Hopes And Dreams Of Humanity In The Novel Don Quixote Of La Mancha By Miguel De Cervantes

The novel, Don Quixote of La Mancha, written by Miguel de Cervantes, is deemed as a timeless masterpiece for several reasons, one of which being how the personalities of characters not only drive the plot forward and appease the reader but also causes the idle reader to deeply introspect. Don Quixote uses madness to acknowledge the unpleasant truths of humanity. Don Quixote entertains a fundamentally comic madness. Protagonist Don Quixote is grounded to his madness in powerful alternate realities.

Quixote is a perfect example of “created reality.” the character Don Quixote is real, and he lives in the real world, but everything that he sees is exaggerated in his mind. It all begins with his name. Don Quixote was not actually a “Don.” He was a wealthy, intelligent farmer who read too many books about knighthood and went crazy. He convinced a simple-minded peasant named Sancho to become his squire, promising him wealth and a high spot in society. This of course was an empty promise because it was not something Quixote could actually deliver on. Don Quixote is fiercely intelligent and, at times, seemingly sane. There is no clear explanation for the split between his madness and sanity. It may be possible that he really does know what is going on around him and merely chooses to ignore the world and the consequences of his actions. We can read his character as a warning that even the most intelligent and otherwise practically minded person can fall victim to his own foolishness and convince himself that he is mad when he has been sane the whole time.

Now the real question is, is Don Quixote actually a madman? Most of the characters in Don Quixote would argue that he is definitely insane since he has all the typical characteristics of a madman-namely, a crazy set of ideas that lead him to pose a danger to both himself and others. But on the other hand, if you break down Don Quixote’s character, one can see that he values chivalry. Which are not the worst values to have, if you take away the violent aspect of it all. Don Quixote values things such as loyalty, humility, and honor which he gained from reading all of the knight books. But the real question is whether one is willing to take the bad with the good when it comes to Don Quixote’s madness. His madness is both ambiguous and paradoxical. His madness consists in him trusting his imagination over his perception. His madness is a state of thrall to a coherent imaginary world. But in the course of his adventures, that world loses its coherence: it is shaken by internal inconsistencies and by the world's complications and contradictions.

Don Quixote believes to be able to perceive the fantastical happening as real and fully breathe life to his imagination. He does not create something from anything: he distorts what is really there for that which he wants to see. He is often talking or thinking to himself as to what the heroes he read about would do in the situation presented. The windmills, for example, are structures that Sancho and Don Quixote can both see on the horizon, but Don Quixote chooses to believe that they are instead giants readying an attack. After he falls from the windmill sail, his faithful squire Sanho said, “Did I not tell your worship to mind what you were about, for they were only windmills? And no one could have made any mistake about it but one who had something of the same kind in his head.” (Cervantes 255). In justification to reality, Don Quixote resorts to additional delusionary authority and claims that an enchanter transformed the giants

into windmills to ensure that Don Quixote did not receive victory. To assume the position of knight-errant, Don Quixote forces himself to behave as one, including abstaining from sleep and fulfilling meals. The effect of hunger and insomnia support Don Quixote's delusions, and he is connected to stay awake dwelling on the beauty of a country girl who he’s convinced himself is the most beautiful princess in the whole world. Dulcinea's beauty and honor act as motivation for Don Quixote’s questing, as he believes his valiant deeds will reflect her purity and goodness; therefore increasing his own infamous adventures. Although he strives for honor and justice, his delusions upset his recognition of right from wrong, and he is understood as a backward hero or, as Sobre calls him, “The Hero Upside-Down.” Don Quixote confuses monks for enchanters and criminals for victims during his adventures with Sancho. Sobre demonstrates the critics as forgiving of Don Quixote, examining his madness under a positive light: “Don Quixote is a complete fool; his folly, however, is the most sublime of virtues in this rotten world; therefore Don Quixote is saintly, a sublime hero- or so this reasoning goes.” (Sobre 129). Don Quixote means well despite his insane actions and avoidance of logic. Sobre notes the qualities of a hero to include a longing for respite from duties demanded of one’s country, but Don Quixote is the opposite: “Don Quixote is a bored man who daydreams; once he embarks on his trip, however, he shuns solace and pleasure … Our hidalgo finally manages to find adventures; adventures seldom find him” (135). Logic holds no lure to the backward hero as logic belongs in the realm of reality.

The novel personifies the hopes and dreams of humanity. Cervantes saw through the eyes of imaginative wonder and wanted to grace his audience with the abilities of personal fancy. Cervantes allowed for the implications of unrequited love, madness, and exorcism to tempt his readers into cathartic expression by suggesting the existence of madness as a response to the mundane. Don Quixote speaks of the power of perception, affording the individual the ability to determine the self. As the novel progresses, the readers get to see Don Quixote step in and out of reality. The significance of Don Quixote's madness state of mind shows that a man's mind can be their own worst enemy as there is a very thin line between sanity and insanity.