



Denver Center
Theatre Company

Inside Out

A STUDY GUIDE

PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

MAY 1998



Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

THE CREATOR OF DON QUIXOTE

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in 1547 in the full tide of the Renaissance and in the very heart of Spain's Golden Age. The Spanish Empire was at the height of its power and fame; her epic heroes, Cortez and Pizarro, had conquered entire populations in the New World and released streams of gold that supported the military might of Charles V and Phillip II. Despite the rich American source of treasure, the defense of Spain exhausted the resources of her peasants and of her colonies, until at the

“In his tolerant moderation, his genial humor, his broad humanity, sensitive pride and courteous dignity, Cervantes was a true Spaniard.”

DON QUIXOTE

—Aubrey Bell, Cervantes.

defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, the country was too impoverished to recover. With the decline of Spanish power, England and the reformation countries of

Europe began their ascendancy.

Cervantes was born into poverty, the fourth son in a family of seven children. Though his father was a surgeon, he earned very little as a salaried employee at the University of Alcala de Henares, where Miguel was born, so it is doubtful Miguel received much formal education.

When he was 20, Miguel and his brother, Rodrigo,

“We do not laugh at Don Quixote any longer. His blazon is pity, his banner is beauty. He stands for everything that is gentle, forlorn, pure, unselfish, and gallant. The parody has become a paragon.”

—Vladimir Nabokov, Lectures on Don Quixote.



joined the army. Cervantes participated in the battle of Lepanto. This battle established Spanish superiority on the sea against the Turks. Miguel fought bravely, receiving two shots in the chest and a wound, which rendered his left hand useless for the rest of his life. His bravery earned him a recommendation from Don Juan, the Austrian half-brother of Phillip who commanded the Spanish forces. After a long convalescence, Cervantes rejoined the army to fight in campaigns in Tunis, Sardinia, Naples, Sicily and Genoa, where he learned much about Italian culture. Returning with Rodrigo to Spain, their ship was captured by pirates and both brothers were sold as slaves in Algiers.

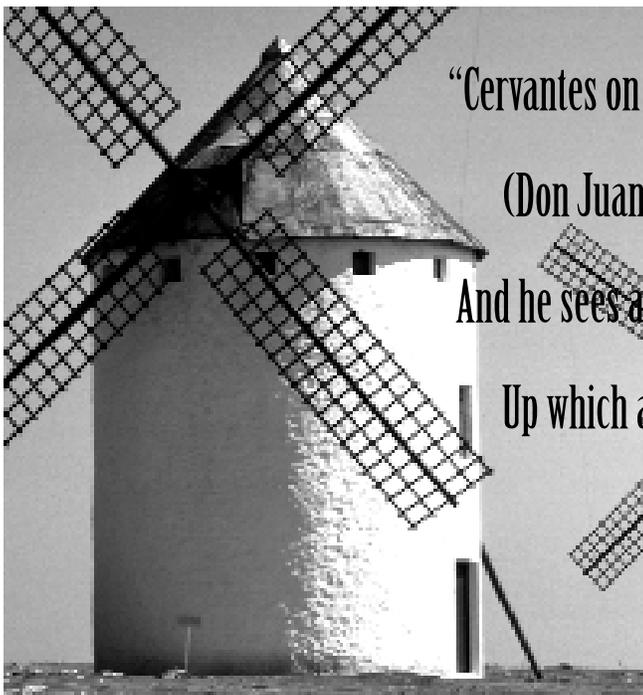
The story of his incredible bravery in those five years is almost legendary, for Cervantes schemed again and again, not only for his own escape, but for the liberation of his fellow slaves. He gained the admiration of the Dey of Algiers, Hassan Pascha, who always spared him. Finally, in 1579, Cervantes' ransom was negotiated.

In 1580, Cervantes returned to Spain, maimed, without any means of livelihood. He began to write for the theatre, but his plays were unsuccessful. During this time, he had an affair with a Portuguese girl, who eventually deserted him, leaving him to raise their daughter, Isabel. Later, Cervantes married the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, Catalina Salaza y Vozmediano, but the marriage was not a happy one. Because he had to support his wife, daughter, his mother, two sisters and mother-in-law, he took a job as a bookkeeper collecting foodstuffs for Spain's "invincible" Armada. It was during this period that

Cervantes came to know the Spanish peasant and his knowledge contributed to the creation of Sancho Panza.

Cervantes had no aptitude for bookkeeping and was twice imprisoned for owing money to the treasury. Imprisoned in Seville, he began to reflect on his life. It was there, most scholars speculate, that he began to write *Don Quixote*. Released from prison, misfortune continued to dog him, impeding his writing. Finally completed in 1604, *Don Quixote* Part I was an immediate best seller. Running into six editions a year after publication, the book gave Cervantes no further profit other than the initial payment of his publisher. Sixty-seven years old, still poor and in failing health, Cervantes began the sequel to *Don Quixote*, only to find that a pirate edition of his idea had become popular. To thwart this bogus publication, Cervantes quickly completed Part II.

Between the ages of 57 and 69, Cervantes published his *Exemplary Novels*, 12 stories of Spain, which gave perceptive accounts of local life. He also wrote the plays, *Eight Interludes* and *Eight Comedies*, and his last work, *The Troubles of Persiles and Sigismunda*, which is notable for its prologue dedicated to his once-patron, the ungrateful Count de Lemo. Cervantes, writing from his deathbed, began the prologue: "With one foot already in the stirrup and with the agony of death upon me, great lord, I write to you." Cervantes died in April, 1616, the same month and year that marks the death of William Shakespeare.



“Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in his sheath
 (Don Juan of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.)
 And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
 Up which a lean and foolish knight forever rides in vain.”

—G. K. Chesterton, *Lepanto* (1915).



BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CHARACTERS

Of the more than 400 characters who appear in the novel *Don Quixote*, the playwrights, Pavel Dobrusky and Luan Schooler, have included the following in this production:

Don Quixote: the knight-errant who goes on adventures to bring honor to his vocation and rid the world of evil.

Cervantes: the author and narrator.

Dulcinea: Don Quixote's imagined inspiration and lady love.

Niece: Antonia, niece of Don Quixote: she pleads to her uncle to stay home.

Padre: the busybody curate and spiritual supervisor of the Don's family.

Sancho Panza: a peasant and Don Quixote's squire.

Teresa: Sancho Panza's wife.

Freston: an evil magician referred to by Don Quixote.

Andres: husband, wife—partners in a slapstick trio.

Hamlet: Shakespeare's moody Dane who turns up as a corpse.

Monks and Basques: provincial types of clumsy speech and limited judgment.

Altisidora: arch, mischievous damsel in the Duchess's household who claims to love Don Quixote.

Innkeeper: sort of a rural constable in 17th-century Spain. He acts as lord of his domain just as a knight was lord of his castle.

The Cook and his puppet show: a combination of Maestro Pedro, the puppeteer of Book I, Chap. XXV and Don Quixote's reaction to the puppet show in Chap. XXVI.

Maritornes: the Innkeeper's Galician wife who plays Princess.

DON QUIXOTE: PARODY AND THEME



PHOTO BY GARY ISAACS

Parody: a literary or artistic work that broadly mimics an author's characteristic style and holds it up to ridicule. *American Heritage Dictionary.*

Early in the play Don Quixote's niece complains that her uncle spends so much time "reading absurd tales of knights and chivalry" that he neglects his responsibilities.² When Cervantes began to write *Don Quixote*, he said the book "would be a chastisement to those authors of pernicious inane novels of chivalry," such as *Amadis of Gaula* by Montalvo and *Don Belianes de Grecia*.³ As he wrote, he became less harsh and his book became a parody on chivalric novels, as well as a precedent for the burlesque humor, which has been an integral part of Spanish literature ever since. Though he despised the excesses, extravagances, exaggerations and mannerisms of these chivalric books, he loved the bravery, loyalty, sense of dedication and devotion to higher causes.

So Cervantes created Don Quixote, the knight-errant in an age when knight-errantry had been dead for centuries. Don Quixote attempts to set right the

wrongs of the world, to protect the weak and oppressed and to bring about what he called the "Golden Age," which to his mind was something akin to the "Kingdom of Heaven." He failed, to be sure, but he never relinquished his ideals, never retreated in the face of hardship, danger, disappointment and humiliation. He was sure that the effort had been worth the making. Perhaps Cervantes intended Don Quixote to

represent his country, Spain. "The analogy holds, for Spain had set out under Ferdinand and Isabella and Charles V to reform the world in the light of what Spaniards thought best, and Spain, too, had

Cervantes, and so too our playwrights, interplay reality with illusion and idealism. They ask why one cannot create one's own reality, a higher reality in the fields of art, politics and religion. Though the world may think the idealist mad, he/she may find a higher satisfaction within himself/herself that possibly could benefit others. For example, a computer company has used a series of magazine advertisements featuring faces of Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Ted Turner, Maria Callas, etc., with the caption "Think Different." Perhaps in Don Quixote's case, he did think differently and it was reality which was at fault.

Don Quixote, the first modern philosophic novel, is also "the complete novel of humanity, for its two characters, Don Quixote

"Romance seems to have a latent potential for parody and irony, waiting to be drawn upon by the writer and/or reader..."

failed... ." ⁴

As Cervantes failed to achieve material success in his lifetime, so Quixote failed to achieve his ideals in his. Seen as a madman, the world he wanted to revive never really existed. He discovered that one cannot live in an Utopian or poetic world, even though he is willing to accept the trials and suffering. Madness, in literature, is sometimes used to reveal, symbolize or become a vehicle for truths that cannot normally be perceived. In his madness, Quixote is on a more elevated plane than reality. However, he is eventually forced to accept the limitations of this imperfect world. But, the author is asking, what is reality? In the major theme of the book,

and Sancho Panza, represent not only the two most common types to be found in Cervantes' Spain, but also the two most common human types to be found anywhere."⁵ Quixote is the idealist and reformer—unselfish, long-suffering, striving for the good of mankind—while Sancho Panza is the utter realist, self-centered and seeking instant gratification for his animal needs. Taken together, these two represent the two sides of every man, and the writers seem to say that each person to be whole needs some of both in him/her. In order to adjust to reality and live in the real world, the idealist must temper his idealism with realism and "the realist must look upward

DULCINEA

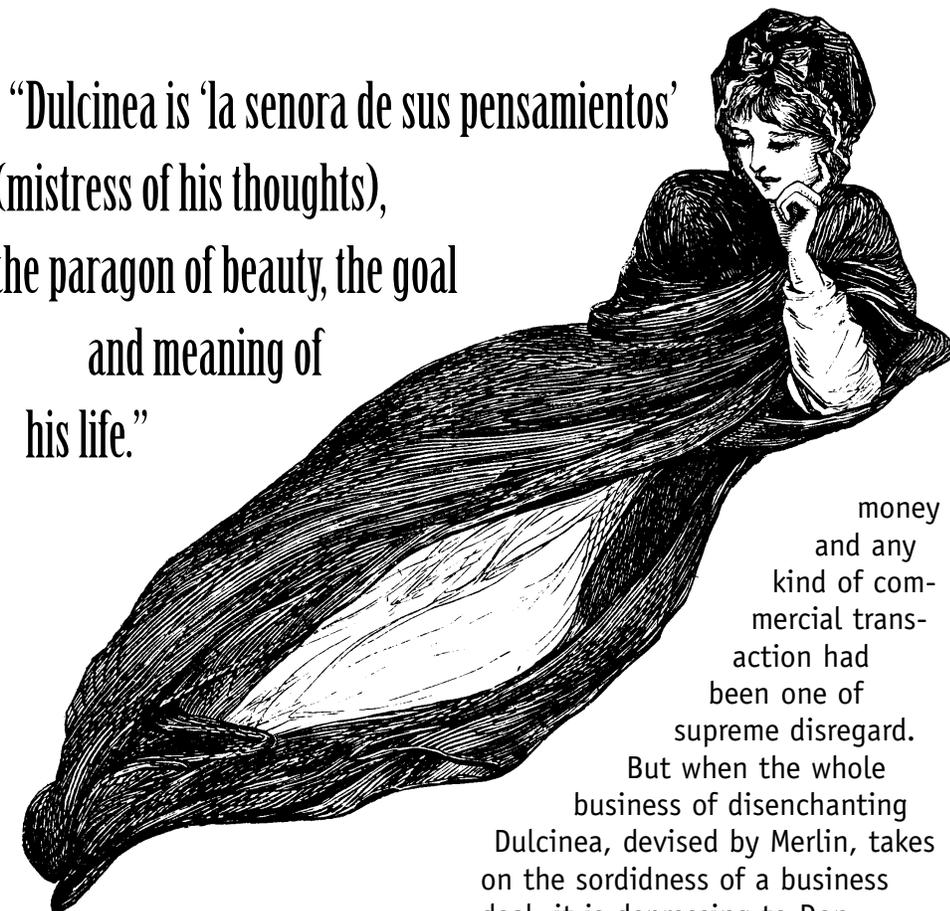
Dulcinea is one of the most extraordinary character conceptions in literature. She exists as pure idea in the mind of Don Quixote and is the professed motivation or justification for many of his actions. She has no physical presence, though in the novel her form is in Aldonza Lorenzo, who is spoken of, but never appears on the scene (unlike various modern stage and screen versions). In the terminology of mythological archetypes, she symbolizes the “anima,” the female element of man’s psyche which opposes the elements of the shadow, i. e., the enchanters.

She is the ultimate descendant of those perfectly idealized ladies, whom the poets of courtly love sang and swooned over, sighed and died for. “She is the beloved whose virtues have etherialized her right out of physical existence. She is the disembodied mistress.” 8

But the illusion becomes vulnerable when Sancho convinces Don Quixote into believing that an uncouth peasant girl is an enchanted Dulcinea. This “flesh and blood—portrayal of Dulcinea contaminates Don Quixote’s vision and he loses the freedom to portray her as his imagination dictates. Consequently, his beautiful dream becomes a crude joke fashioned by Sancho. As a result, the figurative Dulcinea becomes debased and transformed, first by Sancho and then by others, and Don Quixote is unable to break the spell. But, the worst is yet to come! Dulcinea’s image is further contaminated with money.

Don Quixote’s attitude toward

“Dulcinea is ‘la senora de sus pensamientos’
(mistress of his thoughts),
the paragon of beauty, the goal
and meaning of
his life.”



“There is **no** Dulcinea;
she’s made of flame and air.
And yet how **lovely** it
would seem if every man
could weave a dream
To **keep** him from despair.
To each his Dulcinea though
she’s only flame and **air**.”

—Mitch Leigh and Joe Darion. “To Each his Dulcinea.” *Man of La Mancha*.

money
and any
kind of com-
mercial trans-
action had
been one of
supreme disregard.

But when the whole business of disenchanting Dulcinea, devised by Merlin, takes on the sordidness of a business deal, it is depressing to Don Quixote and ridiculous to everyone else. Sancho has to “pay” for this by receiving 3,300 lashes on his rear. Naturally, he does not accept this without haggling; Sancho convinces his master to pay him so many pieces of silver per stroke, raises the price and finally cheats Don Quixote by faking the entire punishment. Could Dulcinea be more vulgarized?

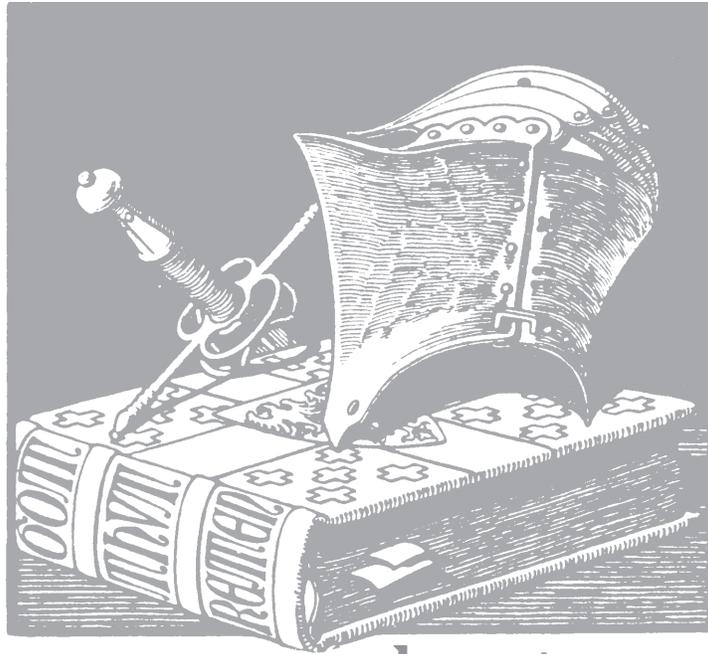
Dulcinea does not seem to be the symbol for anything, though the “anima” can be the soul; but her image is closely associated with what chivalry means to Don Quixote. Thus, when the charade of restoring her to what she once was ends in a fraudulent cash deal, we can compare Dulcinea to what was left of chivalry in 17th-century Spain. When the purchase of noble titles became widespread, it was the new age of Don Dinero (money) and the death of

PARODY AND THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DON QUIXOTE

Don Quixote, besides being a parody of chivalric romance, paints a picture of civilization in Spain from 1605 to 1615 that reveals Cervantes' opinion of many institutions. As Don Quixote questions reality, "so Europe was going through a time in which reality began to flip-flop. ... Don Quixote's abilities to fool himself are a focus of the age's anxieties. Identity, for the first time in European history, becomes a matter of opinion"9

One of the subjects Cervantes examines is the Church. He was a devout Catholic and found no fault with the dogma or doctrine of his religion, but he had little esteem for the ecclesiastic who acted as confessor in an aristocratic household. In the scene with the Duke and Duchess, the Bishop is portrayed as a parasite and intruder. He abuses his position by pretending to rule the grandee and teach him and everyone else his business, while passing judgment on everything. Likewise, the Padre in the play is pictured as narrow-minded and censorial when he organizes and presides at the book-burning.

Instilled in Cervantes, as in the majority of his compatriots, was the conviction that the governor and the magistrates are the enemies of the down-trodden and poor. "We know by ample experience that it does not require much cleverness or learning to be a governor," says Don Quixote in his instructions to Sancho Panza. 10 Thus, the description of Sancho Panza's government on the Island of Barataria satirized the administrative system of Spain. Though the squire tries his hand at fairness and reform, he is stymied by bureaucracy and the hostility of people surrounding him.



"I used to think in my heart that the only thing (my master) knew was what pertained to chivalry; but there is nothing he won't have a finger in."

—Sancho Panza

Cervantes criticized some of the learned scholars, among them lawyers and doctors. He ridiculed physicians in his portrayal of the doctor on Sancho Panza's island. The Doctor's advice consists solely of forbidding his master to eat anything and finally, Sancho Panza banishes the doctor with these words: "A trade that does not feed its master is not worth two beans." 11

In the play and novel one also meets some inhabitants of the road.

The inn-keeper stands at his door with his wife by his side, waiting to fleece travelers of quality. The wagoneers and muleteers arrive at the inn after crossing the deserts of Castile under a burning sun; they are a brutal and savage bunch; after eating, drinking and gambling, they usually fight. Then

there are the players and puppeteers of an itinerant group whose performance provides an enchanted illusion for Don Quixote.

Although Cervantes witnessed the return to favor of the titled nobility, he wrote little of these grandees who were prone to plunder and arrogance, because he was dependent on their patronage. However, he did portray the Duke and Duchess as amoral aristocrats who amuse themselves at the expense of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, though they give them bed and board. Cervantes saved his severest barbs for the lowest rung of Spanish nobility—the hidalgo. By making Don Quixote a hidalgo, the writer lets us see the absurdity of this society. The hidalgo's sole capital was his honor, inherited from ancestors who had fought for their faith. They had the "limpieza de sangre" (purity of blood), though they lacked property and servants to govern. They also had "executorias" (patent letters), which

exempted them from direct taxation and immunity from debtors' prison. These two factors lent them an outward appearance of superiority over the class of taxpayers (pecheros), peasants, artisans and the bourgeoisie. However, most hidalgos were victims of perpetual poverty and continuous hunger. Yet, work, especially manual labor, was considered ignoble and this "passion for ennoblement which affected Spain contributed to her decline by diverting men from certain forms of productive activity." 12

Some wealthy merchants sought to become a segment of nobility by trying to "pass" into higher social standing. Various monarchs, suffering from a lack of funds, sold "executorias de hidalgo" to merchants and wealthy landlords, who then ceased to take part in the active economy of the country. Each tried to preface his name by the title "Don," to which even the hidalgos had no legal right. But the practice became widespread and tended to be used

by all those who had reached a certain level in the social scale.

Thus, Don Quixote is a member of a social class, which is poor and without occupation. Living in one of the most desolate provinces of Spain and reading books on chivalry, he believes himself molded out of finer clay. He will not work, but, in his mind, he will restore virtue and honor—a dubious mind-set, at best. It is only by reflecting on the condition of Don Quixote that one can see the two elements that were opposed to each other but deeply bound up in the Spanish soul—idealism versus materialism. This combination produced a conflict both in social and individual life and is perfectly illustrated by those two inseparable characters: Don Quixote, the idealistic noble, and Sancho Panza, the materialistic peasant. "My history—will require a commentary to make it intelligible." *Don Quixote*, Book II, chap 3.

PUNS AND WORD-PLAY

In his book, *Lectures on Don Quixote*, Vladimir Nabokov says that proverbs, puns and word-play are one of the structural devices of *Don Quixote*. From *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* here are some of the most famous.

Which I have earned with the sweat of my brows. (Book I, 4, 22.)

Can we ever have too much of a good thing? (I, 6, 37.)

There's not the least thing that can be said or done, but people will talk and find fault. (II, 4, 70.)

Thank you for nothing. (III, 1, 94.)

A finger in every pie. (III, 6, 133.)

Let every man mind his own business. (III, 8, 157.)

Thou hast seen nothing yet. (III, 11, 190.)

My memory is so bad that many times I forget my own name. (III, 11, 195.)

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. (IV, 10, 322.)

Every man is as Heaven made him, and sometimes a great deal worse. (III, 4, 468.)

Luan Schooler and Pavel Dobrusky have parodied some of these puns and written their own. For example:

TERESA: When the sparrow leaves its eggs alone, it's the cuckoo that can't be blamed for what happens. (p. 5.)

When the spider weaves her web, the only smart fly is the one in the dung! (p. 5.)

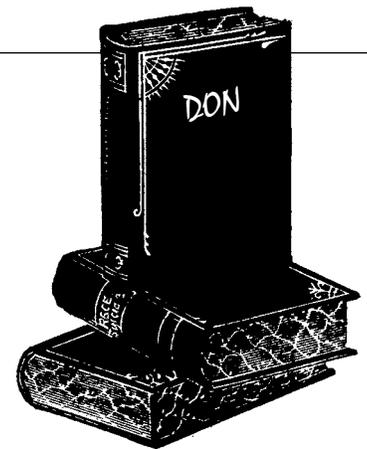
SANCHO: A bird in the hand is worth something even if it's not really in my hand yet. (p. 35.)

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush and what's good for the goose is not necessarily what cooks them. (p. 44.)

To which we say:

"Hanging is too good for a man who makes puns; he should be drawn and quoted."

—Fred Allen.



ACTIVITIES

FOR ELEMENTARY GRADES

1. **Collage:** Using magazine ads, make a collage of Dulcinea. Remember, she is always changing in Don Quixote's imagination.
2. **Friend or Foe** exercise

- a. What would Don Quixote think of such modern inventions as the airplane, telephone, television, computer, automobile, etc.?
 - b. Write his description of one of these inventions and describe and how he would deal with it.
 - c. Going to the front of the class, show what he thinks of this object. Is it a friend or enemy? Is it safe or dangerous?
3. **Create an adventure** exercise
 - a. Imagine Don Quixote and Sancho Panza saw Denver International Airport, the Denver Public Library, the sculpture outside the library (Lao Tsu), the State Capitol, Elitch Gardens, or something else in Denver.
 - b. Write the adventure the two would have with one of these structures.
 - c. Questions to ask: What is it? What does it do? Why is it here? What should we do with or about it?

4. **Puppet** Make a puppet of your favorite character in the play and invent an "adventure" for it.

5. **Magic Pond** exercise contributed by Nadine Caracciolo:

- a. Class gathers in a tight circle.
- b. Everyone generates heat by rubbing their palms together until they feel "fire at their fingertips," as in Tai Chi.

- c. The center of the circle becomes the water in the magic pond by the fingertip fire and everyone chanting together "OONGA POONGA POOF!"
- d. Encourage the students to really visualize the pond, the water. Describe what it looks like.
- e. Tell them to dip their hand in and feel the water. There is sand in the bottom of the pond. Have them dig their hands into the sand. There is something very small in the sand buried just for you.
- f. Ask them—"What did you find?"
- g. By "Oonga, Poonga, Poof"ing again, the pond can change to chocolate pudding, oatmeal, or something else. Taste it, wash your face and hair in it.
- h. Change it back to water to wash off.
- i. Transform it into a giant pond—dive into it standing up.
- j. Find something big in the water and bring it up to the surface—what did you find?

Skills: focus, sensory awareness, changing space.

6. **What's in the box** exercise from Johnstone, Keith. *Improv: Improvisation for the Theatre*. New York: Theatre Arts Book, 1989.

- a. Students have an imaginary box in front of them.
- b. They open it up and take something out of the box

- c. They are asked – what is it? What does it look, smell, taste, feel, sound like? How big? How heavy?

Skills: specificity, use of sense memory.

FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

1. Look up the word "quixotic" in the dictionary and see if you agree with the meaning given. Explain why or why not.
2. The novel, *Don Quixote*, has been called a "parody" by some critics and a "picaresque" novel by others. Look up the meanings of both words and explain which one describes the play best. Why?
3. Is Don Quixote out of touch with his times? Explain why or why not.
4. What evidence is there in today's world of a conflict between "the world of Don Quixote" and "the world of Sancho Panza?" Read some or all of the novel and consider these questions.
5. Edmund Wilson, writer and literary critic, once wrote that he had been bored by everything he had ever known about Spain, that he had learned no Spanish, and never "got through" *Don Quixote*. Write a letter to Wilson and comment on his statement.
6. Lionel Trilling, another writer and critic, stated that "all prose fiction is a variation on the theme of *Don Quixote*." Choose any novel with which you are familiar and comment on this contention.
7. Rent the movie musical *Man of La Mancha* and compare it to this production and/or the novel. What are the likenesses and differ

ences?

8. Read *Don Quixote* Part I, chapters 1, 6, 7 and chapters 2, 3, 4, and 72 in Part II. Don Quixote identifies himself with the fictional characters he reads about. With what fictional character have you identified and why?

9. Using these same readings, reflect on your own identity. Who are you? What sort of person do you hope to become?

10. Don Quixote is playing a role of knight-errant. Discuss the several roles you play each day. What role would you play to escape reality as the Don does?

11. In an essay on *Don Quixote*, the author says one of the themes is protest—the modern longing to destroy lies and conventions. Discuss his idea and if it exists in the play and/or the novel. (Arnoldo Mondalori. *Cervantes*. New York: American Heritage Press.)

12. **Where Charades** exercise contributed by Tim Threllfall Don Quixote was a traveler and so are you.

a. Divide the class into two or more groups.

b. Each group receives a piece of paper telling them where they are (examples: at a circus, a restaurant, a cemetery, a mall or a video arcade, in an airplane or a swimming pool, etc).

c. Using as many specific details as they can incorporate from their memories, the group creates the scene without words.

d. If the other groups are to guess what the scene is, make sure the class does not fall into the trap of trying to make theirs “tough” to guess.

e. The wheres can get less and less general the more advanced the class becomes, more skilled.

Skills: sense memory, physicalization, specificity, ensemble work.

13. **What are you doing?** exercise contributed by Jane Ryan Students pair up into partners A and B. A asks B “What are you doing?” and whatever B’s VERBAL response is, A does physically. B asks A “What are you doing?” and Whatever A answers VERBALLY which should not be what s/he is doing physically, B begins to do physically. This should go back and forth for several times, or perhaps could be done with the whole class as a chain rather than in partners.

Example:

B is combing hair

Person A (to B)

“What are you doing?”

Person B

“Tying my shoes.”

(A begins to tie shoe.)

Person B (to A)

“What are you doing?”

(A continues to tie shoe)

“Swatting a fly.”

(B begins to swat fly)

Person A (to B)

“What are you doing?”

(Person B continues to swat fly)

“Jumping up and down”

(A begins to jump up and down.)

Etc.

Skills: concentration, choice making, rhythm.

14. **No Ordinary Object** exercise contributed by Jill Meyers

a. Students can be divided into pairs, or work individually.

b. In front of the rest of the class, student or pair demonstrate themselves doing an ordinary activity using an ordinary object, such as brushing one’s hair, eating spaghetti, or reading a book.

c. The object that they are using becomes animated and turns on them. (They must clearly show how this happens.)

d. The object is now trying “to destroy” them. The student’s object is to survive the menace of the object. Their goal must be clung to fiercely.

e. In the end, the object wins.

Skills: specificity, concentration.

15. **Present Tense Journey**

exercise

Pair up students. Each participant is allowed one word at a time to describe an adventure she/he is taking. The journeys can be fantastical and involve monsters, aliens and non realistic circumstances. (Participants may link arms, hold hands or just stay in physical contact as they travel around the room describing and acting out the journey to the class.) It is not two people having an adventure but the pair equals “1.” They must use the pronoun “I” instead of “we.” The story must make logical grammatical sense in the context in which it is described. Because each student can only contribute one word at a time the journey will take some unplanned twists and turns. There is no preparation for this adventure, it is improvisational and happens in the “present tense.”

Skills: concentration, quick thinking, physicalization, focus, ensemble work, rhythm.

Notes

1. Riley, p. 35.
2. Schooler and Dobrusky, p. 2.
3. Chandler and Schwartz, p. 192.
4. Chandler and Schwartz, p. 193.
5. Chandler and Schwartz, p. 195.
6. Chandler and Schwartz, p. 196.
7. Davenport, p. 65.
8. Riley, p. 127.
9. Davenport, p. xvi.
10. Cervantes, Book II, chap. 42.
11. Cervantes, Book II, chap. 47.
12. Defourneaux, p. 43.

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U S WEST World Premiere. Commissioned by the DCTC.

Special thanks to the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust and the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation for supporting new American plays at the DCTC.

Inside Out is intended for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages.



Denver Center
Theatre Company

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A division of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts

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The Student Matinee program
is sponsored by

