Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Layson, Hana, and Glen Carman, project dirs. The World of Don Quixote: Digital Collections for the Classroom (Newberry Library). Other.

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dcc.newberry.org/collections/the-world-of-don-quixote.

The World of Don Quixote traces the different ideas that led Cervantes to *Don Quixote*. Bringing together this author's possible "paths" of thinking by way of a series of documents, this virtual depository, created by Hana Layson in conjunction with Glen Carman (2013–17) as part of the Newberry Library's Digital Collections for the Classroom project, not only exposes its audience to history and culture but also opens up an infinite number of possibilities to "live" and engage in *Don Quixote*'s cosmos. With this scope in mind, the electronic platform is intended, as noted by the editors in their introductory section, to be pedagogical—and I would add, transformative: "[t]he documents that follow [which are credited to be used for 'non-commercial, educational purposes'] offer teachers and students a deeper understanding of the world that Cervantes— and *Don Quixote*—negotiated" ("Introduction"). This objective has guided the authors to use a digitized interface as a means for dialogue between Don Quixote, the character, and their postmodern viewers. The general structure is organized pedagogically by the following question, which not only guides the discussion among its readers but also serves as an occasion for reflection: "How did Cervantes' *Don Quixote* respond to the social conditions and literary traditions of early modern Spain?" ("Introduction"). The assemblage includes seventeenth-century maps of Spain and Europe, a letter on behalf of Philip II regarding the Moriscos, illustrations from chivalry books read by Don Quixote, and a collection of forbidden books sanctioned by the Inquisition. It should be noted that every item in this digital catalogue contains metadata.

The introductory portion of this electronic library starts with background information on life during the early modern period in Spain. This was a world in which there co-existed vestiges of a glorious past—a culture rooted in a rigid feudal medieval lifestyle—and the rise of a Renaissance (not to mention a patrimony) of Spanish empire. Then, subsequently, it suffered a sudden economic collapse, bringing the Spanish people into a severe vigil of censorship by the Inquisition and the Castilian crown, a rise of violence against *conversos* (converts or New Christians) and *moriscos* (converts from Islam), and more.

Nevertheless, in this time, authors sought to continue pursuing their literary agendas. Yet, Cervantes knew how to negotiate his worldview with regard to early modern Spain through the creation of his masterpiece, *Don Quixote*, which critics have called the first modern and even postmodern novel. At the end of this section, the editors pose "questions to consider" for the purpose of perpetuating interactive conversations with their digital participants: "What was the geography of Spain in the seventeenth century?"; "What were the books that Don Quixote loved and that drove him insane?"; "How did the Inquisition shape the world of letters in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain?"; etc. ("Introduction").

Following the introduction, the next pieces from this digital structure are the compiling of maps and a corpus of digitized documents. "The Geography of Quixote's World" follows the roads that Don Quixote travels throughout the novel. It also includes seventeenth-century maps of Spain and Europe. These images, just as before, are guided by questions that not only facilitate discussion but also bring students to high-level thinking and evidence-based practices: for example, through the use of words and phrases such as "compare," "provide evidence," "what is the purpose of," "evaluate," "based on these excerpts," and others. Some of these inquiries, however, should be addressed in a way that allows for more open-endedness rather than brief replies: for example, instead of leading with "does" or "can you" interrogatives, implementing more "how" or "why" requests. Unrestrained questioning in this way can extend the discourse and at the same time guide the learning process. In addition, this section contextualizes geographically the world of Don Quixote. In terms of visualization, I would recommend adding captions that thoroughly explain the image in detail, and if possible, attaching an audio clip to the image to be more inclusive and accessible. This way, the experience would be more user- and student-friendly. Additionally, it would be beneficial if these images could be enlarged without sacrificing clear resolution. This would allow students and researchers to grasp details that could be useful for potential group discussions or independent research.

The language of the texts is accessible for a student audience; the site also provides all the essential content and context of the period and explains the making of the items examined in the collection. One of the highlights featured in this collection is a "Letter of King Philip II of Spain and Portugal" (1583) in which transcribed and accurately translated texts are provided. Documents

such as this one can be useful for analyzing linguistic and cultural dynamics of the period through new digital methods and tools.

The idea behind these artifacts is that to be in someone's shoes, one has to "live" in that individual's own sense of the world. "Quixote's Readings: The Chivalric Romance" brings to light the books that, as Cervantes writes, "dried out" Don Quixote's brain and stole his sanity (DQ I: 1). This "imaginary world" ("Quixote's Readings…"), as its creators call it, can take whoever navigates these interfaces to that Quixotic world. Perhaps this journey can even shed light upon why this character becomes insane, or maybe even make sense of his "logic." Some of the books presented in this array include *Le premier livre d'Amadis de Gaula* (1572), *Orlando furioso* (1584), and book extracts from some English *Quixote* editions (1731, 1780). These visuals portray picturesquely a world of heroic actions, with knights and horses battling against evil, juxtaposed to the act of reading—a Don Quixote who exercises the profession he calls *la andante caballería* (knight-errantry).

The last portion of this project captures the politics of "Reading and the Inquisition." It first describes an atmosphere of hostility and vigilance. This section narrates the book history and printing of early modern Spanish books, including ecclesiastical censors and indices of books forbidden by the Spanish Inquisition. Some of the items presented include Erasmus's *Adages* (1540), the *Index Expurgatorius Librorum* (1571, 1583), and a *Don Quixote* frontispiece (1780), with an illustration of a bonfire.

The World of Quixote provides an array of virtual interpolations that bring to life Cervantes's novel within the classroom; moreover, its computerized library takes us to the imaginary world of early modern Spain. This architecture also puts into dialogue the existence of Don Quixote and Cervantes, where readers are situated among chivalric romances, the Inquisition's censors, and the interplay between reality and idealism (or simply, irony), or a hidden message in the text. This "digital collection for the classroom" would help improve students' proficiency in Cervantes's work, but could also be useful for Don Quixote scholars and *aficionados*. Through The World of Quixote, its illustrations and its language, users can engage in a Quixotic colloquy, one that brings them closer to the character and the author. While the creators of this project warn that the material presented "should not be approached as neutral or objective documents" ("The Geography of Quixote's World"), this digital

collection nevertheless provides an opportunity to discourse and reflect on the "world" that Don Quixote perhaps perceived as uniquely his own.

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Real Academia Española (Royal Spanish Academy).
Corpus Diacrónico del Español (CORDE; Diachronic corpus of Spanish).
Database.
Madrid: Real Academia Española. Accessed 6 January 2021.
rae.es/banco-de-datos/corde.

The Corpus Diacrónico del Español (CORDE; Diachronic corpus of Spanish) and the complementary Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA; Reference corpus of current Spanish) together constitute a searchable database of the Spanish language from its first appearances in print to the present. CORDE covers texts prior to 1975, and CREA picks up from there. This review will focus exclusively on CORDE, although the design and methodology of the two are similar.

According to the Real Academia's introductory page, CORDE draws on a database of 250 million words from texts published across the Spanish-speaking world, "in prose and verse, and within each modality, in narrative, lyric, drama, technical-scientific, legal, religious, and journalistic texts" ("Home"; rae.es/banco-de-datos/corde).[1] As should be evident, this is an incredibly promising resource for scholars in any number of endeavours, both those using the results as a bibliographic tool and those seeking statistical information about word and language usage over time. However, as with any database, the quality of results is limited by the quantity of data in the system and the ease of access to that data.

Before addressing the question of CORDE's utility in practice, I will offer an outline of the interface and its functions. The home page allows the user to input under "Consulta" ("Search") any word or phrase, and to limit the search

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1. All translations of site material are my own. The site is exclusively in Castilian Spanish.