

Basing his work partly on Cervantes's life experiences, Wasserman set his play in a Spanish prison, where Cervantes and his fellow prisoners act out scenes from Don Quixote.

Cervantes. I shall impersonate a man . . . enter into my imagination and see him! His name is Alonso Quijana . . . a country squire, no longer young. Bony and hollow-faced . . . eyes that burn with the fire of inner vision. Being retired, he has much time for books. He studies them from morn to night, and often through the night as well. And all he reads oppresses him . . . fills him with indignation at man's murderous ways toward man. He broods . . . and broods . . . and broods—and finally from so much brooding his brains dry up! He lays down the melancholy burden of sanity and conceives the
 10 strangest project ever imagined . . . to become a knight-errant and sally forth into the world to right all wrongs. No longer shall he be plain Alonso Quijana . . . but a dauntless knight known as—Don Quixote de La Mancha!!!

(The Prisoners giggle appreciatively as the transformation of Cervantes into Don Quixote takes place before their eyes. The Manservant, who will become Sancho Panza, assists with costume elements, props, and so forth.)

Don Quixote (*singing, a little tongue-in-cheek; an actor aware that he's performing*).
 20 Hear me now, oh thou bleak and unbearable world!
 Thou art base and debauched as can be;
 And a knight with his banners all bravely unfurled
 Now hurls down his gauntlet to thee!

I am I, Don Quixote,
 The Lord of La Mancha,
 My destiny calls and I go;
 And the wild winds of fortune will carry me onward,
 Oh whithersoever they blow.

Whithersoever they blow,
 30 Onward to glory I go! **G**

Sancho.
 I'm Sancho! Yes, I'm Sancho!
 I'll follow my master till the end.
 I'll tell all the world proudly
 I'm his squire! I'm his friend!

PARODY

Reread lines 1–30. What dramatic techniques does the playwright use to introduce Don Quixote and explain his transformation?

Don Quixote.

Hear me, heathens and wizards and serpents of sin!
All your dastardly doings are past;
For a holy endeavor is now to begin,
And virtue shall triumph at last!

*(They mount the “horses”—two dancers with wooden frames attached—
40 and ride away. As they ride, the horses dance a spirited flamenco and Don
Quixote points out to Sancho the sights along the way. They sing together.)*

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 the end.
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 proudly
I’m his squire!
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Don Quixote and Sancho.

50 Whithersoever they blow,
 Onward to glory we go!

*(At the conclusion of the song, they dismount and Sancho leads the
“horses” to the well to drink.)*

Don Quixote. Well, Sancho—how dost thou like adventuring?

Sancho. Oh, marvelous, Your Grace. But it’s peculiar—to me this
great highway to glory looks exactly like the road to El Toboso
where you can buy chickens cheap.

Don Quixote. Like beauty, my friend, ’tis all in the eyes of the
beholder. Only wait and thou shalt see amazing sights. **H**

60 **Sancho.** What kind?

Don Quixote. There will be knights and nations, warlocks,
wizards . . . a **cavalcade** of vast, unending armies!

Sancho. They sound dangerous!

Don Quixote. They *are* dangerous. But one there’ll be who leads
them . . . and he will be most dangerous of all!

Sancho. Well, who is he? Who?

Don Quixote. The Great Enchanter. Beware him, Sancho . . . for
his thoughts are cold and his spirit shriveled. He has eyes like little
machines, and where he walks the earth is blighted. But one day I
70 shall meet him face to face . . . and on that day—!

(He shakes his lance ferociously.)

H PARODY

What character contrast does the
dialogue in lines 54–59 establish?

cavalcade (kāv’əl-kād’) *n.* a
procession of people on horseback

Sancho (*sensibly*). Well, I wouldn't get upset, Your Grace. As I always say, have patience and shuffle the cards.

Don Quixote. Do you never run out of proverbs?

Sancho. No, Your Grace. I was born with a bellyful of them. I always say—

Don Quixote (*looking off as the projected shadows of a great windmill's sails cross the stage*). Aah-hah!

Sancho. What is it?

80 **Don Quixote.** How long since we sallied forth?

Sancho. About two minutes?

Don Quixote. So soon shall I engage in brave, unequal combat!

Sancho. Combat? Where?

Don Quixote. Can't not see? (*pointing*) A monstrous giant of infamous repute!

Sancho (*looking vainly; the "horses" are interested, too*). What giant?

Don Quixote.

It is that dark and dreaded ogre

By the name of Matagoger!

You can tell him by the four great arms awirling on his back!

90 **Sancho.** It's a windmill.

Don Quixote (*shouting*).

Ho! Feckless giant standing there!

Avast! Avaunt! On guard! Beware!

(*He charges off.*)

Sancho. No, no, Your Grace, I swear by my wife's little black mustache, that's not a giant, it's only a— (*Offstage a crash; the horses run for cover. To musical accompaniment the combat continues as Sancho dances about, dodging first Quixote's helmet which comes flying back onstage, then the butt of his lance, splayed and splintered. The final crash; and Quixote crawls back into view, his sword a corkscrew. A doleful picture, he comes rolling downstage as Sancho hurries to plump himself down and stop him.*) Didn't I tell you? Didn't I say, "Your Grace, that's a windmill"? ❶

Don Quixote (*hollowly*). The work of my enemy.

Sancho. The Enchanter?

Don Quixote. He changed that giant into a windmill at the last moment. He will take any advantage in order to— (*a pause; an illumination*) Sancho, it comes to me!

Sancho. What, Your Grace?

❶ **PARODY**

Identify three examples of **visual humor** in lines 96–102.

110 **Don Quixote.** How he was able to upset me. It is because I have never properly been dubbed a knight.

Sancho. That's no problem. Just tell me how it's done and I'll be glad to take care of this drubbing.

Don Quixote. Dubbing. Thank you, my friend, but it may only be done by another knight.

Sancho (*dismayed*). *That's* a problem. I've never *seen* another knight.

Don Quixote. The lord of some castle would do. Or a king or a duke.

Sancho (*helping Quixote to his feet*). Very well. I'll keep an eye out for any kings or dukes as we go.

120 **Don Quixote** (*looking off*). Ahaaa!

Sancho (*apprehensively*). Now what?

Don Quixote. The very place!

Sancho. Where?

Don Quixote. There!

Sancho. If Your Grace would just give me a hint . . . ?

Don Quixote. There in the distance. A castle!

Sancho (*peering vainly*). Castle.

Don Quixote. Rockbound amidst the crags!

Sancho. Crags.

130 **Don Quixote.** And the banners—ah, the brave banners flaunting in the wind!

Sancho. Anything on 'em?

Don Quixote (*shielding his eyes*). I see a cat crouching on a field tawny . . . and beneath it the inscription "Miau"!

Sancho. Oh, that's fine, Your Grace. Maybe this is where you can get yourself drubbed.

Don Quixote. Dubbed. (*excitedly*) Blow thy bugle that a dwarf may mount the battlements and announce our coming!

Sancho (*under the spell, lifts his bugle then hesitates*). But I don't see
140 a castle. I do see something . . . maybe it's an inn. ❶

Don Quixote (*sadly*). An inn.

Sancho. We'd better pass it by, Your Grace. Those roadside places are full of rough men and women.

Don Quixote. Come. We shall ride straight to the drawbridge of yon castle, and there thy vision may improve!

(The lights fade to transition lighting as Quixote and Sancho drop out of character.)

❶ **PARODY**

Reread lines 120–140. What causes the misunderstanding between Sancho Panza and Don Quixote?