

First & Last Name

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Engl. 2332

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Text: Don Quixote

Passage: “He then inquired if Don Quixote had any money on his person...they also carried shirts and a little box of ointment for healing the wounds they received” (Cervantes 2689).

“Having furnished himself with shirts and all the other things that the innkeeper had recommended, he and Panza rode forth one night unseen by anyone and without taking leave of wife and children, housekeeper or niece.” (Don Quixote Part I, Chapter 7, p.2700)

Question: How does Cervantes provide an impression of rationale in a seemingly irrational setting?

Issue: Issues of Theme. A theme pervasive in Don Quixote is one of satire with specific reference to romantic chivalry. In these passages, Don Quixote displays a complete lack of rationality in his decision to engage in adventures worthy of a knight-errand. He strictly follows all of the guidelines as he has seen established in the many novels he has read. In contrast, Don Quixote does exude some semblance of wisdom, which deviates from the customs outlined in the romantic novels.

Critical Approach: The Deconstruction approach is the most appropriate for this passage and question. Deconstruction is a comparison of two polar opposites. Throughout Cervantes’ literary work, we see the struggle between irrational and rational behavior as exhibited by the

title character, Don Quixote. He embarks on adventures that lack any sense of reasonableness. Yet, there is some semblance of rationality exhibited in his interactions.

Answer:

We are introduced to Don Quixote as a man incredibly intrigued by novels of romance and chivalry. He is so enamored with the thought of being a knight-errand that he secures and modifies a complete set of armor. Next, he creates a name for himself, his horse, and even for a neighbor that he now feels is his “great lady.” It is clear that Don Quixote is a man that is about to embark on a journey without much forethought and with no apparent objective other than to contend with battles as they arise, as those do in the books he has been poring through. He departs with nothing but his horse, his armor, his new name and his desire for adventure.

Don Quixote’s first day as a “knight-errand” is rather uneventful until he encounters an innkeeper that he mistakes as the lord of a castle. Among some humor in the interactions with the “damsels” and the innkeeper himself, he later finds himself enjoying a meal. As the evening unfolds, the innkeeper has a rather private conversation with Don Quixote. During which, the innkeeper inquires wither Don Quixote has any money with him. Don Quixote’s remark is a stark “no” and he offers that during all his reads, he has ever once heard of a knight-errand carrying any money. The innkeeper tells him that he has been misinformed and states that every knight carries extra shirts and plenty of money with him on each journey. Don Quixote offers no response to the innkeeper’s comments at the time, but they play a significant role just a few pages later.

On his next journey Don Quixote opts to take a companion, Sancho Panza, with him. Just prior to his next adventure, we observe Don Quixote engaged in “a little thinking” prior to his journey. During this time, he includes shirts and the other items recommended by the

innkeeper. In yet another uncertain and illogical situation, we witness Don Quixote implement a form of logic that is incongruent with his beloved novels.