

Helene Wolf, Sweden

Love – real and imaginary – in Cervantes' Don Quixote

Abstract:

When devoting himself to the mission of knight-errantry Don Quixote, in accordance with the chivalric tradition known to him through novels, seeks a lady to love and worship. A knight-errant without a lady to love is 'like a tree without leaves or fruit and a body without a soul', Don Quixote declares. But what is love – real and imaginary? In 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' from 1907 Freud explores love – delusionary and real – and later in 'Observations on Transference-Love' from 1915 he continues with transference-love and what we might call true love. Freud's scope is dreamlife, delusion, and love, in the psychoanalytic setting. In Cervantes' tale, Don Quixote transfers an idealized image of the woman to the imaginary character of Dulcinea del Toboso. The seemingly devoted bombastic love for the dreamlike Dulcinea promotes an idealized image of the knight-errant himself. In Jensen's *Gradiva* lost love is regained. What can *Don Quixote* and *Gradiva* teach us about love – real and imaginary – and about dreams and delusions, in real life or transferred in the psychoanalytic setting?