

COMMENTARY OF  
MAN OF LAMANCHA

At face value--on the level of the content--the Man of LaMancha is a subtle call to unfaith. Only it is issued from 'another worldly stance which makes it even more enticing and dangerous--especially for this body. It calls men to live out of the fact that they create reality, but rejects the "nevertheless" that reality is also given. This "other world" cannot stand in the midst of this world, but must reject it. Don Quixote comes out and announces himself in effect as "I am I, the master of imagination, wherever I am, I make it what I want, Oh what glory this is." He wants adventure; presto--the next thing a windmill becomes the challenge. He wants a castle; presto the next building an inn becomes one. What is Dulcinea? She is his ideal of the way life ought to be. His whole life is dedicated to serving this 'noble' piece of life and ignoring the other parts of life. And the quest, the impossible dream? It matters not the context, nor the comprehensiveness, not the relevance of that quest, it matters only to dedicate oneself fully and passionately...that is the epitome of humanness. Hitler himself could have written that song. He poured himself without question or cause, in the face of the world forces against him into the dream of the pure race', the Fatherland. The denial of this world is most clearly revealed in the confrontation with the knight with the mirrors. Don Quixote's 'either/or' stance breaks him; he cannot say the "nevertheless" word, so he acknowledges reality as given by deciding to die. In the last moments of his life at the words of encouragement of his friends he reverses himself and pronounces the chasing of ghosts as the glory of his life. Following any impossible dream no matter what it is for the sake of dedicating oneself to a reduced ideal part of light is the last thing in the world that genuine humanness is about.

Yet when looked at symbolically, the Man of LaMancha portrays the experience of the man of faith. This man lives out of the givenness of reality that is 'nevertheless' always created. This other world is in the midst of this world. He announces to the world that "I am I, the man of sorrow; the one for whom everything becomes my destiny and I live the glory of laying down my life for all. He takes the tangential indirect line of attack on the depth problems. For a thisworld man, our whistle points, especially the myth, seem the actions of a crazy man. He figuratively sees a scrawny, illequipped man of bygone ages attacking a windmill! The man of faith sees through the refusal of life to the depth affirmation of life. He knows an inn to also be a castle, for he knows a deep secret. He knows that no matter how much man may try to refuse life or put it on his own terms, the mysterious power always claims victory--that all things finally serve and glorify the Lord. Hence, he can see the virtue in the whore and call upon that in his relationship to her. His Dulcinea is the Lord of all creation, which he perceives in every creature. The impossible dream of the man of faith is the carrying the burden of responsibility for all of creation, for history itself. He knows that only in submission to the fate of creation and in giving his life for it, can he save the world. He knows that to be authentically human is to live in self-conscious service and love of God. Yet the man of faith is no ideal. He is real flesh and blood, and often takes the wrong direction in serving the Lord. And in such circumstances, the Lord is not subtle. Everything becomes a mirror to reflect the error; and the man of faith is crushed by the revelation and weeps with pain. He is faced with a life and death decision: do I right myself or follow my path that I've set? And he does both, for the path he has set in the broadest context is serving God by caring for the world, and this enables him to change directions. The life of such a man transforms the world and brings forth authentic humanness.

Kathryn Convey

MAN OF LAMANCHA

Symbolic Centrum

Fall Quarter, 1972 Movie Conversation December 30, 1972

RECALL THE MOVIE

1. What scenes struck you?
2. What lines do you recall?
3. What major characters do you remember? Minor characters?
4. What music and songs do you remember?

REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE  
OF SEEING THE MOVIE

1. What scenes did you like? Dislike?
2. What troubled you about the movie?
3. What intrigued you?
4. What was the mood of the group?

PROBE THE MEANING  
OF THE MOVIE

1. What was this movie about?
2. What did Cervantes see as the indicative? (as reality, the given)
3. What Don Quixote see as the indicative?
4. How did each of these operate relative to the indicative?
5. What happened in people's lives?

CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF THE  
MOVIE AS A WHOLE

1. Where did you see universal benevolence? Integrity? Fulfillment?
2. How did this occasion a shift in your consciousness?
3. What souvenirs will you take away from this movie?
4. What might be the use of the movie?