CONNECTION 1 – The Bridge to Terabithia + Imagination

* The best connection I made for this story was The Bridge to Terabithia. The Bridge to Terabithia is a movie that is all about this young boy and girl that travel to this magical land of imagination called Terabithia. In this magical land of Terabithia the kids use their imaginations to make everything they dream of come to life, including unicorns, trolls, and other crazy monsters. It is extremely like Don Quixote though, in that everything they imagine is actually something in real life, they’ve just chosen to look at it a different way. In the same way that Don Quixote sees sheep to be warriors in a great battle and windmills to be trolls that must be slain. The children in the Bridge to Terabithia see Squirrels as terrible beasts that are spies for a dark overlord, and they see pinecones as grenades. These kids so believed in his imagination that it altered reality for him, in the same way that Don Quixote’s imagination alters his reality. Basically Don Quixote is just a kid playing pretend in a grown up’s body that won’t stop playing when their parent says it’s time to come inside. And just like in the Bridge to Terabithia, in Don Quixote we are witnessing a fictitious reality set inside of actual reality that was created by someone’s over active imagination.
* Another connection I immediately made was to a popular movie called the Lego Movie. The movie is a story about this little Lego piece that goes on a miraculous adventure. The whole point of the story \*SPOILERS\* is that at the end of the movie, you realize that the whole adventure you just watched was a kid playing with Lego pieces in his basement, and the villain of the story was the kid’s dad who didn’t like the kid playing with his Legos. Basically the whole story was just a figment of a small kid’s imagination, another story kind of like Toy Story and Don Quixote, where imagination is a central theme.
  + Questions
    - In this story we see a man that is overcommitted to a fictitious reality created by his imagination, what’s another story where imagination is a central or foundational role?
    - Don Quixote is constantly seen making certain things into something they are not. He turns windmills into trolls, and a couple herds of sheep into great warrior tribes battling each other. What does this sort of imagery remind you of?
    - Did you guys ever play pretend as a kid? What did you do when you imagined things? Did you imagine things out of nothing or did you use something like a tree trunk to battle when you were imagining being a great knight?

CONNECTION 2 – The Unjust Justice System + Thomas More’s *Utopia*

* Another connection I made was between Don Quixote and one of our more recent texts in the class, Thomas More’s *Utopia*. In Utopia, Thomas describes an island of Utopia which is the perfect world. In this world exists a no-money economy. Money itself is considered to be useless and invaluable. One of the themes in Utopia has to do with the stupidity of Money being a defining factor of Power or Status. One quote from Utopia reads “They [the Utopians] do not understand why a dunderhead with no more brains than a post, and who is as depraved as he is foolish, should command a great many wise and good men simply because he happens to have a great pile of gold.” (Norton – pp. 2168) This idea is similar to ideas that are seen inside of Don Quixote, the idea that something as silly as gold or status should be the defining factor of power.
* This is heavily related to another theme In Don Quixote, which is an expression of the Unjust Justice System, where those with large amounts of money or status are excluded judgement for their crimes while those without money are imprisoned unjustly. We see a couple different situations where this is expressed. Such as the part of the story where D.Q. comes into contact a rich and unjust farmer. When you look at the situation broadly, glistening over the fact D.Q. is out of his mind, you see a picture of a rich and cruel man who has clearly broken the law and been unjust to his servant by denying him his pay and beating him. Yet this man is let off with nothing more than a warning by this supposedly righteous knight (a picture of law and order in the present situation) simply because he is rich and says that he is a knight as well. The clearly criminal man receives no punishment and ultimately continues being cruel and unjust. This is also expressed when D.Q. is at the Inn where he is dubbed a knight and begins to beat and murder random men who moved his Armor. When bystanders begin to throw rocks at D.Q. to get him to stop killing and hurting people, the book says the following “The landlord, meanwhile, kept calling for them to stop, for he had told them this was a madman who would be sure to go free even though he killed them all.”
* This sort of system where status elevates the rich to be above the Justice System and law and order is something that still exists today. Look at the Clinton family. Both, and Bill and Hillary Clinton have been caught or heavily suspected in scandals of national proportions, yet neither have received any criminal punishment because of their wealth and status. In fact, Hillary nearly became the president of the United States! But she was beaten out by President Donald Trump, a man who has committed hundreds of thousand dollars of tax fraud. Now if any normal person were to commit these crimes the punishment would be quick, exact, and final. Yet since these people are of elevated status with lots of money, instead of being punished for their crimes they have been rewarded with an opportunity to run the country.
  + Questions
    - What are some places in D.Q. where we see some pictures or allusions to Justice Systems or Law and Order?
    - How does money or Status affect these systems or those subject to them?
    - What are some other examples of an “Unjust Justice System,” or a system in which having money or status can change the rules for you - in either other works of literature, media, or reality.

CONNECTION 3 – Lanval, Lancelot + the Knight’s Princess

* The Last connection I made was the importance of The Knight’s Princess. It is explicitly explained and expressed in Don Quixote the importance that every Knight-errant must have a princess or Mistress that he is the champion for. A woman that he quests for, slays monsters for, and gives glory too. This is a tradition that is seen in just about every story that has a knight in it. It is the central focus of Marie de France’s *Lanval*. A story in which a knight is loved by a mysterious and angelic Mistress, who gives him everything he could ever desire, in exchange for nothing else but keeping their love a secret. Ultimately the knight is unable to keep this secret because of the great glory and honor that is found in the tradition of the Knight and the Princess. This idea where a knight must praise a princess is found in Don Quixote many times. In fact, on more than one occasion, D.Q. lashes out in physical anger towards people that refuse to praise his Princess. This is important because on many other accounts Don chalks up the actions of others to something like a demonic influence or his horse’s weakness, so he can rationalize the disagreements of others and adopt them into his insanity. But when it comes to matters concerning the praise of his princess, he is unable to accept it and lashes out.
* This idea is the main focus of the story of King Arthur and Lancelot, where the trope has been twisted and romanticized in the “forbidden love” style of classic Chivalric romance, not dissimilar to another of Marie’s works *Laustic/The Nightngale.* Yet another tale concerning a Knight and a princess. This theme extends to modern day in stories such as Rapunzel, and movies such as a Knight’s Tale.

PASSAGE

“…God be with you, and do not fail to do as you have promised, under that penalty that I have pronounced.” – this passage is Don Quixote speaking to the rich and cruel farmer, letting him off with a warning simply because he is rich and he says he is also a knight. Found on page 2377.

I chose this passage because it exemplifies the theme found in my second connection, the idea of the Unjust Justice System and how that system gives special exceptions to those of high money or social class.