



# Luxury and temperance in character education today

## *Lujo y templanza en la educación actual del carácter*

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### Abstract:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises parents' right to educate their children, which entails the right to choose the type of formal education and, above all, the right to determine the desired course of education provided within the family. There is currently widespread concern about protecting children and adolescents from the harmful influence of hatred, addiction, and pornography. However, there is also an urgent need to recognise the negative influence on minors of the environment of luxury in which many live. Therefore, this study addresses the historical evolution of the concept of luxury, in both Spanish and English, and the importance of early education in temperance.

This article will conclude by presenting several methods for teaching temperance, while asking parents to seek imaginative solutions according to their circumstances, bearing in mind the new directions in which luxury is headed today. Although it may seem presumptuous to predict any aspect of the future, luxury has clearly entered a process of economic slowdown, making it essential to address the flight of numerous aspirational consumers within the current social environment. Indeed, a quiet and discreet kind of luxury has become fashionable, one that considers the quality of products, but also their sustainability and simplicity, with attention suitably tailored to the most important customers.

**Keywords:** luxury; temperance; character education; family education; moral education.

### Resumen:

La Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos reconoce a los padres el derecho a la educación de sus hijos, lo que implica el derecho a escoger un tipo de educación escolar y, sobre todo, el derecho a determinar el cauce deseado a la educación impartida en el seno de la familia. Actualmente hay una preocupación muy extendida para prevenir a niños y adolescentes de la nefasta influencia del odio, las adicciones o la pornografía. Pero, además, es urgente reconocer la mala influencia que tiene sobre los menores el ambiente de lujo en el que no pocos viven. Por ello se trata de estudiar la evolución histórica del concepto de lujo, tanto en español como en inglés, y la importancia de una temprana educación de la templanza.

Este artículo concluirá presentando varios métodos para enseñar la templanza, a la vez que se pide a los padres que busquen soluciones imaginativas de acuerdo con sus circunstancias,

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teniendo en cuenta los nuevos caminos que está recorriendo hoy día el lujo, pues, aunque sea algo presuntuoso señalar el futuro de cualquier cosa, es evidente que el lujo ha entrado en un proceso de desaceleración económica, siendo imprescindible hacer frente a la huida de numerosos consumidores aspiracionales dentro del actual ambiente social. En efecto, hoy se ha puesto de moda un lujo tranquilo y silencioso que tenga en cuenta la calidad de los productos, pero también su sostenibilidad y simplicidad, con una adecuada atención personalizada a los clientes más importantes.

**Palabras clave:** lujo; templanza; educación del carácter; educación familiar; educación moral.

## 1. Introduction

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children, which clearly means that the State cannot impose a specific kind of education. However, it also means that they are entitled to foster a certain type of education at home and can use means to shield their children from the main enemies that arise in their education. Thus, they may avoid social pressures that have a negative impact on the character education of their children. For this reason, there are laws that regulate the behaviour of children and adolescents, in an effort to prevent them from being influenced by hate, addictions or pornography in social media.

A fact that is perhaps less well known, however, is that living in a setting of excess luxury also negatively influences the character of many children and adolescents. Aristotle noted the importance of cultivating moderation in children in his book *Nicomachean Ethics*:

Children in fact live at the beck and call of appetite, and it is in them that the desire for what is pleasant is strongest [...] Hence they should be moderate and few, and should in no way oppose the rational principle—and this is what we call an obedient and chastened state — and as the child should live according to the direction of his tutor, so the appetitive element should live according to rational principle (Aristotle, 1999, Book 3, Chapter 12, p. 53).

Therefore, this paper is divided into three parts. The first outlines the traditional concept of luxury in Spanish and in English. Next, the complex relationship between luxury and the cultivation of temperance, which is essential in achieving human fulfilment, is analysed. Temperance is increasingly necessary to overcome the social discontent that has been fostered by diverse ideologies such as relativism. Finally, new problems related to luxury, which have generated new perspectives on its evolution, will be addressed.

## 2. The wide-ranging concept of luxury

The well-known expression *traduttore, traditore* aims to highlight the problems involved in any translation. But this expression actually has a deeper meaning, referring to the idea that the same words do not always mean the same thing in modern languages, as their meanings change over time and a proper literal translation may not refer to the same situation in different languages.

A paradigmatic example of this is the term 'luxury', translated as *lujo* in Spanish. Indeed, the Spanish *lujo* is not equal to luxury in English, and the meaning of luxury in both languages has changed significantly over time. Below are a few observations about the meaning of luxury in each of these two languages.

## 2.1. *Lujo* in Spanish

According to the 1992 edition of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española de la Lengua* [Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy of Language], *lujo* has three meanings: 1. '*Demasía en el adorno, en la pompa y en el regalo* [Excessive adornment, pomp and delight]; 2. *Abundancia en cosas no necesarias* [Abundance of unnecessary things]; and 3. *Todo aquello que supera los medios normales de alguien para conseguirlo* [Anything that surpasses the normal means of a person to achieve it]'.

A brief analysis of these meanings leads to the following conclusions. In the first definition, *lujo* refers to something that is wrong. In fact, the same dictionary defines *demasía*, as excess, audacity, insolence or wickedness. One insightful example of the embodiment of *lujo* can be found in the life of Mariano Téllez-Girón (1814-1882), 12th Duke of Osuna, Infantado and Arcos, to name just a few of his titles, and Grandee of Spain twenty times over. The duke was:

The highest payer of provincial taxes in Spain in 1855, paying this tax in twenty provinces, and in 1863 the territorial assets of the ducal estate of Osuna were equal to 0.5% of the national territory, spanning 230,000 hectares (Comas y Arqués, 1885, p. 93).

Mariano's predecessor and brother, the 11th Duke of Osuna, Pedro de Alcántara, was the eldest son of the previous duke, meaning that, according to the principle of primogeniture still in force at that time, the younger brother was not meant to inherit anything. Therefore, in 1833, Mariano embarked on a military career, taking part in numerous battles in Spain and later acting as a member of parliament and senator. In 1844, his brother died childless at the age of 34 and Mariano inherited the title and possessions of the duchy of Osuna, subsequently undertaking numerous political and diplomatic activities. Mariano stood out for his extraordinary amiability and intelligence, but especially for his lavish spending capacity, which reached its peak during his time as *chargé d'affaires* in Russia and, later, as ambassador from 1860 to 1867.

It was in Russia where Osuna's luxurious lifestyle exploded. The stories about throwing the silver dinner service into the river after being used by the czar or the servants clothed in the same fabric as the czar are legendary. But the fact remains that all his assets were mortgaged and sold off before he died. Having died without heirs, his administrators explained the bankruptcy of the House of Osuna by stating:

Sustained competition in opulence with the aristocracy in Russia, where there are families that own virtually entire provinces and rely on a vast system obtained for free in virtue of feudal rights, was only possible for someone as disinterested as the late Duke of Osuna: while they were no match for him in terms of distinguished, powerful forebears, he refused to give them the upper hand in the magnificence of costly modern luxury (Comas y Arqués, 1885, p. 93).

The sad fate of the assets of the House of Osuna contributes significantly to the largely negative nature of the first definition of *lujo*.

The second definition provided by the dictionary is not particularly apt either, despite the famous words of Coco Chanel (1883-1971), so often repeated in luxury circles, that luxury is a necessity that begins where necessity ends. These words were based on Werner Sombart's important work, published in 1912, which states, at the beginning of the paragraph entitled *Concept and essence of luxury*, that: 'Luxury is any expenditure that goes beyond the necessary. This is obviously a relative concept that makes sense only insofar as we have a notion of what is "necessary"' (1912, 2009, p. 49). The problem lies in the difficulty of defining the limits of necessity, given that human beings are not necessary.

The third definition describes luxury as something that surpasses the normal means of a person. However, this definition does not objectively address what luxury is either, but rather notes, subjectively, that luxuries may be highly diverse things, simply depending on the financial circumstances of each individual.

These definitions have changed over time. In the definition found on the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* website (20 August 2025), the entry for *lujo* is quite different, perhaps in response to the Royal Academy's standard of receiving suggestions from numerous users and 'thoroughly examining all the issues raised, endeavouring to assess the definitions as fully as possible so that they are not gratuitously biased or offensive' ('Preámbulo', *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, 2023). The term *lujo* currently has the following definitions:

1. 'Abundancia en el adorno o en comodidades y objetos suntuosos [Abundance of adornment or comforts and lavish objects];
2. *Abundancia de cosas y medios* [Abundance of things and resources];
3. *Aquello que supera los medios normales de alguien para conseguirlo* [Something that surpasses the normal means of a person to achieve it];
4. *Elevada categoría, excelencia o exquisitez que posee* [High standing, excellence or exquisiteness possessed by something];
5. *Persona o cosa valiosa, excepcional o extraordinaria* [Valuable, exceptional or extraordinary person or thing].

The differences in the entries by the Royal Academy from 1992 and those currently found on the Royal Academy's website are considerable. In fact, the most striking aspect of this latest edition is that it avoids any negative interpretation of luxury. Indeed, *demasa* [excess] has nothing to do with abundance, for abundance merely entails a *large quantity*, whereas excess has a different meaning to the one above. Therefore, not all abundance can be classified as excess. What's more, when classical Roman authors like Cicero criticised luxury —according to Casinos Mora— it was by no means a criticism of wealth on principle, but rather merely 'to the extent that its possession, display or acquisition are revealed to be contrary to *decorum* (the term *decorum* generally means appropriate and suited to individuals and their circumstances). Their disapproval was therefore restricted to *extravagant* luxury, since moderate and decorous luxury is not only socially acceptable but even deemed *secundum mores*, 'appropriate and worthy of admiration' (Casinos Mora, 2015, p. 63).

The difference between extravagant luxury and authentic luxury is not merely a matter of quantity, because one's personal circumstances must also be considered. The generosity we expect of those with high social standing does not have the same value as that of those who use their newly obtained wealth ostentatiously to climb the social ladder. Generosity must not be confused with lavishness and wastefulness.

## 2.2. *Luxury in English*

Having analysed the Spanish definitions of *lujo*, a brief reflection must now be made on the definitions of *luxury* in the English language.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* provides two essential definitions: 1. 'The fact of enjoying special and expensive things, particularly food and drink, clothes and places; and 2. A thing that is expensive and pleasant but not essential'. Other dictionaries provide other definitions, such as those characterising luxury in terms of something *unusual* or something that *cannot be done often*, classifying it not only as *pleasant* but also *beautiful*. However, the definitions found to be most accurate in this case are the two fully transcribed above.

Both definitions coincide in describing luxury as referring to expensive and pleasant things. In addition, one of the entries notes that 'food and drink, clothes and places' are special luxury items, while the other indicates that, for something to be luxurious it must not be essential, thus circumventing the more confusing term *necessary* found in the definition by Coco Chanel.

## 3. The diverse faces of temperance and its relationship to luxury

It is interesting to note that the aforementioned reference to food and drink in luxury also appears in relation to *temperance*. For example, the *Cambridge Academic Content*

*Dictionary* defines temperance as ‘the habit or practice of avoiding extremes of behaviour, esp. not drinking too much alcohol’. Obviously, drinking too much alcohol is not the same as drinking a moderate amount. In any case, mentions of temperance now conjure up images of sordidness.

This could have something to do with the ease with which one may overstep boundaries when drinking and the harsh campaign against alcohol championed by numerous associations in the United States, including The Temperance Movement and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, which were prevalent from 1830 to 1933.

However, human nature has not actually changed. Alcohol was banned in 1920 under the 18th Amendment of the US Constitution, sparking the creation of a network of gangsters to distribute alcohol and prompting numerous murders. Therefore, a new movement took shape in 1933, with the 21st Amendment, based on the idea that temperance has diverse facets and that prohibition by law is not the best way to achieve temperance. Indeed, this vision of temperance, which is tied to sordidness, strays vastly from that of those who consider it one of the necessary strengths for fulfilment in the life of ordinary people (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Ever since the era of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, the dual nature of temperance has been addressed, and it is clearly developed in the depictions by Raphael and the Pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones. The former painted *The Cardinal and Theological Virtues in the Stanza della Segnatura* in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican between 1508 and 1511. There, Temperance is portrayed as a young goddess holding a bridle that restrains a putto bearing the fire of passion. The latter, in turn, depicted temperance in 1872 as a young woman standing on flames, pouring water on them from a pitcher in her arms. Coinciding with Frey (2021), one might say that temperance can be seen from two perspectives. In the first, it is seen as self-possession or dignity, in which the person has learnt not to be led astray by passion, but that the boundaries are set by reason. In other words, there are evil passions, like wanting to strike someone who laughs at us, but it is not wrong to reject their friendship even if we forgive their evil deed, or to drink half a glass of whiskey on a holiday. In the second, temperance is seen as self-control: it is not swayed by obstinate, rebellious sensual appetites, but it is unable to teach goodness, meaning that evil is not rejected at its source but rather only when it becomes necessary to use the fire of intelligence in order to avoid being overcome by the wrong pleasure.

FIGURE 1. Raphael. *Cardinal and Theological Virtues and the Law* (Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican, 1511).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, 2011.

FIGURE 2. Edward Burne-Jones. *Temperantia*.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, 2018.

Having observed the numerous facets of temperance, it is now time to study its relationship to luxury. Perhaps the best place to commence this study is in the writings of Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD), whose *Meditations* combine the depth of his ideas with the extraordinary nature of his circumstances, for it must not be forgotten that he was emperor of the Roman Empire for nearly twenty years. All eleven books in this series are interesting, but 'Book I' is probably most relevant to the topic at hand. Throughout this book, he shows gratitude to a wide range of people—from his grandfather Verus to the gods—for all that he has learnt from them, thus showing us the importance he places on 'simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich' (Marcus Aurelius, 2005, 'Book I', 3), the 'endurance of labour, and to want little' (I, 5), the 'impression that my character required improvement and discipline' (I, 7), having 'never showed anger or any other passion, but was entirely free from passion, and also most affectionate' (I, 9), 'self-government, and not to be led aside by anything' (I, 15), and having 'preserved the flower of my youth, and that I did not make proof of my virility before the proper season' (I, 17).

It would be easy to disregard these ideas, accusing Marcus Aurelius of acting as a representative of stoicism. But philosophy shows us that, rather than allowing ourselves to be influenced by prejudices based on labels, we must instead search for the truth in what we hear. It may seem like Marcus Aurelius wished to feel no passion, but his stance is actually akin to that of Aristotle in the words quoted above from *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Perhaps, by comparing Marcus Aurelius' ideas above and the definitions of luxury, it is possible to conclude that he was no lover of luxury. However, a more in-depth analysis of the texts by Marcus Aurelius reveals that they harbour highly diverse viewpoints. The first is quite clearly his condemnation of the habits of the rich. Obviously, there was no one richer than the emperor. But the scandalous lifestyles led by many have prompted the enactment of sumptuary laws to put limits on luxury on more than a few occasions throughout the centuries.

His words about the need to improve and discipline his character are also highly significant. Whereas temperament is more closely tied to one's nature, character can be formed in many ways. And the first way is the importance of paying attention to reason

and not allowing ourselves to be led astray by an insatiable desire for pleasure, listening to those raising us, which is a sign of proper future development.

The methods for building a moderate character today will now be assessed.

#### 4. What needs to be considered today in building a moderate character?

The first thing to bear in mind is that parents' responsibility in cultivating a moderate character, as described above, is not limited to families with above-average incomes. I recall a teacher at a school with very poor students who told me about a conversation he had had with the mother of an adolescent who forced her to get a second job cleaning stairs to fulfil her son's desire for famous designer jeans and expensive shoes, of the kind that are popular among young people. In any case, parents and educators could reflect on these ideas and on their specific circumstances.

We could start by saying that the place of temperance within character is often the result of the place held by money in our hearts and lives, observing the money we give others, starting with our children. It is a mistake to think that money is the devil's dregs. But an even greater mistake is to forget what Saint Paul said: 'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil' (1 Tim. VI, 10), because this love culminates in literary figures like Mr. Scrooge or Scrooge McDuck. In fact, if we want to teach our children temperance, we must pay more attention to our expenses than to our words. Marcus Aurelius thanked his father for true moderation and sobriety in all things, among other things (I, 16). Of course, as pointed out before, the measure of moderation is greatly dependent on the circumstances. The example of our parents has the ability to teach us limits through their actions better than the discourse of the most experienced teacher.

Furthermore, in educating young people it is important to explain that what pleases the senses contributes to well-being, but well-being and happiness are not the same thing. Many people are unhappy because their lives lack meaning, despite the fact that they live in an environment of luxury and well-being.

We could also point out that an abundance of luxury leads children and adolescents to believe that Instagram is real life, rendering them incapable of bearing the hardships and difficulties we all go through in life.

From another perspective, we observe that Marcus Aurelius thanked his brother Severus for having conceived 'the idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed' (I, 14). One good practice in this life is to give to the poor the same amount as you have spent on luxury brands each month.

We might highlight that, whenever possible, it is also highly educational to grow up in a family with several members. The number of children could be a paradigm for the generosity of the parents. Experience shows that when children learn to look after their siblings first, they will be more willing and open to helping the needy later. Obviously, no one should be forced to have children, no matter how rich they are, and the circumstances today are not favourable to having large families. But we must not forget that the gross domestic product is currently much greater than a century ago and yet our fertility rate today is much lower. It is logical to aspire to 2.1 births per woman, the rate needed for survival of the community as a whole. Unfortunately, Western civilisation offers other figures: it is sad to read in *The Guardian* that 'the total fertility rate across England and Wales fell to 1.49 children per woman in 2022' (Inman and Otte, 2024), or to read an article stating that Spain 'has the lowest European fertility rate outside Malta' and 'in Madrid, there are more cats and dogs than children under 10' (Eberstadt, 2024).

Clearly, having children is expensive. But is it more economical if the investment in each child consists mainly in providing the money needed to offer them a good education, limiting young people's spending on unpaid recreation for their work.

A profound reflection on how to educate in temperance in today's circumstances could lead us to conclude that it is necessary to cultivate imagination so that our children do not grow up surrounded by excessive luxury, which could prompt them to make serious mistakes or to develop addictions that did not exist in the past. In this regard, it is interesting to note the initiatives of a group of highly wealthy people in the United States, like Mark Zuckerberg and George Lucas, who have decided not to let their children inherit the vast fortunes they have amassed. Thus, their children will receive a modest inheritance, but most of their fortunes will be allocated to institutions that seek to help people in need.

Finally, a brief reflection on the future of luxury, i.e., the proposed response to a sector clearly showing signs of economic slowdown, is offered.

## 5. Luxury in the future

We have witnessed the evolution of the concept of luxury over time and the complex relationship between luxury and temperance. However, the reality of luxury changed in 2024. An interesting report was published by McKinsey & Company in January 2025, entitled: *The State of Luxury: How to navigate a slowdown*. The report asserts the following:

Over the past five years, the luxury industry experienced a period of exceptional value creation. Between 2019 and 2023, unprecedented demand for personal luxury goods—fashion, leather goods, watches, and jewellery among them—combined with a deep well of supply allowed the sector to achieve a 5 percent compound annual growth rate [...] Now, as we step into 2025, the luxury industry is facing a significant slowdown that has hit even top brands hard (Balchandani, D'Auria and Grunberg, 2025, pp. 1-2).

And a look at the May and June 2025 issues of *Fashion Network* magazine shows us that Benetton lost 230 million euros in 2023 and 100 million in 2024 and is planning to close hundreds of shops; Ferragamo lost 16 million in 2025, Hermès witnessed a 5 % decrease in profits last year, etc. Obviously, each major brand has presented a wide variety of options to turn the situation around.

This new range of options includes what we have called *new luxury*, which focuses mainly on *experiences*: breaking away from routines and saving, feeling pampered, showing spending power. It is striking to note the desire for authenticity in luxury items today: behind this we can see that humans have fewer points of reference for knowing who we are and who we want to be, turning to luxury for a sense of living intensely, thus seeking distinctive and meaningful treatment.

Luxury has also entered the realm of the politically correct, moving away from power and promoting its integration into social and environmental issues such as sustainability, like Tiffany's campaign against coral harvesting, which damages marine ecosystems, or Rolex's new slogan, in which it is no longer the watch of those who guide the destinies of the world, but one featuring optimal legibility and durability even in the darkest places thanks to a luminous substance patented by Rolex.

To conclude this section, designing what luxury will be like in the future is too ambitious of an endeavour. For many, it will certainly continue to be the means for satisfying their desires for splendour, distinction and pleasure, or at least their desire for superiority and disdain for others. Luxury has become accessible to many people, taking on a social presence that would have been inconceivable in other eras, with astronomical rates of international spending or even simulating the desires of certain adolescents who:

In search of solitude and closer contact with nature, seek refuge in the treetops, putting into practice Thoreau's idea that we must free ourselves from the encumbrances imposed by society. Except that this desire is belied by the fact that these tree houses have hot water, king size beds and every other modern convenience. 'Glamping' is the name that the media has given to this new form of luxury camping (Medialdea, 2024, p. 50).

It is also true that inequality in terms of financial resources has become much more pronounced. The negative effects of this inequality can be especially severe if those at the bottom perceive certain expressions of great luxury not only as an unnecessary expense but as a means of scorning them. In reality, we are somewhere between brands abandoning numerous aspirational customers, as noted by Muret (2025), and the complaints of *Very Important Clients* who do not receive adequate personalised attention.

However, the most innovative moment could well be the so-called *quiet luxury*. Luxury was first defined in this simple, innovative way in an article published by the journal *Luxonomy* in 2023. Far from pompousness, luxury is based on quality, simplicity and intrinsic value. The concept of quantity and high prices is replaced with tranquillity, simplicity, the genuine value of exquisite attention to detail and a commitment to sustainability. *Quiet luxury* loves the authenticity of craftsmanship, of things that are unique and special, removed from mass production. It is a lifestyle that appreciates the essential and the authentic. Although it is not exactly a luxury item, the film *Perfect Days*, nominated for an Oscar in 2024, offers an approach to that contemplation of the beauty of everyday life. A simple existence, carried out to perfection, which is sensed in both the beauty of a sunrise and in the wonder of the universe, expressed in a tiny plant or in the work well done by those who built the public toilets in Tokyo and those who keep them clean.

It is also worth recalling the success of the South Korean author living in Germany, Byung-Chul Han, who has published several highly acclaimed books (*The Burnout Society*, *The Scent of Time: A Philosophical Essay on the Art of Lingerin*g, *Vita contemplativa: In Praise of Inactivity*, etc.), in which he argues the need to overcome the hyperactivity of our time, the excess information and hyper-consumerism, championing the importance of silence, knowing how to close one's eyes and work less, devoting more time to contemplation. Related to this, there is also talk of something called *quiet ambition* (Adamczyk, 2023), as many young people are tired of a work ethic that destroys their personal life, and even *silent trails* (González-Hontoria, 2024), on which to take long bicycle rides through quiet areas of the planet, considering calmness and solitude to be a means for finding oneself.

In this context, *quiet luxury* moves away from today's economism, seeking a rational control over time, the quest for high quality materials, respect for nature and work well done, in addition to devoting time to activities that help us progress in the discovery of the deeper meaning of human existence. This type of luxury is akin to temperance rather than major luxury.

## 6. Conclusions

The concept of luxury has a complex history; it does not have the same meaning in Spanish and in English and its meanings have also changed greatly over time, and will continue to do so in the future. Perhaps the most well-known definition is the one provided by Werner Sombart, who, in 1912, related luxury to something beyond a necessity. However, the problem with this definition, which he hinted at, is that it is not possible to define what is necessary to human beings, which are not necessary. In Spanish, the definitions of luxury have changed vastly over the years. Even in the short amount of time spanning between 1992 and 2023, we see quite disparate meanings offered by the Real Academia de la Lengua Española. The greatest achievement made in this time may be the fact that all negative interpretations of luxury are now rejected, insisting on abundance, which is a large quantity, but not mentioning excess, which lends negative connotations to abundance. The English definition, in turn, refers to the pleasure of enjoying special, expensive things, and includes an interesting reference to food and drinks, which is absent from the Spanish definition. This relationship was highly significant in the US, where there was a major campaign against alcohol since at least 1870, which ended in its prohibition by law from 1920 to 1933.

However, the negative impact of this fight against alcoholic beverages was that it lent a certain sordid air to temperance. On the other hand, history shows that temperance has taken two quite different forms: one depicted by Raphael in the early 16th century, showing a young goddess holding reins that restrain a putto bearing the fire of passion, and the other by Burne-Jones, who, in 1872, painted temperance as a young woman standing on flames and pouring water on them. Frey (2021) offered a good interpretation of these differences, asserting that temperance can be seen from the perspective of self-command, when individual guides each action with the decisiveness of reason, or from the perspective of self-control, when evil is not rejected at its source, but reason must be used to overcome the force of evil passions.

A reading of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* reveals how the emperor managed to live with the sort of moderation that makes us masters of ourselves, overcoming the force of evil passions. It is important to start early to achieve a moderate character because, as Aristotle said, children live according to their desires. For this reason, luxury may jeopardise the development of a good character, so parents must be imaginative in order to learn how to act according to reason, which makes it paramount to teach children the place the money has in our hearts and in our lives.

Finally, a reflection has been made on the future of luxury, given that we are entering a new era, moving away from the unprecedented demand for personal luxury items seen from 2010 to 2025. Top brands are facing a serious slowdown, with significant losses and a changing social mentality. Therefore, perhaps the future lies in *quiet luxury*, thinking more about calmness, simplicity, genuine value and a commitment to sustainability. Many young people are tired of the hyperactivity of our times, which ruins personal and family life, seeking instead contemplation and solitude as a means of finding themselves and discovering the deeper meaning of human existence.

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## Author biography

Having earned a PhD in Philosophy from Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain), he remained there in the Faculty of Education as a professor of philosophy of education from 1980 to 2013. He later acted as vice-rector of Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR). He is currently an emeritus professor at both universities. His research has focused on analysing the anthropological foundations and critical-philosophical assumptions of educational processes, on educational aims and how they are expressed in the different curricular subjects in educational policy and educational legislation in reference to the European sphere in particular, on civic and moral education in democratic systems, on the ethics of education, and on character education, creating and leading until 2023 the first master's course in Spain on the subject. He has received numerous prestigious awards and medals in Spain, such as the Gran Cruz de Alfonso X el Sabio [Grand Cross of Alfonso X the Wise]. For forty years — until 2023 — he was the editor of *Revista Española de Pedagogía* (JCR and Scopus), and is a member of the editorial boards of other journals.

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