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LA POÈTICA DE LA IL·LUSTRACIÓ: RAÓ & CÀNON

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POÈTICA DELS GÈNERES

Poética de la novela: la Ilustración ante el Quijote

(The poetics of novel: Enlightenment in front of the Quixote)

Emilio MARTÍNEZ MATA (Universidad de Oviedo)

Knowing the reaction of the so called “century of lights” in front of the *Quixote* holds a special interest, not only because it sets an unavoidable starting-point to discover the reception of the novelistic genre, but also because it involved a dramatic change in the interpretation of the *Quixote* which will have a key role, through the English novelists, in shaping the modern novel.

The influence of the *Quixote* is not limited to certain characters and episodes, indeed its most studied aspect, nor to the so called “Quixotic principle” –the misadjustment between literature and reality– but will also determine the novelistic conception of authors such as Fielding, Smollet, Sterne, Lennox, Marivaux ...

A dramatic shift in the interpretation of the *Quixote*, occurred at the beginning of the 18th century as a result of the merge of different factors, allowed the developing of this process. Since the very moment of its publication until the beginning of the 18th century the *Quixote*, and especially its characters, had achieved a widespread diffusion, but it had been considered a burlesque satire, a mere parody of chivalric genre which had been widely condemned and was absolutely outdated.

The “century of lights” meant editorial and critical success for the *Quixote*, but this was far from being a uniform phenomenon: while in Spain the critical appraisal arrived well into the last third of the century, other European countries considered the *Quixote* the very basis of what is known as modern novel. The analysis of this process allows us to observe the birth of a genre and the crucial role of the *Quixote* in its shaping.