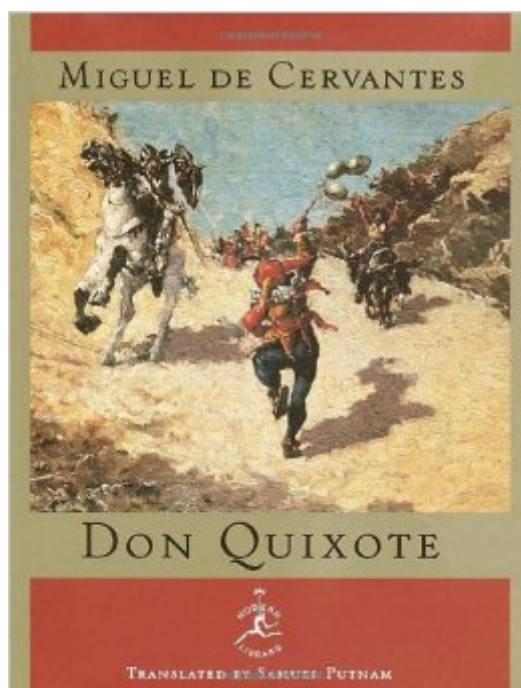


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Don Quixote De La Mancha (Modern Library (Hardcover))



Synopsis

Don Quixote is practically unthinkable as a living being," said novelist Milan Kundera. "And yet, in our memory, what character is more alive?"----Widely regarded as the world's first modern novel, Don Quixote chronicles the famous picaresque adventures of the noble knight-errant Don Quixote de La Mancha and his faithful squire, Sancho Panza, as they travel through sixteenth-century Spain. This Modern Library edition presents the acclaimed Samuel Putnam translation of the epic tale, complete with notes, variant readings, and an Introduction by the translator.----The debt owed to Cervantes by literature is immense. From Milan Kundera: "Cervantes is the founder of the Modern Era. . . . The novelist need answer to no one but Cervantes." Lionel Trilling observed: "It can be said that all prose fiction is a variation on the theme of Don Quixote." Vladimir Nabokov wrote: "Don Quixote is greater today than he was in Cervantes's womb. [He] looms so wonderfully above the skyline of literature, a gaunt giant on a lean nag, that the book lives and will live through [his] sheer vitality. . . . He stands for everything that is gentle, forlorn, pure, unselfish, and gallant. The parody has become a paragon." And V. S. Pritchett observed: "Don Quixote begins as a province, turns into Spain, and ends as a universe. . . . The true spell of Cervantes is that he is a natural magician in pure story-telling."The Modern Library has played a significant role in American cultural life for the better part of a century. The series was founded in 1917 by the publishers Boni and Liveright and eight years later acquired by Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer. It provided the foundation for their next publishing venture, Random House. The Modern Library has been a staple of the American book trade, providing readers with affordable hardbound editions of important works of literature and thought. For the Modern Library's seventy-fifth anniversary, Random House redesigned the series, restoring as its emblem the running torchbearer created by Lucian Bernhard in 1925 and refurbishing jackets, bindings, and type, as well as inaugurating a new program of selecting titles. The Modern Library continues to provide the world's best books, at the best prices.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (1,106 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Edith Grossman's is the hot new translation, but there may be a tendency to confer too much praise on a fresh reading. From what I have sampled, I have no doubt of Grossman's excellence, but this is not the "definitive" DQ (no one's is), and frankly, after some comparison of the early chapters, I've decided to spend my time with Burton Raffel's translation, now only a decade old. Raffel sometimes opts for a colloquial word or two, but it's never jarring, and his overall style seems not only less pretentious to me than Grossman's, but a superior combination of a modern reading with a traditional "tone." Tone and style are important, and Raffel sometimes makes Grossman seem too abstract or fussy, though this is difficult to describe. Raffel's phrasing is more focused and vigorous than Grossman's--though both are said to be accurate. Let me offer a couple of examples that shifted me toward Raffel:

Grossman: "Some claim that his family name was Quixada, or Quexada, for there is a certain amount of disagreement among the authors who write of this matter, although reliable conjecture seems to indicate that his name was Quexana. But this does not matter very much to our story; in its telling there is absolutely no deviation from the truth."

Raffel: "It's said his family name was Quijada, or maybe Quesada: there's some disagreement among the writers who've discussed the matter. But more than likely his name was really Quejana. Not that this makes much difference in our story; it's just important to tell things as faithfully as you can." (Notice how Raffel makes immediately clear in the last sentence what Grossman so literally translates.

Note: .com seems to have a hard time linking reviews to specific editions - it makes a difference. This review is of the Modern Library edition, ISBN-0679602860, translated by Samuel Putnam. I am reposting it, hoping it will link correctly this time).-----When you approach reading (or rereading) a "classic" work you really, mostly, don't have to think about whether to read it -- that decision was either made by someone assigning it to you or, more

wonderfully, by you, yourself deciding to swim contra-current against the cultural waters... following Neil Young's advice to "turn off that MTV." So. You are going to read it. And, if you are paddling the .com, here, you are going to buy and OWN it. The question really becomes which edition you should own. This is the one. It's a fine translation - surprising in its avoidance of archaic language. It has a nice structure - the inevitable notes are available but not obtrusive. This edition, the Modern Library hardback edition, translated by Putnam, is also a nice book to own. It isn't one of those pretty faux-leather "shelf-candy" copies that'll break your wallet first. This is a hardworking book - the essence of the Modern Library idea. But it is a wonderful packaging of the whole 1000+ pages that is both readable and shelvable. No thousand-page paperback will survive an actual reading as anything you would want excepting as backup next to the latrine. Did I mention that it is a great book, great story? Well, others over the years have managed that :-). But I will loudly agree. I'm rereading it only now after a 35 year hiatus (yes, indeed, classics can be lost on the young - that's why you want books that last.

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