The Contributions of Postmodern Narratives to Master's Degree Students' Higher-Order Thinking Skills[*]

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Abstract

This study has been prepared for the purpose of examining the contributions of postmodern narrations to literature education. It focuses on the outcomes of readings from postmodern narrations by 12 master's degree students studying in the Department of Turkish Language at a university in Central Anatolia. In the theoretical dimension of the study, the students were given information about new approaches and technological innovations in the sciences of physics and psychology to prepare the groundwork for bringing out postmodern narrations with a focus on the ontological approaches of the new realities of the world. The birth of new literary aesthetics was pointed out as ha ving resulted from these rooted changes. In this context, the novels *Ulysses* by James Joyce and *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka were given as examples. The students were told to read *Tutunamayanlar (The Good for Nothing by Oğuz Atay)*, considered to be the first modernist work in Turkish Literature, as well as *Kara Kitap (The Black Book, by Orhan Pamuk)* and *Suskunlar (Taciturns* by İhsan Oktay Anar)*, which are regarded as developed examples of postmodernist narratives. Group discussions about these works were made in the classroom. On the semi-structured interview form applied in this study, students were asked to write what outcomes they had reached while reading in terms of the main components of postmodern narrations, metafiction, intertextuality, perceptions of space and time, mystery/detective fictions, and the question of existence. Collected data was analyzed by the researcher using descriptive analysis, and the results were verified through validity and reliability studies carried out by two experts. The following findings were obtained from the study through the patterns of qualitative research. The students expressed that postmodern narrations had contributed to the development of higher-order thinking skills. They pointed to the *question of existence* and different uses of time in the narrations. They expressed liking mystery fiction.

Keywords
Literature education • Postmodern fiction • Perception of time • Question of existence • Educational outcomes

Literature is a branch of fine arts performed with language, in its most general definition; it reveals people and their surrounding realities (listening, feeling, thinking, memorizing, believing, missing, worrying, rejoicing, hoping, etc.) through different aspects within aesthetic structures that start with history, culture and art.

The written culture and art produced by humans since the first ages of history teach individuals to understand the level of civilization to which they belong and to live and interpret the life they live carefully, as well as creating an environment of being open to universal culture and understandings by protecting their national values and making comparisons with them.

In this context, literature education aims to train individuals who can express themselves to be able to use Turkish correctly, effectively, and beautifully; to enjoy reading and its culture; to have wide emotional, thoughtful, and imaginative worlds; to develop aesthetic tastes; to have refined tastes; to be virtuous; and to have a stable personality with humanistic and moral behaviors.

The literature lesson, which has multiple functions and a rich content due to its nature, opens to students a way to use cognitive processes (higher-order skills) such as problem-solving, discovering, critical and creative thinking, questioning, discussing, synthesizing and evaluating. Post-modern narratives, which give the opportunity to restructure a literary text by giving meaning from different dimensions, provide students countless treasures in this sense when compared to traditional narratives. This study will mention the contributions of these narratives to literature education.

As a 20th century work of art, postmodern compositions are products of a completely different world in terms of content, form, technical style, language, and pronunciation. Taking command of the era, postmodernism has made in-depth changes in several scientific fields, the most important being positive sciences. It has reflected onto art and literature education, as well.

German physicist Max Planck's presentation of "the quantum of action" (Planck, 1996), Einstein's theory of relativity (Einstein, 2001), Heisenberg's uncertainty principle (Heisenberg, 1987, pp. 19–24), and Stephen Hawking's argument for absolute time that was examined on twin brothers (Hawking, 2013, p. 54) call into question Newtonian physics and are all signs of consequential new developments. These developments in the natural sciences have changed the perception of chronological time and have brought understanding to the relativity and uncertainty of time.

Recent Approaches and Theories in the Field of Psychology

Freud's subconscious dimension of psychology, Jung's collective unconscious, Adler's individual psychology, and Bergson's attitudes toward intuition are based

on observing human's spiritual nature from different points of view. In this regard, a variety of perspectives have been created to reveal its hidden aspects.

The rapidly evolving and growing scientific discoveries of modern times have been reflected in technology. The technological revolution surrounds individuals' subjective and social lives and has created different values and perceptions. Advances in transportation, information, and communication technologies have entered into the system of life. They have increased consumption and made people nervous, alone, and isolated in a world surrounded by objects.

New media is a sector that has been created by these socio-economic conditions. The truth is that in the relationship between man and society, the media has grown prodigiously, and its power leads the contact between a person and the public. Hence, the income that results has caused a struggle between media bosses. Jean Baudrillard calls this "hyper reality" (Doltaş, 2003, p. 25; Lucy, 2003, p. 70).

While Nietzsche was trying to question established judgments that were well-known, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, and Baudrillard approached the sciences from a postmodern aspect removed from any kind of dogma or ideology. François Lyotard described this process as the "postmodern condition" that represents extraordinary social-life literature (Lyotard, 2000). In opposition to meta-narratives (grand narratives) that carry a variety of messages, this postmodernist literature puts emphasis on small narratives.

Entering the field of literature is the problem of human existence that has risen with the reality of modern life. Alain Robbe-Grillet defended the idea that "now that man finds the truth of life in his existence, so do we need a literature which can describe this existence" (Ecevit, 2011, p. 64).

The fact that the world is very different from the old one has set the stage for emersion into a new literary aesthetic. Completely different from the aesthetic principles of traditional literature, the avant-garde literature of the 20th century has demonstrated its concept of aesthetics. James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Robert Musil, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf were the first to transfer this new concept of aesthetics into literature. They made essential changes in the content of novels and the format of fiction, narration techniques, language, and discourse.

In these kinds of narratives, *image, symbol, metaphor, allegory, connotation*, and *allusion* are in the forefront rather than meaning, and they use new and original images within their unique framework, such as Kafka's image of a castle or the man who transformed into an insect. These structures are open to different interpretations and require special efforts that challenge reader's intellectual faculties. Kafka's explicit works can be shown as a great example. His works, which include *The Trial*,

The Castle, *Contemplation*, *The Judgment*, *The Metamorphosis*, and *In the Penal Colony*, are not meant to be interpreted literally (Eco, 1992, p. 18).

The main concern of a modernist writer is staging *time* as they narrate a world composed of several texts. Relativity in the perception of time, as well as very different time patterns, has almost revealed a new kind of novel called a *novel of time* (Aytaç, 1995, p. 30).

In these narratives, a character does not pursue an individual or social action. They are obscure and passive, maybe facing the problem of misidentification or depersonalization; they are always undergoing a change or transformation and experiencing split-personalities or multiple personalities.

Ongoing reflective/purifier (mimetic/catharsis) aesthetics that date back to Aristotle's time were based on realities that embody an individual's life and consequences. A mediocre reader accustomed to traditional narratives that contain a certain feeling, main message, and cause-effect relationship falters in this new literary aesthetic that has undergone profound modifications.

In the area of metafiction, real-fictional complexity and smoothness is discussed. These narratives frazzle the reader with their different uses of image, symbol, metaphor, allegory, dreams, fantasy elements, intertextuality, conscious and subconscious perceptions of time and space, unusual fiction format, and narration techniques.

Having experienced these complex fiction narratives that strain readers' comprehension in the novels *Kara Kitap* and *Yeni Hayat,* Ecevit (2008, p. 17) evaluated it like this: "The majority of readers do not understand these novels. They don't know what to grasp while reading and feel unsubstantiated and alone in the text. In spite of the intellectual richness of these narratives, readers have never been surrounded by this feeling by reading Goethe, Balzac, or Tolstoy. They have read *Yakup Kadri* and *Selim* İleri in peace and comfort, as well as Orhan Pamuk's *Cevdet Bey ve Oğullari* (works from classical Turkish literature; Ecevit, 2008, pp. 15–16). Writers forms their work according to the format, structure, and original patterns of 20th-century novel aesthetics, therefore explaining the logical story of a traditional-realistic novel using the reader's lack of understanding of new literature (Ecevit, 2008, p. 17).

Wolfgang Welsch stated that postmodern texts with their slick constructs, like "a complex of contrasts blended together in different proportions," confuse readers who are accustomed to traditional reading (Ecevit, 2011, p. 168). Reading postmodern narratives requires vast effort and special concentration as they lack an easy, readable structure. Understanding and interpreting the text depends on one's accumulation of experience.

Emerging today as art intellectualism, postmodern art does not possess a structure that can easily be understood by ordinary readers; it is very complex, like the difficulty of finding your way out of a jungle. It gets even harder if you don't have a compass; exiting depends on the consumer's equipment. (Özbek, 2005, p. 14)

Although difficult to read, these structures can promote and strengthen reader's cognitive competence and have many other benefits. First of all, this type of literature leads or even forces the reader's thoughts and feelings to be creative. Based on existing experiments and experiences, it enables the reader to engage in new creations by providing new and original ideas between objects and relationships, and in brief, by producing concepts and challenging one's cognitive processes. The reader is not a consumer but a producer in reading texts. Murray Krieger characterized postmodern narratives as "aesthetic reading" (Doltaş, 2003, p. 16) and believed that if they are read using their proper method, they can enrich one's thoughts and feelings, as well as develop one's comprehension ability by keeping one constantly dynamic.

With their pluralistic polyphony and colorful structure, postmodern narratives contribute greatly to the development and establishment of *democratic culture*. With the help of mass media, these narratives are perceived as diverse cultures with values from all over the world; with no regard to the nature of right or wrong, good or bad, or useful or harmful; and with no filter. In this way, even with their different impositions and results, they are *democratized* and made accessible to the public with informative meaning (Doltaş, 2003, p. 86). Postmodern art has the capacity to form healthy societies and democratic cultures, as well as to foster the critical thinking necessary for mental expansion (Özbek, p. 13).

Postmodern narratives provide readers with very rich resources through intertextuality. Turkish literature does the same interdisciplinarily by using parody/ pastiche and irony, borrowed from Eastern and Western classical literature. The reader is offered extensive literary materials, such as philosophy, history, geography, sociology, psychology, architecture, archeology, anthropology, ethnology, law, and so on. Ever more colorized, it prepares the basis for unknowns to be learned and for what is known to be used in different formats and styles.

Postmodern texts are also pleasing to readers. Berna Moran calls this "aesthetic joy" (2009, p. 233). This is the joy of reading and being able to make sense of a text. As this literature genre has bumps and traps hidden inside the text, being able to understand and interpret these colorful and polyphonic formats and to make sense of the uncertainties and gaps is therefore a joy at the same time. Within contemporary art are various flavors, colors, and hidden mysteries which please the reader as they become solved. "Not all readers can seize this pleasure, though" (Özbek, 2005, p. 25). If the reader can read Kafka's *The Castle* with an image of a castle and follow

the clues within the text to solve the secret message hidden between the lines, then he will enjoy the text with great perspective (Ecevit, 2008, pp. 66–67). Following the secret clues carefully inside these narratives and decoding their secrets is like playing a mystery/detective game. It gives the reader the same pleasure as solving puzzles.

Readers' points of view and approaches towards texts, their new interpretations, and any different implications can enrich the work. According to the writing methods, generating any type of in-text references and preserving the integrity of the structure is always appreciated by readers in postmodern narratives.

Postmodern narratives can also shed light on readers' writing performances. Different fictional experiments, narrative styles, materials, language, and discourse would be examples for the reader; if they possess writing skills and potential, then they can benefit from this.

Postmodern narratives can transport readers to another world, enrich the imagination, and promote association and fantasy because they have the quality of a clear structure. Each time the reader reads, a different interpretation may result. While structuring the text, the author finds the gaps left to the reader, and with the help of the imagination, fills them in properly to produce new textuality. Additionally, this contributes to the richness of the text.

Postmodern narratives also bring a philosophical perspective. These are mostly the search for efforts at self-identity, self-exploration, and self-discovery; for growing individualism and returning back; and for ontologically patterned themes like the meaning of life. The narrator expects the reader to make sense of life because it is a concept which can change from one person to another. Like intuition, it means to perceive and interpret the present colors and patterns of life, as well as the different feeling of objects.

However, in these types of narratives, readers must know their place and purpose before anything else. They must get rid of old reading habits, approach the text as led by the author, and not coincide with the reality of the work but with suspicion of its reality. Orhan Pamuk's novel, *Yeni Hayat* has been introduced as an example of postmodern narratives to be read (Ecevit, 2008, pp. 70–76). This next part should be read very carefully: The narrators indicate how these novels should be read to hint at what's between the lines of the text. Orhan Pamuk mentions these hints in his novels *Yeni Hayat* (1994, p. 242) and *Kara Kitap* (1991, p. 242).

Twentieth-century avant-garde texts do not, in fact, have a single reading format. Effective readers are supposed to know the multiple reading formats embedded in the text's multi-layered structure.

Any bit of writing may be read 'non-pragmatically' if that is what reading a text as literature means, just as any writing may be read 'poetically.' If I pore over the railway timetable not to discover a train connection but to stimulate in myself general reflections on the speed and complexity of modern existence, then I might be said to be reading it as literature. (Eagleton, 1990, p. 33)

Postmodern narratives are structures which can be read multiple ways in accordance with different theories and approaches. Different reading formats are determined depending on the readers' attitude towards the text, their field of interest, and the accumulation of the text. "Every literary text is exposed to multiple readings according to its context and its readers' different identities and interests… there is no such a thing as an accurate way of reading a text; there can only be a multitude" (Lucy, 1997, p. 343). Indeed, it is useful to be reminded that *Yeni Hayat* has five separate reading formats in Turkish literature (structuralism, formalism, mysticism, socialist realism, and impressionism; Ecevit, 2008, pp. 79–268).

In terms of education as a student-centered approach, postmodern narratives seem to be closely related to *constructivism*. Constructivism is the new information an individual obtains combined with their previous experience. It has evolved as a theory related to knowledge and learning, and is turned into an approach over time that describes how students assemble information (Demirel, 2008, p. 66).

An individual's perception of the world outside, its meaning configured in one's mind, and its fit to the scheme of the mind coincide with learning postmodern narratives. When the reader reads these narratives, previous information is placed in interaction with symbols, allegories, metaphors, associations, and bookmarks to make sense and create new structures. The images of a well, mirror, road, travel, and book; the metaphors of light and fog; and the allegory of trees are tangible examples of this. In this context, the constructive approach shows "Learning is not a passive receptive process, but an active process of creating meaning…Learning is subjective and must internalize the things one has learned through various symbols, images, graphics, or models" (Özden, 2011, p. 71).

Constructivist theorist, John Piaget, sets up cognitive learning among higher-order thinking skills such as meaningful thinking, problem-solving, discovery learning, critical and creative thinking, research and analysis, and contextual learning.

These skills are inevitable for comprehending postmodern narratives and include "questioning, problem-solving, analyzing criticism and creative thought, evaluating, synthesizing and decision-making processes," according to Lewis and Smith (1993, pp. 135–136).

However, practical field studies on the teaching of postmodern narratives have not yet been encountered in the field of literature education in Turkey. Within the broad scope of this study's question, postmodern narratives are hoped to shed light on future studies in terms of their contribution to the teaching of literature.

Purpose of the Study

This research study investigates if Turkish postgraduate students in an education department who are studying postmodern narratives:

a.) improve their higher-order thinking skills through the metafiction platform,

b.) enrich their literary culture by recognizing the different aesthetic and cultural values of metafiction,

c.) understand the problem of existence,

d.) see the differences between the perception of time and space,

e.) are able to enjoy following mystery/detective fiction,

f.) and see different narration techniques and formats together.

We intend to determine the dimensions of their achieved gains.

Methodology

In studies performed on literature, a limited number of studies on the teaching techniques and methods of post-modern narratives in the field of literature education are found, most of which are just theoretical. In this qualitative study, we attempt to answer the question of the contribution of post-modern narratives in teaching literature by starting with this deficiency.

Study Group

The study group of this research consists of 12 students who were receiving their master's degree during the 2014-2015 academic year at the Department of Turkish Education in a university in Central Anatolia; it used fictionalized writings according to the qualitative research design. Five of these students were also teaching at schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), two were working in private education institutions in Ankara, and five were waiting to be appointed; four of the students were female, and eight were male.

Data Collection Tool

Measuring tool assessment form. The semi-structured interview form used within the scope of the research was prepared for the purpose of determining the contributions of post-modern narratives to literature education.

Before the preparation of the interview form, the study group was given theoretical information for a period of three hours. The main framework of the different fields in science that reveal post-modern narratives was drawn, and related theoretical sources were used (i.e., findings that change the perception of time in physics, developments in psychology, the technological revolution, power of the media, problem of existence, etc.). It was emphasized that these fields of science, as well as technological innovations, would be reflected upon in the new literature aesthetic.

A literature review was performed on the reading methods and techniques of post-modern narratives. Aspects on how to read the narratives were found in the light of the information obtained from a very limited number of theoretical books. Two world-renowned works of post-modern narratives, *Ulysses*, by James Joyce, and *The Metamorphosis*, by Franz Kafka, were analyzed in the classroom environment as sample texts, and their post-modern narrative properties (metafiction, intertextuality, updated history, mystery/detective fiction, language. and narrative techniques) were emphasized. A period of six hours was spent on both works in total.

In the second stage, students were asked to read in accordance with the post-modern narrative reading techniques: *Tutunamayanlar*, by Oğuz Atay (considered to be the first post-modern narrative in Turkish literature); *Kara Kitap*, by Orhan Pamuk; and *Suskunlar*, by İhsan Oktay Anar; these last two are known as more developed examples of these narratives. Intergroup discussions were performed in groups of three, each under the supervision of the researcher, and they were reminded to make inferences about these works. Each student wrote an opinion about the three novels in question, spending a total of six hours on the three works.

The students were asked to write their opinions and inferences about post-modern narratives in the semi-structured interview form that the researcher had prepared. The interview form included six questions related to being able to develop higher-order thinking skills within the field of metafiction; gain rich literary culture by means of intertextuality; understand humanity's problem of existence; see the differences in perceptions of history, time, and space; enjoy reading mystery/detective fiction; and be able to see different narrative techniques and types.

The data collected through the interview form were taken as the base data set within the context of the research and analyzed using the process of descriptive analysis. Two experts in the department of education sciences were consulted for validity and

reliability of the interview form. In this process, answers given by the students were examined by the researcher and two experts, separately; topics with consensus and disagreement were discussed within the framework of the themes and subthemes created by the item stem for the given opinions. Opinions with similar meanings were gathered under a meaningful and logically consistent group as a result of the discussion, and the findings were interpreted by determining six common themes (Gay, Mills, & Arisian, 2006).

The results obtained from the data were calculated in line with the reliability formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (reliability = consensus/[consensus + disagreement]; 1994). As a result of the calculation, the reliability of the research was found to be 84%. Reliability calculations, because they were greater than 70%, showed that the research is reliable. Thus, the obtained result rendered the research reliable.

Analysis

In this study, the interview forms of 12 students were assessed through descriptive analysis; however, only unique student opinions were included due to the limitations of the writing field in interpreting the analysis results. Direct quotations are frequently included in descriptive analyses in order to reflect the opinions of the individuals being interviewed or observed (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009, pp. 167–170; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008, p. 224).

Both interview forms were coded to indicate gender and participant number (such as F1, F2, …, M1, M2, etc.) when assessing the interview forms.

Creating the framework for descriptive analysis. In this process, a six-dimensional framework was drawn for data analysis within the scope of the theoretical framework of the research. In this way, the themes under which the data would be included and presented were made clear.

Data analysis. The data obtained in the dimensions determined at the previous stage were read and assessed as views.

Defining the findings. In this process, the obtained data were defined and supported with necessary quotes and references.

Findings

The contributions of 12 postgraduate students that were received after they read postmodern narratives were analyzed. The findings are organized in Table 1.

Table 1

Postgraduate Students' Opinions about the Contributions Received from Reading Postmodern Narratives

Contributions	f/N
1. Its level of metafiction helped me improve my higher-order thinking skills	9/12
2. It helped me enrich my literary culture by introducing different cultures through intertextuality	8/12
3. It helped me understand the problem of human existence (Understanding the problem of existence, being able to make sense of life and objects).	7/12
4. It helped me perceive the differences between the perceptions of time and space.	7/12
5. It helped me enjoy and take pleasure from reading mystery/detective fictions.	6/12
6. It helped me recognize different narration techniques and formats.	6/12

As seen in Table 1, reading postmodern narratives mostly helped students with their *higher-order thinking skills through metafiction*. Nine out of 12 students stated that they had developed their problem-solving, questioning, exploration, research-analysis, creative, and critical-thinking skills more than any other skills by reading these three narratives.

Regarding the development of higher-order thinking skills among students, their selected original opinions were investigated analytically.

Student M9's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"Selim loses his grip constantly and his suicide is a problem. Turgut Özben's friend leads him to investigate issues, which ends up in his suicide; this can be a kind of problem-solution. At this stage, the reader starts to investigate the underlying facts of his suicide. Turgut and his friend's loneliness are a bourgeois intellectual crisis learned from the text, aimed at exploring this issue. Selim Işık makes guesses about the reasons for the suicide; this develops the reader's creative thinking, and like Turgut Özben, engages the reader in a process of investigation and questioning. The author helps us understand why Selim wanted to end his life, the miseries that he had experienced, and we justify him. Many successive skills challenge our mind to think continuously."* (M9).

Kara Kitap. *"Rüya leaves her husband and her house and this is the process of the issue. The abortion occupies the reader's mind. Galip's lost wife and cousin, as well as Celal Salik's search in the streets of Istanbul, leads to the problem-solving process. Galip explores many things at this time, like Istanbul's different sites and seeing the people as if for the first time. Galip questions himself while looking for his wife. Thinking about the places that Rüya and Celal might be actually leads to investigating and questioning. Galip found his identity while looking for his wife and became a creative writer, which caught my attention."* (M9).

Suskunlar. *"There is a series of stories in the novel. Eflatun's tracing of the mysterious voice is the issue, and finding the source of the mysterious voice is the problem-solving process. This process ends up in Mevlevihane and is an inner journey of finding one's*

identity and self-discovery. It describes three essential aspects of the universe's creation (Torah, Bible, and Koran); music tones are the product of a related research." (M9).

Student F11's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"Why did Selim Işık commit suicide? What is the reason for Turgut Özben's identity crisis? What is the mood of people like who can't cling to life? Why are they thinking marginalized? The author had the reader encounter some problematic situations. Solving these problems by tracing the clues looks like a detective story. The reader thinks about Selim Işık, about people like this, and evaluates them. Does society have enough determination themselves to understand this kind of people? Does it have a proper education system to win them? We can evaluate society and individuals from this point of view. We can also criticize a lot of institutions."* (F11).

Kara Kitap. *"This is a kind of novel which develops students' higher-order thinking skills. Galip looks for his wife, who left him a 19-word farewell letter and a set of clues to keep the reader dynamically active. In fact, he pulls the reader into the text, saying "O, reader! Are you there? Are you with me?" Why did Rüya leave the house? Where did she go? Who did she leave with? How does Galip react to this disappearance? Galip discovers himself while looking for Rüya in Istanbul's streets, and he meets Celal, a creative writer. Meanwhile, he discovers, ponders, and evaluates the secrets of Istanbul. The Black Book is a novel composed of many rooms, like a maze. Even with all the different events in each room, it can still grab the reader with clues."* (F11).

Suskunlar. *"Eflatun chases the mysterious voice (which is the issue); finding the source of the voice in Mevlevihane is a problem-solving task. What will the esteemed Cüce encounter while looking for eternity? Who killed Kanuni Asım? Can Davut uncover it? I had thought about the meaning of the book's title, and I found out why on last page. The author pushes the reader into this chain of problems and makes him think."* (F11).

As demonstrated in Table 1, eight out of 12 students thought that postmodern narratives had important impacts on them by enriching literary culture by introducing different cultures using intertextuality. Eastern and Western texts (literary, philosophical, religious, economic, psychological, etc.) can promote attitudes and achieve different points of view on humanity and the truth of life with these works.

Students' original opinions about enriching Turkish, Eastern, and Western literature with the help of intertextuality, one of the fundamental elements of postmodern narratives, are mentioned below:

Student M7's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"Selim Işık's interest in reading and cultural preservation, as well as Gonçarov's talk about Oblomov, caught my attention. In this way, I got to know the Russian society of that time. I found out Selim similarities to Jesus when he found the Bible in his library and started reading it and respecting Jesus. Also, when Turgut was talking to his inner voice, Olrich, and addressing him as "lord;" this reminded me of the Don Quixote-Sancho Panza relationship. The basic structure of Tutunamayanlar is based on Joyce's Ulysses, like Stephen Dedalus, Turgut Özben is searching and forever getting lonelier than before. These made me reread the books to find the similarities."* (M7).

Kara Kitap. *"Sheikh Galip has fictionalized as Hüsn did about Aşk Mesnevi; he has embraced the quest of self-discovery. Galip discovers himself while looking for his wife Rüya, like Hüsn who found himself while looking for love and overcoming many challenges. This made me think about old works like Mantıku't Tayr, in which the bird, Simurg, was looking for the king and found himself in the end. It taught me thematic thinking."* (M7).

Suskunlar. *"I found out that there are common points in the holy books (Torah, Bible, and Koran) about the creation of the universe. The story of Cain and Abel, Lord Zahir and his struggles with Satan, Prophet Jesus's miracles, and the partnership of Tagut with the esteemed Cüce all caught my attention. Rafael did not make any sense to me. Quran puts light on events with signs. I learned that religious texts are used in postmodern narratives."* (M7).

Student F8's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. "*I was interested in the Russian novelists like Nabokov, Gorchakov, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, and Chernyshevsky who had influenced Selim Işık. I wonder why the author used these. I have read Kierkegaard and Nietzsche's opinions on what to do in parts of novels like Don Quixote, Hamlet, and Ulysses. Concepts like life and humans, wisdom and insanity, and reality and imitation are open to questioning. I didn't understand much, but it caught my attention. In this book there were too many quotations from world literature, philosophy, and economics.*" (F8).

Kara Kitap. *"Since I had read Mesnevi, Hüsn-ü Aşk, Mantıku't-Tayr, and Binbir Gece in the Old Turkish Literature Class, it was easy to find connections between them and Kara Kitap in terms of inner journeys and self-discovery. I learned in class about the connection between the levels of hell in The Divine Comedy and the ground levels where Bedri Usta placed his mannequins. These diverse books have broadened my horizons."* (F8).

Suskunlar. *"In this novel, I have found the connections between creation and events of sound (music). Creation and identifying the lives of holy people in three religions appealed to me. I learned about the creation phases of the universe from Genesis in the Torah. I learned the story where Zahir Efendi (as Jesus Christ) was caught by a robber named*

Yahya and then baptized, and I learned from the Bible about miracles like healing the paralyzed and resurrection. The Quran taught me about the first fight between brothers, Cain and Abel, in Mâide Surah." (F8).

As Table 1 shows, seven out of 12 students declared that postmodern narratives provided them with a great many contributions in terms of understanding the question of existence and explaining the meaning of life. The students stated that they had developed new perspectives of identity, existence, and life.

Student perspectives about understanding the question of existence and explaining life's meaning are given below:

Student F6's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"The reader tries to understand the problem of one's existence through the characters Selim Işık and Turgut* Özben. *I tried to question and explain the meaning of life while reading the reasons why Selim Işık could not hold on to life. The quest of Turgut* Özben, *who discovers himself while investigating Selim Işık's suicide, helped me question my inner-self and think about life and humanity. Both Selim and Turgut have proved that they exist as they are written. This result provided me with a great mental perspective."* (F6).

Kara Kitap. "*The fact that Galip tries to find himself in Celal's multiple personalities, questions his existence, and discovers his desire to write when he searches for his missing wife, Rüya, appealed to me. He shows up as the creative writer at the end of the book throughout which he had been a character; this implies that he has fulfilled his existence. The last story of Şehzade Celâlettin Efendi prompted me to answer the question, "Can we be ourselves?"* (F6).

Suskunlar. *"Eflâtun actually tries to find the reason for his existence when he pursues the mysterious "voice" that calls to him. The story of the reed and cane in Mesnevi made me question where we come from and who we are. The narrative tells also about the universe's phases of existence, which feels like he wants the reader to think about the reasons for the existence of humanity and the universe.*" (F6).

Student M10's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"Why could Selim Işık not hold onto life? This question, which both Turgut* Özben *and the reader wonder about, takes the reader to the problem of existence and makes the reader question the reason for the existence of humans. I was confronted with the fact that making sense of life with its changing faces is a phase and has earned me philosophical perspective."* (M10).

Kara Kitap. *"When Galip searches for Rüya and Celal, he finds his own identity and inner-self. He discovers his inner creativity. He says that he owes his existence to writing. This result helped me think about existence through writing. The prince who tries to be himself in the story of the prince, the mannequins in Beyoğlu's showcases that don't understand us, human faces stuck between Western and Eastern cultures, all made me question if we could be ourselves when trying to understand life."* (M10).

Suskunlar. *"The only way to make sense of life is to be silent. The Yedikule oracle, saying that we can discover reality in silence with the eyes of the heart, has declared that we can discover life through silence. The universe has unique harmony. Life can make sense through the unique symphony of the voices of nature, humans, and musical instruments. Just like Plato sees the truth in the world of ideas, the objects of the world are the reflections of this truth. The statement, "All creatures in the universe have a voice that we can understand by discovering them in our inner world," gained me a different perspective."* (M10).

As can be seen in Table 1, half of the students expressed that postmodern narratives provided them with a new perspective in terms of the relativity of time and in terms of seeing the perceptual differences in history, time, and space.

The students' opinions in terms of how history, time, and space have been used are given below:

Student M4's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"While Selim Işık's perspective of life includes issues from the education system in Turkish society that question bureaucratic procedures and the conflicts between intellectuals in petite bourgeois; although discussions are conducted on this point, it also gives archival documentation from the Second World War and Turks' ideas about the history of Central Asia, thus providing a historical perspective. While educational, it was hard to follow the relativity of time in traffic."* (M4).

Kara Kitap. *"There is the perception of multiple times. The three generations' of neighbors' different life styles, the part where Celal Salik goes back in time and becomes Fatih Sultan Mehmet, views of Istanbul in the eyes of Ottoman princes, and Celal Salik's impressions of Istanbul show that the perception of time has many layers in relation to the setup of the book. The author, predicting that the Bosphorus will ebb, comes back to the story of the Ottoman prince who struggles to be himself. The usage of time in these narratives appealed to me."* (M4).

Suskunlar. *"It breaks the traditional perception of time with references to the holy books, going back to when humanity was created in the narratives of Istanbul during the era of Sultan Ahmet II. I saw that the perception of time and space was used differently."* (M4).

Student M12's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"I noticed that time was used relatively in these narratives. The Bronze Age can be given as an example. This age, designed by the author as the age when the innocents bring the tyrants to account, is narrated as the age when villains are punished. The villains are always punished in fairytales, as well. The narrative takes the reader to the ages and places of Selim Işık's childhood and adolescence. Therefore, the present, past, and future intertwine. Stream of consciousness is given as the reason for this. It was hard to notice the time shifts, even though I read it over and over again. However, I found the time setup interesting."*(M12).

Kara Kitap. *"We also see fictional time in this narrative. Time also changes in relation with the events in the subconscious. Galip goes back in time when he tells about his childhood years with Rüya; he refers to historic events and people like Fatih Sultan Mehmet when he walks Istanbul's streets as Celal Salik. He designs it as the future, as well, telling the story that Galip and Rüya are 73-years-old and they spend the New Year at Beyoğlu and exchange presents. Although it was quite difficult, I learned how the narrator used time, and I noticed new perceptions of time."* (M12).

Suskunlar. *"This novel covered many stories while organizing the past, present, and future together. The part where the Yedikule oracle sees the future of Zahir Efendi is a fictional time. The parts telling the times when Cüce İskender was a slave turn the clock back. Time setup is not as complex as in the other two books, and the time shifts are more easily followed."* (M12).

As can be seen in Table 1, half of the students declared that they enjoyed themselves with the crime/detective fiction in the postmodern narratives; therefore, they enjoyed the books.

Students' opinions in terms of the joy and esthetic pleasure that crime/detective fiction provided them are as follows:

Student M2's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"The parts where Turgut searched for reasons why Selim committed suicide, gathered information about suicide, found Selim's friends, went to his home, and went over his dairy and books gives the impression that Turgut was taking the reader with him. I found this process gripping. This is, in fact, Selim's fondness for games."* (M2).

Kara Kitap. *"The parts where Galip looks for his wife, Rüya, and Celal in different districts of Istanbul; where he tracks them and gets threatening calls from a retired army officer; the delusions of the journalist, Celal; Rüya and Celal getting shot; and the investigations in the police station are quite escapist. They made me feel as if I was reading a crime novel. Even if the search was interrupted from time to time, I did not lose my interest. The "daily*

fortune-telling" and "we can read your face with your photo" newspaper columns, as well as the puzzles, were designed to help the reader have a pleasant time." (M2).

Suskunlar. *"The parts where we see Cüce Efendi kill Asım and Eflatun, where Turgut has the gangs in Zincirli Han commit murders, where Zahir Efendi struggles with his men in Konstantiniye, his music-lover murders, where Davut follows Neva with whom he is in love, and where he fixes his disrupted melody were escapist. I was excited that the events appealed to the reader.*" (M2).

Student F6's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"The parts where Turgut* Özben *goes over to Selim's descendants (his diaries and letters, too) to find out the reason for his suicide and where he meets Selim's friends like a detective excite readers, leading them on and making them think."* (F6).

Kara Kitap. "*The parts where Galip looks for his missing wife, Rüya, in the places where he can find her is like a pursuit conducted by a detective. Galip, saying that "the eye is always on me," is followed by the multiple personalities of Celal. Galip, while reading Celal's writings, investigates the threatening calls that Celal gets; in his life as a journalist, he also writes under Celal's name. The narrative where Celal gets killed while meeting the threatening retired army officer at the appointed place, its clues, and its investigations are given just like a crime fiction. It was breath-taking.*" (F6).

Suskunlar. *"Davut, having seen and fallen in love with Neva, watches her street and home. He fixes the broken semi. He functions like a security officer. The parts where Cüce made evil plans and killed Asım and Eflatun created feelings of excitement and panic in me. I wondered who he would kill this time. Eflatun searches for his self when he pursues the mysterious voice, but I was drawn in when he followed the "voice" coming from Mevlevihane.*" (F6).

As can be seen in Table 1, half of the students stated that the books helped them understand how postmodern narratives are written and formed in terms of seeing different narrative techniques and forms.

Students' opinions on this topic are as follows:

Student M1's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. "*The novel is not written with the narrative techniques and forms as used in the novels we are familiar with. Steam-of-consciousness and flashback techniques (the parts where we go back to Selim's childhood, his friends, rote-learning education system, punishments, etc.) were difficult for me. However, they also made me wonder about the book. I asked why he said all these things. I reread it over and over.*" (M1).

Kara Kitap. *"Interwoven times tire the reader, yet they provide the book with a rich manner of storytelling. We see many flashback scenes. The author tells about his own childhood in the process of searching for Rüya; he talks about their families, remembering the children's magazines they had read together. There are also predictions about the future, such as an earthquake striking and the Bosphorus ebbing."* (M1).

Suskunlar. *"This novel gives interwoven stories. Time also goes into the past or future based on this. Stories of many characters are interwoven. The parts where the author goes back in time and tells about his family, when he tells Kalın Musa, when he introduces the music lovers, when he refers to the holy books, and when he talks about the phases of creation were tiring to read. It was difficult for me to keep my mind alert all the time. It was like a brain exercise. The author's musical information was also intimidating."* (M1).

Student F11's opinions:

Tutunamayanlar. *"I found the narrative technique of this book quite different from classical novels. We see interwoven techniques. We see pastiche-parody from Ulysses by Joyce, the Don Quixote-Sanço Panza relationship in the Turgut* Özben-Olrich *dialogue. The book covers the problem of existence with a quote from Hamlet by Shakespeare: "To be or not to be." Inner dialogue: The conversation between Turgut* Özben *and Olrich. Collage: Bronze Age, Tutunamayanlar encyclopedia, poems, songs, and theater plays. Irony: Critique of simplified language under the title of* İlmihal. *Flashback technique: The part where Selim Işık goes back to his childhood. Narrative materials: The two prologues (of the publisher and the writer). There are many styles of writing, such as poems, songs, diaries (Düzgen's diary), short plays, archival documents, and newspaper columns. I think that the author used such complex techniques together marks his achievement. He presses that point."* (F11).

Kara Kitap. *"There are some parody-pastiches from Hüsn-ü Aşk by* Şeyh *Galip. The couple, Galip and Rüya, is a reference to Hüsn-ü Aşk. They grew up together like Hüsn and Aşk, studied at the same school, were taught by the same teacher, and loved each other. Collage: Supposedly disconnected stories are brought together (the story of the prince, Bedii Usta's mannequins, Hurufis' irony of reading the face in the mirror, mysterious pictures, etc.). Flashback technique: the life of the large family living in* Şehrikalp *and Rüya's childhood. Narrative materials: old stories (Binbir Gece), Mesnevi by Mevlana, reader photos with green marks, newspaper columns, Eastern and Western classics, and phone calls. They all provided me with different techniques."* (F11).

Suskunlar. *"Collage: Disconnected stories told together (like the stories of Eflatun, Davut, Cüce* İskender, *Neva, Kalın Musa, Zahir Efendi, and Rafael). Flashback technique: The part where Cüce* İskender *goes back to his slavery days. Irony: Kalın Musa's stinginess. All of these reminded me of the Arabian Nights. The quotes from the Torah and the Gospels in the stories, religious stories, verses from the Holy Quran, and information about music modes and instruments were tiring to follow. However, they broadened my horizons."* (F11).

Discussion

The ideas of the students who participated in the survey show that the postmodern narratives provided them with rich contributions in terms of improving high-level cognitive skills.

The students stated that high-level cognitive skills had worked in parts that investigated the reasons for Selim Işık's suicide; where the individual and society are questioned and criticized; where Turgut Özben discovers his inner self and starts to write in *Tutunamayanlar* (*The Good for Nothing*); where we see Galip searching to try and find his wife that abandoned him; where he finds his identity in this process and fulfills himself like Celal Salik, whom he becomes in *Kara Kitap* (*The Black Book*); and where Eflatun finds himself when he discovers his inner world in *Suskunlar* (*The Taciturns*). These are the skills of problem solving, questioning, discovering, surveying, examining, creative and critical thinking, analyzing, and evaluating, respectively.

Critical thinking, creative thinking, and other cognitive thinking skills are stated as prerequisites for teaching high-level cognitive skills to students (Underbrake, Borg, & Peterson, 1993 as cited in Doğanay, 2014, p. 312). However, the question of how to apply these skills to genuine and important information is an important issue that requires special field expertise.

Postmodern narratives have complex formats and content setup. Because of their multi-layered structures decorated with images, symbols, allegory, and patterns, they involve expression gaps. The time shifts that they include and their implicit structures make it hard to understand or interpret these narratives, as well as to make inferences from them. High-level cognitive skills are needed. Therefore being an intellectual and active reader with cultured reading is necessary.

Resnick, who said that "Well written texts are incomplete texts because of their nature," has a text description that gives honest information about postmodern narratives. It is the reader's task to complete the expression gaps in the incomplete parts: "The author leaves some important judgments to the readers' understanding, wants them to fill in the gaps instead of pegging everything down. The expert readers with critical reading skills can reveal these hidden meanings in the text; however, the beginners find it hard to understand such texts, because they do not have the necessary critical skills" (Resnick, 1987 as cited in Doğanay, 2014, p. 313).

The Turkish curriculum for Grades 1-8 as prepared by MoNE names the skills of identification, following, prediction, finding links, comparison, classifying, producing or suggesting solutions, questioning, and interpreting or evaluating under the scope of high-level cognitive skills (MoNE; 2009). To direct the students, teachers are expected to pick the texts, methods, and reading strategies that will improve these skills (Tuncer, 2010, pp. 37–41).

The aim of the high school Turkish Literature curriculum is given as critical thinking with high-level cognitive skills, creative thinking, communication, researching and questioning, problem solving, decision making, using information technologies, making good and effective use of language, and gaining the skills to enjoy works of art (MoNE, 2005, pp. 192–193).

Critical reading and critical listening skills were focused on in the new curriculum, which is structured with the titles of reading, writing, and oral communication based on the literary genre and aims to provide students with critical awareness through the texts (MoNE, 2015, pp. 3–6).

Upon examining the literature, a very limited number of experimental studies have been carried out on teaching postmodern narratives in the field of Turkish Literature education. In the applied field research about the difficulties in reading postmodern narratives, the findings were obtained that master's students were not able to perceive the concept of metafiction adequately or intertextually, and that they had difficulty in comprehending allegories, motives, metaphors, images, symbols, signs, and signals due to a lack of exposure to reading Western classics (Işıksalan, 2014). The theoretical dimension covers some expert ideas for the question of how to read these narratives (Ecevit, 2008, pp. 65–76). Aesthetic pleasure, creative and critical thinking, features of a democratic person, questioning existence, and making new sense of life are given as the possible contributions of these narratives to the readers (Doltaş, 2003, p. 36, 86; Ecevit, 2008, pp. 62–63, 66–75; Moran, 2009, p. 233; Özbek, 2005, pp. 13–19, 25–26).

While postmodern methods and tendencies in Turkish novels bring about a new point of view in analyzing these narratives (Sazyek, 2002), the relationship established with the definition and literary aesthetics of postmodernism is examined by giving examples from texts in the world and in Turkish literature (Emre, 2004, pp. 84–368). Examples are given from novels in Turkish literature by addressing the historical aspects of postmodern narrations within the scope of the new historical theory (Çelik, 2005), and the essay on the analysis of *Kara Kitap*, by Orhan Pamuk (Işıksalan, 2007), are indirect hints on how to read these narratives.

Enriching literary culture by diversifying it intertextually is another important issue to be covered. Postmodern narratives have a potential to provide students with many different perspectives from diverse cultures and to broaden their horizons. The students in the research group stated that the similar novel characters, images, happenings, parody-pastiches, mimicry, and irony from the books of wisdom from the East, such *Kelile & Dimne*, *Mantuku't-Tayr*, *Arabian Nights*, *Hüsn ü Aşk*, and from the West, such as *The Divine Comedy*, *Don Quixote*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Notes from Underground*, *Hamlet*, *Ulysses*, and *The Metamorphosis* have provided them with intellectual richness, an improved literary culture, and a comparative perspective.

The new world reality that showed up in the second half of the 20th century has brought ontological terms with it and made it a part of the literary field. Postmodern narratives provide the readers with skills such as deep thinking and seeing reality outside of obvious frames from different perspectives in terms of understanding the issue of existence and making sense of life and objects. Selim Işık and Turgut Özben proved their existence in *Tutunamayanlar*, which is based on existing within writing, while Galip proved his in *Kara Kitap* through writing. Selim Işık wrote the encyclopedia in *Tutunamayanlar*, while Galip got the reader to question life through Celal, under whose identity he showed himself. He also fulfilled himself by being the creative force at the end of the book, based on the perspective that "each human being has a story to be written." Eflatun, in *Suskunlar*, managed to find the place where the mysterious voice called him to when he questioned his inner world.

The perception of the relativity of time, as revealed with discoveries in physics, is one of the radical changes of 20th century that shakes the perceptions of time and space. This truth also influences the new literary aesthetics, providing the reader with the opportunity to construct time in one's mind and subconscious. The postmodern narratives give the reader new time perceptions and introduces them to diverse periods and ages in history. The history is told through a reality apart from its own; it becomes a pop history brought to the present in a chase-like approach. The fact that Fatih Sultan Mehmet was given as Mehmet the Second is an example of this. Students stated that it was hard for them to follow the time lines because the time shifts in these narratives were greatly under the influence of fictional time. However, they also declared noticing time was shown shifting to the past and future when they noticed themselves entering into the subconscious mind of the narrator.

Literary theorists who believe that each postmodern narrative reader is a detective tracking the missing, the guilty, and the goings on think that the reader who is pulled into the story is partners with the author. Criminal stories and fiction can cause excitement in the reader. The stories where Turgut Özben works like a detective to find out the reason for Selim's suicide, where Galip tracks his missing wife, Rüya, and where there is the journalist, Celal, are crime fictions. The story in *Suskunlar*, in which Kanuni Asım's killer gets caught and revenge is taken, pulls the reader into the narrative.

The students who thought that the crime and detective dimensions of postmodern narratives were escapist declared that they had enjoyed themselves noticing the crime fiction, like a detective who is tracking, trying to find clues and evidence, and then assessing the evidence. They also said that they were excited following these events.

It is an important perspective for students to see the different narrative techniques and formats, and to notice the rich narrative opportunities all together in postmodern narratives with complex structures. Steam-of-consciousness and flashback techniques (coming from

cinema), literary montages, and collages (coming from art) point to some of the setup-forms which postmodern artists reference. Students who participated in our research stated that they could see the different techniques in these narratives even if they were tired. They showed, as examples, archaic text parodies, ironies, poems, old songs coming from the dark corners of mind, plays that reference any period, essays, memories, and historic stories as examples. They emphasized that using these all together create rich and associative texts.

Because it is difficult to read postmodern narratives and metafiction texts, the techniques to read them should be taught to students. Metafiction; intertextuality; multiple states; changes in perceptions of history, time and space; the human problem of existence; meaning of life; crime fiction; different narrative techniques; language; and discourse can be given as examples of this. In particular, the concept of metafiction and sub-fictions that help this concept should be emphasized because each postmodern narrative is a multi-fiction. Students should know that they will consciously read these narratives with different literary aesthetics.

Students who know that it's hard to read and understand postmodern narratives, with their multilayered structures and diverse meanings waiting to be discovered, will achieve great benefit from them.

Students who have the basic skills should be provided with the opportunity to reach higher cognitive levels. This can be realized through texts and reading strategies that will improve higher-level skills beginning in primary school.

Literature educators who are to give lessons should be instructed on the new reality of the world and literary aesthetics before teaching students.

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