

Lesson 17

This lesson covers pages 462-481 in the text, and will focus on satire in Voltaire's *Candide* and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. First read Robert DeMaria Jr.'s introduction to satire on pages 462-464. Identify ambiguities, contradictions, and ironies in the excerpt from Voltaire's *Candide* (pages 467-470), and watch how the satire is enhanced through the use of exaggeration, understatement, and character names. Compare the satiric elements in *Candide* with *The Rape of the Lock* from Lesson 16.

In the second half of the lesson, read the excerpt from *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes (pages 475-479), taking note of how elements from medieval romances and heroic epics are manipulated into the parodic form. Compare the use of the foil, Sancho Panza, to the character of Enkidu in *Gilgamesh* (Lesson 2). Look at elements or phrases from *Don Quixote* that have entered the modern vernacular.

English 12

Lesson 17

CONNECTING TO WORLD LITERATURE

The Sting of Satire

by Robert DeMaria, Jr.



You have just read the famous English satire *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift and an excerpt from Alexander Pope's mock-epic poem *The Rape of the Lock*. In this Connecting to World Literature feature, you will read excerpts from two famous satirical novels from other parts of the world:

Voltaire from **Candide** (France)

Miguel de Cervantes from **Don Quixote** (Spain)

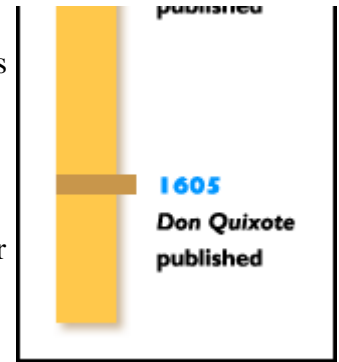
A **satire** is any piece of writing designed to make its readers feel critical — of themselves, of their fellow human beings, of their society. Some satires, like Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (see page 453), are intended to make us laugh at human foolishness and weakness; these satires are good-natured and laugh-provoking. Other satires, like Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (see page 430), may make us laugh, but it is often laughter of a bitter kind, arising from anger and indignation at human vices and crimes.

Neither Nice Nor Neutral: The Purposes of Satire

No matter how humorous a satire may be, its ultimate purpose is most often serious: Satirists are dissatisfied with things as they are, and they want to make them better. Instead of giving constructive advice, though, satirists focus solely on what is



wrong with the world and its inhabitants. They use exaggeration to make folly, vice, and vanity appear ridiculous, and therefore unattractive. We must not expect satirists to be objective or neutral, to present both sides of a question, or to show the good and bad traits of a character. Instead, we must understand that satire is fueled by extravagant exaggeration and wild generalization: Lawyers are greedy, politicians are corrupt, scholars are boring. Satirists make fun of vicious, selfish, mean-spirited people in the hope that we will see aspects of ourselves in such people and mend our ways. Thus, satirists perform an important function in society: They expose errors and absurdities that we no longer notice because custom and familiarity have blinded us to them.



The Uses of Satire

Satire is the most various of all literary forms, appearing in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. It is also one of the oldest. In its crudest form, invective (another word for “name-calling”) satire is probably as old as civilization. The more formal satire found in the literature of the West was mostly influenced by ancient Greek and Roman writers.

Throughout history, satire has traditionally thrived whenever repressive governments are in power and their obvious corruptions can be ridiculed. Times of prosperity and indulgence, when reckless spending and greed prevail — when upper classes “sup” while the lower classes starve — are likewise eras when satirists flourish.

Scathing Humor: The Weapon of the Satirist

One of the most useful techniques available to the satirist is **parody**, a mocking imitation of a writer’s style or of a particular genre. Often, the style being parodied is applied to a trivial subject. Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock*, for example, parodies the epic style to describe the theft of a lock of hair. Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (see page 475) parodies the chivalric romance, finding its satire in the incongruity that arises from the clash between the romantic and the real. Parody can only be used successfully by writers who are familiar with many works of literature and who understand and appreciate style.

The Great Age of Satire

Satire thrived across western Europe, beginning early in Italy and cropping up later in Spain, most famously in Cervantes’s parody of medieval romances, *Don Quixote* (1605). Throughout his comic novel, Cervantes ridicules the often tangled and confusing passages that are hallmarks of chivalric romances. The narrator tells us that Don Quixote read so many romances that “his brain dried up.” Many passages from such tales are so convoluted that “Aristotle himself would not have been able to understand them, even if he had been resurrected for that sole purpose.” Wickedly, Cervantes quotes literally from a tale by a sixteenth-century writer whose language is so exaggerated that Cervantes does not need to embellish it further: “The reason of the unreason that afflicts my reason, in such a manner weakens my reason that I with reason lament me of your comeliness.”

The great age of Western satire began in the latter half of the seventeenth century and lasted until the middle of the eighteenth century — a time of great social stability, especially in England and France.

The Fate of Satire: Make Way for Romanticism

At the end of the eighteenth century, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and several other events shattered the peaceful climate that had prevailed until then. Most European governments became less restrictive, and the kind of oppositional temper that marks satire and parody became harder for writers to call forth. Amid the efforts to build new nations, satire and parody gave way to attempts to recapture the grandeur of the old epics and romances. Human nature was celebrated as naturally good and noble rather than

criticized as corrupt and mean.

While some later writers, such as Lord Byron and Charles Dickens, did write masterful satirical works, people, for the most part, sought to glory in the achievements of their cultures. The Romantic lyric, the extended elegy, and the epic narrative became the most popular literary forms in the West in the early part of the nineteenth century. Too much critical honesty finally seemed to be more than society could bear. As one character in Molière’s play *The Misanthrope* says:

“In certain cases it would be uncouth
And most absurd to speak the naked truth;
With all respect for your exalted notions,
It’s often best to veil one’s true emotions.
Wouldn’t the social fabric come undone
If we were wholly frank with everyone?”

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Voltaire

(1694–1778)



François-Marie Arouet, better known by his pen name, Voltaire, is remembered chiefly for his lifelong fight against injustice. Throughout his life, he implored his fellow philosophers to “crush the infamous,” by which he meant all things inhumane and oppressive. As a satirist, philosopher, historian, dramatist, and poet, Voltaire continually criticized the wastefulness of war, the intolerance of organized religion, and indifference to the plight of the poor.



Born in Paris to middle-class parents, Voltaire studied law for a time but soon gave it up to become a writer. His reputation was established early, based on his classical tragedies and his lampoons of the government. Still, even his celebrity did not prevent Voltaire from being brutally beaten at the hands of an offended nobleman, imprisoned in the Bastille, and exiled to England in 1726.

In London, Voltaire met Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope and was deeply influenced by the works of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, which emphasize the experimental method in science. When he returned to Paris, Voltaire wrote philosophical essays and historical studies that reflect this influence. Voltaire debunked traditional approaches to writing history, preferring to write philosophical treatises on morals. These essays

were not abstract, but focused on how people actually lived and worked according to their moral principles. His efforts were not well-received, however, by the people in power. The publication of his most formidable work, *Essay on the Morals and the Spirit of the Nations from Charlemagne to Louis XIII*, caused the book to be banned and Voltaire to be exiled.

Aside from his voluminous correspondence and hundreds of pamphlets on every issue of his time, Voltaire wrote in every literary genre. Of his numerous romances and tales, *Candide* has proved to be the most enduring. Voltaire had little patience for purely metaphysical speculation. This emphasis on modest but practical achievement is reflected in the last page of *Candide*: “Let us work without arguing... it’s the only way to make life enduring.”

Voltaire lived much of his later life near the Swiss border with France. He died during a rare visit to Paris, taken at age eighty-three to see his last play produced. Initially refused a Christian burial, Voltaire’s remains were interred in Paris with great ceremony thirteen years later, following the revolution so greatly influenced by his ideas for reform.

BEFORE YOU READ

from *Candide*

Make the Connection

Voltaire’s *Candide* tells the tale of the woes that befall a naïve young man named Candide. The novel’s subtitle, “Optimism,” reflects the fact that Candide is brought up to believe that his world is the best of all possible worlds. (Many people liked to believe this during the Enlightenment.) Candide and his beloved, Cunegonde, suffer a series of disasters, which Voltaire narrates with verve and wit. Yet the humor never obscures Voltaire’s deeper messages: Optimism is foolish in a world where people’s lives are all too often shaped by cruel social forces, and humankind and its social institutions stand in need of reform.

Literary Focus

Satire

Satire is a kind of writing that ridicules human weakness, vice, or folly in order to bring about social reform. Satires often try to persuade the reader to do or believe something by showing the opposing view as absurd, vicious, or inhumane. Expert satirists use a variety of tools to undermine their opponents’ beliefs. As you read the excerpts from *Candide*, look for five techniques in particular: outrageous exaggerations, deadpan understatements, warped logic (absurdities dressed up as common sense), improbable situations, and ridiculous names.

Satire is a kind of writing that ridicules human weakness, vice, or folly in order to bring about social reform.

For more on Satire, see the Handbook of Literary and Historical Terms.

Background

In the tumultuous social climate of eighteenth-century Europe, writers, scientists, and philosophers questioned accepted truths in ways they never had before. Yet direct challenges to authority can be dangerous. Thus satire, with its indirect criticism and deflating humor, became for many the weapon of choice. In *Candide*, Voltaire satirizes the calamities that befall Candide, an innocent who has been schooled

by the repellent Doctor Pangloss to believe that everything happens for the best. In the first two chapters, Voltaire holds up for ridicule the castle and the army — two of the most important social institutions of eighteenth-century Europe. He also targets the theories of the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz, who believed that a rational God made a rational world in which everything, including evil, has a place and a purpose. Voltaire's Doctor Pangloss directly echoes Leibniz every time he proclaims, "In this best of all possible worlds... all is for the best."

FROM CANDIDE

from Candide

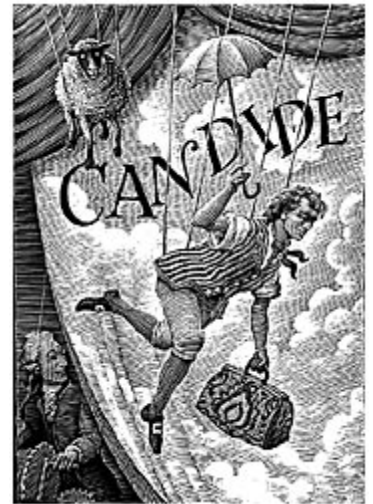
Voltaire

translated by Richard Aldington

Chapter I

How Candide was brought up in a noble castle and how he was expelled from the same

In the castle of Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh in Westphalia there lived a youth, **endowed** by Nature with the most gentle character. His face was the expression of his soul. His judgment was quite honest and he was extremely simple-minded; and this was the reason, I think, that he was named Candide. Old servants in the house suspected that he was the son of the Baron's sister and a decent honest gentleman of the neighborhood, whom this young lady would never marry because he could only prove seventy-one quarterings, and the rest of his genealogical tree was lost, owing to the injuries of time. The Baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia, for his castle possessed a door and windows. His Great Hall was even decorated with a piece of tapestry. The dogs in his stables formed a pack of hounds when necessary; his grooms were his huntsmen; the village curate was his Grand Almoner. They all called him "My Lord," and laughed heartily at his stories. The Baroness weighed about three hundred and fifty pounds, was therefore greatly respected, and did the honors of the house with a dignity which rendered her still more respectable. Her daughter Cunegonde, aged seventeen, was rosy-cheeked, fresh, plump, and tempting. The Baron's son appeared in every respect worthy of his father. The tutor Pangloss was the oracle of the house, and little Candide followed his lessons with all the **candor** of his age and character. Pangloss taught metaphysico-theologo-cosmolonigology. He proved admirably that there is no effect without a cause and that in this best of all possible worlds, My Lord the Baron's castle was the best of castles and his wife the best of all possible Baronesses. "Tis demonstrated," said he, "that things cannot be otherwise; for, since everything is made for an end, everything is necessarily for the best end. Observe that noses were made to wear spectacles; and so we have spectacles. Legs were visibly instituted to be breeched, and we have breeches.




Stones were formed to be quarried and to build castles; and My Lord has a very noble castle; the greatest Baron in the province should have the best house; and as pigs were made to be eaten, we eat pork all the year round; consequently, those who have asserted that all is well talk nonsense; they ought to have said that all is for the best." Candide listened attentively and believed innocently; for he thought Mademoiselle Cunegonde extremely beautiful, although he was never bold enough to tell her so. He decided that after the happiness of being born Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, the second degree of happiness was to be Mademoiselle Cunegonde; the third, to see her every day; and the fourth to listen to Doctor Pangloss, the

greatest philosopher of the province and therefore of the whole world. One day when Cunegonde was walking near the castle, in a little wood which was called The Park, she observed Doctor Pangloss in the bushes, giving a lesson in experimental physics to her mother's waiting-maid, a very pretty and docile brunette. Mademoiselle Cunegonde had a great inclination for science and watched breathlessly the reiterated experiments she witnessed; she observed clearly the Doctor's sufficient reason, the effects and the causes, and returned home very much excited, **pensive**, filled with the desire of learning, reflecting that she might be the sufficient reason of young Candide and that he might be hers. On her way back to the castle she met Candide and blushed; Candide also blushed. She bade him good morning in a hesitating voice; Candide replied without knowing what he was saying. Next day, when they left the table after dinner, Cunegonde and Candide found themselves behind a screen; Cunegonde dropped her handkerchief, Candide picked it up; she innocently held his hand; the young man innocently kissed the young lady's hand with remarkable **vivacity**, tenderness, and grace; their lips met, their eyes sparkled, their knees trembled, their hands wandered. Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh passed near the screen, and, observing this cause and effect, expelled Candide from the castle by kicking him in the backside frequently and hard. Cunegonde swooned; when she recovered her senses, the Baroness slapped her in the face; and all was in **consternation** in the noblest and most agreeable of all possible castles.

Chapter II

What happened to Candide among the Bulgarians

Candide, expelled from the earthly paradise, wandered for a long time without knowing where he was going, turning up his eyes to Heaven, gazing back frequently at the noblest of castles which held the most beautiful of young Baronesses; he lay down to sleep supperless between two furrows in the open fields: It snowed heavily in large flakes. The next morning the shivering Candide, penniless, dying of cold and exhaustion, dragged himself toward the neighboring town, which was called Waldberghoff-trarbk-dikdorff. He halted sadly at the door of an inn. Two men dressed in blue noticed him. "Comrade," said one, "there's a well-built young man of the right height." They went up to Candide and very civilly invited him to dinner. "Gentlemen," said Candide with charming modesty, "you do me a great honor, but I have no money to pay my share." "Ah, sir," said one of the men in blue, "persons of your figure and merit never pay anything; are you not five feet five tall?" "Yes, gentlemen," said he, bowing, "that is my height." "Ah, sir, come to table; we will not only pay your expenses, we will never allow a man like you to be short of money; men were only made to help each other." "You are in the right," said Candide, "that is what Doctor Pangloss was always telling me, and I see that everything is for the best." They begged him to accept a few crowns, he took them and wished to give them an IOU, they refused to take it, and all sat down to table. "Do you not love tenderly..." "Oh, yes," said he. "I love Mademoiselle Cunegonde tenderly." "No," said one of the gentlemen. "We were asking if you do not tenderly love the King of the Bulgarians." "Not a bit," said he, "for I have never seen him." "What! He is the most charming of kings, and you must drink his health." "Oh, gladly, gentlemen." And he drank.

 "That is sufficient," he was told. "You are now the support, the aid, the defender, the hero of the Bulgarians, your fortune is made, and your glory assured." They immediately put irons on his legs and took him to a regiment. He was made to turn to the right and left, to raise the ramrod and return the ramrod, to take aim, to fire, to march double time, and he was given thirty strokes with a stick; the next day he drilled not quite so badly, and received only twenty strokes; the day after, he only had ten and was looked on as a **prodigy** by his comrades. Candide was completely mystified and could not make out how he was a hero. One fine spring day he thought he would take a walk, going straight ahead, in the belief that to use his legs as he pleased was a privilege of the human species as well as of animals. He had not gone two leagues when four other heroes, each six feet tall, fell upon him, bound him, and dragged him back to a cell. He was asked by his judges whether he would rather be thrashed thirty-six times by the whole regiment or receive a dozen lead bullets at once in his brain. Although he protested that men's wills are free and that he wanted neither one nor

the other, he had to make a choice; by virtue of that gift of God which is called liberty, he determined to run the gauntlet thirty-six times and actually did so twice. There were two thousand men in the regiment. That made four thousand strokes which laid bare the muscles and nerves from his neck to his backside. As they were about to proceed to a third turn, Candide, utterly exhausted, begged as a favor that they would be so kind as to smash his head; he obtained this favor; they bound his eyes and he was made to kneel down. At that moment the King of the Bulgarians came by and inquired the victim's crime, and as this King was possessed of a vast genius, he perceived from what he learned about Candide that he was a young metaphysician very ignorant in worldly matters, and therefore pardoned him with a **clemency** which will be praised in all newspapers and all ages. An honest surgeon healed Candide in three weeks with the ointments recommended by Dioscorides. He had already regained a little skin and could walk when the King of the Bulgarians went to war with the King of the Abares.

RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

from *Candide*

Reading Check

1. Who is Candide and what do we know of his background and character? (Where did his name come from?)
2. What is Doctor Pangloss's philosophy?
3. Why is Candide expelled from the Baron's castle?
4. How does Candide become a soldier in the Bulgarian army?
5. Why is Candide sentenced to run the gauntlet?

Thinking Critically

6. **Satire** relies on many techniques usually associated with comedy. Five such techniques are exaggeration, understatement, warped logic, improbable situations, and ridiculous names. On a sheet of paper, draw a chart like the one below and list as many examples of each technique as you can find in this excerpt from *Candide*. Your list will be very long!

Exaggeration	
Understatement	
Warped Logic	
Improbable Situations	
Ridiculous Names	

7. Do people like Doctor Pangloss still exist in today's worlds of education, politics, or religion? Where and why do you still hear people saying things like "It's all for the best"?
8. How does Voltaire use **exaggeration** in Chapter II to satirize disciplinary practices in the Prussian

Army? What point do you think he is trying to make?

9. As Chapter II illustrates, Candide suffers every time he exercises what he believes to be his free will. According to Voltaire, what forces get in the way of a person's exercise of free will?
10. What details of character and plot in *Candide* parody, or mock, the popular romances that still appear on today's bestseller lists or in the movies or on TV soap operas? Why do you think such romances continue to appeal to many people?

Extending and Evaluating

11. Voltaire wrote *Candide* more than 230 years ago. In your opinion, how well has his satire held up? What value, if any, does *Candide* hold for someone growing up in today's world? Does Voltaire's underlying message against intolerance, cruelty, and smugness still apply? Explain your response.

Comparing Literature

12. In what ways is Voltaire's satire like Alexander Pope's in *The Rape of the Lock* (see page 453)? Consider these techniques of satire as you compare the two texts:
 - target of the satire
 - use of humor
 - use of exaggeration
 - use of improbable situations
 - use of ridiculous names
 - expression of tone (lighthearted or bitter?)

WRITING

Analyzing Humor

Refer to the chart you filled out for question number 6 on page 471. Use the details you gathered on that chart to write a brief **analysis** of Voltaire's humor. When you analyze something, you take it apart and examine its elements to see how it works. The chart will show you many techniques used by Voltaire to ridicule his characters and to make us laugh. At the end of your essay, describe the targets of Voltaire's satire.

Use “Writing a Literary Essay,” pages 500–507, for help with this assignment.

Candide Onstage

In 1956, Leonard Bernstein and Richard Wilbur brought their musical comedy based on *Candide* to the Broadway stage. (The photographs in the text are from a later production of that musical.) Try your hand at adapting these two chapters of *Candide* as a **play** for the stage. You will have to identify your main characters and the sets. You can pick up a great deal of your dialogue from the text itself.

Vocabulary Development

Word Information Charts

endowed	consternation
candor	prodigy
pensive	clemency
vivacity	

Using a dictionary, make a chart of basic information about each Vocabulary word listed above. The first one has been done for you.

endowed

- **Meaning:** “provided with”
- **Origin:** Old French *en-*, “in,” and *dotare*, “to endow”
- **Related Words:** *endow* (v.); *endowment* (n.)
- **Examples** (things that can be endowed): money, talent, scholarships

[Open the Online Notebook to write your responses.](#)

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Miguel de Cervantes

(1547–1616)



Miguel de Cervantes, son of a wandering apothecary, or druggist, was born near Madrid, Spain, in 1547. In 1569, Cervantes, seeing no prospects at home, enlisted in the army, fought valiantly, and was wounded at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. His left hand was crippled, earning him the nickname *el manco de Lepanto* — “the one-handed man of Lepanto.”



[More About Miguel de Cervantes](#)

Cervantes hoped to be promoted to an army captain after the war, but his plans were ruined when he was captured by Barbary pirates and held as a slave for five years in Algeria. He returned to Spain in 1580, jobless, in debt, and without any hope of regaining his army career. Over the years he worked as a playwright, bureaucrat, and tax collector before finally landing in jail for failure to pay his debts. Many of those debts had accrued as a result of his family’s scraping together the ransom money to buy his freedom from the pirates.

According to legend, it was while he was in jail that the idea for *Don Quixote* came to Cervantes. His hero, Don Quixote, is a poor, aging landowner who reads nothing but romantic tales of chivalry. As he teeters on the edge of insanity, the old man becomes convinced that he is a knight-errant, even though the age of knights is long past.

The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha was published in January of 1605 and immediately caused a sensation. Once the first edition sold out, pirated (illegally printed) copies began to appear. Six editions were issued in the first year, and translations into French and English appeared within ten years. It seemed that everyone in Spain, and soon everyone in Europe, was laughing at the adventures of the ridiculous knight Don Quixote.

Cervantes, at the age of fifty-eight, was now a famous author, but he was still poor. As was common until the nineteenth century, authors were at the mercy of publishers and were seldom able to retain the copyrights on their books. Thus, *Don Quixote*'s publisher, not Cervantes, reaped the lion's share of the book's profits. Spain's greatest writer died in poverty on April 22, 1616 — one day before Shakespeare. To his family, Cervantes left many debts. To the world he left a comic masterpiece that earned him the title of father of the modern novel.

BEFORE YOU READ

from *Don Quixote*

Make the Connection

Don Quixote is a comic lampoon of the medieval romances that audiences of Cervantes's era continued to devour. But beneath the parody, *Don Quixote* makes a poignant comment on universal human qualities. Even as we laugh at Don Quixote, we realize that there is something of him in all of us. Like Don Quixote, who wished he had lived in an earlier age, and like Cervantes himself, who wished he were a military hero, most of us cherish unlikely dreams. In *Man of La Mancha*, Dale Wasserman's musical adaptation of *Don Quixote* for the stage, Quixote sings of his need "to dream the impossible dream." We can no more relinquish our dreams than he could, without giving up an important part of our inner selves.

The "impossible dream" aspect of Cervantes's novel led to a new adjective in English: *quixotic*. The word describes a dreamer who is well-intentioned but impractical. What quixotic heroes can you think of — from movies, comic strips, television shows, or books? What traits do they share? What keeps them going, no matter what happens?

Literary Focus

Parody

A literary **parody** is an imitation of a work of literature for amusement or instruction. Parodies often make the characteristics of someone or something seem ridiculous by transferring them to a ridiculous subject. To achieve this, parodies use exaggeration, verbal irony (saying one thing and meaning another), incongruity (deliberately pairing things that don't belong together), and humorously twisted imitation. Cervantes pokes fun at every aspect of the medieval romance and its heroic knights. Quixote sees himself as a knight of old, but his armor is rusty, his horse is a nag, and the giants he battles turn out to be windmills.

Parody is the imitation of a work of literature for amusement or instruction.

For more on Parody, see the Handbook of Literary

Background

Initially, Cervantes intended *Don Quixote* to lampoon tales of chivalry and courtly romances, stories from the medieval period about romantic love and knightly adventure, which were still eagerly read by the audience of Cervantes's time. In these stories, idealized knights fought villains, dragons, and monsters, and embarked on quests in honor of ladies to whom they had sworn their love. Such heroes stood for military values such as honor, courage, and loyalty, combined with Christian values such as piety, courtesy, and chastity.

FROM DON QUIXOTE

Don Quixote is a middle-aged gentleman of La Mancha. Unlike most gentlemen, he no longer hunts or attends to his property but spends all of his time reading books about chivalry. As a result of his constant preoccupation with these fanciful tales, he goes mad.

With his mind full of images of adventure and enchantment from his books, Don Quixote decides to become a knight-errant and go forth in search of adventure. He takes down the family's rusty armor and names his bony old nag Rocinante. He knows that as a knight-errant, he must also have a fair lady to whom he may dedicate his dangerous battles and noble deeds. He chooses a country girl whom he hardly knows, Aldonza Lorenzo, and renames her Dulcinea del Toboso.

Don Quixote sets out to right all the injustices in the world, but before his adventures can really begin, his friends and family trick him into returning home. They treat him as a lunatic and refuse to let him read the books that led him into his madness.

Back in his home village, Don Quixote meets a poor farmer named Sancho Panza whom he persuades to serve as his squire. One night, Don Quixote and Sancho secretly ride out and begin their adventures.

The excerpt you are about to read from Chapter 8 relates what happens when Don Quixote and Sancho catch sight of thirty or forty windmills.

from Don Quixote

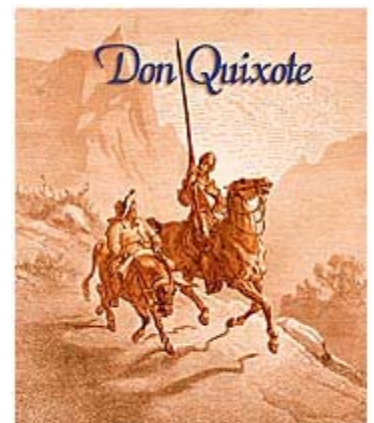
Miguel de Cervantes

translated by Samuel Putnam

from Chapter 8

Of the good fortune which the valorous Don Quixote had in the terrifying and never-before-imagined adventure of the windmills, along with other events that deserve to be suitably recorded.

At this point they caught sight of thirty or forty windmills which were standing on the plain there, and no sooner had Don Quixote laid eyes upon them than he turned to his squire and said, "Fortune is guiding our affairs better than we could have wished; for you see there before you, friend Sancho Panza, some thirty or more lawless giants with whom I mean to do battle. I shall deprive them of their lives, and with the spoils from this encounter we shall begin to enrich ourselves; for this is righteous warfare, and it is a great service to God to remove so accursed a breed from the face of the earth."



“What giants?” said Sancho Panza.

“Those that you see there,” replied his master, “those with the long arms, some of which are as much as two leagues in length.”


“But look, your Grace, those are not giants but windmills, and what appear to be arms are their wings which, when whirled in the breeze, cause the millstone to go.”

“It is plain to be seen,” said Don Quixote, “that you have had little experience in this matter of adventures. If you are afraid, go off to one side and say your prayers while I am engaging them in fierce, unequal combat.”

Saying this, he gave spurs to his steed Rocinante, without paying any heed to Sancho’s warning that these were truly windmills and not giants that he was riding forth to attack. Nor even when he was close upon them did he perceive what they really were, but shouted at the top of his lungs, “Do not seek to flee, cowards and vile creatures that you are, for it is but a single knight with whom you have to deal!”

At that moment a little wind came up and the big wings began turning.


“Though you flourish as many arms as did the giant Briareus,” said Don Quixote when he perceived this, “you still shall have to answer to me.”

 He thereupon commended himself with all his heart to his lady Dulcinea, beseeching her to **succor** him in this peril; and, being well covered with his shield and with his lance at rest, he bore down upon them at a full gallop and fell upon the first mill that stood in his way, giving a thrust at the wing, which was whirling at such a speed that his lance was broken into bits and both horse and horseman went rolling over the plain, very much battered indeed. Sancho upon his donkey came hurrying to his master’s assistance as fast as he could, but when he reached the spot, the knight was unable to move, so great was the shock with which he and Rocinante had hit the ground.

“God help us!” exclaimed Sancho, “did I not tell your Grace to look well, that those were nothing but windmills, a fact which no one could fail to see unless he had other mills of the same sort in his head?”

“Be quiet, friend Sancho,” said Don Quixote. “Such are the fortunes of war, which more than any other are subject to constant change. What is more, when I come to think of it, I am sure that this must be the work of that magician Frestón, the one who robbed me of my study and my books, and who has thus changed the giants into windmills in order to deprive me of the glory of overcoming them, so great is the **enmity** that he bears me; but in the end his evil arts shall not prevail against this trusty sword of mine.”

“May God’s will be done,” was Sancho Panza’s response. And with the aid of his squire the knight was once more mounted on Rocinante, who stood there with one shoulder half out of joint. And so, speaking of the adventure that had just befallen them, they continued along the Puerto Lápice highway; for there, Don Quixote said, they could not fail to find many and varied adventures, this being a much-traveled thoroughfare. The only thing was, the knight was exceedingly downcast over the loss of his lance.


 “I remember,” he said to his squire, “having read of a Spanish knight by the name of Diego Pérez de Vargas, who, having broken his sword in battle, tore from an oak a heavy bough or branch and with it did such feats of valor that day, and pounded so many Moors, that he came to be known as Machuca, and he and his descendants from that day forth have been called Vargas y Machuca. I tell you this because I too, intend to provide myself with just such a bough as the one he wielded, and with it I propose to do such exploits that you shall deem yourself fortunate to have been found worthy to come with me and behold and witness things that are almost beyond belief.”

“God’s will be done,” said Sancho. “I believe everything that your Grace says; but straighten yourself up in the saddle a little, for you seem to be slipping down on one side, owing, no doubt, to the shaking up that you received in your fall.”


“Ah, that is the truth,” replied Don Quixote, “and if I do not speak of my sufferings, it is for the reason that it is not permitted knights-errant to complain of any wound whatsoever, even though their bowels may be dropping out.”

“If that is the way it is,” said Sancho, “I have nothing more to say; but, God knows, it would suit me better if your Grace did complain when something hurts him. I can assure you that I mean to do so, over the least little thing that ails me — that is, unless the same rule applies to squires as well.”

Don Quixote laughed long and heartily over Sancho’s simplicity, telling him that he might complain as much as he liked and where and when he liked, whether he had good cause or not; for he had read nothing to the contrary in the ordinances of chivalry. Sancho then called his master’s attention to the fact that it was time to eat. The knight replied that he himself had no need of food at the moment, but his squire might eat whenever he chose. Having been granted this permission, Sancho seated himself as best he could upon his beast, and, taking out from his saddlebags the provisions that he had stored there, he rode along leisurely behind his master, munching his **victuals** and taking a good, hearty swig now and then at the leather flask in a manner that might well have caused the biggest-bellied tavern-keeper of Málaga to envy him. Between drafts he gave not so much as a thought to any promise that his master might have made him, nor did he look upon it as any hardship, but rather as good sport, to go in quest of adventures however hazardous they might be.

 The short of the matter is, they spent the night under some trees, from one of which Don Quixote tore off a withered bough to serve him as a lance, placing it in the lance head from which he had removed the broken one. He did not sleep all night long for thinking of his lady Dulcinea; for this was in accordance with what he had read in his books, of men of arms in the forest or desert places who kept a wakeful **vigil**, sustained by the memory of their ladies fair. Not so with Sancho, whose stomach was full, and not with chicory water. He fell into a dreamless slumber, and had not his master called him, he would not have been awakened either by the rays of the sun in his face or by the many birds who greeted the coming of the new day with their merry song.

Upon arising, he had another go at the flask, finding it somewhat more **flaccid** than it had been the night before, a circumstance which grieved his heart, for he could not see that they were on the way to remedying the deficiency within any very short space of time. Don Quixote did not wish any breakfast; for, as has been said, he was in the habit of nourishing himself on savourous memories. They then set out once more along the road to Puerto Lypice, and around three in the afternoon they came in sight of the pass that bears that name.

 “There,” said Don Quixote as his eyes fell upon it, “we may plunge our arms up to the elbow in what are known as adventures. But I must warn you that even though you see me in the greatest peril in the world, you are not to lay hand upon your sword to defend me, unless it be that those who attack me are rabble and men of low degree, in which case you may very well come to my aid; but if they be gentlemen, it is in no wise permitted by the laws of chivalry that you should assist me until you yourself shall have been dubbed a knight.”

“Most certainly, sir,” replied Sancho, “your Grace shall be very well obeyed in this; all the more so for the reason that I myself am of a peaceful **disposition** and not fond of meddling in the quarrels and feuds of others. However, when it comes to protecting my own person, I shall not take account of those laws of which you speak, seeing that all laws, human and divine, permit each one to defend himself whenever he is attacked.”

“I am willing to grant you that,” assented Don Quixote, “but in this matter of defending me against

gentlemen you must restrain your natural impulses.”

“I promise you I shall do so,” said Sancho. “I will observe this precept as I would the Sabbath day...”

RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

from Don Quixote

Reading Check

1. After being knocked down by the windmill, how does Don Quixote explain the fact that he has not killed a giant?
2. What natural human needs does Don Quixote ignore? How does Sancho Panza, in contrast, satisfy those same needs?

Thinking Critically

3. In his **parody**, Cervantes uses the techniques of **exaggeration**, **verbal irony**, **incongruity**, and **humorous imitation**. List one example of each technique used in this selection.
4. Cervantes directly pokes fun at the medieval romance every time Don Quixote obeys one of the rules of knighthood, or “ordinances of chivalry,” as he understands them. List three such “rules” that Don Quixote cites.
5. Put simply, an idealist, or romantic, views the world as he or she thinks it ought to be; a realist views the world as it is. Is Don Quixote an idealist or a realist? Which role does Sancho Panza fit? Cite evidence from the text to support your conclusions.
6. A **foil** is a character who is used as a contrast to another character. In what ways is Sancho Panza a foil to Don Quixote? Identify the behaviors of the two men that suggest they are opposites.

Comparing Literature

7. How do Don Quixote’s optimism and idealism compare with Candide’s (see page 467)? Do both of these characters “tilt at windmills,” or do they manifest their philosophies in profoundly different ways? Explain your responses.
8. Cervantes parodies the medieval romance in *Don Quixote*, and Alexander Pope mocks the literary epic in *The Rape of the Lock* (see page 453). What satiric techniques do these two lampoons share?

WRITING

A Modern-Day Parody

Imagine Cervantes writing a parody today. Select some form of written communication that you imagine he would relish lampooning, and then write a **parody** of your own. You may choose from such forms of writing as the multiple-choice test, the memoir, the business memo, the advice-column letter, or the political-campaign speech. Before you begin writing your parody, decide what the target of your satire will be. Then, use one or more of Cervantes’s tools — exaggeration, verbal irony, incongruity, humorous imitation — to write a parody of your own.

Vocabulary Development

Question and Answer Charts

succor victuals flaccid
enmity vigil disposition

Work with a group or alone to find out what you know about the meanings of the Vocabulary words listed above. Make up two questions about each word, and organize your answers in a chart. After you've completed charts for all the words, invite someone else to answer your questions. The first word has been done for you.

succor	
Questions	Answers
How would you <u>succor</u> someone who has been injured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• get medical help• try to make him or her comfortable
In what situations might you be required to <u>succor</u> someone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• when someone falls off a horse• when someone faints

[Open the Online Notebook to write your responses.](#)