

Don Quixote of La Mancha and active aging in the Renaissance (1173)

1:30-3:00 p.m.
Monday February 23, 2015

A wonderful trend has swept across Spain; a literary figure has become a hero. Retirement homes in Spain are being named after Don Quixote and this elderly fictitious figure is attracting a great deal of attention among seniors. Cervantes (1547-1616) cunningly presents his hero Don Quixote as an insane man who leaves his home to embark upon a life of itinerancy, amorous pursuit, and strenuous physical activity in his fifties ?considered at the time the beginning of old age. Presenter Dr. Fernandez is a member of the Institute for the Humanities and a fellow of the Centre of Aging. As a professor at the University of Manitoba his specialty is Renaissance Spanish literature and history. Dr. Fernandez is presently working on a project about the literary figure of Don Quixote, who instead of 'retiring' as was expected from a person of his age and position at the time chose to become an itinerant knight. In spite of the ludicrousness that characterizes these adventures, Cervantes makes them appear so meaningful and enriching that the life chosen by the idealist Don Quixote has become an attractive existential choice, as many generations of readers and scholars prove.

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