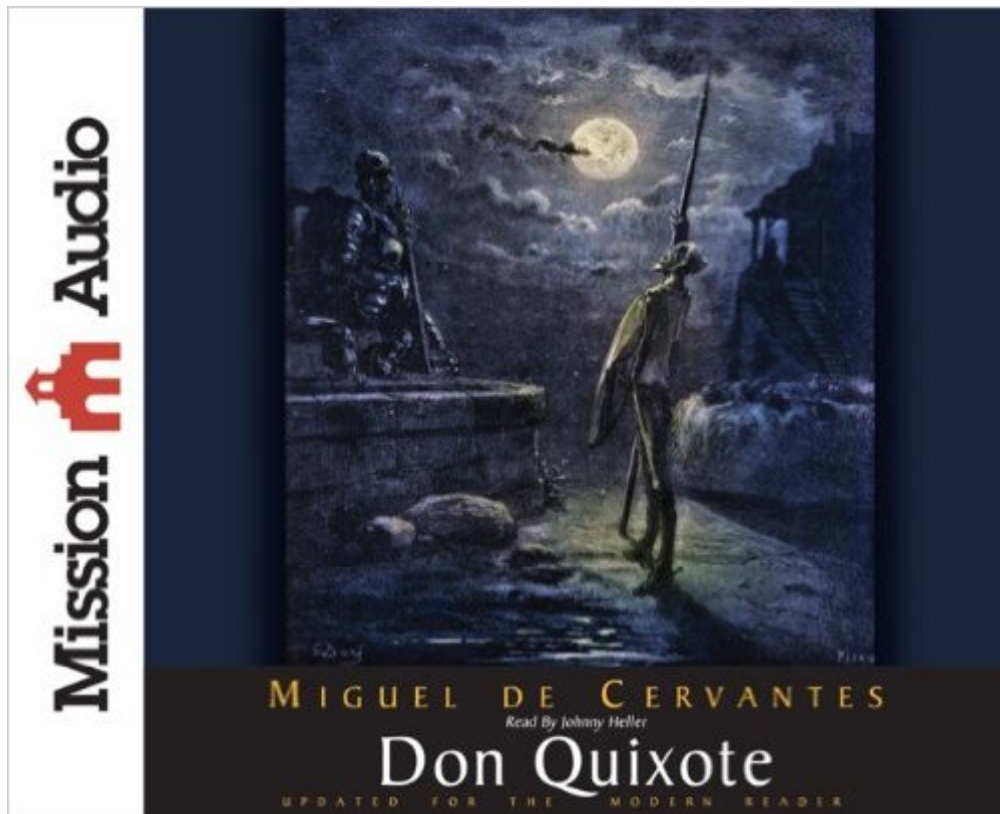


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Don Quixote



Synopsis

Quixotic is a word that the dictionary defines as extravagantly chivalrous or romantic; visionary and that is a fitting definition, indeed, for this charming retelling of Don Quixote, the 17th century Spanish classic by Miguel de Cervantes, now updated for the modern reader. The gallant and fragile Quixote will touch listeners, as will his faithful squire Sancho Panza and the tragically beautiful heroine of the gentle Don Quixote's chivalries, the fair Dulcinea. Don Quixote is rightfully noted to move to pity rather than ridicule, and to tears as well as laughter. And herein lies its chief claim to greatness, that it seems to have been written not for one country nor for one age alone, but to give delight to all humankind.

Book Information

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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.Its 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 - thats why you want books that last.

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