

Abstract (in English)

Initially this Bachelor Degree Thesis studies the conception of the phenomenon of madness through different centuries. It analyses the ancient tradition of the medical aspect of this concept and it also elaborates in detail its symbolism in the so-called culture of folk humor. These dimensions, which evolved mostly in the Renaissance period, are explored due to its influence on meaning of madness in the masterpiece of Miguel de Cervantes *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*. Some other relevant pieces of art and literary works, which could have potential influence on the Cervantes' book, are also expounded. Finally, the existent interpretations of don Quixote's madness are summarized.

Key words

madness, melancholy, laugh, culture of folk humor, carnival, don Quixote, Cervantes, Bachtin, Foucault, Erasmus