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The importance of education from a global perspective teaching don quixote in the 21st century

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE:
TEACHING DON QUIXOTE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Spanish
in the College of Arts and Humanities
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to concentrate on the topic of education in the Cervantine works, by examining the importance and significance from a global perspective using a 17th century text, *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, as part of the teachings in the 21st century classroom. In order to fulfill this objective, the following exegesis will consider specific episodes of *Don Quixote* and it will delve into the following questions: How do specific episodes reflect how education influences those surrounding Don Quixote? How do Don Quixote and his squire Sancho have a continuous learning process of what is considered real versus what should be considered ideal? How are Don Quixote's values reflected in the 21st century? How the text *Don Quixote* impacted the 21st century's education? In order to answer these questions, this study will include cultural aspects of the period and its historical and social context.

DEDICATIONS

For my family, thank you for your unlimited encouragement and love.

For my mentor Dr. Martha García, thank you for your guidance and encouragement to achieve
my highest potential.

For my McNair Cohort and friends, thank you for all your support throughout this process.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This study examines the importance and significance of education from a global perspective using a 17th century text, *Don Quixote*, as part of the teachings in the 21st century classroom; it will explore pragmatic approaches that may be valuable to a new generation of scholars and students. The objective of this study is to concentrate on the topic of education in the Cervantine works. Don Quixote's education is well reflected through his adventures and has many teachings within the text that can be related to the 21st century. In order to fulfill this objective, the following research will take into consideration specific episodes of *Don Quixote of La Mancha* and it will delve into the following questions: How do specific episodes reflect how education influences those surrounded by Don Quixote? How do Don Quixote and his squire Sancho have a continuous learning of what is considered ideal versus what is perceived as real? How are Don Quixote's values reflected in the 21st century? How has the story of *Don Quixote of La Mancha* impacted 21st century's education? In order to answer these questions, this study will include cultural aspects of the period and its historical and social context. The view of education of Don Quixote's teachings influences audiences of all ages, from children to adults. In today's educational system, even though it is a modern world and there is so much information and efficient models in place, there are still areas that may be considered for further assessment and consideration, for motivational reading and instruction. The importance of education is reflected in an effective and practical way throughout the story of *Don Quixote of La Mancha*.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

A) Overview & Significance

The significance of the 17th century story of *Don Quixote of La Mancha* is centralized on many core values, ethical principles, and social morals applicable to any time period. It is a baroque text composed of two parts, and written by Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra. The first part was published in 1605 and the second part in 1615. This ten year gap provided the text, the characters, and the author the necessary time to grow and develop through the writing process. Don Quixote's story has many messages that can be applied to real life situations. This could be one of the most intriguing reasons why this story has been so successful and has stood the test of time.

Cervantes' faithful inclinations toward the biblical traditions and teachings are shown throughout his lessons in the text. While his focus may not have been pedagogical, it carries pedagogical implications. His pedagogic approach is specially integrated in his didactic ending. He created Don Quixote as a mythical medieval character functioning within a modern world. Don Quixote's character is a dreamer whose aspirations are to become a knight and reinstate the medieval core values that have been lost in time. His adventures with his squire Sancho represent the process of unifying the two different global perspectives of what is considered ideal and what is perceived as real. There are numerous themes revealed throughout the story of Don Quixote such as education, diversity, ambition, friendship, honesty, loyalty, and respect, among others. These themes represent the timeless nature of the lessons that are learned and can be applied to the 21st century. Readers of all ages and backgrounds can connect with the character of Don

Quixote. For instance, writers can become inspired to think of many ways they can implement Don Quixote's teachings in their textual productions; faculty may take this literary text and adapt it to their own pedagogic approaches within a classroom; students can learn the many teachings of this book and apply them to their everyday lives. The study of this text may highly contribute in forming a more efficient and dynamic academic system.

B) Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra

Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, author of the book, *Don Quixote*, was born on September 29th 1547 probably in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. He had numerous misfortunes in his life but *Don Quixote* and his writings were not part of them. There are many aspects of his life which are yet unknown or undocumented. Edward H. Friedman, the author of *Spanish Dramatists of the Golden Age*, explains: "the extent of his education is not known, but scholars suggest a humanist background, perhaps under the guidance of the Erasmian Juan López de Hoyos" (63). Cervantes lost the ability to use his left hand at the battle of Lepanto in 1571. He was held captive for five years; therefore he chose to write for the rest of his life (Friedman 63). His life changed from being a proud soldier, to a prisoner, and after recuperating his freedom he took the path of becoming a writer.

According to Joaquín Casaldero in his article "El desarrollo de la obra de Cervantes," "Cervantes did not see life as a joy of the present, *carpe diem*...Don Quixote's whole world is based in the relation of the ideal versus real of the past and the present" (32). Analyzing the past, present and the future was one of the main similarities of both Cervantes' and Don Quixote's

character. Casaldero contends that Cervantes did not always focus on living in the moment. Cervantes' life has been reflected through his writing in *Don Quixote*. A key example is their parallel traits of being honorable and heroic. Cervantes was a soldier, and Don Quixote was a knight; which is a correlation of the medieval characteristics of nobility and chivalry. These similarities are also shown as Cervantes utilized his knowledge and experiences of his past, recognized his reality, and also had a desire of refining the future. The same patterns are found in Don Quixote as he scrutinized books of chivalry and the Bible, acknowledged the change of values in the present, and aimed to improve the future. The parallels between these individuals are illustrated through Don Quixote's disappointments, failures, and his constant awareness of what is considered ideal versus what is perceived as real in the text. Cervantes' representation of Don Quixote's character is not too far from his life description and his major desires of finding love and making a difference in the society of his time. Ernest Herman, author of "Why Cervantes Holds Such an Important Place in Spanish Literature", mentions that Don Quixote is Cervantes's mirrored image, the exact reflection of himself (318). In this case, knowing about the author's background facilitates understanding the main character's struggles and life similarities. Both are in the state of a mature age, and thus having certain financial disadvantages when it comes to finding stability to reach their goals. For example, they both try to find a way to make a difference in their surroundings, even after so many failures, and to make something meaningful out of their lives. Herman also explains that "Cervantes and his book, *Don Quijote*, rose to fame together and his literary failures are forgotten and forgiven on account of the superior, dazzling splendor of his masterpiece" (319). Cervantes' fortune changed when he created what has been considered the first modern novel, *Don Quixote*.

His masterpiece did not only make an impact in Spain, but in the entire world. His work would be transferable to any language, culture, and time period. This masterpiece is considered to be the most translated book after the Bible. James A. Parr in his article “Celebrating 400 years of *Don Quixote*” argues that *Don Quixote* is one of the most important pieces of western literature (1). Cervantes’ text is well known internationally, and its standing is still held amongst modern readers. Parr also cites a 2002 poll, which placed *Don Quixote* first among a hundred major works of literature (1). The product of his settled life was so well done that it was categorized to be the best—compared among many works of literature. Even though he had innumerable challenges in his life, he did not allow the negative experiences of being held captive, failure in love, medical conditions, being a veteran of a war, and financial difficulties halt him from having success in his life. Because of his own journey, Cervantes lived a life full of different perspectives that constituted the support he needed to compose a work of art to which readers could relate independent of their backgrounds and level of education. As previously stated by Parr, Cervantes’ failures did not end up weighing more than his success with *Don Quixote*.

C) Spanish Golden Age: Nobility and the *hidalgo* influence in literature

The Spanish Golden Age is distinguished by its three developmental periods: from the 15th to the 17th centuries; Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque. It is also known as a period of success within Spanish literature and as the Golden Age of Spanish arts for its innovative plays in dramatic literature between the 16th and 17th centuries (Parker 1). The arts and humanities made a

significant impact during these three developmental periods, which established new standards of thought in society. R.O. Jones states in his book *A Literary History of Spain*: “the aspiration to be or to be thought noble became a national mania. The secular literature of the Golden Age Spain mainly reflected aristocratic ideals and conduct” (4). The main focus of the social class was to obtain their highest rank, to be known as heroic, honorable, and chivalrous. As presented by Jones, the exemplary heroes and heroines of fiction and drama during the Spanish Golden Age were usually *hidalgos* (4). Don Quixote’s character constitutes an envoy model of the *hidalgo*, the exemplary hero, who is aspiring to be or become noble. He is under aristocratic ideals of a hero wanting to stand up for those who cannot stand for themselves, to make a difference based on the values of the past that had been lost throughout the times. Even though these values may be perceived as obsolete, identifying the absence of them was, to some degree, the key piece to solving some of the problematic flaws present in what was considered the early modern society, such as greediness, egoism, deceitful and weakness. Related to this point, Jones indicates that the aspiring rank lead to *hidalgos* carrying swords, as wealth and poverty were widely separated; in this regard, the Golden Age was an age of splendor and misery (4). The disequilibrium between the social classes began to amplify violence. Jones also stated that “religion played its part under the vigilance of the Inquisition [of] Spain...[which] was a society whose members were capable of astounding feats of self-sacrifice and endurance in war and exploration in their faith, but who were jealous in honour and sought ...reputation with an obsession” (4-5). During the time of the Spanish Inquisition, the Spanish society had to encounter many hardships. Jones mentioned: “Spaniards of the Golden Age probably knew wider extremes of elation and dejection than most modern readers of their literature” (5). Spaniards who lived during this specific period of time

had a stronger connection to the Golden Age literature; hence, modern readers may not relate to their experience at the same level of comprehension.

CHAPTER III: EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

A) Educational system during the medieval period in Spain

The Medieval period in Spain takes place in the beginning of the Spanish Golden Age throughout the 15th century. During the medieval period, the universities were introduced in the 13th century exhibiting another aspect of the culture and hunger for knowledge that characterizes this period. Nan Cooke Carpenter expresses in her article “Music in the Medieval Universities” that “medieval academic corporations carried faculty of arts and philosophy traditions of higher studies well established by cathedral and scholastic schools” (136). Based on this excerpt, it can be deduced that the medieval education was centralized around the foundation of the Church and its religious customs, which were part of the university’s community environment. The curriculum consisted mainly of art courses; after the completion of these core-prerequisites, the student could advance to higher subjects of law, medicine, and theology (Carpenter 136). Students at this time had to learn about general studies and complete a bachelors of arts in order to be qualified for graduate studies. The university system had a set of rules of preparation, in which their prerequisites may have varied according to their area of concentration of graduate studies. Carpenter also mentions “Salamanca’s role in the history of musical studies is its distinction of being the first European university to establish a chair of music among its endowed professorships” (140). Musical studies were Salamanca’s major affair in the arts and made its mark internationally. Even though the Catholic Church administered most of the education in Spain, the foundation of this educational system was developed world-wide, thus, granting an advantage of the music endeavors and royal support in academic concerns (Carpenter 140). Art

became a pillar for the society to sustain and transfer their history and values to the new generation.

B) Educational system during the Renaissance in Spain

The educational system during the Renaissance period in Spain took place just after the medieval period and before the Baroque era. The Renaissance was disseminated by the influence of Italy and humanism began to take firm root during 15th century Spain (Jones 6). Although the Renaissance period has its origins in Italy, Spain began developing its own collaborative and unique movement based on Italy's influences. Therefore, Queen Isabel's active patronage of teaching and learning attracted Italian scholars to move to Spain, and as a result brought the teaching of Latin. Spaniards had the opportunity to travel to Italy to study and learn about this movement (6-7); consequently, the networking and collaboration between Spain and Italy became an exchange of education. The study of Greek was also initiated in Spain (7). New advances in education were developing and flourishing in both countries leading to the founding of the new university in Alcalá de Henares (1498), with the objective of teaching theology, but resulted having more success along with its combination of the liberal arts (7-8). The main concern of the period was focused on the humanities and its contributions. As a result, the primary product of the new university was the *Antwerp Polyglot Bible*, published in 1569-72 (8). These accomplishments contained the modern developments of the century, thus resulting as a tribute to Spain. This became a major triumph for the Spanish monarchy: a beginning to the establishment of a solid academic system based on arts and humanities, which later would have

been followed by the addition of the sciences creating a complete and efficient pedagogical curriculum.

The academic institutions in Europe continued evolving during the Renaissance. Paul F. Grendler, author “The University of the Renaissance and Reformation,” mentioned “between 1400-1625 Spain added eight universities” (2). Education started to become a major luxury among the upper class. Grendler also adds: “religious order boarding schools for the sons of nobles competed successfully with universities for the most prized students... [constituting of]...better environment for learning than the universities” (25-26). Religion continued to make a stamp on its education amongst nobles. This was establishing more academic encouragement for students. Having both the universities and the religious boarding schools was continuing the diversity and development of the academic system.

C) Educational system during the Baroque in Spain

The educational system of the Baroque is considered to have taken place during the third period during the Spanish Golden Age. The 17th century opened with Cervantes’ masterpiece *Don Quixote* in 1605 with instant success and the second part in 1615. This novel was wedged between the Medieval and Baroque periods. Don Quixote’s character critiqued the Baroque societal structures and strove to have the medieval ideals re-integrated as part of the modern society. This was a reflection of the change of values of the centuries. Society did not focus on nobility any longer; they were focused on individuality. In comparison with the medieval times, the main concerns were the ideals of being chivalrous and noble. As Victor Pérez Díaz, the

author of the “State and Public in Spain during the Ancient Regime”, states “the university system expanded to meet the needs of the imperial administration” (264). Therefore the academic system shifted its focus from the studies to pleasing Spain’s imperial policies, to having scholars take part in the societal idealistic disputes. Pérez also mentions an example of Don Quixote and Sancho’s adventures, “[Cervantes]...invites the reader to acknowledge the equivocal nature of a world where heroic deeds have a scant relation to reality” (265). This illustrates how their current ideals were not effective and that there is a significant importance of how the medieval ideals of chivalry and nobility may have improved the societal issues of the Baroque period. Accordingly, Cervantes contributes with the integration of social moral lessons in his writings as a way to apply them to aid the society of the modern world. The new world was a confused labyrinth in which the individual had to find his way alone (Pérez Díaz 266). This shows that without the guidance of the medieval values in the modern world, society must function individually. Although the individualistic ideal was still in place, there was hope that society would keep in mind the medieval values of Spain’s society to succeed in the period in time.

CHAPTER IV: A DIALOGUE WITH THE TEXT: *DON QUIXOTE*

A) The influence of education in *Don Quixote*

In chapter 16 of the second part: “Of what happened to Don Quixote with a discreet knight of La Mancha”, Don Quixote has the opportunity to advise Don Diego. Don Diego tells Don Quixote that he is concerned for his son, because his son’s only interests are about poetry and not about the sciences. Don Quixote responds to Don Diego: “Sons, sir, are fragments of their parents’ bowels, and so their parents must love them whether they are good or bad, just as we love the souls that gave us life...” (587). Don Quixote explains to Don Diego that no matter what decisions his son makes, he is still family, and should always be loved by his blood relation. He also mentions that “...it is the parents’ task to direct their sons from their earliest days along the path of virtue, good breeding and correct Christian behavior, so that when they grow up they can be staffs of their parent’s old age and their glory for the future...” (587). Don Quixote then states that it is the job of the parent to teach their sons the good ways and then they will make their parents proud. The protagonist adds:

And as regards forcing them to study this or that discipline, I consider it to be a mistake, although there would be no harm in trying to persuade them to do so; and, if the student has no need to study for the sake of *pan lucrando*, (bread making money) because he is lucky enough to have been provided by heaven with parents who give him an income, I should incline to the opinion that he be allowed to study the subject that he likes best-and even though the study of poetry

is not so much useful as pleasurable, it is not one of those subjects that dishonor practitioners. (587-588)

Don Quixote advises Don Diego based on his own life as a student who never stops learning and sharing his findings. He does not advise him as a father; on the contrary, the knight only speaks about his expertise of being a learner. He also emphasizes that the persuading of the parents is not wrong, but the parents should not neglect their child if he or she does not want to follow their guidance. He also mentions that if the son would not have to worry about the financial aspects, he should then choose what he is passionate about and that poetry is not a dishonorable subject to study. Don Quixote also provides the textual space of educating Don Diego about what poetry is as he explains:

Poetry, my dear hidalgo, is, as it seems to me, like a young, tender lovely maiden, whom other maidens, that is to say all the other branches of learning, have the task of enhancing, adorning and perfecting, and she must make use of them all, and all of them must derive their prestige from her; but this maiden is not to be pawed over, or paraded through the streets, or displayed in the corners of market-places or in palace antechambers. (588)

Don Quixote utilizes a simile to compare poetry to an ideal woman. He describes her as gentle, worthy, respectable, and exclusive. In this comparison, he enlightens the value and respect for women as one of the most important values of the Medieval period. He is explaining to Don Diego that poetry is a highly regarded field of study, which cannot be exhibited just anywhere. This is an admirable way to describe poetry, thus representing the humanities compared to the

other disciplines. Don Quixote is indicating that the humanities are the basis of education in Spain at the time. He also mentions:

She is made of an alchemy-gold of such excellence that anyone who knows how to treat her will turn her into pure gold of inestimable worth; he who has her in his charge must keep her under strict control, and not allow her to stray into lewd satires or baneful sonnets; on no account must she be sold, except in heroic poems, mournful, tragedies and cheerful, well-contrived comedies; she must not be allowed into the company of rogues or the ignorant, vulgar crowd, incapable of recognizing or appreciating the treasures contained within her. (588)

With this rhetorical description, Don Quixote describes poetry as pure and of great value especially in the hands of the right person. He also explains poetry is a subject that is complemented by other subjects and is well respected. He is able to educate Don Diego about his knowledge of poetry and helps him understand that his son is still getting an education, based on this subject of study that would be different from his own aspirations for his son, but equally beneficial and formative for him and their society.

The influence of education of those surrounding Don Quixote is continuous throughout the text as exemplified by Sansón Carrasco and Dorotea. The character of Sansón Carrasco, who is a student at the University of Salamanca, has fully read the first part of *Don Quixote*. He lives in Don Quixote's neighborhood and is well aware of who Don Quixote is, and comprehends his idealistic views of his adventures. He is a caring well-educated young man who has studied at the university level. In chapter 62 of Cervantes' part II, Sansón Carrasco fights Don Quixote in a

battle, disguised as a knight and wins, thus causing Don Quixote's return home (903). Sansón decides to fight Don Quixote as a knight, because he knew that defeating him in battle was the only way that he can get him to go home. He is an important character in the story that deeply cares for Don Quixote and understands the cultural and textual code in which the protagonist functions and at the end of this episode, Sansón Carrasco makes sure that Don Quixote is back home safely.

Dorotea, although a female character, is presented as another educated character within *Don Quixote*. She is a strong, well-read, and well-prepared young lady, whom Martha García describes in *La función de los personajes femeninos en Don Quijote de La Mancha y su relevancia en la narrativa* noting her intellect and personality (70). Cervantes presents Dorotea as a beautiful and well-educated woman; nevertheless, physical attributes are not as important as her intellect. Jay Farnes states in his article "Festive Theater, Restie Narrative in Don Quixote, Part I" that "she identifies herself with Quixote's fantasy, stretching her reading to an exact style of impersonification" (110). Dorotea shared Don Quixote's idealistic views, setting her apart from other women of her time. Although she does not represent the women of her time, she represents the intellectual virtuous modern woman. Her character is an inspiration to women, since she obtained her education in an era where women did not have access to schooling. This is another example of how global education is reflected in the story of *Don Quixote of La Mancha*.

An additional example of teaching and learning may be found in chapter 42 of the second part of Cervantes' text "About the advice that Don Quixote gave Sancho Panza before he went to govern his island, together with other carefully considered matters". In this episode, the Duke

and the Duchess having read about Don Quixote and Sancho's adventures decide to take advantage of them and use them as part of their entertainment (765). Don Quixote in this chapter seems very proud of his squire Sancho for finally getting the opportunity to be the governor of his island. The Duke and Duchess have their servants and tenants act along, as if they were in the medieval times (70). They represent the influence of education of those surrounding Don Quixote, since they read the first part of the text. Therefore, they use their knowledge of *Don Quixote's* story as an advantage with the intent to show them as objects of entertainment. This episode shows a partial level of education, but not at its fullest, because if these characters were using their education and status accordingly, they would not have tried to humiliate or minimize the image of Don Quixote and Sancho in a public venue. They would have known to be honorable, respectful, honest, kind, and responsible for their own actions and decisions. This instance in the text is also an example of the change of values of the period in time.

In this chapter there is another theme at hand which is the friendship of Don Quixote and Sancho. Don Quixote tells Sancho: "...you are, without the slightest shadow of doubt, a dunderhead ...thanks only to some of the spirit of knight-errantry that has rubbed off on to you, you find yourself the governor of an island no less, just like that" (767). Don Quixote lets Sancho know that he is proud of him for achieving what he wanted and has been working for since the first part of the novel, his own island. This reflects that Don Quixote's teachings have had a positive effect on Sancho. In chapter 33 of the second part of Cervantes' text, "About the second set of instructions that Don Quixote gave Sancho Panza", Don Quixote gives Sancho advice on his manners as a governor such as his dress code, public speaking, and dinning etiquette (770-771). Even though Don Quixote must stop teaching Sancho and let him alone in his new position

as a “governor”, the protagonist understands that they must separate for a common good and moves on to his new adventures alone. The episode shows how Sancho has been deprived of food as part of the duke’s mocking scene where Sancho is named “governor” of an island. Sancho understood here that *this specific governor position* was not what he was taught to be a governor, and says “I’ll jump out of my government and go back to serve my master Don Quixote because, when all’s said and done, so long as I’m with him even though I do eat my bread in a state of alarm at least I get to fill my belly...” (864). This episode shows, that while eating was not a priority for his master, Sancho was never deprived of food. Don Quixote had never deprived him from his right to eat; he only taught him that it was not a priority for a knight to eat. Therefore Sancho discovered a new appreciation for his master Don Quixote and realized that the governor position was not made for him. In the end of the chapter, Sancho realized it was all a hoax, but he knew his friendship with his medieval knight, Don Quixote, was more important than what he had to face with the dukes and decided to return to continue learning and accompanying his master on future adventures.

B) Don Quixote and Sancho: Teaching and learning of ideal versus real

In their adventures, Don Quixote and Sancho learn about what is considered ideal versus what is perceived as real. At the beginning of the text, Sancho talks constantly and is always focused on everything related to the material aspects of life such as food, shelter, and income. His life has been built around the agricultural life. He is very direct in his way of expressing his ideas and thoughts and has a completely different perspective of life compared to Don Quixote’s, a

medieval knight. Sancho sees things how they are, without the influence of how they should be or how they may be in the future. His worries are more related to his basic human needs of sleep, rest, and nutrition. On the other hand, Don Quixote is well educated by the books of chivalry and the Bible. He is well mannered and carries on the chivalrous ideals of a knight. He sees things how they should be, rather for what they are. He is very respectful and considerate. In the most popular episode of the Cervantes' text, chapter 8 of the first part "About the brave Don Quixote's success in the dreadful and unimaginable adventure of the windmills, together with other events worthy of happy memory," Don Quixote tells Sancho, "... a place where stand thirty or more monstrous giants with whom I intend to fight a battle and whose lives I intend to take..." (63). This is an example of how his idealistic Don Quixote's perspective really is. Don Quixote is imagining that the windmills are giants, and he wants to fight them. Sancho replied "What giants? [and Don Quixote said]...those giants you see over there...with long arms: there are giants with arms almost six miles long" (63). Here is shown how Sancho cannot see the giants Don Quixote states he sees based on his knowledge of the *libros de caballerías* (books of chivalry). Sancho then corrects him by saying: "...those over there aren't giants, they're windmills, and what look to you like arms are sails-when the wind turns them they make the millstones go round" (64). This chapter highlights Don Quixote's idealistic perspective of responsibility as a knight fighting evil and Sancho's realistic view of just simple windmills. These examples from the text not only show the different perspectives between Don Quixote and Sancho to the reader but they character themselves understand that their views are different.

Don Quixote teaches Sancho about what is ideal, since, for Don Quixote, life was a better place during the medieval and chivalry times. This code of conduct is a noteworthy example

because during this era, 17th century Spain, the medieval social values had changed and the society was learning to cope with a new and more complex cultural structure. Don Quixote teaches Sancho about the books of chivalry, of how to become a knight, and how to be a squire. Education becomes a major theme in the friendship between Don Quixote and Sancho. Fernando Sainz in his article “Don Quijote educador de Sancho” explains that although Don Quixote was unaware of the teaching methods, he was able to find surprising results in the education of Sancho” (363). Don Quixote and Sancho had very different backgrounds. Don Quixote only knew about his world and the world of the books he read: “[In contrast Sancho was a farmer, with the only knowledge of the real world, his]... school had no walls, on the contrary, extended without limits by Castilla’s dilated plains...without point, goal, and aimless. [Studying a] single-subject, of ennobling life, [and] absorbed the thoughts of his master the knight errant” (Sainz 363). The only education Sancho obtained was the one that Don Quixote was providing to him. Don Quixote focused on teaching Sancho how to be a squire. Sainz states: “...the only thing that he had achieved was to reduce Sancho’s belly and increase his brain and his heart” (363). Don Quixote taught Sancho about what could be equally important other than sleeping, resting, and eating, thus Sancho gained knowledge and thoughtfulness for his intellectual mind. Sancho’s thought process improved after he learned the responsibilities of a squire. In Cervantes’ text chapter 10 of Part I “About what happened next between Don Quixote and Basque, and the peril with which he was threatened by a mob of men from Yanguas”, Sancho demonstrates his learning by showing his leadership and convincing his master to not look for vengeance (80). In this chapter Sancho shows his maturity as a squire and respectfully tells his master what should be ideal based on Don Quixote’s teachings. Sancho has learned from his master what should be

done and what should not be done, and in this case, Don Quixote is impressed and agrees with him. Another example of his learning can be found in chapter 12 of the second part “About the valiant Don Quixote’s strange adventure with the brave Knight of the Spangles” where Don Quixote tells Sancho “with every day that passes by, dear Sancho... you lose some foolishness and gain some sense” (558). Don Quixote acknowledges that Sancho is maturing. In the same chapter, Sancho replies to Don Quixote: “Yes, some of your good sense is bound to stick on to me” (558). Sancho confirms that he is learning from his master.

The second part of the Cervantes’ text focuses mainly in the learning and teaching process of Don Quixote and Sancho. Their long journey meant more than just seeking an adventure, it was an experience to grow and help others. Sainz also observes that “Don Quixote...introduced him to a world of ideas and desires that he was unfamiliar with...he had him acknowledge the beatings he received in exchange for the pleasures that gave him a new way of thinking and feeling” (365). This demonstrates Sancho’s long learning process merits extraordinary results. Don Quixote teaches Sancho and Sancho learns and grows from his experiences with his master. According to Dorothy Tharpe, the author of “The ‘Education’ of Sancho as seen in his personal references,” Sancho’s relationship with Don Quixote becomes stronger throughout their shared experiences (244). Their friendship develops with time and grows into being more meaningful. Tharpe also states “the ideal education is one which results in the fullest development not only of the mind but of the spirit as well” (248). As mentioned above by Tharpe, only time, dedication, and effort will help Don Quixote and Sancho reach their highest learning potential.

Sancho teaches Don Quixote about what is real, the simplicity of life and of how things have changed from medieval to the Baroque times, since there was not a formal education in place to all the spheres of the society, which may provide a complete and integral formation. The change of values was a reality; the society's vision had changed, and the focus of life was centered mainly on the individual's contributions. During their adventures both characters were able to learn about each other, but also about themselves. In chapter 10 of the first part, Don Quixote's learning of Sancho's perspectives of what is real, such as the need to eat and rest, is shown as "...he complains about pain in his ear...[and]...is concerned about what is there to eat" (81). This example shows that Don Quixote has learned Sancho's favorite things to do, which are eating and resting. He is not focused on the idealistic views of being a knight; he is caught in what is real, which are his hunger and pain. In chapter 31 of the second part "Concerning many weighty matters" is shown that "Don Quixote was amazed by what was happening; and that was the first day when he was fully convinced that he was a real knight errant, not a fantasy one, seeing himself treated in the same way as he'd read that such knights used to be treated in centuries past" (693). Here Don Quixote's image of himself is starting to change. This is another illustration of Don Quixote's listening and learning from Sancho.

There are plenty more examples that may show the reciprocal influence between Don Quixote and Sancho. This continuous teaching and learning aspect of the text has made these characters become their better selves. This also supports the themes of friendship and diversity. Their relationship of knight and squire has resulted in an extraordinary friendship, full of exceptional qualities such as reciprocal respect, loyalty, and honesty. Their combinations of their diverse backgrounds and adversity lead them to see their life differently. It also encourages them

to look for ways to understand, share, and coexist with each other. Their common goal was one of an adventure and it turned out to be an extraordinary one. Not only influencing themselves, but those characters surrounding them and the readers of this story without overlooking that there should be always present a balance of both components, what is real and what is ideal, in order to avoid extremes. This balance between real versus ideal assists in obtaining the maximum potential in life, which will be beneficial not only for the individual, but also for the society in which the individual belongs as part of a social group.

CHAPTER V: CRITICAL STUDIES ABOUT DON QUIXOTE AND EDUCATION

Education is one of the most potent tools of humanity. The book, *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, demonstrates that studying the past and present may be improved and the future may be more predictable and brighter. James March speaks about the human development and mentions:

Quixote reminds us that if we trust only when trust is warranted, love only when love is returned, learn only when learning is valuable, we abandon an essential feature of our humanness, our willingness to act in the name of a conception of ourselves regardless of its consequences. (205-206)

March explains the symbolism of Don Quixote as a character in depth. One of the most valuable privileges of being human is doing things without expecting anything in return. Another example in relation to March's study is found in chapter 25 of *Don Quixote, Part I*, when Miguel de Cervantes mentions in the voice of his character, "the turning crazy of a knight with cause nor grade nor thanks. The touch is in a destiny without occasion." (206). This example symbolizes the implications of the religion as part of the society of this time grounded on the biblical traditions: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:3). Cervantes incorporated the Bible's teaching into his text to highlight the significant human characteristic of the aspiration to help others. Don Quixote's humble purpose to make a difference in this text is an inspiration to its readers.

Furthermore, an academic institution is a valuable contribution to the educational system.

March adds, “higher education is a vision, not a calculation. It is a commitment, not a choice. Students are not costumers; they are acolytes. Teaching is not a job; it is a sacrament. Research is not an investment; it is a testament” (206). March speaks about the university and all its qualities, benefits, and contributions to society. Education should not be looked at as a mercantile investment or just an option, but instead as a vision and compromise for a more productive future. It is obvious to observe the difference between a student and a consumer. A student can be described with positive qualities such as being honest, responsible, and studious; on the other hand, a consumer may be described with not so many positive qualities such as demanding and uninformed. The student knows how to achieve goals and knows that to obtain results it requires time, honesty, effort, work, and patience. At the same time, the consumer expects to obtain results fast, without effort and is not interested on how these results should be obtained through a process. It is interesting to notice that in this modern world of the 21st century, the expectations about education are somewhat similar; however, the true institution of education must maintain its roots and their values must not disappear in the name of modern world.

The lessons implied in *Don Quixote of La Mancha* do not stay in the margins of the classroom; they stay with scholars throughout their lives, thus continuing to be applied in modern times. Marvin Lazerson in his article “Knight Errantry & Undergraduate Education” mentions that “thirty colleagues from the University of Puerto Rico joined [him] at a Pew Higher Education Roundtable to re-conceptualize the baccalaureate degree... [by utilizing]... their learning wisdom of Don Quixote and Cervantes’ teachings...” (56). This is a remarkable example of how *Don Quixote*’s text not only applies to the modern classrooms but it can also be

used to influence decisions in the academia. This constitutes solid evidence that scholars may use and may transfer the lessons learned from this book and apply them to their everyday life.

Lazerson also mentions that “one lesson that Don Quixote communicates, is that higher education reformers have to expand their efforts beyond questions of what courses and texts students should study and pose questions about the relationship of the student experiences to learning” (56). This statement supports other factors such as the need to take into account students’ individual experiences to improve the academic system. Lazerson includes that “both are acute observers... [and]...they are two sides of the human condition” (57). We observe a comparison between Don Quixote and Sancho, as two different points of views. Don Quixote’s perspective is based on applying his learned ideals from the *libros de caballerías* into his immediate reality while Sancho’s perspective resides in dealing with the reality, in which he has to cope with and live every day. Lazerson also states a second lesson of *Don Quixote*: “the need of a balance in the ideal versus real, who are both]...engaged in visionary efforts to improve learning while adjusting to [the] real-world constraints” (57). It shows that the main objective is not based on what is real or what is ideal in the academic system, but the impact of both components applied to the educational system. The methods of the academic institution have been modernized, but the values of integrity, scholarship, and excellence remain the same. Education provides a complete set of matters, subjects, and core values, which prepare students to succeed in both the humanities and sciences.

Many challenges come along with teaching *Don Quixote* in the 21st century classroom. Patricia W. Manning in her article “Don Quixote on the Plains: Harnessing Enthusiasm for the ‘*Quijote*’ at the Undergraduate Level”, discusses that “teaching Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra

‘El ingenioso don Quijote de la Mancha’ at the undergraduate level in the 21st century can be challenging due to the advanced technology taking away from the reading of books” (64). Most of these challenges are marked by a reduced attention span and interest in reading from students. Technology could be a major barrier for the future of academia, only if it is not applied correctly. Although technological advances can aid with the availability of resources for study and research, they can also hinder with distractions, taking away from reading. Books have been the primary sources of the education system and the decrease in their use may have a negative impact in the development of learning skills in the future generations. Another relevant point would be that the new generation of student’s course work is usually not related to literature and culture; therefore, their interest in literature is often diminished. New strategies need to be in place to have a balance in the education system in order to succeed. Manning’s use of J.B. Biggs personalizing strategies in the classroom have improved students’ comprehension of *Don Quixote*, and even after the students receive their evaluations they continue to apply what they have learned from the text to their life (67-70). Some of the core values students learn from reading this text: are friendship, honesty, importance of education and to have a balance between their dreams and reality.

There are several methods of teaching that can be used in order for the student to achieve the highest learning potential, however they vary with the educator, resources, and the students’ learning style. Cervantes’ text includes many examples of moral lessons that can be transferred to any time frame. The personalizing strategy of faculty may assist and motivate the students to be more fervent about the text; its reading may become more memorable and its applications in real life case scenarios may increase the student’s interest in their learning of *Don Quixote*.

Another example of teaching *Don Quixote* in the 21st century classroom is the following findings by Kimberly Contag stated in her article “What’s So Funny About *Don Quijote*,” where she shares that “I am constantly impressed by the diverse modern reactions to what I continue to teach as a funny book with serious implications” (33). *Don Quixote* has been perceived to be a hilarious book by 21st century students, which is entertaining and keeps the reader interested in its content.

Contag also mentions: “most students in the modern classroom will tell you that no matter how serious or tragic some interpretations may be, the *Quixote*, read either in Spanish or in translation, is a very funny book” (33). It shows that the meaning of Cervantes’ text is not being lost in translation. Contag’s findings include that “laughter comically creates fresh associations of ideas, which through absurd combination; enhance both the mood and the conditions for flexible thinking” (34). Her humorous tactics to teach students about *Don Quixote* creates a connection between enjoyment and reading which can be quite successful to obtain the student’s interest. Don Quixote is a well-represented character who fails often, but through laughter he acquires the reader’s attention and has great pedagogic lessons throughout his story. Although Don Quixote can be amusing, he is also very serious in presenting his own values which teaches students that there is a time and place to act in a certain matter showing always respect and consideration.

In the 21st century, there are many ways to learn about *Don Quixote*: by reading, writing, having conversations, power point presentations, and films, to name some of the new teaching techniques available in today’s teaching and learning environment. Jon Blake references James Grawboska’s video tour in “The Route of *Don Quixote*.” “[which]... challenges the students to

reflect upon what they think and they see or hear ‘La Mancha,’ and addresses the stereotypes and perceptions that students of language, literature and culture often have in mind” (531-532). His study of this video tour shows that having a combination of teaching media is very effective. Utilizing technology to increase the student’s interest in *Don Quixote* can be an efficient method to integrate this text to the 21st century’s course curriculum at the secondary level and higher education as well. In Esther Almarcha Nuñez-Herrador and Isidro Sánchez Sánchez’ article of “La iconografía popular de don Quijote” it is shown that “the visual arts have helped diverse education levels identify Don Quixote’s adventures” (2). This is an illustration of a different medium that is utilized to teach *Don Quixote* in the 21st century, such as the visual arts. Sánchez also states: “the images are part of the fundamental chapter of human communication, which establish a language as rich and complex as the oral and or the written one” (2). These are useful tools for the students who are visual learners; however, there are many types of learners, and therefore, a mix of media for teaching and learning would be highly recommended in the classroom.

In addition to convincing students to read a 17th century text, there is also the challenge that professors must adapt their teaching styles to fit the 21st century classroom. Paulette Perrin in her article “The Lessons of Don Quixote viewed from the Classroom” mentions:

“There are too many outdated ‘Don Quixotes’ marking time in governmental, supervisory and administrative positions, and in the nation’s classrooms, who need doses of reality and practicality” (207). She uses *Don Quixote* as a means to describe the different levels of professionalism. She suggests the need of being updated in order to provide the best education possible to the new generations of students and scholars. Perrin also states: “our students are

living in a postmodern world... [therefore]...those educators that have already taken the postmodern plunge, and those just testing the waters, must become the new ‘Reality Instructors’ for our times” (208). Perrin is focusing on the faculty being challenged due to the many changes occurring in education with the use of *only* technology. They need to acknowledge that the same educational strategies are not going to be as effective on postmodern students. Changes are going to occur often and the education system needs to offer the most current information available. It is understandable that change may not be effective for everyone, but taking into consideration the complete educational arena, both educators and learners must be considered as integral branches of the educational community. Providing the necessary equilibrium between books in print and technology in the classroom, it could make more achievable and effective the learning process. Perrin shares that “Foucault’s description of the would-be knight... [associating the] ...classroom teacher in the beginning of the 21st century: “He travels endlessly over that plain, without ever crossing the clearly defined frontiers of difference, or reaching the heart of identity” (212). This example of the text is stated to show that Don Quixote needed Sancho’s company to succeed. Therefore, if teachers are able to find and apply a balance between idealistic views of education and its immediate reality, then they may obtain more successful results. Perrin says that “if we can consistently stay within boundaries set for us by others, like Don Quixote, we may never know the heart of *our* identity—the best that can be” (212). Perrin conveys the practice of having the instructors overcome the challenges of learning in the 21st century classroom by embracing the new postmodern ideals and continue to make an impact on their students. She shares the vision of *Don Quixote* idealism as an example of staying within barriers and not succeeding. At the same time, *Don Quixote* may be used as an example of learning from

the reality that Sancho provides to reach a more steady poise and succeed in studying, teaching, and learning the text in the 21st century classroom.

Teaching *Don Quixote* in the 21st century classroom can be a success by integrating several significant methods of analyzing and discussing the text. Edward H. Friedman in his article “Quixotic Pedagogy; Or, Putting the Teacher to the Test” shares that as a current professor of *Don Quixote* he intends to use this class’ structure as a model to continue his teachings of various courses (20). The methods he has compiled for the teaching of this text have been so successful and effective that he would like to continue using it as a standard model. Friedman also explains that “having taught *Don Quixote* for about twenty-five years, I have had the opportunity to explore diverse options and to look at critical, theoretical, and methodological trends” (20). These are some of the strategies used to improve the students’ learning. His assessment methods are based on regular short essays, participation, based on advanced reading, and in class discussion, research papers, and two tests which are composed of Part I and Part II of the text (Friedman 29). These methods are effective since all of them are based on the readings and student participation. Friedman has taught at various universities and quotes “...I have been truly impressed by the student’s skills at reading and analyzing *Don Quixote*, and I always am thrilled by what I can only call the glow of accomplishment and the critical spirit that I see at the end of the semester” (30). Studying *Don Quixote* is a process; it takes time, dedication and many strategies to fully analyze and comprehend his teachings. In this regard, Friedman says that “if any text can teach us how we chose to study, teach, and write about literature, it is *Don Quixote*” (30). In this statement he supports that *Don Quixote* is an instrument that has many purposes for a diverse audience. Teaching *Don Quixote* in higher

education has been a rewarding experience by engaging students with a various means of instructing.

Concerning Cervantes' use of the time, expectations, and challenges of his characters in the text, it becomes evident that one of his main goals is to show a variety of examples of individual development so that the audience can relate and understand at different cognitive levels. John Jay Allen in his article "Selections from Jay's Writings on Cervantes Coping with Don Quixote" comments: "Cervantes shift from action and passion per se to the development of character involved impressive perceptions of the way people change, dream, and fantasize" (24). Cervantes' method of character development is a way of displaying examples of the process of how an individual can grow to become a well-rounded person. These relatable examples assist the reader in connecting to the content of the text. Allen states: "the production and consumption of fiction are primary activities in *Don Quijote*, it is an ideal text for the teacher of literature" (24-26). His statement supports the significance of this text and its impact on students. Allen also shares: "my ideal student is one who comes to me with a copy of *Don Quixote* and says "I love this book...Help me find out why" (26). The delight for this book being projected through the educators to the students and from the learners to the faculty can be highly gratifying. Allen's description of the ideal student is an excellent example of a successful teaching strategy that rewards the students even after they have achieved the objectives of the assignment.

Don Quixote is a symbolic character, who during his adventures from place to place, finds himself in different situations and always reflecting on his values of honor, faith, and edification. Don Quixote is considered a universal allegory of studying and learning and because

of these factors his story is presented to children in Europe starting from elementary school. Leo Spitzer mentions:

If the child follows well the lesson he has learned in this book, he will, later in life, adapt his own will power to criticism, and be able to understand reality, without despising too much [the] imaginative type of man who is a failure dealing with life, and without sympathizing too readily with the so-called 'successful realist' who knows only the laws of mechanics and of behaviorism. (128)

In Europe, children at an early age start learning about major works of literature that have an important impact in the culture of the society. The children learn how to analyze the past, live the present, and plan for their future. They learn about life through literature and they tend to be more receptive to other points of view and perspectives. If some of these positive aspects of this model of education could be integrated in the United States, especially in Florida, a large majority of the students would be more focused in their education and holistic formation. All cultures are different; by learning about works of literature like this masterpiece, the education tends to have more value than the economical investment itself. This is why societies, in general, should invest the necessary amount of resources in education for its fundamental value. In this way the younger generations can embrace their studies as part of their life. Spitzer also expresses that "the greatest works of art have...the power, after making us see the most unexpected perspectives, of restoring, to the renewed world, that primeval simplicity and richness...[an] inner beatitude of self-enjoying beauty that is as well God-like as child-like" (128). Spitzer's opinion shows that in order to appreciate a work of art, one has to see the *enchantment*, and the marvelous things that are God-like and child-like. Not all the works of art have to have a well-

defined purpose from the beginning; one has to rest the mind and imagine the marvelous things of life in order to be able to appreciate the work of art. Spitzer appreciates Cervantes's *Don Quixote of La Mancha* as a work of art, which may symbolize the beauty of life and its multiple ramifications.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study has been focused on the influence of *Don Quixote* in the 21st century and answering the questions that originated from this study: How do specific episodes reflect how education influences those surrounding by Don Quixote? How do Don Quixote and his squire Sancho have a continuous learning of ideal versus real? How are Don Quixote's values reflected in the 21st Century? How has the story of *Don Quixote of La Mancha* impacted 21st century education? As a result, the following conclusions are drawn from exploring how the story of *Don Quixote of La Mancha* is relevant for children, young people and for adults because it conveys many values and lessons that can be applicable to many situations in today's world of the 21st century. The impact of education is present in specific episodes to those surrounding Don Quixote such as the examples of Dorotea the educated woman, Don Quixote's teachings of his ideals of being a medieval knight in a modern world, and his advising to Don Diego about poetry. Don Quixote and Sancho have a continuous learning of what is considered ideal versus what is perceived as real throughout their adventures. Sancho executes Don Quixote's idealistic views by taking a leadership role, and Don Quixote encounters reality when he becomes aware of hunger and pain, which were not part of his idealistic expectations of a knight. They both continued to influence one another in creating together a balance between ideal and real. Current critical studies in teaching and learning support the text's importance and relevance within the modern educational system.

Don Quixote is considered a universal allegory whose values have influenced the 21st century's critical thinking and the academic system. This novel has not only influenced modern students and faculty, but it has also influenced decisions in academia. Furthermore, it is part of

the nature of human beings to have a vision to achieve noble goals. To illustrate this point we may think about the biggest innovations of the past 20th century, walking on the moon, the Internet, Concord planes, even though they could be seen as unreachable at first. With faith, hard work, and determination these innovations could be achieved, but also the education forms part of this equation in order to reach the impossible. Even though there is so much information about education and very solid pedagogical models to observe, there are still aspects of studying, teaching, and learning that deserve attention and consideration in the United States of America, a country open to innovations and constant evolvement. The global perspective in the education system in Florida, to some degree, undervalues the Humanities, like some of the characters in the text. Therefore, the finding of more useful applications of a text like *Don Quixote* will improve the academic system. The significance of global education and the presence of the arts and humanities in academia is an essential and efficient tangible platform present throughout the entire novel of *Don Quixote of La Mancha*.

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