

First & Last Name

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Engl 2332 S01

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Text: Don Quixote

Passage: “And so he went on, stringing together absurdities, all of a kind that his books had taught him, imitating insofar as he was able the languages of their authors. He rode slowly, and the sun came up so swiftly and with so much heat that it would have been sufficient to melt his brains if had had any.” **Citation needed**

Question: How does Cervantes use Don Quixote’s illusions to elicit sympathy from the reader despite the critical tone of the narrator?

Issue: Issue of evaluation and Issue of theme. This question explores Don Quixote’s adherence to the chivalric code as an appeal to the reader’s ethos.

Critical Approach: The Reader-response approach is well suited to answering questions related to how or why the reader is affected by a particular aspect of a text. Reader-response critics focus on the interaction between reader and text; they believe that the reader plays an active role in creating the meaning of a text. To understand why the character of Don Quixote, though treated harshly by the speaker, is so appealing it is necessary to consider the relationship between the reader and the text.

Answer: The reader sympathizes with Don Quixote not simply because he is delusional, but because of the manner in which he conducts himself within his delusions. The fact that his perception of reality is mistaken does not make his actions or intentions any less noble. He treats knaves and prostitutes with the utmost courtesy and is mocked in return. The code of chivalry

that he follows comes to symbolize for the reader his or her own guiding moral principles or standards that have at one time or another, been threatened by popular opinion. In one sense, he is a role model. Though blind to his true surroundings, Don Quixote seeks a life of honor and virtue: perhaps less the fool than he at first appears.