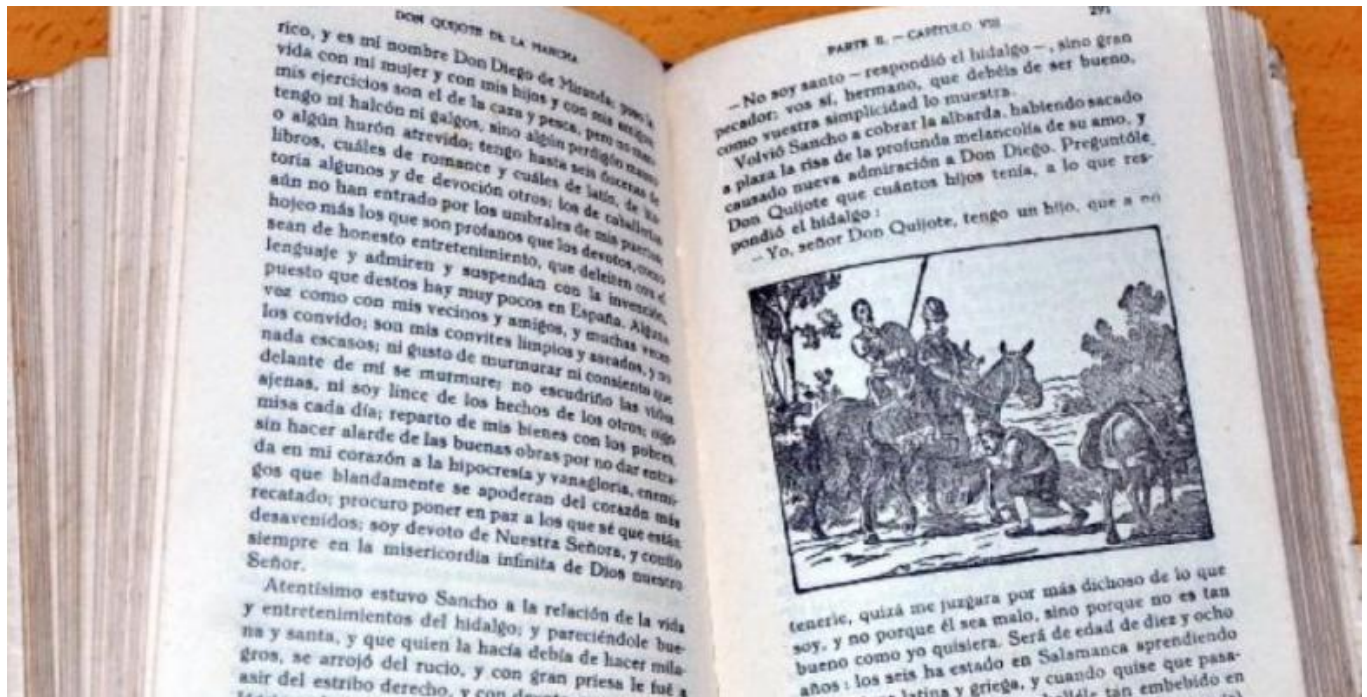


CRITICAL ZONE: On the importance of reading (one more time)

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Much have been said about the need to foster reading among youngsters...It is a win-win situation for all, though.

Do we read more, or less? It is hard to answer that question as no definitive data is provided. I do not believe people read less (as the action of reading itself, reading anything). It is impossible people read less as there is more information citizens have access to. The impact of visuality in recent times is also linked to the growing presence of technology in our daily life. But it is impossible to embrace such technology if we do not read, if we do not know how to read.

It is evident that reading books, printed or digitalized, has lost its charm. One of the main source of entertainment once, (reading) is today set aside by audiovisual products, videogames, and internet, with a wide range of possibilities and media: from a PC to a cellphone.

Reading a novel, a storybook, an essay, a newspaper...implies greater intellectual efforts that sitting behind a "monitor" does. We are also living in an accelerated world. Many people say: "I have no time to spend one hour reading." Nonetheless, we usually spend hours watching movies, series, or games in our cellphones.

However, the equation is not to quitting one thing to boosting the other. It is more like rediscovering the pleasure of reading, which certainly leads us to enhance our cultural knowledge. And new technologies are not an obstacle. They may be the medium to cope with such richness. Reading anything, either a printed book or a digitalized one; but reading.

Cultural expressions are complemented. But reading is still, so far, the base of the cultural pyramid.

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