



# Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times: A New Reading of Don Quijote

*David Quint*

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## Cervantes's Novel of Modern Times: A New Reading of Don Quijote David Quint

This book offers a radically new reading of Don Quijote, understanding it as a whole much greater than the sum of its famous parts. David Quint discovers a unified narrative and deliberate thematic design in a novel long taught as the very definition of the picaresque and as a rambling succession of individual episodes. Quint shows how repeated motifs and verbal details link the episodes, often in surprising and heretofore unnoticed ways. Don Quijote emerges as a work that charts and reflects upon the historical transition from feudalism to the modern times of a moneyed, commercial society. In Part One of the novel, this change is measured in a shift in the nature of erotic desire, and we find Don Quijote torn between his love for Dulcinea and his hopes to wed for wealth and social advancement. In Part Two, Don Quijote himself changes from anarchic madman to a gentler, wiser hero--a member of a middle class in the making. Throughout, Cervantes meditates on the literary form that he is inventing as a response to modernity, questioning the novel's relationship to other genres and the place of heroism and imagination within stories of everyday life.

A new and coherent guide through the maze-like structure of Don Quijote, this book invites readers to appreciate the perennial modernity of Cervantes's masterpiece---a novel that confronts times not so distant from our own.

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