

Gender and Power Relations in Don Quixote: A Feminist Analysis of the Female Characters

Li Zheng¹, Stacy Ayson²

¹ Beihai University of Art and Design, Guangxi 536000, China

² University of Baguio, Baguio 2600, Philippines

Abstract: This paper analyzes the female characters in Don Quixote from a feminist perspective, exploring the ways in which gender and power relations are presented in the novel. By analyzing the major female characters in the novel (Dulcinea, Teresa Panza, Marcella, and other female characters), the paper points out that these characters, though seemingly weak or subordinate on the surface, actually reveal the gender inequality in the society of the time and how women find their place in the social structure. The paper uses the literature review method to summarize relevant studies, analyze the relationship between gender and power in Don Quixote, and reveal how Cervantes reflects the hierarchical system of the Spanish society of the time through female characters.

Keywords: Don Quixote; Cervantes; Feminism; Gender and Power; Female Roles

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Don Quixote is one of the classics of Spanish literature, in which Cervantes describes a series of adventures of the protagonist, Don Quixote, and his squire, Sancho Panza, revealing the conflict between human ideals and reality. Although Don Quixote mainly exposes the perception and growth of the male protagonist, the female characters in it play an important role in shaping male identity, demonstrating gender inequality, and reflecting the gender norms of the society at that time, and the female characters in the novel also provoke a profound social critique within the framework of gender and power relations.

Early criticisms focused mostly on the novel's narrative techniques, character psychology or the satirical significance of chivalric literature. In recent years, scholars have gradually focused on gender issues in the novel and its satire of patriarchal society (Hernández-Pecoraro, 2002).

1.2 Literature review

Although women are not the main characters in this novel, they play a crucial role in advancing the plot, characterization and revealing social phenomena. The words and actions of the female characters, their social status, and their interactions with the male characters in the novel reflect the gender concepts and the power structure of the patriarchal system in the 17th century Spanish society. In particular, female characters such as Dulcinea, Teresa Panza, and Marcela not only portray social identities that are different from those of male characters, but also challenge gender norms in the patriarchal system (Hernández-Pecoraro, 2002). To some extent, these characters reflect Cervantes' critique of gender inequality in 17th century Spanish society, and also show the multiple identities and complexities of women in a patriarchal culture. Their complexity, independence and sense of resistance shown in the novel give Don Quixote a gender consciousness that transcends its time.

In the 17th century Spanish society, religious beliefs, aristocratic culture, and feudalism together shaped a male-centered social structure

(Lewis & Sánchez, 1999). Women's roles in society were governed by the three core values of chastity, obedience, and motherhood, and women's marriages, property, and social status were often determined by their fathers, brothers, or husbands (Cornell, 2013). The profound influence of such gender concepts is evident in literary creations, where female characters are often portrayed as idealized lovers, victims, or moral degenerates. However, Cervantes skillfully breaks through this stereotype in his creation of Don Quixote by giving more subjectivity and complexity to female characters. It is in this social context that the multifaceted nature of female characters, power struggles, and issues of gender representation in Don Quixote have become key topics in exploring the work.

Many scholars regard Dulcinea as the most symbolic female character in Don Quixote. Lu points out that Dulcinea is not a real woman, but an idealized vision of Don Quixote, representing the projection of male fantasies about women (Lu, 2024). Similarly, Jin emphasizes that the illusory image of Dulcinea reveals how male-dominated narratives construct an idealized image of the "perfect woman," thus avoiding the real subjectivity of women (Jin, 2021). In Cervantes, Marcella is considered one of the characters with the greatest sense of female independence, and Shen argues that Marcella's active rejection of marriage and her insistence on self-independent choices exemplify a challenge to traditional gender roles (Shen, 2014). Chu and Li point out that Marcela's declaration ("I was born free") has a strong rebellious meaning in the literary context of the 17th century, embodying the challenge of female subjectivity (Chu & Li, 2008). The image of Teresa Panza has also received much attention in studies on female characters. Triplette suggests that Teresa Panza, as a woman of the common class, demonstrates her hidden power in a male-dominated discursive environment through her husband's worship and following Don Quixote (Triplette, 2018). Mancing emphasizes that although Teresa Panza has no social status, her power is still represented in traditional patriarchal concepts (Mancing, 2006). In terms of the gender performance of female characters, Alliston argues that some of the other female characters in Don Quixote protect their own interests by deliberately assuming gender roles that conform

to societal expectations, and that this group of people mainly refers to roles such as prostitutes and poor women. And that this strategy of “gender performance” is exactly an early example of Butler’s theory of “gender performance” in literary practice (Alliston, 2011).

Regarding Cervantes’ view of women, Xu points out that although Cervantes reinforces the gender stereotypes of the traditional patriarchal society to a certain extent, he also demonstrates a gender consciousness that transcends the times by portraying female characters who are independent, intelligent and courageous (Xu, 2024). Hernández emphasizes that Cervantes’ image of women is “both contradictory and similar”, and that he tries to find a balance between controversy and reality, revealing the dilemma of women’s equilibrium in society ((Hernández-Pecoraro, 2002).

All these views reveal that the female characters in *Don Quixote* are not single “dependents” or “victims”, but individuals with complexity and subjective consciousness. On the basis of these studies, this paper will further explore how these female characters embody their subjectivity in the tension between gender and power, and analyze the uniqueness of Cervantes’ portrayal of women.

1.3 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The following theoretical framework and conceptual tools were used in this study as a theoretical underpinning to analyze the relationship between gender and power in *Don Quixote*.

1.3.1 Gender and Power Theory (GPT)

The theory of “gender and power” focuses on how gender is structured in society in relation to power structures, affecting the social status, distribution of resources and identity of individuals and groups.

Cornell proposed the Gender and Power Theory (GPT), which focuses on how society shapes gender differences through power relations, emphasizing the role of power structures, production relations, and affective relations in the gender system (Cornell, 2013). Cornell argues that gender is not merely a distinction of physical characteristics, but a social construct, and that men and women are treated differently in society due to differences in power structures. Cornell also developed the concept of Hegemonic Masculinity, which contributes to the theory of gender and power, which argues that men dominate important relational dominance in social power structures and that this dominance is dependent on the perception of the “ideal masculinity” is continuously shaped and maintained. Cornell points out that the maintenance of this hegemonic masculinity is not only dependent on male control over women, but also involves dominance and submission between different groups of men.

In *Don Quixote*, male characters (e.g., Don Quixote and Sancho) express their positions of power through chivalric adventures, fantasizing about women, or exerting influence; in contrast, female characters are often in a position of being gazed at, judged, or manipulated. By analyzing how female characters accept, challenge, or reshape this gendered power structure, a critical sense of latent patriarchal power can be revealed in the novel. For example, Marcela’s declaration of independence and rejection of marriage is a direct challenge to the social power structure of power.

1.3.2 Feminist Theory (FT)

Feminist Theory (FT) is a critical theory that seeks to expose and critique gender inequalities and how power affects women’s status and experiences. The theory not only focuses on women’s rights and status in society and advocates for social change to

promote gender equality, but also addresses broader issues of gender, power, identity, and culture. In *Don Quixote*, Dulcinea (Dulcinea) does not exist in reality, but is a female figure in Don Quixote’s fantasy, embodying the idealization and objectification of women for men. “The Widow’s Tale reflects the gender power relations of 17th century Spanish society, where Camila is placed in a male-controlled environment, trapped in the power structure of marriage, and restricted by social norms from freely choosing her own destiny. Its fate can be analyzed through liberal feminism or radical feminism. Other liberal feminists believe that marriage should not be a tool to control women but should be based on equality and trust. However, Camilla’s marriage is a power relationship in which her fidelity is objectified as a wager of friendship between men, and Anacelmo’s actions reflect the patriarchal society’s suspicion of women’s fidelity, which not only undermines the marriage relationship, but also restricts women’s personal development. Camilla’s ending tragically demonstrates the fragile position of women in society as she is pushed into a cycle of being manipulated, tested, and ultimately blamed.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By combining gender and power theory, feminist theory, and related concepts, this study analyzes in depth the complexity of female characters in *Don Quixote*, dissects how female characters struggle to survive in a patriarchal society and seek subjectivity in the face of gender oppression, reveals the novel’s profound critique of gender power relations, and provides new perspectives for understanding gender politics in literature.

This study is important at both theoretical and practical levels.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

a. This study cuts through the feminist perspective to further enrich the interpretation of *Don Quixote*’s character groups and fills the gap of insufficient attention to female characters in traditional studies.

b. This study will incorporate Gender and Power Theory (GPT), Feminist Theory, and other feminist ideas in order to reveal how the female characters in *Don Quixote* demonstrate a sense of independence in the face of societal pressures.

c. By analyzing the words and deeds, psychological activities and social status of female characters, this study further explores the gender norms and the mechanism of constructing female images in 17th century Spanish society, providing new ideas for Spanish literary studies and gender studies.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

a. In teaching practice, this study will help guide students through literary texts to understand the complex relationship between gender and power.

b. Provide insights into contemporary literature education through role-playing, scenario simulation and other teaching activities. Teachers can use the female characters in *Don Quixote* to guide students to understand gender equality, social power structures and the awakening of women’s sense of autonomy, encourage students to think about the multiple roles of female characters in society, and thus cultivate critical thinking and a sense of social responsibility in students.

c. This study can also provide reference for contemporary literary criticism and film and television adaptations, and help creators understand the diversity and complexity of gender

discourse in classic literature.

1.5 Research Objectives

This study focuses on the portrayal of female characters in Don Quixote and explores their interaction with gender power relations. this paper aims to:

a.analyze the female characters or storylines in Don Quixote that exemplify gender power relations.

b.analyze how female characters in the novel demonstrate subjectivity and independence within a patriarchal system.

The exploration of these issues not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the novel's textual structure and characterization, but also reveals Cervantes' forward-thinking in terms of female consciousness.

2 Methods

2.1 Research paradigm

This study utilized the literature review method for the qualitative research design. This approach is appropriate because this study aims to analyze gender and power relations in Don Quixote by examining relevant literary texts, scholarly articles, and feminist theoretical frameworks. By synthesizing existing scholarship, this study will explore how Cervantes portrays the main female characters and their roles within the broader context of social and cultural power dynamics.

2.2 Design and Methodology

2.2.1 Data Gathering Tools

This study adopted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, aiming to sort out how female characters in Don Quixote can be interpreted from a feminist perspective, focusing on the ways in which gender and power relations are constructed in the novel. This review brings together scholarship that uses feminist literary theory to analyze Cervantes' work and distills from it key ideas about female characterization, gender dynamics, and social structures.

Research questions	(1)which female characters or storylines in Don Quixote embody gender power relations? (2)How do female characters in the novel demonstrate subjectivity and a sense of independence in the context of patriarchy?
Research strategy	Databases: Google Scholar, China Knowledge Network (CNN). Search terms: "Cervantes" and "Feminist analyses" "Don Quixote" and 'Feminist analyses'. "Don Quixote" and 'Gender and rights'. "Don Quixote" and "Female characters", "women's roles" "Don Quixote" and 'gender and power'
Inclusion Criteria	- Scholarship that focuses on female characters, feminism, gender, and power relations in Don Quixote - Explicit engagement with gender and power theory and feminist literary theoretical frameworks (e.g., liberalism, radicalism) - Textual close reading analysis of specific female characters or gender depictions

Exclusion Criteria	- Non-scholarly or non-peer-reviewed writing (e.g., blogs, reviews) - Literary criticism unrelated to gender or power - Research unrelated to the female characters of Don Quixote
Literature Screening and Selection Process	An initial search was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, which yielded 95 articles. After de-duplication and review of titles, keywords and abstracts, 60 were retained for reading the full text for assessment. Eventually, a total of 12 literatures met the criteria and were included in the analysis of this study.
Data extraction and analysis methods	The included studies was coded and thematically analyzed, and the basic information extracted included: author, year of publication, theoretical framework used, object of analysis and key findings. Through qualitative thematic analysis (QTA), the following major themes was summarized in this study: - Women's existential dilemma and hierarchical embodiment under patriarchal structure in novels - The symbolic meaning and narrative function of female characters - Feminist role analysis
Limitations of the study	Although this review strives to be comprehensive, gray literature (e.g., unpublished essays, class transcripts, campus newspapers) that was not included due to copyright considerations and limited collection sources; some studies that did not explicitly use feminist terminology throughout may have been omitted after a keyword search.

2.2.2 Data Gathering procedures

The data collection process includes the following steps:

Identify primary sources, especially the English translation of Don Quixote and the original Spanish text.

Query literature that provides important insights into gender roles, feminist analysis, and power relations in Cervantes' work.

Sift through the collected literature, focusing on topics related to gender rights, female role images and power, etc., and summarize the ideas that can be drawn upon.

2.2.3 Treatment of Data

Thematic analysis was used to categorize the data based on recurring patterns and themes. Concepts such as feminism, gender and power relations, and resistance to traditional gender roles was central to the analysis. The structure of the findings is consistent with the research objectives, emphasizing how Cervantes portrays female roles in relation to power structures.

2.2.4 Ethical Considerations

Since this study only deals with published texts without direct human involvement, traditional ethical issues such as informed consent and confidentiality do not apply. However, this study followed appropriate citation practices to ensure intellectual integrity and academic rigor.

3 Result and Discussion

Although female characters are usually on the periphery of

the male-dominated world in the novels, their resistance is full of complexity, often not in direct confrontation, but in subtle confrontation through words, actions, or thoughts, challenging the social expectations and gender norms of women at the time. Through these characters, Cervantes not only reveals the social problem of gender inequality, but also reflects deeply on how women find space for their own survival in a male-dominated world.

The portrayal of these female characters below reveals the strict distribution of gender and power in Spanish society at the time, and the place of women in this social structure. Through these vibrant, vivid characters, Cervantes shows how women fought for autonomy, resisted oppression, and sought self-identity in the intersection of gender and social class in a patriarchal society. Although these female characters are in most cases the product

of a male perspective, their presence and actions still reflect the complexity of women’s position in the power structure, revealing a potential challenge to traditional gender roles and a call for gender equality.

Table1 The female characters that exemplify gender power relations

The female characters that exemplify gender power relations	(1)Dulcinea’s idealization and the symbolism of gender roles
	(2)Teresa Panza’s domestic roles and gender identity
	(3)Marcela - a symbol of the autonomous woman
	(4)Prostitutes and poor women - the intersection of gender and economic class

Table2 Female characters demonstrate subjectivity and independence within a patriarchal system

(1)Dulcinea
Related references: 1.Jin, W. (2021). An analysis of the character image of Dulcinea, the heroine of Don Quixote in Spanish literature. 2.Lin, Q. (2020). A brief analysis of the character image of Dulcinea, the heroine of Don Quixote. 3.Lu, S. (2024). The chivalric spirit of Don Quixote in the contradiction between ideal and reality. 4.Li, D. (2011). On the absentees in Don Quixote: The magician and Dulcinea. 5.Huang, J. (2024). A study on the narrative art of Don Quixote from a postmodern perspective.
Dulcinea is an avatar in the novel and is the ideal woman in Don Quixote’s mind. Dulcinea is not portrayed as a character with an independent personality, but rather as Don Quixote’s projection of her idealization, sanctification, and purity. Her presence profoundly influences the entire storyline and represents the portrayal of female characters by a male culture in which women are objectified, idealized, and fantasized to satisfy male needs and desires (Jin, 2021).
This character portrays gender idealization bias and is a symbol of male gender power. In Don Quixote’s eyes, Dulcinea is perfect and pure, and her image is thus one of the driving forces behind Don Quixote’s actions. However, this idealized image reveals an important social reality: female characters are often shaped by male society and culture to fulfill male fantasy needs(Lin,2020). This gender construction not only expresses the male desire to control women, but also reflects the imposition and restriction of female identity in the society of the time, thus making her not only a vehicle for Don Quixote’s extreme admiration of women, but also an embodiment of the idea of gender inequality. As Lu argues, the figure of Dulcinea is essentially part of a male power structure in which women have no real self-expression and exist only as objects of male fantasy (Lu, 2024).
Modern scholars’ understanding of Dulcinea, however, tends to be more complex. Lee, for example, mentions that Dulcinea’s “absence” actually highlights her social symbolism as the “ideal woman”. Dulcinea’s inability to appear in reality is due to the fact that she does not represent a real woman, but rather a projection of male society’s idealization of women. This idealization is not a mere love affair, but a limitation of the female role in terms of gender, morality and social norms (Li, 2011).
Critics of modernism have argued that the existence of Dulcinea is only part of Don Quixote’s fantasy and cultural structure, revealing gender inequality and the plight of women as “gender symbols”. This role is a manifestation of how male society transforms the female role into a silent idealized object, which is not only a manifestation of gender oppression, but also a complete disregard for female individuality and independence, which shows how women in male-dominated societies are portrayed as objects of male desires, rather than as individuals with independence and subjectivity (Huang, 2024).
(2)Teresa Panza
Related reference: Ciallella, L. (2003). Teresa Panza’s character zone and discourse of domesticity in Don Quijote.
Teresa Panza, the wife of Sancho Panza, a “big fat woman of thirty”, is described as a traditional housewife with vulgar, greedy qualities that represent the traditional setting of female roles both inside and outside the home - as a supporter of men’s lives as well as having to take care of domestic work and childcare. -both as a supporter of men’s lives and as someone who must take on domestic labor and childcare responsibilities. From a gender perspective, the image of Sancho’s wife reflects the expectations of society at the time regarding the role of the family and motherhood. It is a stereotypical image of women that symbolizes the society’s fixation on female power and gender roles at that time.
Ciallella argues that Cervantes portrays her in a humorous and ironic way, and that her maternal figure, although not portrayed as noble, still reveals the importance of women in the family and social structure (Ciallella, 2003). Sancho’s wife is not only the traditional “good wife and mother” of gender expectations, but also the manager of the family economy, and it is through her interactions with Sancho that she demonstrates how women can increase their influence in the male-dominated family structure and further participate in the construction of the social power structure through the family role.

(3)Marcela
Related references: 1.Shen, W. (2014). A comparison of women's views in chivalric literature and martial arts literature from the East and the West. 2.Chu, G., & Li, Z. (2008). An interpretation of the aesthetics of Don Quixote from the perspective of psychological structure.
Marcela is an independent female figure in Don Quixote, she is a shepherdess, intelligent and kind, and countless people are bowled over by her beauty, however her cleanliness leads her to face several ill wills, those who pursue her furiously discredit her and pose as superior, attempting to bind her soul with traditional rules and self-righteously judge her morally. She rejects Amerigo's advances and defends her decision that she should not be bound by male desire. Marcela's rejection and her independent views on love and marriage contrasted with the social expectations of the time. In Spanish society at the time, women were often expected to follow traditional gender roles, such as marrying wives and mothers, whereas Marcela rebels against this structure by asserting her free will. Her independence is not just a rejection of male love, but an expression of a woman's sovereignty over her own body and mind (Shen, 2014). As Chu and Li point out, her refusal was not callous, but her defense of her right to free choice, she expressed her insistence on women's autonomy through her words and attempted to break down men's expectations of women and the oppression of their gender roles through rational debates, such a courageous woman, possessing some of the most beautiful qualities of her time (Chu & Li, 2008). Marcela is a symbol of countless noble women, and the importance of this character lies in the fact that she is one of the few female characters in the novel who voluntarily chooses to be single and not dependent on a man. Her behavior challenges the social notion that love is a woman's vocation and demonstrates women's autonomy in making decisions about marriage and emotional life. Once upon a time, the deformed concept of marriage and love generally believed that when a woman reaches the age of 30, she is a leftover woman, and that women must get married and have children, and even women must give birth to a son to carry on the family line. The characterization of Marcela has vividly shaped a novel, enthusiastic history of women's growth, which is not a kind of spiritual guide to the women who are deeply disturbed by their relationships and marriages. Spiritual Guide.
(4)Prostitutes and poor women
The characters of prostitutes in the novels, such as the women encountered in the city, are often portrayed as morally corrupt, a portrayal that reveals both the inequality of gender and class and the double standards of society at the time regarding female sexuality. Female sexuality was scrutinized in society, and poor and lower-class women in particular were more susceptible to moral condemnation. The most iconic of these prostitutes is the women encountered by Don Quixote and Sancho, who, although victims of gender oppression and social marginalization, engage in some form of power struggle with the male characters through their actions. Although their behavior is seen as "degrading," from a feminist perspective, the existence of these characters highlights the strong connection between gender and economic class. Through these prostitute characters, Cervantes shows how women struggle to survive in the midst of poverty and gender oppression. Although the role of prostitutes has been criticized in traditional literature as that of moral failures, their existence reveals the dual oppression of women through economic poverty and social injustice. Women are often forced to enter "forbidden gender zones" in order to survive, and in the process their individuality and choices are completely stripped away. These roles are not socially acceptable, but they do raise criticisms of gender and social class structure in the context of the novel.

These above depictions of female characters not only reflect women's submissiveness and dependence, but also demonstrate women's subtle resistance within the male power structure. From Sancho's wife's efforts for her family, to Kilda's rejection of love, to the silent resistance of the prostitute character, Cervantes's portrayal shows how women, under the dual oppression of gender oppression and social class, seek to find a space for survival and a way to rebel in the midst of marginalization and deprivation.

4 Conclusion

Through an in-depth analysis of the female characters in Don Quixote, such as the idealization of Dulcinea, the traditional roles of mother and wife, and the independence of Kilda, and the marginalization of prostitutes and widows, we find that these characters, although usually relegated to a secondary position in traditional gender frameworks and bound to traditional gender roles and social norms, are by no means merely appendages to the male storyline or symbols of gender norms. symbols of the male storyline, they demonstrate potential challenges to the structures of social inequality through subtle ways of resistance and coping, fighting for autonomy in a patriarchal society, resisting oppression, and seeking self-identity in the intersection of gender and social class. Through his portrayal of these female characters, Cervantes reveals the inherent bias against women and the social structure of

gender inequality in Spanish society, as well as the diversity and complexity of gender power relations in society. This is a potential challenge to traditional gender roles and a call for gender equality. Thus, Cervantes' work is not only a novel about male heroism, but also a profound reflection on gender and power structures. This essay provides a detailed analysis of the female characters in Don Quixote from a feminist perspective and explores how these characters reflect gender and power relations in Spanish society at the time. It is hoped that it will provide a valuable reference for scholars studying gender, literature and society.

5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study of the relationship between gender and power in Don Quixote, the following recommendations are made:

5.1 Curriculum development

Literature and gender studies educators may consider Don Quixote as a key text for exploring themes of gender dynamics and power relations.

Incorporating Don Quixote into curriculum design provides a valuable opportunity for educators to guide students in understanding how gender roles were constructed in early modern Spain, examining key female roles in relation to their historical

and cultural contexts and how these depictions reflect broader social hierarchies. By analyzing female roles and engaging students in discussions about gender and power dynamics, students can critically engage with historical representations of gender and their relevance to contemporary discussions of social justice.

In addition, combining Don Quixote with modern feminist theory can help students connect the gender power dynamics depicted by Cervantes to contemporary gender issues. By comparing the novel's female characters to modern media depictions of women, students can develop critical thinking skills that transcend the boundaries of literary analysis and encourage them to reflect meaningfully on enduring social structures.

5.2 Interdisciplinary teaching strategies

To deepen students' understanding of gender and power dynamics in Don Quixote, educators are encouraged to take an interdisciplinary approach, combining literary analysis with feminist theory, social psychology, and historical research. The incorporation of social psychology can further illuminate how power dynamics are represented in character interactions. Educators can also introduce students to the legal, religious, and social frameworks within which women lived in 17th century Spain, and with an understanding of these realities, students can see how Cervantes' female characters conformed to or resisted these expectations. By integrating these interdisciplinary approaches, educators can create a more dynamic and reflective learning environment in which students can examine the novel's female characters from multiple perspectives, thereby gaining a fuller understanding of their roles and the societal forces that shaped them, and even using Don

Quixote as a text that challenges the assumptions about gender and power both in Cervantes' time and in contemporary society.

5.3 Further studies

The results of this study highlight the potential for an in-depth exploration of gender and power dynamics in Don Quixote. Future research could expand on these themes by comparing Cervantes' female characters to those in other early modern literature. Such comparative studies could reveal broader trends in how women's power was represented during this period, provide insight into how Cervantes' portrayal of women continues to resonate with and challenge contemporary readers, and also provide a richer understanding of how gender power relations operate across cultural boundaries.

Through these avenues of research, scholars can continue to reveal the subtle ways in which Don Quixote interrogates gender and power, ensuring the novel's relevance in current conversations about social justice and equality.

6 Acknowledgement

My family has shared the burden of housework and childcare with me so that I could have enough time to complete this essay. The company of my child was the driving force behind my writing. My tutor, Dr Stacy Ayson, was very patient in following up the writing process, which gave me more confidence in completing the essay revisions. She is academically rigorous and always gives guidance at critical moments and meaningless her professional guidance added to the literary value of this essay.

References

- [1] Lewis, T., & Sánchez, F. J. (Eds.). (1999). *Culture and the State in Spain, 1550-1850* (Vol. 2169). Taylor & Francis.
- [2] Mancing, H. (2006). *Cervantes' Don Quixote: a reference guide*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- [3] Alliston, A. (2011). Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity. *The Eighteenth Century* 52(3), 249-269.
- [4] Ciallella, L. (2003). Teresa Panza's character zone and discourse of domesticity in Don Quijote. *Cervantes*, 23(2), 275-296.
- [5] Chu, G., & Li, Z. (2008). An interpretation of the aesthetics of Don Quixote from the perspective of psychological structure. *Film Literature*, (13), 89-90.
- [6] Cornell, D. L. (2013). Gender, sex, and equivalent rights. In *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 280-296). Routledge.
- [7] Hernández-Pecoraro, R. (2002). "DON QUIXOTE'S" DOROTEA: PORTRAIT OF A FEMALE SUBJECT. *Hispanófila*, (135), 19-39.
- [8] Huang, J. (2024). A study on the narrative art of Don Quixote from a postmodern perspective. *Young Writers*, (20), 103-105.
- [9] Jin, W. (2021). An analysis of the character image of Dulcinea, the heroine of Don Quixote in Spanish literature. *Youth Years*, (13), 47-48.
- [10] Li, D. (2011). On the absentees in Don Quixote: The magician and Dulcinea. *Foreign Literature*, (05), 43-48+157.
- [11] Lin, Q. (2020). A brief analysis of the character image of Dulcinea, the heroine of Don Quixote. *Shenhua* (Upper), (12), 49-50.
- [12] Lu, S. (2024). The chivalric spirit of Don Quixote in the contradiction between ideal and reality. *Young Writers*, (25), 175-177.
- [13] Schmidt, R. (2005). Women in the 1905 and 1916 Cervantes Centenary Activities. *Romance Quarterly*, 52(4), 294-311.
- [14] Shen, W. (2014). A comparison of women's views in chivalric literature and martial arts literature from the East and the West. *era Literature* (Second Half Month), (08). 175-177+188.
- [15] Triplette, S. (2018). Chivalry and the Female Reader in Part Two of Don Quijote. *cervantes*, 38(1), 81-119.
- [16] Xu, C. (2024). "Leaving" women: On the female consciousness of characters in 19th-century foreign literature. *Journal of Hanshan Normal Journal of Hanshan Normal University*, 45(4), 72-79.