

21L.012, Don Quixote

(16 Oct)

(student presentation on the Picaro)

Don Quixote

- borrows from Picaresque literature
- Picaro: similar to “rogue”
- episodic: plot loosely formed; several self-contained events
- Picaro: 1 form of episodic literature

(student presentation on Amadis of Gaul)

Don Quixote Part 1: 1605, published by itself;
later, a different author wrote a follow-up, which prompted Cervantes to publish Part 2 in 1615

Epic: The Odyssey

Romance: Arthurian Romance

- characters idealized, contrary to a novel’s realistic characters

novel: Don Quixote

- supernatural events occur (e.g., Don Quixote blames enchanter)

novel: new, modern

- opposed to romance (Don Quixote mocks romance)

In a prologue, what’s the relationship between the author and the addressee?

- Cervantes addresses reader
- Cervantes’s prologue is less formal than Chretien’s prologue
- Chretien distances himself from his patron
- Cervantes refers to the idle reader, lowers expectations
- Cervantes’s audience: the public, whom he didn’t know, in contrast to Chretien’s audience
- Cervantes is open about the difficulty of writing prologue; he mocks prologue conventions
- pg. 15: book mocks chivalry books
- pg. 26: Don Quixote deranged by chivalrous books
- another interpretation: Don Quixote should be admired for dreaming of something better instead of settling for normal life (romantic)

- How mad is Don Quixote?
 - pg. 27: Don Quixote cleans suit of armor, makes helmet, learns from first test that helmet is not strong enough, and doesn't retest it
- pg. 30: note conflict of languages (ornate vs. normal)

(18 Oct)

(student presentation on Hidalgo)

Hidalgo

- social class (and literary genre: romance/novel)
- purity/mixture
- dualistic nature of humanity

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza

- dualistic nature
- conflict
- note image of Don Quixote on horseback: man taming beast

note varying social classes

Spain in Christendom

many Muslims and Jews forced to convert, though still not pure;
people feel uncertain because of changing religious environment

pg. 73: person and Arabic text a fiction

- Why did Cervantes attribute?
- distances author from writing

pg. 76: Arabs are liars

Cervantes may have attributed to Arab because an Arab would have a different perspective

Romance as a genre is obsessed with purity

- note the contrast between royal court of romance and marketplace where Arab text was found
- pure vs. mixed
- novel: embraces mixture
- Don Quixote: story of Spanish knight from Arab
- recall contrast between languages on pg. 30: ornate vs. normal

pg. 46: encounter between Don Quixote and merchants

- note knight vs. merchants
- merchants want to observe
- Don Quixote wants them to believe

(30 Oct)

(student presentation on Charlemagne)

(student presentation on the counter-reformation and Spanish Inquisition)

The Spanish Inquisition sought cultural homogeneity;
 Note historical transformation during which Don Quixote was written: power was transferring from a few elite to the marketplace

Don Quixote, ch. 20

154:

- Don Quixote fears sound, which he mistakes for something dangerous
- he relates his vision of a golden age (vs. an iron age) to his companion Sancho Panza, of universal brotherhood and community

156:

- Sancho binds Don Quixote's horse's feet
- What does this action represent?
- Sancho learns he can't persuade Don Quixote with words; instead Sancho appeals to Don Quixote's sense of destiny
- Sancho learns how to manipulate Don Quixote

157:

- Sancho clings to Don Quixote's thigh?
- What is the symbolic value of this?
- the 2 sides of human nature that Don Quixote and Sancho Panza represent are inextricably connected
- what's the symbolic significance of the thigh?
- Dionysus: born from thigh of Zeus, where he was hidden; god of wine, everything animalistic about human nature

160:

- Don Quixote unable to avoid Sancho Panza's stench

162:

- Don Quixote and Sancho Panza acknowledge that they're bound together; they laugh about it; comedy: accommodating what can't change
- Don Quixote then reinstates the difference between them, getting angry

164:

- Don Quixote requires distance from Sancho Panza

names

- Rocinante (horse)
 - significance of name?
- Sancho Panza
 - significance of name?
- Dulcinea (Don Quixote's love)
 - dolci: sweet
 - nea: born
 - sweet-born: of noble birth (but she's actually a peasant)

Does Don Quixote attach importance to birth?

(1 Nov)

recap of previous class:

- used ch. 20 in Don Quixote to explore issues
 - in the chapter, Don Quixote announces his vision of a new golden age
 - he describes it as a time when people didn't know the words "yours" and "mine"
- issues explored:
 - Don Quixote considers the state of society
 - explores which society is most suitable
 - comic acceptance of duality (only momentarily)

windmills episode in Don Quixote:

- he notices windmills, which he mistakes for giants (pg. 63)
- he ignores Sancho's disputation
- he's thrown from his horse
- even then, he claims that an enchanter turned the giants into windmills to thwart him
- Don Quixote substitutes fantasy for reality
- questions: how certain can we be of evidence from senses?
- consider evolution of modern science: relies on physical laws
- Don Quixote illustrates transformation from religious world to scientific world, from theism (God active in workings of world) to deism (God designed world, let it work)

note Descartes handout

- how certain can we be of perception?
- What can I know without senses?
- recall Don Quixote's encounter with merchants

Don Quixote's encounter with sheep

- he mistakes the dust from the sheep for a cloud of dust being raised by armies
- Don Quixote is so insistent that Sancho believes him
 - Don Quixote goes into detail about the supposed armies
 - the sheep are not visible initially
- Sancho: confirmed empiricist
- Sancho cannot observe the sheep, and is swayed by Don Quixote's story

Don Quixote's naming of things

- contains a hint of a thing's actual state

What we expect to find in the world affects how we perceive the world

Don Quixote has a framework of assumptions in which he observes the world;
incompatible with scientific framework

Is truth about finding what's real or finding a coherent framework?

Don Quixote provides a coherent account within his framework

consider issues of social class

- Don Quixote mixes with a variety of people
- class about not just \$, but also worldview, values
- Don Quixote wants to bring back courtly ideals, but he also states that "man is a child of his deeds"
- Don Quixote remakes himself as a knight
- in assessing Dulcinea, Don Quixote emphasizes her potential, rather than her lineage (future, not past)

Don Quixote's encounter with servant girl

- he beautifies homely girl
- is Don Quixote
 - satire: makes fun of him, or
 - romance

priest complains of prisoners who are let loose

Don Quixote claims it's not his responsibility to determine whether the chained are good or bad: "I did what my religion requires of me"