



Research Article

Beyond the Traditional: A Postmodern Reading of Jules Verne's *Doctor Ox's Experiment*

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Abstract

Postmodernism, as a reaction against modernism, embraces diverse perspectives and rejects the idea of a singular truth, focusing instead on the fluidity of reality and the multiplicity of interpretations. In literature, the postmodern novel disrupts traditional notions of truth and narrative closure, opting instead for open-ended storytelling that relies on irony, pastiche, and intertextuality. These features invite readers to engage with a text on multiple levels, revealing new meanings through linguistic play and unconventional narrative strategies. Jules Verne's *Doctor Ox's Experiment* exemplifies this postmodern approach by challenging conventional literary norms. Through Verne's use of irony, he deconstructs the stereotypes of the inhabitants of Quikendonia, while blending fictional elements that blur the boundaries between reality and fabrication. Additionally, the intertextual connections present in the story enhance its depth, linking it to broader literary traditions. This study aims to explore *Doctor Ox's Experiment* through a postmodern lens, examining how Verne employs key postmodern techniques to offer a nuanced critique of reality and narrative structure. By analyzing these features, the paper provides a fresh interpretation of Verne's work, showcasing its significance within the framework of postmodern literary analysis.

Keywords

Conventional, Fictional, Postmodernism, Reader.

1. Introduction

According to Anderson, Federico de Onís first introduced the term postmodernism in 1930 to refer to a conservative counter-response to modernism, suggesting a retreat from the intense demands of modernist aesthetics. This alternative approach emphasized a more subtle style, with intricate details and ironic undertones (Anderson 4). There are also varying views of postmodernism as an extension of modernism.

Hutcheon, for example, argues that the two are closely connected, shaped by a web of influences, distinctions, and independent elements (Hutcheon 38). Over time, however, the term's meaning evolved, expanding to reflect broader societal, cultural, and historical changes. Anderson observes that it took approximately two decades for the term to shift from an aesthetic to an epochal category (Anderson 5). In the 1950s,

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significant social changes in the West contributed to the development of postmodernism. Toynbee, for instance, saw the Franco-Prussian War as a key event signaling the start of the postmodern era. In *The Postmodern Turn*, Steven Best and Douglas Kellner argue that the 1960s were a pivotal decade for postmodernism, emphasizing difference and multiplicity as central themes promoted by postmodern theorists (Best and Kellner 4-5). Fiedler views postmodernism as a positive and refreshing shift. In the 1960s, he celebrates its emergence, particularly among America's younger generation. These "cultural mutants," as Fiedler calls them, broke away from traditional historical narratives, embracing values of nonchalance and detachment seen in postmodern literature (Anderson 13). By the mid-1980s, postmodernism had significantly impacted a range of fields, including literature, politics, and architecture, marking a period when established beliefs began to decline, giving way to new ways of thinking.

A central tenet of postmodernism is its rejection of absolute truth. Postmodernists argue that reality is fluid and that no single, universal truth can be applied to all situations. This stands in contrast to the modernist belief in objective, universal truths. For Sim, skepticism plays a pivotal role in challenging the claims made by other philosophical systems (Sim 3). This perspective challenges binary distinctions that create rigid divides and label individuals in simplistic categories such as good-bad, white-black, or ugly-beautiful. Instead, postmodernism advocates for a more inclusive worldview, one that rejects exclusion and the prioritization of any single perspective. It encourages questioning, reassessment, and the amplification of ideas and viewpoints that were previously marginalized or overlooked. Rosenau encapsulates this idea in *Post-Modernism and Social Sciences*, pointing out that postmodern social scientists call for an exploration of boundaries and the illumination of neglected aspects of society, including marginalized communities, traditional beliefs, and the often-dismissed, unconventional elements of human experience (Rosenau 8).

Postmodernism's approach to reality is defined by its rejection of sustained realism. Rather than adhering to an established system or proposing a new one, postmodernism adopts a playful stance, embracing complexities and contradictions without suggesting a fixed framework (Butler 37). Consequently, literary texts within this paradigm do not merely mirror reality but instead intentionally distort it, challenging readers' perceptions. In postmodern literature, reality is presented through individual perspectives and subjective interpretations, fostering skepticism about its very nature. This divergence amplifies the elusive essence of reality, complicating the reader's comprehension. As Barthes observes, literature has lost its former status as a socially privileged medium; instead, it has become a language filled with hidden complexities, resembling both a dream and a potential threat (Barthes 3). Readers encounter fragmented and fictionalized statements that resist clear interpretation, undermining the notion of an

absolute truth. The traditional role of the author and the intended meaning of a text are dismissed, allowing the text to exist independently, free from preconceived symbolism. Barthes contends that writing has undergone profound transformations, shifting from passive observation to active engagement, and even self-destruction, reaching its ultimate evolution in contemporary times (Barthes 5). This shift, according to Barthes, opens the door for more in-depth analysis and varied interpretations.

One of the defining features of postmodern texts is the shift of focus from the author to the reader. In postmodern literature, the reader takes center stage, while the author assumes a more passive role. The narrative no longer revolves around the author's intent or the text itself but prioritizes the reader's active engagement. As Rosenau states, "No longer is the reader a passive subject to be entertained, instructed, or amused. S/he is given the freedom to attribute meaning to the text without consequence or responsibility" (Rosenau 25). In postmodernism, the text becomes a site of multiple potential meanings, shaped by the readers' individual interpretations rather than a single authorial vision. Allen notes, "ideas are not presented as finished, consumable products, but are presented in such a way as to encourage readers themselves to step into the production of meaning" (Allen 34). The motif of creating an impression of incompleteness is prevalent in postmodern narratives. By employing complex language games, the author invites readers to actively engage, drawing on their own experiences and imagination. This method disrupts the traditional linear narrative structure, favoring ambiguity and open-endedness. As David Lodge puts it, "We can't see the closed ending of the traditional novel where the truth is revealed and fate determined, nor the open ending of the modernist novel that is satisfying but not final" (Lodge 45). Connor describes the concept of "flattening time into a space" as a disruption of linear time, creating a timeless quality in the narrative (Connor 172). This fragmented representation of time allows readers to bring their own subjective experiences to complete the story, adding layers of personal interpretation. In this sense, Deeds argues that language profoundly influences our perception of time and consciousness. Time becomes an active force intertwined with language, shaping our understanding of reality (Deeds 140). Language thus functions as a lens through which we perceive time and the world around us, emphasizing the fluidity of meaning and the reader's role in constructing the narrative.

Postmodernism does not manifest as a straightforward opposition to traditional art forms and ideologies; rather, it incorporates a diverse mix of elements drawn from various styles, cultures, and historical periods. This eclectic approach allows for a unique reinterpretation of earlier works, lifestyles, and perspectives through a new narrative framework. One of the dominant techniques in postmodern literature is the integration of existing works into new creations—a practice known as intertextuality. This method aims to challenge

preconceived ideas and perceptions, fostering connections across different literary texts. Intertextuality thus plays a fundamental role in shaping postmodern literature. According to Rosenau, the use of this technique often arises from the belief that all potential ideas have already been expressed, leaving minimal scope for true originality. Consequently, all writing can be seen as reiterations of previous texts in a deeper sense (Rosenau 36).

Harvey underscores the interconnectedness inherent in both the creation and interpretation of texts. He argues that writers are influenced by the texts they engage with, which, in turn, inform their own writing. Similarly, readers approach texts with preconceived notions shaped by their prior encounters with other works, thereby contributing to the ongoing process of textual production (Harvey 49). Postmodern texts often draw inspiration from a variety of sources, including novels, myths, and historical events. However, the author's intention goes beyond mere imitation; rather, the referenced texts are recontextualized, resulting in innovative and distinct narratives. The deliberate use of allusions and references allows postmodern authors to transform traditional texts, offering new interpretations and perspectives while engaging readers in a dynamic process of meaning-making.

Pastiche is a literary technique that involves imitating the style, themes, and techniques of a previous author. Fletcher highlights pastiche's distinctive quality as a creative practice, emphasizing its ability to strike a balance between originality and replication. This technique allows artists to produce something fresh while still referencing and drawing inspiration from earlier works (Fletcher 43). Authors who employ pastiche reinterpret previous works through their own language and stylistic choices, resulting in new creations that bear traces of the original text while showcasing the author's unique creative vision.

Jameson, however, views pastiche as a form of imitation that does not aim to elicit laughter but rather presents imitation without a deeper meaning. He argues that it is the blending of various historical styles without specific reference, reflecting the postmodern era's emphasis on the "neo" aspect of society (Jameson 23). This form of mimicry is unconstrained by traditional rules, allowing for the combination of different styles and time periods. Consequently, pastiche leads to the resurgence of historical novels, where the past is artificially constructed and merged with both realistic and fantastical elements (Anderson 61).

Irony plays a pivotal role in postmodern writing, transcending literal meaning. It occurs when the intended meaning of a statement is contradicted by its context, either deliberately or unintentionally. By recognizing that meanings are not fixed but open to multiple interpretations, we become aware of the layered meanings that words carry, shaped by past and potential future uses. As Nicol notes, irony is more than mere

cynicism or mockery; it signals an understanding of how ideologies influence the construction of reality (Nicol 13). In postmodern texts, irony serves as a counterpoint to challenge the ideals of modernism. It subverts the serious tone often found in modernist works, using ironic discourse to question societal norms and the language of everyday life (Colebrook 150). The skepticism engendered by the loss of trust in established norms prompts readers to critically reevaluate their own beliefs. As Wayne C. Booth argues in *A Rhetoric of Irony*, irony invites individuals to cultivate skepticism and confront dominant ideologies. "Irony is usually seen as something that undermines clarities, opens up vistas of chaos, and either liberates by destroying all dogma or destroys by revealing the inescapable canker of negation at the heart of every affirmation" (Booth ix). Irony's subversive nature can lead to liberation but also carries the potential for destructive consequences.

One significant characteristic of postmodernism is its inclination to reevaluate the past. In postmodern thought, historical facts, sources, and explanations are not fixed but are subject to various interpretations. Ankersmit contrasts traditional and postmodern views of history, noting that while modernists consider evidence as a means to uncover the truth about the past, postmodernists use it as a tool to explore multiple historical interpretations. To illustrate this difference, Ankersmit uses the metaphor of tiles: modernists view the tile as a way to reveal hidden truths, while postmodernists see it as a stepping stone to explore other possibilities, symbolizing a new approach to knowledge and understanding (Ankersmit 172). Iggers further emphasizes the subjective nature of historical narratives, arguing that historical accounts are constructed through language (Iggers 123). Postmodern novels, therefore, aim to revisit previously discussed topics from fresh perspectives, reinterpreting and reassessing other authors' works in terms of their narrative, content, and characters. In doing so, these authors often distort and misrepresent historical facts, inviting readers to draw connections between past and present narratives.

2. Methods

This qualitative study explores Jules Verne's *Doctor Ox's Experiment* through a postmodern lens, using close reading to analyze techniques like irony, intertextuality, pastiche, and narrative fragmentation. These elements are examined for their role in subverting literary norms and constructing alternative realities. The analysis draws on postmodern theorists such as Linda Hutcheon, Roland Barthes, and Fredric Jameson. Hutcheon's concepts of irony and historiographic metafiction illuminate Verne's narrative strategies, Barthes' "death of the author" supports reader-driven interpretations, and Jameson's critique of pastiche provides insights into Verne's blending of genres. Intertextual analysis situates the text within broader

cultural traditions, revealing Verne's engagement with and subversion of established narratives. Contextual analysis aligns the work with its historical milieu and postmodern literary trends. Together, these approaches offer a nuanced interpretation of Verne's significance in postmodern literature.

3. Result and Discussion

A key theme in postmodernism is the reevaluation of historical events and the blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction. In *The Town of Quiquendone*, Verne takes the narrative to a metafictional level, fully immersing the reader in a fictional world. He intentionally incorporates historical elements, using them to construct his story while presenting an interpretation of history filtered through skepticism. Verne's approach diverges from traditional historical accounts by blending fictional events with historical ones and presenting them as though they are real. Right from the beginning, Verne offers an imagined description of the town of Quiquendone and its inhabitants. He points out that Quiquendone does not appear on modern maps, expressing confusion over the town's absence in atlases, guides, or historical records. He writes, "If you try to find, on any map of Flanders, ancient or modern, the small town of Quiquendone, probably you will not succeed. Is Quiquendone, then, one of those towns which have disappeared? No." (Verne 1). This moment dissolves the line between reality and fiction, challenging the reader's understanding of reality and prompting them to question the trustworthiness of knowledge sources such as maps. Verne further enhances the authenticity of his tale by providing specific dates and locations, like the laying of the first stone in 1197 by Count Baldwin and the town's position between Oudenaarde and Bruges. The town's primary industries—whipped cream and barley sugar—suggest its prosperity, while Verne describes the wisdom, prudence, and hospitality of the people, offering readers a deeper understanding of Quiquendone's character (Verne 2).

Verne utilizes the intertextual technique of postmodernism in *The Town of Quiquendone*, enhancing the reader's understanding of the text. Intertextuality is evident through allusions to other literary works, relying on the reader's familiarity with these texts to fully appreciate the story's meaning. Without prior knowledge of the referenced works, it becomes difficult for the reader to recognize these subtle references. Verne opts for insinuations instead of direct mentions of specific events, thereby requiring a certain level of literary awareness from the audience. One notable example is the allusion to Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, where the protagonist, an ambitious scholar, makes a pact with the devil in exchange for twenty years of boundless power. Faustus uses this power for selfish and nefarious purposes. In a similar vein, Verne's Doctor Ox conducts an experiment to manipulate the

emotions of the townspeople of Quiquendone by introducing gas, which leads to unforeseen and disastrous results. Both characters are driven to extreme lengths in their quest for knowledge and power, challenging established norms and pushing boundaries through experimentation and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

A significant feature of postmodernism is its ability to disrupt traditional narratives and prompt the reader to question and reflect, thereby challenging the idea of a singular authoritative voice. In *The Town of Quiquendone*, the narrator often engages directly with the reader, inviting them to take an active role in the unfolding story. The narrator poses intriguing questions about Dr. Ox's experiment, such as why he selects the peaceful town of Quiquendone for his unprecedented lighting system. The true nature of Dr. Ox's plans remains elusive, as he shares details only with his loyal assistant, Yygene (Verne 21). This blurring of the narrative's boundaries diminishes the narrator's omniscience, allowing both the reader and the narrator to explore the story's mysteries together. Rather than adopting an all-knowing stance, the narrator presents observations with skepticism and uncertainty. Phrases like "I know not" (30), "I cannot say why" (89), "that I cannot tell" (2), and "or is it" (2) create a sense of shared experience between the reader and the narrator, positioning them on an equal plane. These expressions obscure reality, reinforcing that the narrator is not more knowledgeable than the reader. For instance, in Chapter 4, the narrator breaks from traditional narrative conventions by directly addressing the reader, signaling a shift away from the typical omniscient narrator who holds superior knowledge.

"Who, then, was this personage, known by the singular name of Doctor Ox... Was Doctor Ox rich, then, that he should undertake to light a whole town at his expense? Probably, as he permitted himself to indulge in such extravagance,—and this is the only answer we can give to this indiscreet question... Why had he, of all the Flemings, selected the peaceable Quiquendonians, to endow their town with the benefits of an unheard-of system of lighting?" (Verne 19–20).

In this passage, the narrator openly acknowledges his uncertainty about why Dr. Ox chose to invest in illuminating Quiquendone, keeping the reader in suspense and underscoring the postmodernist tendency to challenge traditional conventions. By doing so, the narrator invites the reader to question the true motives behind Dr. Ox's seemingly generous act. The lack of clarity surrounding Dr. Ox's intentions leaves room for interpretation and discussion, allowing the reader to form their own conclusions. Dr. Ox's experiment thus carries the potential for either innovation or harm to the townspeople, with the outcome remaining uncertain, keeping the reader engaged and anticipating the consequences.

The narrator also attempts to engage the reader's cognitive faculties by encouraging them to recollect the information previously shared. He refers to prior events such as, "The reader

will not have forgotten the strange custom by which M. Van Tricasse would become a widower and..." (Verne 71), and "If the reader has not forgotten, it was said, during the long conversation of..." (Verne 21). In this way, he challenges traditional storytelling and invites the reader to become an active participant in piecing together the fragmented narrative. The sincere tone used by the narrator also adds credibility to the story and helps foster a genuine connection between the narrator and the reader. In an attempt to persuade the reader, the narrator offers substantiating evidence such as "so much so," "such is," and "such was."

In addition to engaging the reader directly, the narrator also offers crucial information that aids in the development of the narrative. By frequently justifying his narrative decisions with phrases such as "Let us explain" (Verne 55), "This demands explanation" (Verne 9), and "This is why" (Verne 9), the narrator playfully manipulates reality, cultivating a sense of skepticism. These statements encourage the reader to question the reliability of the narrator's voice, as they hint at an underlying uncertainty or subjectivity. This technique reinforces the postmodernist idea of questioning authority and encourages the reader to remain critical of the narrative perspective, recognizing that the truth may be more fluid than it initially appears.

Irony, a defining feature of postmodernism, is prevalent throughout *The Town of Quiquendone*, where the author presents what initially appears to be a straightforward explanation, while subtly embedding significant criticism beneath the surface. Verne's language is often filled with veiled sarcasm and a sense of detachment, which becomes apparent only upon closer examination. His ironic stance is especially evident in the depiction of the eccentric and absurd characters in Quiquendone. The townspeople are portrayed as mere pawns, trapped in the absurdity of their own existence. Whether at home or in public, they show no signs of excitement, maintaining a mechanical and steady rhythm to their lives. Their actions are devoid of passion, and their daily routines are marked by coldness and detachment. The average heart rate of fifty to fifty-two beats per minute symbolizes the unchanging, monotonous nature of their existence, highlighting their entrapment in an endless cycle of dull repetition where time seems to stand still (Verne 56). This portrayal resonates with the postmodernist technique of intertextuality, as it evokes parallels with Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Much like Beckett's characters, who wait endlessly for something to provide meaning to their lives, the townspeople of Quiquendone are similarly caught in a perpetual cycle of monotony, devoid of purpose or excitement.

Another layer of irony in the novel lies in the town's peculiar tradition of prolonged courtship. In Quiquendone, courtships last for ten years, during which couples devote themselves to deeply understanding one another's personalities and values. The narrator compares this extended period to the time spent studying for a professional career. While ten years might

seem excessive for courtship, the narrator sarcastically argues that it is not too long when compared to the lifelong commitment of marriage. In fact, the narrator mocks this tradition by suggesting that becoming an engineer or a physician requires less effort than acquiring the knowledge necessary to be a good spouse (Verne 36). This irony serves as a critique of the town's exaggerated approach to courtship, underscoring the absurdity of the characters' lives and further emphasizing the mechanical, detached nature of their existence.

Furthermore, the actors intentionally slow down their performance style to match the slow nature of the Quiquendonians. Verne presents this scene ironically, as shown in the following excerpt: "But what applause greeted these artists, who enchanted without ever wearying the audiences of Quiquendone! All hands clapped one after another at tolerably long intervals, which the papers characterized as 'frantic applause'" (Verne 43). The phrase "frantic applause" highlights the irony between the audience's genuine, subdued response and the exaggerated description used by the papers. While the phrase implies a strong reaction, it becomes clear that the applause was far from frantic. The repetitive clapping at long intervals reflects a sarcastic tone, suggesting a robotic, mechanical reaction rather than a sincere display of admiration.

The characters' obliviousness to their situation further adds to the irony, emphasizing the absurdity of their lives. Despite having lived in darkness for centuries, the people of Quiquendone do not protest. Instead, they express urgency about having to wait another eight years for the town to be illuminated. Their acceptance of such an unusual situation critiques the human tendency to normalize even the most bizarre conditions, suggesting a detachment from reality and a blurring of traditional expectations. In this way, Verne encourages the reader to critically assess the absurdities in their own lives through the lens of the ironies portrayed in the story.

In a postmodern narrative, conventional beliefs are often questioned and subverted. Verne, through Doctor Ox's experiment, presents a story that challenges ideas about humanity's capacity for change and the reliability of scientific experiments. He undermines the expectation that the peaceful, passive residents of Quiquendone will remain unchanged, as well as the belief that technological advancements, like Doctor Ox's experiment, will always yield positive results. Initially, the townspeople experience no disruptions in their daily lives, but after the experiment, noticeable social changes occur. Once a quiet and monotonous community, the people of Quiquendone become lively and energetic. The high concentration of oxygen introduced by Doctor Ox leads to uncontrollable behavior, and tensions quickly escalate. Conflicts arise in town hall meetings, academy sessions, and council reunions, where heated arguments break out within mere hours. Even during church services, the citizens' heightened emotions prevent them from focusing on the sermon (Verne 56). This collapse of social harmony critiques the established norms,

exposing the fragility of the once-stable existence of the Quiquendone people and emphasizing the unpredictable consequences of scientific experimentation.

This unexpected reversal challenges the belief that the inhabitants of Quiquendone are inherently passive, reflecting a key postmodern idea—that reality is subjective and constructed. By presenting this shift, the narrator invites the reader to question the truthfulness of the events in the story and to consider the nature of the town's transformation. Verne further challenges the established notion that scientific progress always leads to positive outcomes. He critiques society's blind acceptance of technological advancements without critically examining their potential consequences. Doctor Ox covers the entire cost of the experiment, relieving the townspeople of any financial burden. Rather than questioning the experiment itself, the townspeople focus on the potential benefits and the excitement of being the first town in Flanders to experience such advanced technology. This highlights their unquestioning enthusiasm, underscoring the postmodern skepticism toward authority and progress, and urging the reader to reconsider the true cost of scientific experimentation.

The author's deliberate engagement with the reader, delving into the intricacies of the narrative and providing elucidations, is another characteristic of the postmodern technique in *Doctor Ox's Experiment*. Through this communication, the narrator attempts to persuade the reader about the forthcoming events. He assures the reader that he will offer a comprehensive account of the extraordinary occurrences in Quiquendone, asserting his agency and influence over the text through a conversational style. By subtly encouraging the reader to engage in textual analysis, the author guides the progression of the story while offering hints about its direction.

For instance, when Burgomaster Van Tricasse and Counselor Nikluse release their anger upon reaching the belfry tower, the narrator alludes to their sudden transformation into serene beings in the chapter titled "In which it is once more proved that by taking high ground all human littleness may be overlooked." By using the title as a clue, the narrator invites the reader to pay closer attention to the events in this chapter. The narrator also encourages the reader to contemplate the reasons behind the calmness of these two characters after ascending the tower, leaving the cause ambiguous. As the narrator states:

"Then—was it because of their being out of breath? ... Their brains became cooler and simmered down like a coffee pot when taken away from the fire. Why? We cannot answer this 'why'; but the truth is that having reached a certain landing stage, two hundred and sixty-six feet above ground, the two adversaries sat down and, really calm, looked at each other without any anger in their faces" (Verne 84).

By posing these questions and leaving them unanswered, the narrator encourages the reader to actively participate in the construction of meaning, forcing them to engage with the text on a deeper level. The delay in answering these questions

makes the reader doubt the narrator's credibility and the fixed meaning, as the response to these inquiries is intentionally postponed until chapter seventeen. This technique disrupts the plot's natural progression and elongates the process of receiving answers, heightening the reader's sense of suspense and involvement.

Rather than leading to a disastrous conclusion, the story takes an unexpected turn, revealing a surprising twist that challenges the reader's assumptions about the fate of the townspeople. The people of Quiquendone narrowly avoid disaster due to an unforeseen outcome triggered by the combination of oxygen and hydrogen reservoirs. The reader is caught off guard by the sudden explosion, and the narrative structure deviates from the anticipated tragic ending. Instead of the town's destruction, the danger is averted, which both surprises the reader and disrupts their expectations. This twist, marked by irony, critiques blind faith in scientific progress, highlighting the importance of considering the consequences of technological breakthroughs before fully embracing them. It serves as a reminder that, despite the potential for advancement, unforeseen outcomes can drastically alter the course of events, and not all progress leads to positive results.

5. Conclusions

In *Doctor Ox's Experiment*, Jules Verne emphasizes the primacy of fiction, prioritizing creative exploration over strict literary depth and plot structure. By employing postmodern techniques, Verne adds complexity to the text, encouraging readers to engage more actively with the narrative. Through clever wordplay, pastiche, allusion, and fictional historical elements, Verne constructs a world that feels plausible and immersive, drawing readers deeper into its fictional universe. The frequent breaking of the fourth wall—asking questions, engaging in conversations, and involving the reader in the creative process—further strengthens this engagement. Seemingly unrelated details are subtly introduced and later converge, unraveling the true nature of Doctor Ox's experiment and its profound impact on Quiquendone.

Sarcasm plays a key role throughout the novel, with Verne skillfully handling stereotypes and established truths with irony. He satirizes the assumptions about the town's peacefulness and invites readers to question these preconceptions. This ironic approach not only enhances the authenticity of the fantastical events but also deepens their resonance, encouraging reflection on the absurdity of the townspeople's lives and the outcomes of technological intervention.

A closer analysis reveals how postmodern works like *Doctor Ox's Experiment* have evolved, particularly in narrative structure, language, and methodology. Traditional literary forms—once designed to convey clear messages and offer moral guidance—are disrupted. Verne's text confronts readers

with a complex, layered narrative that incorporates various language games and postmodern elements, prompting interactive engagement and reflection. Ultimately, Verne invites readers to reconsider their perceptions of reality, transforming the work from a mere story into a commentary on the fluid, subjective nature of truth itself.

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