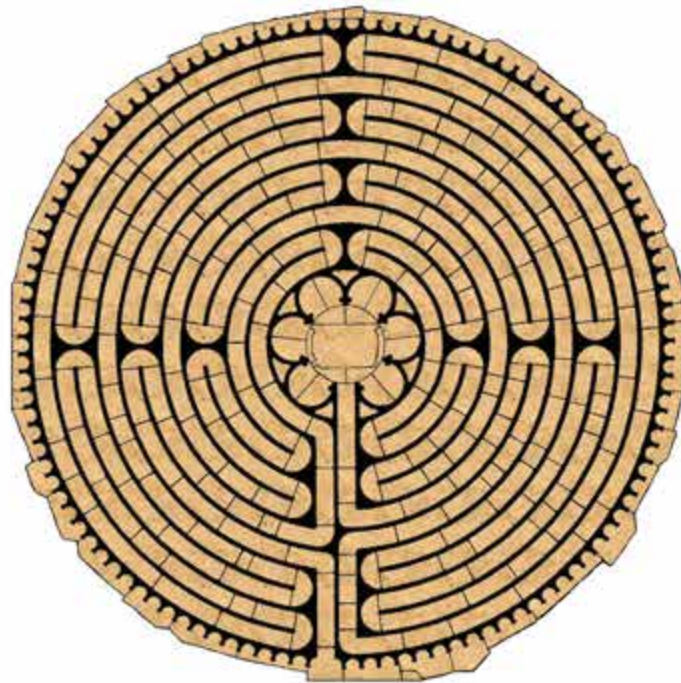


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Windmill to Bridle in the Epic of the Bourgeoisie:
Temperance and Commerce in *Don Quijote de la Mancha, Part 1*

Eric Clifford Graf
Independent Scholar

Mas templóse esta furia por entonces con pensar...
(*Don Quijote* 1.28 329)

Después que bajé del cielo, y después que desde su alta cumbre
miré la tierra y la vi tan pequeña, se templó en parte en mí la
gana que tenía tan grande de ser gobernador...
(*Don Quijote* 2.42 967)

Political philosopher and classicist Leo Strauss once observed that great books teach us how to read them. As a student of the novel, I assume he meant that great authors reveal their concerns through coordinated manipulations of narrators, dialogues, plots, and symbols. In the pages that follow, I'll show one way *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605/15) by Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) teaches us how to read it. I wager, too, the success or failure of such textual maneuvers has a lot to do with why we consider some books great and others not. We should keep in mind, however, the competing claim that a book's greatness owes more to its acceptance by the general public than to the existence of any authorial program. Nowadays great books must impress the masses.

Don Quijote tops serious lists of great novels partly due to good fortune. Sociological, technological, and geopolitical factors favored Cervantes's victory in the race to pen the first modern novel. Spikes in printing and commerce increased cultural and linguistic exchange across Europe and the Americas. The Renaissance recovered, translated, and published classical models like Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* (c.175) and Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* (c.225 or c.375), and quick translations of Cervantes's masterpiece into English (1612) and French (1614) ensured its overseas transmission during a phase of rapid colonial expansion by many European powers.

Authorial greatness was another factor. Some of the reputation of *Don Quijote* surely owes to the view that Cervantes's novel remains the lodestar for modern prose fiction. Great writers such as Zayas, Lafayette, Defoe, Voltaire, Jefferson, Tocqueville, Poe, Caballero, Twain, Dostoevsky, Unamuno, Musil, Borges, Kundera, García Márquez, and Walcott point to *Don Quijote* as a singularity in the history of the novel form. There is little dispute on this score.

One way of emerging from a half century of malaise in the humanities would be to attribute some of the consequence of *Don Quijote* to the assimilative

genius of Hispanic culture and the unique talents of its greatest author. Cervantes was destined to be an oddity among his peers due to a ten-year hiatus from Castile. On the one hand, his extravagance owes to his early exposure to the Baroque's ebullience at Naples and Rome in 1569-75 (see De Armas). On the other hand, his captivity at Algiers in 1575-80 isolated him right when Spain shifted from defending Italy against the Ottomans to managing its overseas empire. The Battle of Lepanto (1571) and the *Grande y Felicísima Armada* (1588) bracketed Cervantes's youth with glory and catastrophe. Wounded at the first and then enslaved by pirates, he served as a requisition officer for the second. Such vicissitudes explain some of the complexity of his novels.

Another reason for assessing *Don Quijote* as a more involved Baroque text and not an atavistic relic of the Renaissance is its disorder, especially its infuriating transitions or lacks thereof. These messy moves still disclose a satirical agenda; it just takes more work to unravel their meaning. Consider the symbolic deployment of a windmill and bridle in the 1605 text. Separated by thirty-three chapters and equidistant from the novel's beginning and end, the sequence in DQ 1.8-9 from the hidalgo's bout with a windmill to the narrator's dealings with Moriscos in Toledo ties into Maritornes's use of a bridle to enervate the hero in DQ 1.42-43 (see Fig. 1). This continuity owes to mutually reinforcing allusions to temperance in each episode.

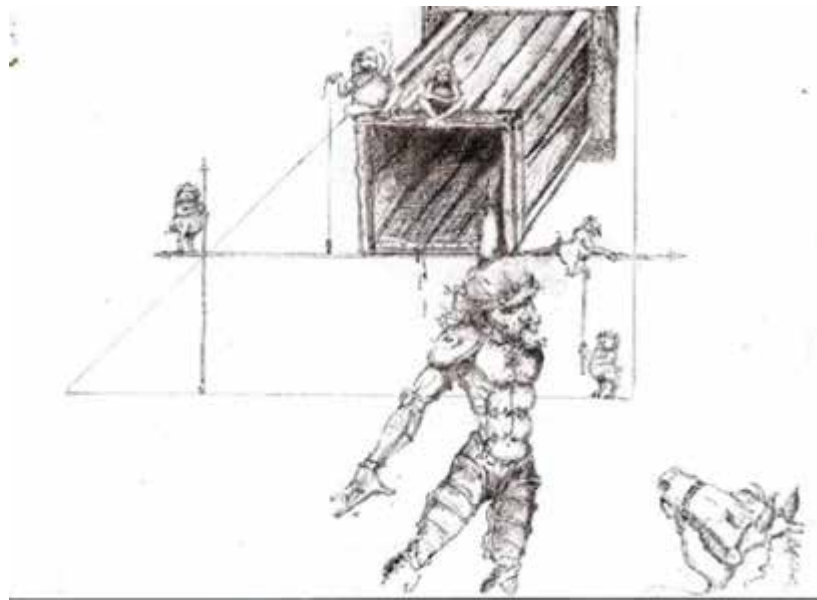


Fig. 1: Christopher Roelofs, *Don Quijote* 1.43, Universidad Francisco Marroquin, <https://donquijote.ufm.edu/en/>.

Along with justice, prudence, and courage, the cardinal virtue of temperance (i.e., moderation, sobriety, or self-control) is found in classical philosophy and Judeo-Christian theology (see *The Republic* 4.426-35, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3, 5, *4 Maccabees* 1.18). By way of temperance—*sōphrosynē* or ‘sound-mindedness’ in Greek—the novel’s symbolic windmill and bridle relate to the fall and recovery of a madman who is intemperate [‘not sound-minded’ in Greek]. At the same time, temperance suggests a political cure to the growing pains of the Spanish Empire. This is because it inevitably alludes to the fact that Plato, ever seeking the right doses of princely character, action, and knowledge necessary to sustain a political order, ranked temperance as the most difficult and complex of the personal virtues.

DQ 1.8 and 1.43 represent remarkably surgical authorial interventions even for a text known for its cuts and sutures. After his defeat by the windmill, don Quijote is about to clash with a Basque gentleman at the end of DQ 1.8, when the narrator informs us that the manuscript has ended. Next, in DQ 1.9 he describes his fortuitous recovery of the missing narrative in the marketplace of Toledo. Opposite the glaring rupture of DQ 1.8 is the invisible opening of DQ 1.43, which without number or heading in the first edition left readers of DQ 1.42 confused by the arrival of DQ 1.44. Chapter eight is involuntarily truncated; chapter forty-three displays no origin. An ingenious device in DQ 1.8 and what seems like the error of an absentminded printer in DQ 1.43 are echoes of a decision to expand the novel’s scope by inserting additional tales and episodes (see Flores; Murillo). They are the scars of a textual operation.

Furthermore, DQ 1.8 and 1.43 both show don Quijote experiencing memorable defeats. In the first episode, a windmill he mistakes for a giant unhorses him and throws him to the ground; in the second episode, Maritornes ties off his wrist through an opening in a hay loft such that, left hanging he brays “like a bull” from the pain in his hand, arm, and shoulder. Let’s attend to the objects which rebuff and suspend don Quijote here: (1) a windmill, (2) an ass’s bridle.

An allegorical representation of the cardinal virtue of temperance can still be seen in a French manuscript from 1512 (see Fig. 2). Such illustrations escorted Renaissance translations of and commentaries on authors who discussed the personal virtues. Temperance wears a clock on her head and holds spectacles in her left hand. Her glasses symbolize study and the perception of facts. Her clock regulates the life of a wise man. She also straddles a windmill, which stands for steady labor. Finally, from her own mouth she draws a bridle signifying verbal moderation.

The windmill and bridle of temperance are now two of the most important symbols of Cervantes’s novel and the history of the novel form. They also provide context for understanding its classical as well as bourgeois values. Specifically, the windmill and bridle in DQ 1.8 and 1.43 frame a series of chaotic and agonizing love stories involving Grisóstomo, Marcela, don Quijote,

Maritornes, Cardenio, Luscinda, Fernando, Dorotea, Anselmo, Camila, Lotario, Captain Viedma, Zoraida, Luis, and Clara. After don Quijote's defeat by the windmill, we read about all these romantic adventures in the wilderness, at sea, along roads, in cities, and at inns. The same passions of the Andalusian lovers of the Sierra Morena soon inflame Florentine, Algerian, Leonese, and Aragonese hearts too. After two antithetical love stories—"The Curious Impertinent" (the falls of Anselmo, Lotario, and Camila) and "The Captive's Tale" (the liberations of Viedma and Zoraida)—the series ends with the hopeful enamoration of Luis and Clara and don Quijote's impairment by Maritornes's use of a mysterious bridle. Cervantes then reprises the love tales through Eugenio, Vicente, Leandra (Anselmo, Lotario, Camila), a group of penitents carrying an effigy of the Virgin Mary (Zoraida), and don Quijote (Viedma) in a cage.



Fig. 2: *Allegory of Temperance*, MS76, E13, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1512, The Hague.

Specialists have noted how the harmonious resolutions to the sentimental labyrinths located between the windmill and bridle advocate for ethnic integration. This is a genealogical type of temperance achieved through miscegenation and cross-caste marriage (see Herrero, El Saffar, Márquez Villanueva). At the same time, we see that mistakes made while injecting these stories into the novel remain ripe with their own meaning. Two actions—(1) an incision at the end of DQ 1.8, (2) an over-stitch at the beginning of DQ 1.43—fit neatly inside a windmill and bridle, i.e., two symbols of temperance mark the surgical defeat and restraint of don Quijote.

In this light, the clock on temperance's head might relate to some of the novel's temporal problems (see Murillo, *The Golden Dial*); temperance's spectacles could signal the act of reading as a process of examining facts. In the introduction to his translation of Thucydides, Jeremy Mynott observed that for most of Western Civilization we do better to think of great books as "a kind of continuum, which might have at one end of it philosophy, dealing with the most general considerations and expressed in a largely abstract way, and at the other end literature and history, with their emphasis on particular lived experience" (xvii). An allegorical symbol for a personal virtue distributed rather neatly across a realistic novel combines the abstract and particular.

Another way to think about this is to note that a frame which resolves the title character's complications now reads like "more work and less talk." This idea matches the conclusion of the 1615 novel, where don Quijote's parting advice to Altisidora is that she avoid leisure and occupy herself in "honest and continuous work" (DQ 2.70). In DQ 1.8 and 1.43, however, the target of such earthly realism is still the mad knight. Leveraging a windmill and bridle against don Quijote, Cervantes deploys temperance as an antidote, balsam, or *pharmakon* which cures a lunatic imbalanced by the epic adventurousness of the heroes of chivalric romance.

Historically, a bourgeois transformation of aristocratic authority helps explain why a windmill defeats don Quijote and then deposits readers in a marketplace in DQ 1.8-9. The final metamorphosis of aristocratic authority into a legal system able to enforce contracts and property rights surfaces in the figure of Judge Juan Pérez de Viedma in DQ 1.42. Something similar happens shortly thereafter when don Quijote convinces two mysterious customers to pay Juan Palomeque for his services before they abandon the inn in DQ 1.44. The common thread here is a peaceful, productive, and economically free social order based on the rule of law and property rights as antidotes to an otherwise savage and bankrupt state of affairs.

All of this echoes the satirical, anti-epic spirit of Apuleius's late-classical picaresque *The Golden Ass*. This is another reason *Don Quijote* remains the most conspicuous example of Hegel's view of the novel as "modern bourgeois epic." Janus-like, Cervantes delivers the *coup de grâce* to the Ancien Régime while he

also forges the modern novel, that final unheroic and most cannibalistic of literary forms spawned by the ascendent West (see Lukács; Bakhtin). Vittore Branca noted that urban merchant families owned 66% of the fourteenth-century manuscripts of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Echoing Hegel, Branca dubbed Boccaccio's masterpiece the "epic of merchants." Cervantes too wrote an epic of merchants, specifically, a modern picaresque aimed at the last remains of the provincial nobility. He also signaled the virtue of temperance as what permits a form of bourgeois heroism to rise Phoenix-like from the ashes of an aristocratic fantasy. Finally, Cervantes's tempered epic suggests it's no accident that Apuleius's picaresque also deploys a mill and an erratic bridle in the process of socializing and transforming the protagonist back into a human being (see Graf).

In a reprise of this motif, it's don Quijote whose heated emotions need tempering in DQ 1.46. His unhinged fury is then projected onto Eugenio, who likewise needs calming in DQ 1.50-52. In the end, the "Knight of the Burning Lake" together with the "cabra manchada" 'spotted she-goat' in such proximity to don Quijote and Eugenio, each in excited emotional states, signal a hidden ritual of purification (see Girard on Jacob, Odysseus, Hercules, and Jonah). Echoing this sacrificial tone, somehow don Quijote and Eugenio manage to extract from the impassioned labyrinths of the Sierra Morena their own respective victories over anger, madness, and violence, i.e., they manage controlled doses of temperance.

On the other hand, tar and spotted fur also symbolize *mestizaje* or "miscegenation" in marked contrast to Eugenio's disparagement of Leandra's sexuality. Eugenio's name derives from the Greek εὐγενής (eugenēs), 'noble,' literally 'well-born,' from εὖ (eu), 'well' and γένος (genos), 'race, stock, kin.' Already opposite Eugenio's desire for purity, an anti-orthodox type of sociological and genealogical temperance appears in the novel's first poem by Urganda, who compares don Quijote to "Orlando furio-[so] / Templado a lo enamora-[do]" 'Furious Roland, tempered by love.' Urganda echoes the tempering roles of goddesses like Andromeda, Venus, Diana, and Isis in the *Aethiopica* and *The Golden Ass*. In the case of Ariosto's Roland, accepting the transracial love between Angelica and Medoro might cure the knight's frenzy, a remedy also suggested by Urganda's reference to the black African poet Juan Latino in the same poem. *Mestizaje* as a goal of poetry explains Cervantes's respect for Ariosto and it reflects Mediterranean culture as more assimilative in this transracial way (see DQ 1.25-26).

Returning to the commercial theme, the symbolic seams of temperance located at DQ 1.8-9 and 1.42-43 frame don Quijote's egotistical fantasies, allowing Cervantes to advance a sharp mockery of a feudal aristocracy struggling to sustain the Ancien Régime. At the same time, the metamorphosis of the epic warrior into a legal and commercial mediator, at times even a transnational matchmaker, offers an offramp for an outmoded Hercules. Cervantes seems to say, "Exchange your role as a frontier warrior for that of a domestic policeman who

enforces law, order, and contract, thereby allowing us to work and trade in peace, and we'll produce great national wealth." History shows this to be a pretty good sociopolitical bargain most of the time (see McCloskey; McCloskey and Carden).

Writing in the wake of the French Revolution, Alexis de Tocqueville grasped Cervantes's anti-aristocratic performance of commercial miracles and secret miscegenations in *Don Quijote* (see DA 2.3.5, 2.3.18n3). Marxists see such humbling moments as luxuries of an economically exploitative system that should be discarded (see Lukács; Eagleton). By contrast, in Cervantes's day many late scholastics saw these types of exchange as the happy signs of a spontaneous and sacred economic order. This organic perspective at times made them insist that the greater good called for a minimum of intromission by political and religious authorities. Hayek circled this connection between economics and theology in his Nobel Prize speech, "The Pretense of Knowledge" (1974), after stressing the error of interventionism: "the chief point was already seen by those remarkable anticipators of modern economics, the Spanish schoolmen of the sixteenth century, who emphasized that what they called *pretium mathematicum*, the mathematical price, depended on so many particular circumstances that it could never be known to man but was known only to God."

Mario Vargas Llosa noted almost two decades ago that *Don Quijote* attended to early modern readers who were nostalgic for aristocratic rebels because they spied authoritarianism coming into view. This political triangulation circa 1600 preserves a modicum of dignity for don Quijote, who acts as a provincial counterweight to meddling inquisitors, emperors, kings, dukes, and governors, i.e., versions of the future tyrants of centralized superstates. Even granting the hidalgo this redemptive political status, we must recall that he only reclaims his dignity late in the 1615 text. Early in the 1605 novel he's a menace. In sum, the allegorical configurations of temperance at the outset and ending of don Quijote's second sally between DQ 1.8 and 1.43 suggest moderation as the solution to the hidalgo's madness in DQ 1.1.

In terms of the novel's political significance, temperance is a key personal virtue for effective self-governance, which translates at scale into measured management of the expansive and socially diverse Hispanic empire. Cervantes's Aristotelian desire for a reformed aristocracy that might drive expanding circles of economic prosperity and moral virtue through society entails most especially the positive examples of Viedma and Diego de Miranda in DQ 1.37-42 and 2.18 (see Murillo, "Nueva hipótesis"). Similarly, Juan de Mariana's princely advice manual, *The King and the Education of the King* (1598/1605), might temper some of the more tyrannical theories, policies, and decisions of Governor Sancho Panza in DQ 2.42-55. We must also keep in mind that the political dissolution of Habsburg Spain seemed plausible at times in the sixteenth century. A kind of mass movement politics instigated the *Guerra de las Comunidades de Castilla* of 1520-22 (see Maravall; Haliczzer); a more aristocratic and counterrevolutionary

rebellion was staged at Zaragoza in the *Alteraciones de Aragón* of 1591; and an eerily modern ethnic conflict drove the bloodshed of the *Guerra de las Alpujarras* of 1568-71.

In the context of Habsburg Spain as the first modern nation state with an overseas colonial empire, the counterexamples of justice, courage, prudence, and temperance modeled by Viedma, Miranda, and Mariana suggest the need for better national and imperial policies. Reflecting on other lessons in governance in *Don Quijote*, these consist mostly of avoiding the moral and economic hazards associated with crime, violence, and slavery (DQ 1.4), religious persecution (DQ 1.6), business monopolies (DQ 1.8), piracy and banditry (DQ 1.41), monarchical tyranny (DQ 2.8), monetary inflation (DQ 2.17), national insolvency (DQ 2.23), foreign wars (DQ 2.24), civil wars (DQ 2.27), taxation (DQ 2.45), corruption (DQ 2.47), and ethnic cleansing (DQ 2.54). Each of these topics merits further discussion and has other examples in the novel, but generally it seems best to yoke the ignorance of *pathos* (emotion) with *logos* (reason). Hidalgos, judges, governors, and kings should cultivate temperance in addition to justice, courage, and prudence. They must do this if they are to rein in the princely fantasies that muddle facts, cloud logic, and impoverish citizens. Whether or not we can honestly expect such moderation, consistency, or thoughtfulness from our modern leaders is another question.

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