected by Marcela and dies by his own hand. His last wish is to be buried at the very spot where he saw her for the first time, as a testimony, he believes, to his undying love.

But in a long passage Marcela eloquently argues that Chrysostom’s love was ill-conceived and ill-timed, and only reflected the impatient, all-consuming passion of its bearer. For her, whose realism parallels Sancho’s and Dulcinea’s relative to Don Quixote’s idealism, ‘My desires are bounded by these mountains; and if they extend beyond them, it is to contemplate the beauty of the sky, a step by which the soul travels to its first abode.’ Marcela’s speech suggests a Paradise/Arcadia full of possible lovers who do not wish to be possessed, and in fact cannot be possessed until such time as Heaven decrees. From Marcela’s perspective, the pursuing lover is a victim of his passionate subjectivity, which prevents him from properly recognizing the object of his passion. He is in love with love, as it were, and thus defeats himself. The story of Marcela and Chrysostom unmistakably mirrors, in a simplified form, Don Quixote’s story.

In Chapter XIX, Don Quixote acquires the last part of his name, the epithet, *The Knight of the Sad Countenance*. This is a significant metafictional episode because in it Don Quixote refers to himself as a created
character, even speaking on behalf of the author, claiming to know Cervantes’ innermost thoughts, just as authors often claim to know their characters’ innermost subjectivity.

‘...your worship has lately got the most dismal face I’ve ever seen. It must be either from weariness after the battle or from your worship’s losing his teeth.’

‘It is from neither,’ replied Don Quixote, ‘but because the sage whose task it is to write the history of my deeds must have thought it right for me to take some title, as all knights did in the olden days. One called himself The Knight of the Burning Sword; another of the Unicorn; one of the Damsels; another of the Phoenix; another The Knight of the Griffin; and yet another of Death; and by these names and devices were they known all round the world. That is why I say that the sage I mentioned has put it into your thoughts and into your mouth to call me now The Knight of the Sad Countenance, a name which I intend to use from this day on; and to make it fit me better, I intend to have a very sad countenance painted on my shield when I have an opportunity.’

In this quotation, he also refers to other characters and other works of literature as if he were a literary critic as well as author of his own creation.

Another, this time satirical, example of Cervantes’ metafictional strategy, is provided by Sancho Panza’s humorous attempt to tell a story to Don Quixote in Chapter XX.

‘I tell you, then,’ Sancho resumed, ‘that in a village in Estremadura there was once a shepherd - a goatherd I should say, for he kept goats - and this shepherd or goatherd, as my story tells, was called Lope Ruiz. Now this Lope Ruiz fell in love with a shepherdess called Torralba, which shepherdess called Torralba was the daughter of a rich herdsman; and this rich herdsman...’

‘If you tell your story that way, Sancho,’ said Don Quixote, ‘and repeat everything you have to say twice over, you will not be done in two days. Tell it consequentially, like an intelligent man, or else be quiet.’
‘The way I’m telling it,’ replied Sancho, ‘is the way all stories are
told in my country, and I don’t know any other way of telling it. It
isn’t fair for your worship to ask me to get new habits.’
‘Tell it as you like,’ replied Don Quixote, ‘and since it is the will of
Fate that I cannot help listening, go on.’
‘And so, my dear master,’ Sancho went on, ‘as I said, this shepherd
fell in love with the shepherdess Torralba, who was a plump, high-
spirited girl, and rather mannish, for she had a slight moustache - I can
almost see her now.’
‘Really, did you know her, then?’ asked Don Quixote.
‘I didn’t know her,’ replied Sancho, ‘but the man who told me this
story said that it was so true and authentic that when I told it to anyone
else I could swear on my oath that I had seen it all. So, as the days
came and the days went, the Devil, who never sleeps and tangles
everything up, brought it about that the love which the shepherd had for
the shepherdess turned to hatred and ill-will; and the reason was, as
evil tongues told, that she caused him a number of little jealousies, such
as exceeded the bounds and trespassed on the forbidden; and
thenceforth the shepherd loathed her so much that, to avoid her, he
decided to leave that country and go where his eyes should never see
her again. But when Torralba found that Lope scorned her, she
immediately fell to loving him more than she had ever loved him
before.’

‘That is natural in women,’ said Don Quixote, ‘to scorn those who
love them, and love those who loathe them. Go on, Sancho.’

‘It came about that the shepherd put his resolution into effect,’ said
Sancho, ‘and set out driving his goats across the plains of Estremadura
to cross into the kingdom of Portugal. Torralba heard of his plan, and
followed him at a distance, on foot and bare-legged, with a pilgrim’s
staff in her hand and a satchel round her neck, which contained, the
story goes, a bit of mirror and a broken comb, and some little bottle or
other of washes for her face. But whatever it was she carried, I don’t
mean to set about inquiring now. I’ll only say that the story tells how
the shepherd came with his flock to cross the Guadiana river, which at
that season was swollen and almost overflowing; and at the place he
struck it there wasn’t a boat of any kind, nor anyone to ferry him or his
flock to the other side. This put him very much out, because he saw
Torralba coming near, and she was sure to bother him a great deal with
her entreaties and tears. He went on looking about him, however, until
he saw a fisherman close beside a boat, which was so small that it could only hold one man and one goat. But, all the same, he hailed him and arranged for him to take himself and his three hundred goats across. The fisherman got into the boat and took one goat over, came back and fetched another, and came back once more and took another. Keep an account of the goats which the fisherman is taking over, your worship, for if you lose count of one the story will end, and it won’t be possible for me to tell you another word of it. I’ll continue now and mention that the landing-place on the other side was very muddy and slippery, which delayed the fisherman a good deal in his journeys backwards and forwards. But, all the same, he came back for another goat, and another, and another.’

‘Take it that they are all across,’ said Don Quixote, ‘and do not go on coming and going like that, or you will never get them all over in a year.’

‘How many have got over so far?’ asked Sancho.
‘How the devil should I know?’ replied Don Quixote.
‘There now, didn’t I tell you to keep a good count? Well, there’s an end of the story. God knows there’s no going on with it now.’
‘How can that be?’ replied Don Quixote. ‘Is it so essential to the tale to know exactly how many goats have crossed that if you are one out in the number you cannot go on?’
‘No, sir, not at all,’ answered Sancho. ‘But, when I asked your worship to tell me how many goats had got across and you replied that you didn’t know, at that very moment everything I had left to say went clean out of my head, though there were some good and amusing things coming, I promise you.’
‘So,’ said Don Quixote, ‘the story is finished, then?’
‘As sure as my mother is,’ said Sancho.
‘Really,’ replied Don Quixote, ‘you have told me one of the strangest tales - true or false - that anyone could imagine in the whole world; and never in a lifetime was there such a way of telling it or stopping it, although I expected no less from your excellent intelligence. But I am not surprised, for this ceaseless thumping must have disturbed your brains.’
‘That may well be,’ replied Sancho, ‘but I know that so far as my story goes there is nothing more to say, for it just ends where the error begins in counting the goats that cross over.’
‘All right, let it end where it will,’ said Don Quixote.
The trespassing of truth on the territory of fiction and fiction on that of truth is enacted with a humorous twist, since the habitual roles of Sancho and Don Quixote are reversed, resulting in the parameters of each becoming indistinguishable.

The imbrication of fiction and truth is epitomized by the episode called Mambrino’s helmet, in which Don Quixote mistakes a barber’s basin for the helmet of a great chivalric hero, ‘For everything which he saw he adapted with great facility to his wild, chivalrous and errant fancies.’ Don Quixote’s madness, according to this, would be his facility for adapting reality to his desires, his playfulness, his excessive open-mindedness in a sense. By acting like an innocent child, not yet possessing worldly knowledge, Don Quixote endears himself to the idealists and dreamers of subsequent ages.

In Chapter XXII, Don Quixote ‘liberates’ a group of galley slaves in a celebrated episode. One of the prisoners, Gines de Pasamonte, claims to have written his autobiography,

‘... I have written my life with these very fingers...It’s so good ...that Lazarillo de Tormes will have to look out, and so will everything in that style that has ever been written or ever will be. One thing I can promise you, is that it is all the truth, and such well-written, entertaining truth that there is no fiction that can compare with it.’

‘And what is the title of the book?’ asked Don Quixote.

‘The Life of Gines de Pasamonte,’ replied that hero.

‘Is it finished?’ asked Don Quixote.

‘How can it be finished,’ replied the other, ‘if my life isn’t? What is written begins with my birth and goes down to the point when I was sent to the galleys this last time...I have a lot more to say...though I shan’t need much for what I have to write, because I know it by heart.’
Like Don Quixote and Cervantes, who was himself a prisoner for a time, Pasamonte, a fictional character, talks about himself as real, thus reversing fiction and reality.

‘If you wish me to explain to you, gentlemen, the immensity of my misfortunes in a few words, you must promise not to interrupt the thread of my sad tale with any question or remark; for the moment you do so, my narrative will end.’

These words recalled to Don Quixote’s mind that tale of his squire’s which had been broken off because he had not kept count of the number of goats which had crossed the river. But to return to the Ragged Knight, he went on: ‘This warning I give you because I should like to pass briefly over the story of my misfortunes. For to recall them to mind is only to add to them; and the less questions you ask me the quicker I shall come to the end of my tale. Yet I will not leave out anything of importance, as it is my wish to satisfy your curiosity completely.’

In another important metafictional episode, a character named Cardenio tells his life story to Don Quixote and Sancho. His tale reveals the risk inherent in storytelling, that when truth is in excess, the fictional magic dies. Cardenio threatens to cease telling his tale should anyone interrupt by questioning or remarking on anything. Despite his warnings, Don Quixote interrupts him to defend Queen Madasima’s virtue, that is, he interrupts Cardenio on a point of literary interpretation, and in response Cardenio beats him. Once again fiction regarding itself as real defends itself against the real in the guise of fiction.

The origin of deception is located by Don Quixote in a mysterious group of enchanters who work on the imagination and reason and who are either for one or against one:

‘...everything to do with knights errant appears to be chimaera, folly and nonsense, and to go all contrariwise? This is not really the case, but there is a crew of enchanters always amongst us who change and
alter all our deeds, and transform them according to their pleasure and their desire either to favour us or injure us. So what seems to you to be a barber’s basin appears to me to be Mambrino’s helmet, and to another as something else. It shows a rare foresight in the sage who is on my side to make what is really and truly Mambrino’s helmet seem to everyone a basin.’

This implies that the loss of reason can have positive or negative consequences. Thus the demarcation of truth and fiction cannot be absolutely identified without doing violence to this dynamic.

Cardenio’s tale of love lost through deception, of madness and exile, bears metafictional significance:

‘Do not grow weary, gentlemen, of hearing these digressions of mine; for my grief cannot be told succinctly and methodically, since every circumstance of it seems to me to deserve a long discourse.’

To which the priest replied that not only were they not weary of his tale, but that they were glad to hear the details; since they were not of the sort to be passed over in silence, and deserved the same attention as the main thread of the story.

His disquietude, his wandering, his perpetual motion, his grief, and the restlessness of his unfulfilled desire curiously echo the diverse character of Don Quixote himself who, we have seen, also reflects to a degree the thinking of Cervantes, the writer.

In the following quotation, telling a story is likened to the process of making a garment, from the gathering and preparing of materials to the weaving and stitching and assembling. All of this process must be done wisely and judiciously,

For at this point the wise and judicious historian, Cide Hamete Benengeli, brought his third part to an end...the history itself, the thread of which, being carded, twisted, and reeled, may now be resumed.
The metafictional implication of this metaphor, understood in its extended sense, is that just as a garment, a created thing, covers or adorns the body, therefore hiding and indirectly revealing simultaneously, so fiction, a created thing, has a similar relation to truth, hiding, revealing, augmenting, and adorning.

The voice of Cervantes, the author, can be heard in the following quotation, marvelling through his characters, namely the priest and Cardenio, at the character of Don Quixote, and moreover wondering whether Don Quixote is not perhaps too incredible. In it we overhear Cervantes musing aloud on a metafictional theme:

‘But is it not marvellous to see how easily this poor gentleman believes all these inventions and lies, simply because they are in the same style as the nonsense in his books?’

‘It is,’ said Cardenio. ‘It is so strange and rare that I do not know whether anyone trying to invent such a character in fiction would have the genius to succeed.’

The dream-like mode of Don Quixote’s thinking, that is, its fantastic aspect, a mode in which events occur beyond the conventional linearity of time and space is well evidenced in the following,

‘But do you know what does astonish me, Sancho? You must have gone and returned through the air. For you have only taken three days travelling to El Toboso and back, and it is a good ninety miles. From which I conclude that the sage necromancer, who is my friend and looks after my affairs - for I certainly have such a friend, or I should not be a true knight errant - I say that this necromancer must have assisted you on your journey without your knowing it. For there are enchanters who have picked up a knight errant asleep in his bed, and next day, he will not know how or why, but he will wake up more than a thousand miles from the place where he went to sleep. If it were not for that, it would be impossible for knights errant to come to one another’s aid in their perils, as they do at every turn. One of them, perhaps, is fighting in the Armenian mountains with some dragon or
fierce monster, or with another knight. He is getting the worst of the battle, and is just at the point of death. Then, when you least expect it, there appears another knight, on a cloud or in a chariot of fire. This friend, who was the moment before in England, comes to his assistance, saves his life, and is back that night in his own lodging, enjoying his supper. Very often the distance from the one place to the other is six or seven thousand miles. Now all this is effected by the skill and wisdom of these sage enchanters who watch over valorous knights. So, friend Sancho, I do not find it difficult to believe that you made the journey to and from El Toboso in so short a time; since, as I have said, some friendly sage must have carried you through the air without your knowing it." 135

The second feature of this dream-like mode is Don Quixote’s idealistic longing for a return to the Golden Age, and its third characteristic is his pursuit of an ideal woman. These three aspects are equidistant from truth in its material dimension.

*The Tale of Foolish Curiosity* constitutes a tale within a tale. Its metafictional function is to promote, by means of formal repetition, the gradual revelation of the dialectical relations between truth and fiction, skepticism and deception, knowledge and innocence. The terms of the dialectic form two broad contrary movements in the novel, according to which, on the one hand, we see the marvelous transformed into the quotidian and, on the other hand, the quotidian transformed into the marvelous, as Don Quixote becomes more like Sancho Panza and Sancho Panza more like Don Quixote.

In the course of his adventures, Don Quixote encounters a character called ‘the captive,’ who proceeds to tell his story thus:

‘Listen then, gentlemen, and you will hear a true story, and I doubt whether you will find its equal in the most detailed and careful fiction ever written.’ 136
In the comparing of reality and fiction, reality emerges superior according to this quotation. However, in true Cervantean ironic fashion, the reality which is referred to belongs to the life of a fictional character, the captive. Hence, the superiority of reality to fiction is in no way indisputable, Cervantes seems to suggest.

The captive, a fictional character, tells his ‘true’ life story and in it he mentions a fellow captive named Saavedra,

The only one who held his own with him was a Spanish soldier, called something de Saavedra; for his master never so much as struck him, nor bade anyone else strike him, nor even spoke a rough word to him, though he did things which those people will remember for many years, all in efforts to recover his liberty; and the rest of us were afraid that his least actions would be punished by impaling, as he himself feared they would be more than once. And if it were not for lack of time I would tell you something about that soldier’s deeds, which you would find much more entertaining and surprising than this story of mine.  

One would assume this fellow captive just another incidental fictional character except for the fact that Saavedra was Cervantes’ own surname.

The real Cervantes, then, appears as a fictional component in an allegedly real life story which we know through the prism of irony to be fiction, or, to put it differently, fiction appears in the guise of reality while reality appears in the guise of fiction, each infusing the other in a double deception.

The narrator, like a film director, cuts across from one action sequence to another, interrupting the first by the second, thus leaving the reader in suspense regarding the outcome for the first sequence. Yet another technique of irony much favored by Cervantes is the use of parallel or simultaneous actions, broken off at strategic points of suspense and later resumed,

But let us leave him there, for someone is bound to help him; or, if no one does, let him suffer in silence for his rashness in taking on more
than his strength warrants; and let us go back fifty paces and see how Don Louis answered the judge, whom we left asking him privately the reason for his travelling on foot in such poor clothes. In Chapter XLV, the question of truth is approached directly in a scene that clarifies the truth status of the barber’s basin or Mambrino’s helmet. In his usual, delightfully ironic fashion, Cervantes has one barber jokingly disputing with another, saying,

‘And I say, under correction, always submitting myself to better judgment, that this piece before us, which the good gentleman is holding, not only is not a barber’s basin, but is as far from being one as black is from white, or the truth from a lie. But I do say that, though this is a helmet, it is not a complete helmet.’

Of course, no one would know better than a barber that the basin was really a barber’s basin, yet the barber pretends to adopt Don Quixote’s idealistic argument, all the while using the language of skepticism. The truth, he admits, must always in the end be established by trial, an argument contrary to Don Quixote’s, to whom truth is either the revealed truth of doctrinal religion, or truth established by ideal precedent, that is, one which faithfully copies an ideal literary original.

The skepticism is reinforced by a further notion of truth introduced later in a scene by another character, Don Ferdinand,

‘There is no doubt,... that Don Quixote has spoken very wisely to-day in saying that the decision in this case lies with us; and so that it may rest on sounder foundations I will take the votes of these gentlemen in secret, and give you a clear and full account of the result.’

The notion of truth by consensus again contradicts Don Quixote’s earlier conviction equating truth with faith and represents a concession to reality by Don Quixote on his journey from unreason to reason, from faith to skepticism. A weakness in the argument of truth by consensus is alluded to
by the barber to whom the helmet belongs, the victim of Don Quixote’s madness and the practical joking of the other barber, when he declares, ‘...might is right...’\textsuperscript{141} And indeed the scene concludes with a giant brawl in which all attempt to assert their truth by means of might alone. Cervantes’ argument seems to be that if truth must no longer conform to a pre-existing model either literary or historical or divine, but essentially creates itself by trial, then, a modern notion of truth comes to the fore in contradistinction to the medieval, ecclesiastical concept of absolute truth based on faith and revelation. Cervantes’ emergence in a transitional phase in the history of European culture, during which medieval culture was becoming modern, is manifest in this incident.

Soon Don Quixote himself is admitting there is no direct path to revealed truth though he still believes in revealed truth. It follows from this that truth must continually be reestablished, as it encounters new realities, that its unavoidable subjectivity must constantly be modulated to suit the existing reality, an idea Don Quixote at this point in the narrative is not yet ready to comprehend, ‘But perhaps chivalry and magic in our day must follow a different course from that pursued by the men of old;’\textsuperscript{142}

Cervantes’ narrative credo is laid out - a judicious balance of truth and fiction - in the following:

‘...the more it resembles the truth the better the fiction, and the more probable and possible it is, the better it pleases. Fictions have to match the minds of their readers, and to be written in such a way that, by tempering the impossibilities, moderating excesses, and keeping judgment in the balance, they may so astonish, hold, excite, and entertain, that wonder and pleasure go hand in hand. None of this can be achieved by anyone departing from verisimilitude or from that imitation of nature in which lies the perfection of all that is written.’\textsuperscript{143}
Cervantes' literary convictions are reflected in the Canon's conversation with the priest:

Yet he continued that, for all that he had said against such books, he found one good thing in them: the fact that they offered a good intellect a chance to display itself.... Sometimes the writer might show his knowledge of astrology, or his excellence at cosmography or as a musician, or his wisdom in affairs of state,.... He could portray... all those attributes which constitute the perfect hero,.... 'Now,' he concluded, 'if all this is done in a pleasant style and with an ingenious plot, as close as possible to the truth, there is no doubt at all that the author will weave a beautiful and variegated fabric, which, when finished, will be perfect enough to achieve the excellent purpose of such works, which is, as I have said, to instruct and delight at the same time.'

Just as the priest functioned as an ironic spokesman for Cervantes in the previous critical discussion of romances of chivalry, here the Canon performs that function. That discussion, one may recall, resulted in the burning of most of Don Quixote's library.

In the next intervention, the author masquerades as a historian/documentor of truth, playfully attributing his success in finding the continuation of the story to an unnamed doctor who accidentally discovered some original documents, which are to form the basis of the Second Part:

But though the author of this history has anxiously and diligently inquired after Don Quixote's exploits on his third expedition, he has been able to discover no account of them, at least from any authentic documents.... Our author, in fact, would have been able to learn nothing of his mortal end, nor would he even have learnt of it, if good fortune had not thrown an aged doctor in his path. This man had in his possession a leaden box which, so he said, he had found among the ruined foundations of an ancient hermitage, that was being rebuilt. In this box he had found some parchments written in Gothic script but in Castilian verse, which contained many of the knight's exploits.... Such of these as could be read and understood the trustworthy author of this
original and matchless history has set down here,...’  

Another metafictional episode has Don Quixote and Sancho Panza learning of the ‘Arabic liar’s version’ of their adventures:

‘...your worship’s story is already in print under the title of *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*. He says that I’m mentioned too under my own name of Sancho Panza, and so is the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, and so are other matters which happened to us in private.’

Fictional characters learn of their existence as fictional characters, hence, reflect on themselves as if in a mirror. Later they hold an extended critical discussion of Benengeli’s version, together with Sampson Carrasco, who is reporting on it. The literary self-criticism incorporated into the discussion constitutes another instance of Cervantes’ meta-fictional irony.

In another example of the fictional adopting an objective role, Sancho Panza, a fictional character, refers to his fictional author,

‘Let this Master Moor, or whatever he is, take care and look what he is doing, for I and my master will provide him with enough rubble in the way of adventures and different things for him to be able to make up not only a second part but a hundred more,’ wondering aloud whether a Second Part will be published and giving him advice for writing it, all the while boasting that he will provide ample material for the writer, exaggerating his importance to the point where it is implied he, a piece of fiction, is the true author of the story, since he is one of the main actors.

Sancho Panza comments on himself as a character in a history in two further instances of reflexive irony: ‘And though I chance to be put in books and passed about the world from hand to hand, I don’t care a fig - let them say what they like about me,’ and ‘But let them say what they will; for
naked I was born and naked I am now, I neither lose nor gain.\textsuperscript{149} This delightful hoax by Cervantes, in which he denies the central ironic dimension, is an example of his method of piling irony on top of irony. Cervantes’ supreme irony denies its ironic self.

In an episode of ironic reversal, the roles of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are reversed such that Don Quixote upon meeting Dulcinea can only see her as she is in reality while Sancho Panza, playing a practical joke, speaks of her ordinariness as if she were a glorious character from a chivalric romance. No matter what he says to convince Don Quixote otherwise, Don Quixote’s skepticism prevails and in the end he resorts to his usual rationalization, according to which his failure to see her as ideal must be due to an evil enchanter deceiving his senses.

Cervantes uses the devices of tricks, practical jokes, and theater, to mirror the relationship of truth and fiction, ‘Indeed there is no comparison which presents to us more truly what we are and what we ought to be than the play and the players.’\textsuperscript{150} These instruments of irony are employed throughout \textit{Don Quixote}. Indeed, Sancho Panza often tricks and deceives Don Quixote, as do others, and Don Quixote himself takes himself to be a knight errant, confusing the theater with truth in a remarkable lack of ironic consciousness.

The epistemological purpose of the frequent use of practical jokes by Cervantes is to enlighten by means of irony or deception. Irony itself is the principal weapon in Cervantes’ battle against untruth and ignorance.

\textit{The Cave of Montesinos} episode, which is central to an understanding of \textit{Don Quixote}, epitomizes the meta-fictional preoccupations of Cervantes as well as marking a transitional point in the narrative structure. In this episode,
we learn of the full epistemological and romantic dimensions of Don Quixote’s strivings:

Then Don Quixote asked the skillful licentiate to give him a guide to lead him to the cave of Montesinos, for he had a great desire to explore it and see with his own eyes whether the marvels related about it thereabouts were true.\(^{151}\)

That Don Quixote’s strivings are epistemological in nature and romantic in content is supported by this quotation, in which Don Quixote displays his twin obsessions with the marvelous and the true. When Don Quixote reaches the cave of Montesinos he descends into it, and once inside he has a marvelous vision which, when related to others, undermines their trust in his mental health. His descent, from which he emerges metamorphosed, parodies the chivalric heroes’ descent into the underworld. From the viewpoint of the epistemological issues involved, the cave itself hearkens back to Plato’s myth of the development of self-knowledge. In this myth, the individual is likened to one who lives in a dark cave in which a fire burns, casting flickering shadows on the walls. To the individual in the cave who knows nothing of the direct light of the sun or the outside world, his knowledge reflects the flickering shadows familiar to him from the walls. Self-knowledge consists, according to Plato, in the individual’s gradual realization of the insubstantial nature of the shadows and his consequent emergence from the darkness of the cave into the light of the sun, from fictional/false knowledge to the light of truth.\(^{152}\)

Before his descent into the cave, Don Quixote announces, ‘... that he must see the bottom, even if it reached to the pit of hell.'\(^ {153}\) Don Quixote’s emphatic resolve to realize his ideal, ‘...there is nothing so impossible that I cannot undertake and accomplish it,’\(^ {154}\) is also announced. After he emerges
from the cave, he relates a vision he claims he had while within the cave, ‘...the sweetest existence and most delightful vision any human being ever enjoyed or beheld.’ Upon his return to the surface, his new consciousness, the final result of his natural melancholy, he describes as follows, ‘Now, indeed, I positively know that the pleasures of this life pass like a shadow and a dream, and wither like the flowers of the field.’ Significantly, though he values his new knowledge, he nevertheless laments the loss of the paradise beneath the earth, curiously equating, in a sense, the relinquished paradise of the cave and the surface world of consciousness. An ironic reversal of Plato’s myth of progressive consciousness can be seen in Don Quixote’s nostalgia for the cave.

His vision was as follows,

‘In this perplexed meditation, suddenly and involuntarily I was overcome by a deep sleep, and when I least expected it, not knowing how and why, I woke up to find myself in the middle of the most beautiful, pleasant and delightful meadow nature could create or the liveliest human imagination conceive. I opened and rubbed my eyes, and saw that I was not asleep but really awake. For all that, I felt my head and my bosom to make certain whether it was my very self who was there, or some empty and counterfeit phantom; but touch, feeling and the coherent argument I held with myself assured me that I was there then just as I am here now. Soon there appeared before my eyes a royal and sumptuous palace or castle, whose walls and battlements appeared to be formed of clear transparent crystal; and when two great doors opened in them I saw coming out towards me a venerable old man,...’

who addresses him as follows,

‘Come with me, illustrious sir, for I would show you the marvels concealed in this transparent castle, of which I am the governor and perpetual chief warden; for I am Montesinos himself, from whom the cave takes its name.’
For the first time, but not the last, we see a name, Montesinos, corresponding directly to the object it signifies. Word and thing embody reciprocally, consciousness and the unconscious correspond perfectly, their identity attesting to the visionary nature of Don Quixote's encounter.

Don Quixote's vision describes his awakening just like the individual emerging from Plato's cave. He speaks of a castle of crystal whose transparency again suggests the perfect equation of opposites, in this case, inside and outside. Don Quixote's vision, then, represents an experience of the wholeness of consciousness, in which all opposition gives way to the flow of consciousness.

But even within his vision of paradise there are contradictory elements. Reality/truth unavoidably corrodes his idealism. In the crystal palace of his vision, he meets enchanted characters from historic chivalric romances which he cannot disenchant. One of them, Durandarte, expresses his skepticism regarding Don Quixote's ability to disenchant him and sounds very much like Sancho Panza when he quotes a common saying, "...if that should not be, cousin, I say: patience and shuffle the cards." Moreover, Don Quixote cannot avoid answering Sancho Panza's questions about reality within the world of the enchanted, for instance, whether the enchanted sleep, or eat, or defecate, etc. Perhaps the best example of the inescapable quotidian within the very heart of the ideal is Don Quixote's meeting Dulcinea in Montesinos' cave, who asks him to lend her money. Tellingly he does not have enough and so must ignominiously give her an insufficient amount. Once again Don Quixote is unable to free Dulcinea from her suffering enchantment and, to make matters worse, cannot even relieve her economic woes.
In a footnote to the *Cave of Montesinos* episode, Cervantes essentially calls Don Quixote a fabricator of fanciful stories, claiming that on his deathbed he retracted his account of the events in the cave of Montesinos. We see at this point a prefiguration of Don Quixote’s full enlightenment, which comes at the end of the book, where it becomes clear the *Cave of Montesinos* episode was a central and necessary stage in Don Quixote’s epistemological development. In a sense, then, Don Quixote undergoes two deaths or descents into the underworld, emerging from the first, the Cave of Montesinos, a more disillusioned, but also more aware character, and from the second, appearing as one in full possession of his consciousness, gazing back on his life from its pinnacle just before his death.

In one episode near the end, Sancho Panza experiences his own journey to the underworld in his typical realistic mode, which journey parallels Don Quixote’s descent into the cave of Montesinos. Sancho, however, has no glorious vision. He simply falls into a pit and Don Quixote rescues him. Each rescues the other from the underworld. Each acts as the other’s agent of rebirth. Each is a midwife for the birth of the other’s complementary self, and in true Cervantean ironic fashion, their respective deaths and transformations are treated mock heroically.

Cervantes develops his formula of utilizing complementary, contrasting natures, Sancho’s realism vs. Don Quixote’s idealism, when we learn that each has a share of the other’s nature, which share modifies and transforms such that each becomes more and more like the other to form a complex unity of character. The wisdom displayed by each of the pair near the end of the book results from the workings of this philosophical mechanism, which has its counterpart in the plot development. The philosophical stance the
mechanism represents mirrors Cervantes’ metafictional perspective: the making of fiction and the fabrication of complex, dynamic truth is one continuous process.

The criminal, Gines de Pasamonte, whom Don Quixote freed along with a large group of criminals in a chain gang in another act of mock heroism, appears again in a later episode highlighting Cervantes’ themes and methods. In this episode, Don Quixote and Pasamonte meet again by accident at an inn, and Don Quixote does not recognize him due to the fact Pasamonte has changed his appearance and name. He now wears a green eye-patch which also covers part of his face. He calls himself Master Peter and makes his living as an itinerant puppet-showman, traveling around with an ape allegedly having extraordinary insight and a puppet show called, ‘The Releasing of Melisendra.’ Pasamonte, with his disguise, assumed name, and highly theatrical claims, suggests a more mundane version of Don Quixote himself who, one recalls, also assumed a new name, a theatrical costume, and a new role at the outset of his adventures. The ape, allegedly more knowledgeable than a human, ironically underscores the depth of foolishness to which humans can fall. One is reminded of Don Quixote’s madness when we discover the ape can see the past but not the future or the present. Don Quixote, like the ape, cannot see the present because he lives in the past while dreaming of its restoration, and just as his ideal words never correspond to his inadequate actions, so the ape’s nonsensical chattering must be ‘interpreted’ by Pasamonte in order for the ape to appear at all sentient. The epistemological themes of imprisonment within one’s ignorance, freedom from ignorance, and the freedom of knowledge, are ironically embodied here by Pasamonte, the freed prisoner, whose performing ape is humanly free only
in appearance, and who is himself free by virtue of Don Quixote's mock heroism.

Don Quixote's persistent claims of being deceived by evil enchanters should be seen in the light of Cervantes' epistemological concerns. From within Plato's cave, where Don Quixote figuratively resides at the start of the book, Don Quixote is led to the freedom of self-consciousness by the end of the story. When Pasamonte puts on his puppet show, Don Quixote, still under the spell of illusion/ignorance, mistakes the puppets for real people, and in attempting to rescue some of the characters in the play, again mistaking illusion for reality, he destroys all the puppets and almost kills Pasamonte himself. Afterwards, he blames his misapprehension, as usual, on evil enchanters, and is forced to compensate Pasamonte, using real money in an amusingly ironic gesture.

Pasamonte's puppet theater and ape act are further instances of the ironic function of tricks, illusions, and the theater. For the ape act, Pasamonte would do some preliminary intelligence on the town and its inhabitants before he would actually visit, so that when people asked the ape questions to test its knowledge, Pasamonte could pretend to interpret the ape's nonsensical chatter by using the information he had gathered beforehand. Trickery and illusion - theater - are key to an understanding and to an appreciation of Cervantes' delightful irony. Indeed, Don Quixote himself could be interpreted as the main player in a theatrical parody of the chivalric romance.

In another episode, Don Quixote makes the acquaintance of a Duke and Duchess, who are familiar with the literature of chivalry as well as the published First Part of Don Quixote's story:
The pair of them had read the first part of this history, and consequently knew of Don Quixote’s extravagances. So they awaited him with the greatest delight and were most anxious to make his acquaintance, their intention being to fall in with his whimsies, to agree with him in all he said, and to treat him like a knight errant for so long as he would stay with them, observing towards him all the ceremonies usual in books of knight errantry, which they had read and were very fond of.\textsuperscript{161}

Just as Pasamonte fools the townspeople by shaping his answers to fit their questions to the ape, in this case the Duke and Duchess decide to play along with Don Quixote’s whims. Ironic deception in the form of a practical joke is the main device used here to highlight Don Quixote’s gullibility as a naive dreamer.

A supremely ironic episode occurs when Don Quixote encounters characters who have read a spurious Second Part not written by Benengeli. Not only does he confront his true fictional self, through characters such as the Duke and Duchess who have read the First Part of \textit{Don Quixote}, he also experiences his false fictionality, a misadventure which, like any other, further contributes to his truth/fictional definition.\textsuperscript{162} Here Cervantes proves a great master of metafictional narration.

There would appear to be four levels on a scale of fictionality/truth that can be discerned in the Cervantean universe. The least fictional would have the most truth value and the most fictional would have the least truth value, in an ascending order of truth value. The most fictional would be everything pertaining to the spurious Second Part. Directly above that would be Don Quixote, Sancho, and everything pertaining to the true \textit{Don Quixote} of the First and Second Part. Still ascending to the highest truth, the fictional
narrator, Benengeli, would come next, and at the top would be Cervantes himself, the author.

In another episode hinging on a practical joke, Don Quixote is given a coat to wear, placed on a mule, and sent into a town. Unknown to him, as a prank a sign is sewn on the back of his coat reading, ‘This is Don Quixote de la Mancha.’ Consequently, many people, seeing the sign, greet him by name, and Don Quixote believes they know him thanks to his fame. However, finally someone says,

The devil take Don Quixote de la Mancha! How have you got here alive after all the beatings you’ve received? You’re a madman. If you had been mad in private and behind closed doors you would have done less harm. But you have the knack of turning everyone who has to do with you into madmen and dolts. Just look at these gentlemen riding with you! Go back home, idiot, and look after your estate and your wife and children, and quit this nonsense that worm-eats your brain and skims the cream off your intellect.’

In this exclamation, the character acts like a meta-narrator, his comments calling the bluff of the ironic prank. Significantly, words, the objects of fiction, are defeated by other objects of fiction, the metafictional words of the unnamed critic, who observes that the name on the sign corresponds to the fictional object, Don Quixote, but Quixote’s deeds fail to correspond to his words. Thus words and objects correspond only in the fictional sphere, just as Montesinos the character is equated with the cave, whose content is also wholly imaginary.

It is not inconceivable for this episode to be interpreted as a parody of the Judaic belief that when the Messiah comes, the paragon of virtue who is to restore the state of original innocence to all, he will appear riding on a mule and will be immediately recognized by all. In this case, we see a madman,
paragon of imaginary virtue, recognized only because of a sign on his back indicating his fictional identity. In this reading the scene would suggest the emptiness of false Messianic dreams, and would offer yet another blow to Don Quixote's ridiculous pretensions.

In an episode similar to the episode of Pasamonte's 'cognizant' ape, an enchanted head is able to speak about people and things that are present though it cannot know thoughts. Strangely, the head is disembodied and is termed an 'oracular machine.'\textsuperscript{165} Don Quixote's question to the head is '... was it truth or a dream, the account I gave of my experiences in the cave of Montesinos?'\textsuperscript{166} and the head answers, '...it has something in it of both.'\textsuperscript{167} When Sancho protests that the head tells him nothing except what he already knows, Don Quixote adds, 'What answer do you expect? Is it not enough that the replies this head gives correspond to the questions asked it?'\textsuperscript{168} Like the ape which 'answers' questions with information gathered by Pasamonte beforehand, the head also answers questions, using information fed to its manipulator beforehand. Again it is a trick, an illusion designed to entertain rather than to inform. Its mysterious power of enchantment is seen to be hollow as its mechanism is extensively explained in the text. As soulless as Pasamonte's puppets and fiction, the head imitates a living thing but lacks a corresponding spiritual essence.

We know Don Quixote has changed when in a discussion with a printer\textsuperscript{169} he says,

> 'Works of invention are only good in so far as they adhere to truth or verisimilitude; and general history is the better for being well authenticated,'\textsuperscript{170}

and again,
‘You are right, Sancho,...for this artist is like Orbaneja, the painter of Ubeda, who used to answer when they asked him what he was painting, “whatever it turns out”. And if he happened to paint a cock, he would write under it: “This is a cock”, in case anyone might think it was a vixen. That is the sort of person, it seems to me, the painter or writer - for it is all one - must have been who published the history of this new Don Quixote that has come out. Or he must have been like a certain poet who hung about the court years ago, by the name of Mauleon, who used to answer any question he was asked offhand. When someone inquired of him the meaning of “Deum de Deo”, he replied “Do as you like”. Fiction or ‘works of invention’, then, must ‘adhere to truth or verisimilitude.’ Still the relation of fiction and truth, while being characterized as one of adherence or similarity, is not defined any more specifically, and Don Quixote’s statement only begs the question. What seems to emerge from Don Quixote’s observation and example is that fiction, to be successful, cannot be too arbitrary, or to put it differently, fantasy must be complemented by truth for it to be convincing.

Don Quixote’s chivalric downfall, which is really his rebirth or release from the imprisonment of illusion, ironically involves yet another illusion. Sampson Carrasco appears disguised as another knight errant and challenges Don Quixote to a battle. The result, should Don Quixote lose, would mean his returning home and abandoning knight errantry for a year. Don Quixote, who fails to recognize Carrasco, takes him at his word and loses the battle, ‘...he brought Rocinante and Don Quixote to the ground with a terrible fall.’ Don Quixote’s fall corresponds to the final stage of his disillusionment and is the true beginning of his consciousness of death. That awareness of truth is akin to familiarity with death is evidenced by, ‘Then, battered and stunned, without lifting his visor Don Quixote proclaimed in a
low and feeble voice, as if he were speaking from inside a tomb. As such, his fall evokes the Biblical account of the Fall from Paradise. Don Quixote’s knowledge or consciousness would be the fruit of the fall, the result of his disillusionment. Truth, then, would become the product of fiction. But even at the point of his disillusionment, Don Quixote hopes anew for a return to knight errantry, just as fiction again follows upon truth which follows from fiction, their paradoxical inseparability forming an endless cycle of reversals.

Sancho’s reaction to Don Quixote’s defeat echoes Don Quixote’s own reaction,

Sancho, very sad and downcast, did not know what to say or do, for all this episode seemed to him to be happening in a dream, and the whole business to be a matter of enchantment.

After his defeat, Don Quixote is no longer able to blame the usual evil enchanter or aspire to the usual superhuman goals,

As they left Barcelona Don Quixote turned to gaze on the spot where he had fallen and said: ‘Here stood Troy. Here my ill-luck, and not my cowardice, despoiled me of the glory I had won. Here Fortune practiced her shifts and changes upon me. Here my exploits were eclipsed. Here, in short, my happiness fell, never to rise again.’

All I can tell you is that there is no such thing in the world as Fortune, and that events here, whether good or ill, do not fall out by chance but by a particular providence of Heaven, from which comes the saying that every man is the architect of his own destiny. I have been so of mine, but have failed in the necessary prudence, and so my presumption has brought me to disaster,...’

Don Quixote’s new realism contradicts his earlier, almost manic optimism.

Shortly after his defeat, Don Quixote considers living in retirement as a shepherd, a final attempt on his part to recapture a lost paradise, this time by following a pastoral formula rather than chivalric. It is Sancho who alerts
Don Quixote to the impurities within the pastoral, warning him against further illusionment,

‘...shepherds are not all simple. There are rogues amongst them,.... For your lovings and wicked desires are as common in the fields as in the cities, and you find them in shepherds’ huts as well as in royal palaces.’177

At last, Sancho offers his wisdom pertaining to the solution to the problem of how to revive a lost paradise,

‘I only know that while I sleep I have no fear, nor hope, nor trouble, nor glory. God bless the inventor of sleep, the cloak that covers all man’s thoughts, the food that cures all hunger, the water that quenches all thirst, the fire that warms the cold, the cold that cools heat; the common coin, in short, that can purchase all things, the balancing weight that levels the shepherd with the king and the simple with the wise. There’s only one bad thing about sleep, as I have heard say, and that is that it looks like death; for there’s but little difference between a sleeping man and a dead one.’178

Don Quixote’s answer to this is ‘...you were born to sleep; but I was born to watch,...’179 Don Quixote’s watchfulness, the product of his relentless idealistic striving, is expressed in a poem,

Love, when I dwell upon
The wounds you deal me, terrible and fierce,
I run to death apace
In hopes that there my great pains will be gone.
But when I reach that place,
The harbour in this sea of my sad ills,
Such joy my bosom feels
That life grows stronger and I cannot pass.

And so by life I’m slain,
Unwelcome state that mingles life and death!
Living I die, and as my breath
Dies, death recalls me into life again.180
Don Quixote displays a much deeper, more complex, paradoxical character than does Sancho Panza in this poem linking love and enlightenment/disillusionment, death and freedom.

We know Don Quixote’s cure is almost complete when he states, ‘...no one can be bound to perform the impossible.’181

Don Quixote displays a new awareness of the dangers of an overactive imagination, ‘...when she[Altisidora] is busy working the bobbins the image or images of her desires will not work in her imagination.’182 He suggests an overactive imagination leads to the dichotomy between words and deeds.

‘Let Dulcinea await another opportunity, and I will contain myself within the bounds of proximate hope...’183

‘There they dismounted at an inn, which Don Quixote recognized as such, and did not take for a castle with a deep moat, towers, portcullises and a drawbridge, for since his defeat he spoke on all subjects with a sounder judgment,...’184

On the one hand, Don Quixote’s cure or awakening to cautious realism is evident, but on the other, he continues to dream though in a passive mode.

For instance, at the inn where they stop, some paintings hang in the room,

On one of them some wretched dauber had depicted the rape of Helen at the moment when the bold guest stole her from Menelaus; and on another was the history of Dido and Aeneas - she on a high tower in the act of signaling with half a sheet to her fugitive guest, who was in full flight over the sea in a frigate or brigantine. One noticeable difference between the two pictures, however, was that Helen went with no very ill grace, for she was slyly smiling to herself, but the fair Dido was shown dropping tears as big as walnuts from her eyes. Now when Don Quixote saw this he observed: ‘Those two ladies were most unfortunate not to have been born in the present age, and I even more unfortunate not to have been born in theirs. Had I encountered those gentlemen, Troy would not have been burnt nor Carthage destroyed; for all those calamities would have been avoided simply by my killing
Don Quixote still imagines himself an unrivaled hero of antiquity. Sancho too still shows signs of an undisciplined mind as he strings together numerous proverbs with the word ‘and,’ which elicits some realistic advice from Don Quixote, who abhors loosely connected thoughts,

‘Speak plainly, simply and without complications, as I have often asked you before, and you will see how one loaf becomes as good for you as a hundred.’

In one of the last episodes, a delightful meta-fictional encounter occurs between Don Alvaro Tarfe, Don Quixote, and Sancho. Tarfe, who is featured in the spurious Second Part of the history of Don Quixote de la Mancha, claims to be the great friend of Don Quixote, but Don Quixote quickly disabuses him of his conviction, convincing him that the Don Quixote of his acquaintance is a false one. Three fictional characters meet as real characters within a fiction, Don Quixote claiming the fictional Don Quixote a false representation of himself, the real fictional Don Quixote. He commences to argue that the false Don Quixote as well as Tarfe himself are mere fictions while only he and Sancho possess any reality. In the conclusion of this episode, Sancho says,

‘And the true Don Quixote de la Mancha, the famous, the valiant and the wise, the enamoured, the righter of wrongs, the guardian of minors and orphans, the protector of widows, the slayer of maidens, he that has the peerless Dulcinea for his sole mistress, is this gentleman here, my master. Any other Don Quixote whatsoever, and any other Sancho Panza, are a mockery and a dream.’

So Sancho, the dreamer, lays claim to the real fictional status of his dream, separating it decisively from the false dreams offered by the false Second
Part. Tarfe, from being denounced as fictitious, suddenly acquires the status of a metafictional arbiter or critic,

‘...for it’s very surprising to see two Don Quixotes and two Sanchos at the same time, alike in their names yet how different in their deeds. Let me affirm once more that I didn’t see what I did see, and that what happened to me didn’t happen.’

The four-part scale of truth-fictional values, previously outlined, is manifest in this episode.

Dulcinea finally achieves disenchantment after Sancho finishes his penance of three thousand three hundred lashes, imposed upon him as a condition of her freedom by the sage Merlin, and conveyed to Don Quixote in the cave of Montesinos. Sancho’s penance, the product of Don Quixote’s visionary experience in the cave, frees not only Dulcinea, but also Don Quixote’s obligation to her. In effect, then, each of the three main characters find their respective freedom in the end - Sancho returns home, Dulcinea is disenchanted, and Don Quixote returns home with a self-consciousness he previously lacked.

Don Quixote’s new awareness is punctuated by his dying at the very point of achieving that awareness, suggesting in a final lesson that death is the ultimate limit to the dream of infinite desire, while itself paradoxically reflecting a form of freedom.

As they enter their village, Sancho says,

‘Open your arms and receive your son Don Quixote too, who, though conquered by another, has conquered himself - which, as I have heard him say, is the very best kind of victory.’

The conclusion of Don Quixote’s epistemological quest follows the Platonic model of the process of self-knowledge as discussed above. The master of
hyperbole now understands that hyperbole bears only a tangential relation to reality.

Don Quixote abandons his final craze, to live a pastoral life, instead of one of adventure, when his housekeeper informs him of the real hardships of such a life, for which he is obviously unsuited.

The ultimate expression of Don Quixote’s enlightenment comes just before his death. When Sancho urges him to continue dreaming of a return to a life of knight errantry, Don Quixote replies,

‘Let us go gently, gentlemen,...for there are no birds this year in last year’s nests. I was mad, but I am sane now. I was Don Quixote de la Mancha, but to-day, as I have said, I am Alonso Quixano the Good.'190

Ironically, Don Quixote’s full recovery from his madness happens at the point of his death:

‘My judgment is now clear and free from the misty shadows of ignorance with which my ill-starred and continuous reading of those detestable books of chivalry had obscured it. Now I know their absurdities and their deceits, and the only thing that grieves me is that this discovery has come too late, and leaves me no time to make amends by reading other books, which might enlighten my soul. I feel, niece, that I am on the point of death, and I should like to meet it in such a manner as to convince the world that my life has not been so bad as to leave me the character of a madman; for though I have been one, I would not confirm the fact in my death.’191

In the last metafictional flourish, Cervantes proffers a testimonial allegedly said by his narrative persona, Cide Hamete Benengeli, to his pen,

‘Here you shall rest, hanging from this rack by this copper wire, my goose-quill. Whether you are well or ill cut I know not, but you shall live long ages there, unless presumptuous and rascally historians take you down to profane you....For me alone Don Quixote was born and I for him. His was the power of action, mine of writing. Only we two are at one, despite that fictitious and Tordillescan scribe who has dared, and may dare again, to pen the deeds of my valorous knight with
his coarse and ill-trimmed ostrich feather.\textsuperscript{192}

To the list of contraries structuring the narrative Benengeli adds the contrasts of action and writing, or action and dreaming. This dichotomous pair is ‘at one,’ just as the others have been demonstrated to be so through the dialectical relationship of Don Quixote, the creature of fiction and dreamer, and Sancho, the creature of truth and realist.

The end of fiction according to Benengeli, a fictitious character himself, is absolute in this case since the real author has chosen to end the life of his chief fictional character. Ending the possibility of any further continuation of the narrative, metafiction accedes to fiction in a final grand metafictional gesture.
Metafictional Perspectives, Part 2: *The Tale of Genji*

There are approximately seventy\(^1\text{93}\) authorial intrusions in *The Tale of Genji* which, when considered, exhibit a metafictional problematic similar to that previously seen in *Don Quixote*. In this section, the most important of these authorial intrusions will be examined for their metafictional implications.

The first utterance of the narrator as character within the fictional context, ‘I had forgotten: Koremitsu gave a good account of the fence peeping to which he had been assigned,’\(^1\text{94}\) reveals her absent-mindedness, giving a certain reality to the narrator’s persona. This self-reference initiates a cumulative process of authorial intrusions tending to regard the narrator as not only a disembodied, omniscient narrative voice, but also as a participant in the fictional world.

In the first of many such self-referential asides,\(^1\text{95}\) ‘But the details are tiresome, and I shall not go into them,’\(^1\text{96}\) the narrator betrays her boredom with irrelevant details, and informs the reader she will not relate them to spare the reader the same boredom. The momentum and focus of the story must not, we infer, be compromised by the relating of any unnecessary information. Hence, the narrator’s reliable authority is subtly strengthened by confiding the editorial rationale to the reader.

The narrator’s loyalty to the relevant facts of the story, her diligence in relating the truth, is supported by the following quotation:
I had hoped, out of deference to him, to conceal these difficult matters; but I have been accused of romancing, of pretending that because he was the son of an emperor he had no faults. Now, perhaps, I shall be accused of having revealed too much.  

The narrator rebuts her purported critics, some of whom accuse her of making up facts and others of being too factual. Her answer describes a strategy. She claims to avoid the pitfalls of excessive invention and excessive truth. Her strategy is to narrate a story which is neither so fanciful as to be unbelievable, nor so truthful as to be purely historical chronicle.

‘The words with which he sought to comfort her were so subtle and clever that I am unable to transcribe them,...' shows the narrator undermining her authority in the interest of truthfulness by admitting the limits of her powers to transcribe what is too difficult to imagine. The narrator’s limits, perhaps, are the limits of the fictional enterprise itself. The narrator’s ability to mirror reality is put into question as her subjectivity, she points out, lags behind the objective reality. By implication, the previously reliable narrator proves to be a somewhat less than reliable guide. Moreover, the reader is forced to fall back on his own imaginative resources to supply whatever information, subtlety and cleverness are lacking in the account. In effect, this intrusion offers an opportunity to the reader to engage his subjectivity in the same manner as a more capable narrator would, thus temporarily but significantly coaxing the reader into the role of narrator.

The narrator portrays herself as equal to the reader in her inability to resist the charms of the fictional Genji, who is treated here as if he were real:

The princes made offerings and Genji seemed far handsomer than any of his brothers. It may be that I remark too frequently upon the fact, but what am I to do when it strikes me afresh each time I see him?
This impression is strengthened by the narrator’s confession of susceptibility, ‘I am irresistibly affected too, just like you, by the charms of the shining prince,’ the narrator seems to confide to the reader.

Indeed, part of the narrator’s charm is due to the appearance she creates of a spontaneous and natural subjectivity, as in, ‘I have no doubt that a cuckoo sent him on his way, but did not trouble myself to learn all the details.’

The subject of the next intrusion is the impossibility of comprehensively grasping truth:

A complete description of such an event has a way of seeming overdone, and much has no doubt been left out; which is a pity, since many fine poems are sure to be exchanged at such times.

Whenever the narrator stakes out a certain descriptive territory, some things will be left out which some might consider as necessary, while other things will be redundant. What the narrator chooses to include and exclude is always subject to question and revision. The question seems to suggest that fictional truth is built on the unstable ground of reality.

In the following intrusion, the narrator defers to a greater authority than herself to justify excluding poems from the text which had been written in a state of intoxication:

There seems to have been numerous other poems; but Tsurayuki has warned that it is in bad taste to compose under the influence of alcohol and that the results are not likely to have much merit, and so I did not trouble myself to write them down.

By deferring to Tsurayuki, the respected literary authority, in a narrative context, the narrator bolsters her scholarly prestige, creating a persona of learnedness in which the reader can easily trust.
By now the outlines of a pattern have become fairly discernible: the narrator’s persona oscillates between trustworthy/authoritative, and untrustworthy/unauthoritative, sometimes creating an illusion of objectivity and sometimes appearing more subjective. When the objective illusion is weakest, the reader is invited to compensate by providing a substitute in the form of his own subjectivity. Furthermore, when the narrator is a trustworthy, objective guide, the reader is free to indulge in his subjectivity. But when the narrator displays her subjectivity, the reader is forced to become more objective. This dynamic has narrator and reader partially exchanging roles throughout.

Correspondence amongst fictional characters, the narrator of the events surrounding these characters, and the reader of that narration, seems to emerge from the following statement:

I have no doubt that there were many fine passages in the letters with which he saddened the lives of his many ladies, but, grief-stricken myself, I did not listen as carefully as I might have.\(^{203}\) The narrator’s objectivity falters due to her grief upon Genji’s departure into exile.

The narrator’s subjectivity is the focus of, ‘In the confusion I had forgotten....\(^{204}\) Confused, forgetful, and apologetic, the narrator depicts herself as having an imperfect subjectivity equal to the reader’s, thus undermining any sense of absolute authority the reader may have assumed the narrator to have. Failings of objectivity, including impatience, inaccuracy, and exaggeration, are admitted in the quotation, ‘In my impatience I may have allowed inaccuracies to creep in, and exaggerated his eccentricities.'\(^{205}\) The statement serves to warn the reader to be skeptical of the account offered.
The completely credulous reader, it is suggested, is as unserviceable as the omniscient narrator. The metafictional implication is that reality lies some place in-between these opposites.

The narrative persona becomes increasingly real as it accumulates various qualities of subjectivity: 'But I shall not go into the details. I am a charitable person, and would not wish for the world to seem malicious.'

The narrative persona is also seen to be capable of exhaustion as well, yet another aspect of subjectivity:

Though no one has asked me to do so, I should like to describe the surprise of the assistant viceroy’s wife at this turn of events, and Jiju’s pleasure and guilt. But it would be a bother and my head is aching; and perhaps - these things do happen, they say - something will someday remind me to continue the story.

She teasingly suggests she will not allow her malaise to prevent her from continuing the story when circumstances allow.

In the quotation, 'I could have enjoyed a millennium of Genji’s company, however, so serene and sure did he seem,' the narrator clearly considers herself a witness/actor in the story, present at most of the major events and when not present, party to the confidences of credible witnesses and sometimes even fallible ones. The narrator has both active and passive, objective and subjective, aspects. Likewise, the characters and the reader share these dual aspects.

Genji’s reaction to the death of Fujitsubo is described thus, '...there was nothing he could do to keep her back, and no point in trying to describe his sorrow.' As if bowing to the superior force of life, the narrator refrains from trying to describe Genji’s immeasurable grief upon Fujitsubo’s death. The event of her death and his grief speaks for itself, as it were, with an
eloquence beyond the narrator's, whose powers of objectivity are necessarily limited by subjective elements. The narrator modestly surrenders to a truth greater than fiction.

‘He described many precedents which it would not be proper for me to describe in my turn.’\textsuperscript{210} Here the narrator shows concern for propriety, again displaying her social being.

The pattern of reinforcing narrative authority while simultaneously undermining it, in which we sense the dialectical play of subject and object, is particularly evident in the following, ‘Because his visits were longer, the Akashi lady (or so one hears) was feeling somewhat happier with her lot.’\textsuperscript{211} A modest aside is gently embedded within parentheses, attesting to the narrator’s role as a reporter of facts known through hearsay. But her veracity is subtly undermined by the admittedly indirect nature of her evidence. On the other hand, the narrator’s failure to identify the source of information leaves open the possibility that the source may be a direct one and that for undisclosed reasons she does not wish to reveal this. The possibility that her source may be exact and the facts true would reinforce her narrative authority.

Two explanations compete for credibility in the following: ‘And that I have no more poems to set down - is it because, the occasion being a formal one, the flagons did not make the complete rounds?’ Or is it that our scrivener overlooked some of them?\textsuperscript{212} In this form of verisimilitude, which assumes the complexity of truth, the narrator forfeits her authority to the reader who is obliged to explain what the narrator cannot. Reader and narrator reverse roles.
An aside, in which the narrator interrupts the action, addresses the reader directly, ‘...in fact (I say it regretfully) no one could challenge the host.’

Even though the narrator shares confidences with the reader, therefore functioning on the same objective plane as the reader, she must interrupt the action in order to do so, suggesting she operates on an intermediate plane between the fictionality of the text and the reality of the reader.

In the interest of verisimilitude, the narrator acknowledges her secondary status: ‘These are the bits I gathered, and I may not have recorded them accurately.’ The narrator implies she is not only recording, but also arranging and linking what she records, which further implies that any step or all steps of the narrative process may be fallible. She sees herself scavenging pieces of the story, putting them together in a manner that would make the events seem continuous and realistic.

The narrator invents to fill in the gaps in information, fabricating whatever seems most useful to further her tale, ‘One evening, I do not remember exactly when, though it must have been at the loveliest time of autumn,...’

Recording and inventing, the narrator both chronicles and fabricates, obeying the competing necessities of history/truth and fiction.

Again, the narrator is carried away by the events related, ‘Graceful and beautifully fitted out, they were (was a part of it in the eye of the observer?) elegance incarnate,’ though it is not entirely clear whether her account is what carries her away or the events themselves, or perhaps both. The truth of the narrator’s subjectivity seems dependent on the limitations of the observer’s objectivity. Other factors come into play as well, setting limits to truth: ‘...I have fallen into an unfortunate habit of passing on but a random sampling of what I have heard,...’ If the narrator’s account is a fraction of
what she has heard, which, in turn, is a fraction of what happened, then the reader is indeed at a loss for comprehensive objectivity. Consequently, characters’ motives often remain unknown and the action opaque, as the narrator has only speculative access to the truth of the characters’ mental states. For example, in "It seemed to be his purpose, while pretending that the letter was nothing, to get it back," speculation on the real motives of Yugiri’s actions, rather than truth, is offered to explain his actions, as if the information required to definitely explain his behavior was not available. And in this narrative disclaimer,

The story I am about to tell wanders rather far from Genji and his family. I had it unsolicited from certain obscure women who lived out their years in Higekuro’s house. It may not seem entirely in keeping with the story of Murasaki, but the women themselves say that there are numerous inaccuracies in the accounts we have had of Genji’s descendants, and put the blame on women so old that they have become forgetful. I would not presume to say who is right, the blame for any inaccuracy, irrelevance, or omission is set squarely on the shoulders of unreliable witnesses, old women who have become forgetful. Additionally, the narrator rejects the responsibility for weighing the competing claims of various witnesses. Out of modesty and in the interest of objectivity, the narrator implies it is the reader’s responsibility to tolerate the lacunae in objectivity or somehow compensate for it.

Amidst the unsteady objectivity of her account, the wary narrator is unwilling to compromise the focus and momentum of the story, openly declaring herself in the next quotation a conscientious fabricator, ever concerned for the reader’s emotional involvement: ‘The smallest fragment would do injury to my story, I fear, if I were to write it down.’
Rather than tediously relate the confusion following Ukifune's mysterious disappearance, the narrator ironically refers the reader in the next quotation to typical accounts of such occurrences in old romances: 'I need not seek to describe the confusion, for my readers will remember old romances that tell of maidens abducted in the night, and of how it was the next morning.'

The narrator's account mirrors in many ways earlier models. The narrator depends on the reader's previous exposure to these earlier models, which dependence makes the reader an accomplice in the story-telling by bringing to the story his own literary and cultural recollections. In a sense, the narrator and the reader tell the story together, the narrator as co-reader and the reader as co-narrator in a symbiotic relationship. The breakdown of the absolute division of functions between story-teller and reader, subject and object, is complete. The story-teller loses herself in the reader while the reader loses himself in the story-teller. This dynamic of reading is also the dynamic of writing, 'She seated herself at her inkstone and turned to the one pursuit in which she could lose herself when her thoughts were more than she could bear, her writing practice.' Thus, the dissolution of the absolute boundaries of the object has as its corollary the dissolution of the absolute boundaries of the subject, such that subject and object mutually interpenetrate in a dynamic of symbiosis. Writer, characters, and readers, all play vital roles in this meta-fictional drama.

In a scene which constitutes the metafictional core of The Tale of Genji, fictional characters discuss their fictionality. Tamakazura, an advocate of fiction, and Genji, an advocate of reality in contradistinction to fiction, exchange views in this episode. Genji recognizes the entertainment value of romances, and even though he considers them all fabrication, is forced to
admit that he also finds 'real emotions and plausible chains of events' in them. Moreover, in spite of the lack of truth, he is 'moved' by them. He goes on to argue that historical chronicles such as *The Chronicles of Japan* are only 'a mere fragment of the whole truth,' and then he adds that the role of romance is to complement the factual, suggesting that imagination and reality, fiction and truth are codependent, cooperating like writer and reader in the creation of a fictional universe. Finally, the Buddha's use of fiction in the form of parables, 'devices for pointing obliquely at the truth,' is adduced by Genji to emphasize that the fictional universe can do no more than offer a pale reflection of a greater reality, 'pointing obliquely' as it were, beyond itself to a transcendental beyond. The scene then reverts to ironic self-reference as Genji proposes to Tamagazura that 'the two of us set down our story and give the world a really interesting one.' Two fictional characters, taking themselves for real, propose recording their tale for the world to read. Fiction proposes that it become real. The object proposes becoming the subject, the writer. And we know Genji recognizes the powerful reality of fiction when he advises Murasaki to avoid any stories involving wicked stepmothers in her raising of the Akashi Lady's child, Genji's daughter. Genji wishes harmonious relations between his daughter and Murasaki, and to guarantee no wicked stepmother stories poison their relations, he encourages only the telling of 'suitable' romances.

Numerous other quotations support the notion of a metafictional problematic within *The Tale of Genji*, 'but the details are tiresome,' and further instances of Murasaki's narrative strategies may be found in the footnotes and in the text itself.
The beginning of Part Three of *The Idiot* contains a diatribe by the omniscient narrator against the lack of originality in Russia, and leads into a discussion of the eccentric Yepanchin family who are taken to be the epitome of what is lacking in Russia. The narrator then adds, "We have, nevertheless, digressed too much; we merely meant to say a few explanatory words about our friends the Yepanchins." Here the narrator interrupts his diatribe to reprimand himself for digressing too far from the story. In effect, the author interrupts his original digression, considered as an interruption, to apologize and gives as his reason the impossibility of directly explaining the event. Another self-referential intrusion occurs a little farther on: "Already at the beginning of our story we mentioned the fact that the Yepanchins were highly respected by everybody." Also, "As for Mrs. Yepanchin, she was, as has been pointed out already, of good family, though that is not considered of great importance...." In these quotations, the narrator pointedly reminds the reader of facts related earlier in the story, assuming an easy familiarity, almost an intimacy with the reader. But more importantly, by thus interrupting the narrator strengthens the linear and factual structure of the story, a necessity because the story continually threatens to unravel itself. In other words, the ironic self-reflexivity is used strategically to give a conventional form to a thematic content having by nature a tendency to formlessness, i.e., the irrational and inexplicable in human nature. In the end, the diatribe is understood to be not at all digressive but rather a useful and
effective means of attending to a philosophical problem which cannot be approached by direct means. Dostoyevsky, then, interrupts his interruption to ensure the narrative’s continuity and metafictional integrity.

Dostoyevsky’s irony is almost Cervantean in its complexity. This is not unexpected since Dostoyevsky consciously modeled *The Idiot* after *Don Quixote*. Indeed, one could argue that *The Idiot* in a sense amounts to a quotation of *Don Quixote* in the same way that *Don Quixote* constitutes an extended quotation, by way of parody, of numerous chivalric romances.

In the following intrusion, the narrator discusses his strategies and philosophies with the reader, gently directing the reader’s attention, advising and philosophizing:

Don’t let us forget that the motives of human actions are usually infinitely more complex and varied than we are apt to explain them afterwards, and can rarely be defined with certainty. It is sometimes much better for a writer to content himself with a simple narrative of events. This is what we shall do in the rest of our account of the present catastrophe with the general; for, try as we may, we have no choice but to bestow on this secondary character of our tale a little more attention and space than we had originally intended.

These events followed upon each other in the following order...²³³

The writer is himself a character, even calling himself, ‘the writer,’ claiming to be just as unexpectedly affected by the characters (the Yepanchins) and their actions as the reader is and as anyone else would be, which stance follows from the writer himself sharing a fictional status with the characters he creates. To put it another way, since the irrational is wont to erupt, causing disorder and chaos in reality, so the author, as a part of reality, is himself as much a victim of the inexplicable as are his characters. The narrator interrupts in order to remind the reader of this general truth as well as
to preempt the inevitable lacunae in his account, which must reflect the
necessary limits of the author's subjectivity. In this passage, the narrator
relates his despair at being unable to follow his original narrative plan since
the complexities of certain characters are beyond his control, indeed, they to
some extent control him, rendering him in a sense a character in their fiction.
It is as if the marionettes sometimes manipulated the puppeteer, dissolving the
distinction between subject and object, or reality and fiction.

*The Idiot* is replete with pseudo-explanations of the following kind, in
keeping with its theme: 'He was scarcely of any use, but there are people
whom one likes for some reason to see beside one in times of distress.'
Here the narrator offers a general truth as an explanation for a somewhat
surprising incident, but the reason proffered - 'some reason' - is scarcely
adequate for its purpose, and the event remains essentially inexplicable.

This key passage affords insightful commentary on the metafictional
problematic:

> A fortnight had passed since the events described in the last chapter,
and the position of the characters of our story had changed so much
that we find it extremely difficult to continue without certain
explanations. Yet we feel that we have to confine ourselves to a bare
statement of facts, if possible, without any special explanations, and for
a very simple reason: because we ourselves find it difficult in many
instances to explain what took place. Such a statement on our part
must appear very strange and obscure to the reader: how can we
describe something of which we have no clear idea and no personal
opinion? To avoid putting ourselves in a still falser position, we had
better try to explain what we have in mind by an example, and perhaps
the gentle reader will understand the nature of our difficulty,
particularly as this example will not be a digression, but, on the
contrary, a direct continuation of our story.
The writer is likened to the reader, at bottom, in that he admits lacking a definite authoritative grasp of the events he attempts to describe. He is as much a victim of ignorance and surprise as the reader. He asks for the reader's understanding in a direct address as if the reader were present. Whereas previously the writer shared fictional reality with his characters, he now shares hypothetical reality with his readers and the circle is complete: writer, readers, and characters participate in the same fiction and the same reality within the dialectical sphere of fictional reality. The narrator repeatedly undermines his power of authority by admitting his ignorance and denying any special power beyond the reader's to explain the events of the story, 'Now, if we were asked for an explanation...we should, we admit, be hard put to it for an answer.' The narrator even denies his ability to know basic things such as his hero's state of mind, and not wishing to speculate, deliberately confines himself to as objective a description of happenings as possible.

Furthermore, possessing facts makes interpretation more difficult rather than less difficult, contrary to expectation:

We possess many such strange facts, but they do not in the least explain, but, in our opinion, merely make any interpretation of the affair more difficult, however many of them are brought forward. Knowledge of truth, according to the narrator, seems to proceed analogically, by means of the gradual accumulation of related events which approximate to chronological principles, and by ordering related thoughts analogically.

Thus, from the above analyses of the metafictional mechanisms employed by Cervantes, Murasaki, and Dostoevsky, we conclude their effect is the
disruption of conventional narrative logic, allowing us to see dialectically through the prism of fiction.
IV Conclusion

What is the nature of the vision which exalts the beloved beyond measure, and the credulousness that seeks salvation in possessing the beloved? Is it the distance and the impossibility of its traversal that inspires the heroes to relentless pursuit?

In *The Tale of Genji* mention is made of a style of painting called 'reed work.' According to the style, the words composing the text merge into a landscape painting; thus, language, the human world, harmonizes with the natural world, and we see the differentiated at the very point of transformation when it merges with the undifferentiated. What the heroes cannot achieve due to their human limitations, the obliteration of the beloved’s absolute absence and the memory of an ideal past, is effected on the plane of the imaginary, as a work of art. And in a comic expression of this same phenomenon from *Don Quixote*, Alcisladora, a character who had been blaming Don Quixote for stealing her garters, finally revokes her claim after realizing she was in fact wearing them all along, ‘I have fallen into the error of the man who went searching for the ass he was riding on.’

The reciprocity of all forms of opposition, especially truth and fiction, and the ideal and the real, is established by the heroes’ Desire, compelling them to violate interdictions and obstacles to the realization of their dream. Just as the beloved only exists as an absence, so the hero only exists as an absence, acting under an assumed name or from behind a borrowed identity in a field of ontological indeterminacy, framed by political, social, or psychological expectation.
The heroes' domain of action is the world of the anomalous whose special feature is its ability to resist the corrosiveness of present time and the fury of the purely functional. Through the scarcely seen, known, or remembered, through the residual and the evanescent, and through the detritus of motion, distance, and time, the heroes act analogically from the margins of truth and in accordance with their intuition of the whole.

The heroes appear to carry within themselves a kind of embryonic unity of words and objects, fiction and truth, the conscious and the unconscious, and reason and unreason, a conflation to which they easily surrender. Genji, for instance, identifies an original love object from the past with copies or substitutes in the present, while Myshkin fails to distinguish his ecstatic ideal - a purely subjective reality - and the objective individuality of the women he loves. Don Quixote, in his 'madness,' sees nothing but the Imaginary, the inverted absence of Dulcinea.

Genji, Don Quixote, and Myshkin at first resist an ironic epistemology in which meaning is dialectically created through a process of mutual infusion or imbrication of apparent polarities, rather than through conflict between irreducible binary opposites. Genji at first resists devouring time, Myshkin, the paradoxical in human nature, and Don Quixote, the dangerous seductiveness of imagination, and their resistance invariably leads to surrender.

From being a condition of their existence, the namelessness or egolessness of the hero becomes hypothetical, never annulled but recognized and incorporated self-consciously. Don Quixote finally realizes that Don Quixote does not exist, he is only a fictional being, when he reverts to his real fictional name of Quixano. Genji transcends his restless desires in surreptitiously
passing away, his actual death treated by Murasaki as if it were a fade out in a movie. Myshkin overcomes the irreconcilable polarities not by dying but by exiting from the setting and from conventional everyday life – he reverts to madness, a truncated form of ecstasy. The three heroes dream they are what they are not, and indeed find they are not what they are, traversing the void of absence on the wings of Desire. These nameless wanderers map the contours of word and world.

Reflecting on Choang-tsu, Lacan suggests this dynamic in the following:

When Choang-tsu wakes up, he may ask himself whether it is not the butterfly who dreams that he is Choang-tsu. Indeed, he is right, and doubly so, first because it proves he is not mad, he does not regard himself as absolutely identical with Choang-tsu and, secondly, because he does not fully understand how right he is. In fact, it is when he was the butterfly that he apprehended one of the roots of his identity – that he was, and is, in his essence, that butterfly who paints himself with his own colours – and it is because of this that, in the last resort, he is Choang-tsu.

This is proved by the fact that, when he is the butterfly, the idea does not occur to him to wonder whether, when he is Choang-tsu awake, he is not the butterfly that he is dreaming of being. This is because, when dreaming of being the butterfly, he will no doubt have to bear witness later that he represented himself as a butterfly. But this does not mean that he is captivated by the butterfly – he is a captive butterfly, but captured by nothing, for, in the dream, he is a butterfly for nobody. It is when he is awake that he is Choang-tsu for others, and is caught in their butterfly net.

This is why the butterfly may...inspire in him the phobic terror of recognizing that the beating of little wings is not so very far from the beating of causation, of the primal stripe marking his being for the first time with the grid of desire.240

The correspondence of word and object, language and material world is an impossible correspondence according to Lacan, for from the birth of language the distance from subject to object is infinite. Although language and desire
offer a chimerical bridge over the divide, language and world in their essence are ineradicably different. And the tantalizing dream identifying word and world is not frustrated by any enchanter, contrary to Don Quixote’s suspicions, but by causation, the law of material being, which separates dreamer from dream and subject from object.

For Lacan,

...‘the Other’... is that which introduces ‘lack’ and ‘gap’ into the operations of the subject and which, in doing so, incapacitates the subject for selfhood... or plenitude, or mutuality; it guarantees the indestructibility of desire by keeping the goals of desire in perpetual flight.241

Moreover, ‘...all language is the metonymic displacement of desire...’242 The hero, exiled from his subjectivity or identity, existing in a kind of primal namelessness, constitutes his subjectivity by deconstructing a series of false identities offered to him from the social, political, and cultural spheres. His fictional being therefore is inextricably connected to the metafictional dimension of the text, distinguished by seven features. Each of the texts undermines the realist literary model of the omniscient and authoritative narrator, and each of the texts lacks a final ending or closure, therefore denying the possibility of definitive interpretation. Additionally, the stories avoid the well-made plot and a strict chronological sequence of events. Moreover, characters, especially main characters, display a duality which undermines the continuity of being and act, and therefore the sense of simple, unalloyed subjectivity defined in opposition to empirical being. Finally, reality is presented as something not entirely objective in essence, but rather is represented dialectically. In the end, the empiricist, positivist, and
materialist premises of realist fiction and of historical chronicle are problematicized.

In *Don Quixote*, Cervantes writes,

That is what happens with all authors who translate poetry into other languages. However much care they take, and however much skill they show, they can never make their translations as good as the original.\textsuperscript{243}

The heroes’ restorative endeavors are a translation into action of their idyllic dream. In Genji’s case each of his successive lovers represents a substitution or translation of the memory of his mother. For Don Quixote the life of a knight errant validly translates an original fictional genre into contemporary reality, and returning to Russia, to his family, and being in love translate Myshkin’s innocence, dreamed in exile from the Lacanian Other. The path to restoration proves less than direct as the hero and the reader who travels with him digress along an elliptical route shaped by narrative ironies and the transgression of realist expectations, and located in the indeterminate territory of the Imaginary.

All three heroes are creators, likening them to divinities. Genji is an artist figure while Don Quixote is a self-styled creator of perfect justice, and Myshkin thinks of himself as a creator of perfectly moral human beings. And behind the imposing figure of Genji, the visions of Don Quixote and the ecstasies of Myshkin, one finds the archetypal story of a Messiah who comes to restore perfect harmony, even though, in a defining metafictional twist, the hero himself embodies the disharmony he seeks to rectify.

2 Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory*, p.89.

3 Ibid., p.161.

4 Mochulsky, Konstantin, *Dostoevsky*, p.345. "...The main thought of the novel is to depict a positively beautiful individual...On earth there is only one positively beautiful person—Christ,..."

5 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.325.

6 Kaguyahime means 'shining princess,' and her physical beauty is so great that even the emperor wants to marry her. She reveals her other-worldly origin when she returns to the moon.

7 Murasaki, Shikibu, op.cit., p.17.


9 Cervantes, Saavedra Miguel, *Don Quixote*, p.36.

10 Ibid., p.938.

11 Kaguyahime saves a childless, poor, old couple by giving them a child, that is, herself. She relieves their loneliness as well as their poverty, since the bamboo cutter suddenly becomes wealthy after he finds her. Finally, she gives them eternal life which they reject as a poor substitute for the loss of their adopted daughter, Kaguyahime.

12 Cervantes, Saavedra Miguel, op.cit., p.49. "...know that I am the valorous Don Quixote de la Mancha, the redresser of wrongs and injuries."

13 For instance, Kaguyahime, a goddess, is discovered as a four-inch human, and though she quickly grows to adulthood, she still must live in a bamboo cutter's home as a human until she returns to the moon.

14 Kaguyahime leaves the elixir of life.

15 Kaguyahime demands of her five suitors that they prove their worthiness by obtaining objects for her which she knows to be unobtainable.


17 Also Kaguyahime


19 Kaguyahime is really insubstantial when she is found — she is only four inches tall — and she never lives out her natural, earthly life, departing before she can marry.

20 Kaguyahime vanishes after putting on a feathered robe, which causes the wearer to instantly forget human attachment.

21 Kaguyahime is banished from the moon due to a past sin and returns to the moon as a moon divinity.

22 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.61.

23 Ibid., p.1031.

24 "", p.791.


26 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op.cit., p.531.

27 Ibid., p.212.

28 "", p.557.

29 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.42, "Through all the talk Genji's thoughts were on a single lady. His heart was filled with her, and also, in p.44, "There was but one lady on his mind, day after day."

30 Ibid., p.94, "And a sudden realization brought him close to tears: the resemblance to Fujitsubo, for whom he so yearned, was astonishing."

31 ", p.193.

32 "", p.932.

33 ", p.915.

34 ", p.1161.

35 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op. cit., p.55
68 dream

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36 Ibid., p.62. ‘...the brain, tremendously alive and active, must, I suppose, be working hard, hard, hard, like an engine going at full speed.’

37 Cervantes, Saavedra Miguel, op.cit., p.907, and also in p.854, ‘Don Quixote, however, not from hunger but from his restless imagination, was unable to close his eyes, and let his thoughts wander here and there and in a thousand different places.’

38 Murasaki, Shikibu, op.cit., p.1111.

39 Ibid., p.988. ‘Everything reminded him of Oigimi, who seldom left his thoughts.’

40 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op. cit., p. 523.

41 Ibid., p.169.

42 “ . . . , p.326.

43 “ . . . , p.217.

44 “ . . . , p.94.

45 “ . . . , p.434.

46 “ . . . , p.560.

47 “ . . . , p.91.

48 “ . . . , p.409.

49 “ . . . , p.211.

50 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.986.

51 Ibid., p.1034.

52 “ . . . , p.792.

53 “ . . . , p.792.

54 Regarding Niou, Murasaki writes: “The pampered darling of the whole world, he was not very keenly aware of its sorrows and frustrations...and life was a gay parade of style and elegance.’(Murasaki, Shikibu, op.cit., p.986) which implies that he is carefree and flighty. He is called, ‘...deplorably capricious and unreliable,..’(Ibid., p.1054) Moreover, he is amorous, passionate, active, and impulsive. ‘...he had a remarkable way of spying out everyone in the household who was even moderately young and attractive.’(Ibid., p.1034) ‘Never one to hold back on such occasions, he clutched at her skirt. He pushed the door shut with his other hand and seated himself beside the screen.’(Ibid., p.1033) ‘...she now found herself with a gentleman[Niou] who proclaimed himself incapable of tolerating a moment’s separation.’(Ibid., p.1064)

55 Shirane, Haruo, The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of The Tale of Genji, p. 188.


57 Ibid., p.390.

58 “ . . . , p.437.

59 Murasaki, Shikibu, op.cit., p.65.

60 Ibid., p.73.

61 James Legge, trans., The Texts of Taoism, XXV p.130.

62 Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, XL p.47.

63 Ibid., LVIII p.65.

64 Murasaki, Oigimi, Nakanokimi, and Yugao are all discovered on a periphery of the city, in the country.

65 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.661, ‘She[Murasaki] was very beautiful and as fragile as the shell of a locust.’

66 Ibid., p.659.

67 “ . . . , p.789.

68 “ . . . , p.748.

69 “ . . . , p.782.

70 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op. cit., p.58.

71 Cervantes, Saavedra Miguel, op.cit., p.908.

72 Many characters refer to longing, in dialogue and in poetry, for instance, ‘It was a dream that I long to dream again,...’(Murasaki Shikibu, op. cit., p.818) and ‘I yearn to dream again the dream of that night.

The nights go by in lonely wakefulness’ (Ibid., p.50)

Also,
'Where shall I find comfort in my longing?
There are no dreams, for there are no nights of sleep.'(Ibid., p.50)

'Genji longed for a glimpse of the dead girl, of only in a dream.'(Ibid., p.88)

'So few and scattered the nights, so few the dreams.
Would that the dream tonight might take me with it.'(Ibid., p.104)

'Even so little, from a lady who had been given up for dead, was like a dream.'(Ibid., p.179) The Akashi Lady meets her child again, after having given her to Murasaki to be raised many years before: 'gazing upon her as if in a dream...' (Ibid., p.560) 'The birth of a great-grandchild was for the old Akashi nun a dream breaking in upon the slumbers of old age.'(Ibid., p.602) When Yugiri finally wins Tono Chujo's consent to marry Kumoinokari, 'For Yugiri, it was a waking dream.'(Ibid., p.760)

73 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.764.
74 We see this illustrated in the following, 'We shall think of meeting in another world. And not confuse ourselves with dreams of this,'(Murasaki, op. cit., p.1095) '...but the memory was like a dream.'(Ibid., p.1181) and 'The lady of that dawn encounter, remembering the evanescent dream, was sunk in sad thoughts.'(Ibid., p.164) When Yugiri sees Murasaki's dead body: 'He had seen her so briefly, and at her death that brief glimpse had been like a dream.'(Ibid., p.771) '...Nothing lasts, everything changes. That is the way of the world.'(Ibid., p.1143)

75 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.539.
76 Ibid., p.545.
77 '...p.554.
78 'I have been at court through three reigns now...never had I seen anyone who genuinely resembled my lady [Kiritsubo]. But now the daughter of the empress dowager is growing up, and the resemblance is most astonishing. One would be hard put to find her equal.'(Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.19) 'The resemblance to the dead lady [Kiritsubo] was indeed astonishing.'(Ibid., p.19)

79 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.176, in 'Heartvine.'
80 Ibid., p.1096.
81 Lao Tzu, op. cit., XL p.47.
82 Ibid., XVI p.20.
83 Murasaki Shikibu, op. cit., p.255.
84 'Once some women conspired to have both doors of a gallery she must pass bolted shut, and so she found herself unable to advance or retreat.'(Ibid., p.8)
85 Ibid., p.265, and 'It was her arbitrary judgments that sent him[Genji] wandering.'(Ibid., p.142)
86 '...p.61.
87 '...p.1031.
88 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op. cit., p.56.
89 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.1071.
90 '...p.862.
91 '...p.11.
92 Dostoevsky, Fyodo, op.cit., p.64.
93 Murasaki, Shikibu, op. cit., p.16.
94 Ibid., p.459.
95 James Legge, trans., op. cit., XXXV p.130,'The Tao is the extreme to which things conduct us,' and Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, LVIII p.65, 'The straightforward changes again into the crafty, and the good changes again into the monstrous...'
96 Wing-Tsit Chan, trans., A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, p. 190.
97 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op. cit., p.591, 'All this, all this life abroad...is just a delusion, and all of us abroad are delusion....'
98 Cervantes, Saavedra Miguel, op. cit., p.25.
99 Ibid., p.25.
100 '...p.27, '...I am too spiritless and lazy by nature to go about looking for authors to say for me what I can say myself without them.'
101 '...p.31.
102 '...p.31.
...everything that our adventurer thought, saw or imagined seemed to follow the fashion of his reading....

'Don Quixote, however, not from hunger but from his restless imagination, was unable to close his eyes, and let his thoughts wander here and there and in a thousand different places.'

Ibid., p.68.

"c. p.88, 157. etc.

"p.68

"p.89

"p.206.

"p.216.

"p.454.

"p.218.

"p.222.

"p.231.
Tamakazura was the most avid reader of all. She quite lost herself in pictures and stories and would spend whole days with them.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor, op. cit., p.311.

Ibid., p.313.

Cervantes, Saavedre Miguel, op. cit., p.837.


Ibid., p.29.

Cervantes, Saavedre Miguel, op. cit., p.59.
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