

## FROM PROTO-NOVEL TO POST-NOVEL: SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *QUICHOTTE* AS THE REWRITING OF *DON QUIXOTE*



### ÖNCÜ ROMANDAN ROMAN-ÖTESİNE: *DON KİŞOT*'UN YENİDEN YAZIMI OLARAK SALMAN RUSHDİE'NİN *QUICHOTTE*'U

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**ABSTRACT:** Salman Rushdie's 2019 novel *Quichotte* is the story of a hero reimagined by Rushdie as a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. The novel opens in contemporary America where the 70-year-old protagonist Ismail Smile, who goes mad by watching TV, works as a travelling salesman for a pharmaceutical company called Smile Pharmaceuticals. The plot focuses on Ismail's love for a famous television personality Miss Salma R. who, like Ismail, comes from India. He gets retired, changes his name to Quichotte and goes on a quest to win Salma's love. The quest turns into a complete replica of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* when, on a shooting star, he wishes that he had a son who suddenly appears in the passenger seat of the car he drives. He names him Sancho. Yet, the narration turns out to be a novel in the novel written by a spy novelist referred to only as Brother. *Quichotte*, therefore, becomes Brother's imagination that recreates the classical *Don Quixote* in a contemporary setting. This paper, then, focuses on the concept of post-truth in the meta-narrative of Salman Rushdie who not only rewrites a classical novel but also raises questions as to whether or not truths and narrators are reliable. This study also analyses the saturation of the manipulating power of post-truth era in the lives of Rushdie's characters.

**Keywords:** Post-Novel, Meta-Narrative, Re-Writing, Rushdie, Cervantes

**ÖZ:** Salman Rushdie'nin 2019 tarihli romanı *Quichotte*, Rushdie'nin Miguel de Cervantes'in *Don Kişot* romanındaki kahramanını 21. yüzyıl versiyonu olarak yeniden hayal ettiği bir kurgudur. Roman, televizyon izleyerek deliren 70 yaşındaki başkahraman İsmail Smile'in Smile Pharmaceuticals adlı bir ilaç şirketinde gezici satıcı olarak çalıştığı günümüz Amerika'sında başlar. Konu, İsmail'in kendisi gibi Hindistan'dan gelen ünlü televizyoncu Bayan Salma R.'ye olan aşkına odaklanıyor. Emekli olur, adını Quichotte olarak değiştirir ve Salma'nın aşkını kazanmak için bir araya çıkar. Bu arayış, bir yıldız kayması sırasında, kullandığı arabanın yolcu koltuğunda aniden beliren bir oğlu olmasını dilediğinde, Cervantes'in *Don Kişot*'unun tam bir kopyasına dönüşür. Ona Sancho adını verir. Ancak anlatı, sadece Brother olarak anılan bir casus romancı tarafından yazılmış roman içinde bir romana dönüşür. Dolayısıyla *Quichotte*, Brother'ın klasik *Don Kişot*'u çağdaş bir ortamda yeniden yaratan hayal gücü haline gelir. Bu çalışma, sadece klasik bir romanı yeniden yazmakla kalmayan, aynı zamanda hakikatlerin ve anlatıcıların güvenilir olup olmadığına dair sorular soran Salman Rushdie'nin meta-anlatısında roman-ötesi kavramına odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda deneysel roman-ötesi metinlerin manipüle edici gücünün Rushdie'nin karakterlerinin hayatlarındaki etkilerine de odaklanmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Roman-Ötesi, Meta-Anlatı, Yeniden Yazım, Rushdie, Cervantes

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## Introduction

Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* exemplifies his signature style by weaving together several recurring themes and narrative techniques that have defined his literary career. In this work, Rushdie skillfully integrates elements of magical realism, a genre he has frequently explored in his previous novels, creating a surreal yet familiar world that blurs the lines between fantasy and reality. The novel is rich with intertextuality, drawing connections to other texts and cultural artifacts, and rewriting familiar stories in new and unexpected ways. This approach allows Rushdie to explore complex themes such as cultural clashes, identity crises, and the experiences of postcolonial migration, all of which are central to his oeuvre.

In *Quichotte*, Rushdie revisits his earlier attempts at employing mythical tales and canonical works as the foundation for his narratives. This time, he uses the plot structure of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as a framework for his story. The novel follows the protagonist, who, much like Cervantes' Quixote, embarks on a quest driven by an all-consuming love. However, instead of the chivalric adventures of the original Quixote, Rushdie's character navigates a modern landscape filled with contemporary challenges and absurdities. This quest forces the protagonist to confront not only external obstacles but also internal dilemmas, reflecting Rushdie's ongoing exploration of the human condition and the search for identity in a rapidly changing world. By reimagining the tale of *Don Quixote*, Rushdie creates a multilayered narrative that is both a homage to the classic work and a commentary on contemporary issues. The novel's intertextual nature allows readers to see the parallels between the past and the present, highlighting how timeless themes of love, adventure, and self-discovery continue to resonate today. Through this intricate blend of homage and innovation, *Quichotte* stands as a testament to Rushdie's literary prowess and his ability to reinvent classic tales to reflect the complexities of modern life.

It is the story of a hero reimagined and rewritten by Salman Rushdie as a 21st-century version of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. The novel is set in contemporary America and centers on Ismail Smile, a 70-year-old protagonist whose life takes a dramatic turn after he suffers a heart attack. Confined indoors, Ismail becomes obsessed with watching television, which leads to his eventual mental decline. He works as a traveling salesman for a pharmaceutical company aptly named Smile Pharmaceuticals. The narrative focuses on Ismail's passionate, albeit delusional, love for Miss Salma R., a famous television personality who, like Ismail, hails from India. This shared cultural background adds a layer of depth to Ismail's infatuation, making his quest more than just a pursuit of romantic love but also a longing for a connection to his heritage.

It should be useful here to notice the pun on the Ismail's name. Smile, the name of the company Ismail works for, has a phonetic similarity to

Ismail. This pronounciational resemblance is not coincidental when Salman Rushdie's usual puns and linguistic experiments are considered. Rushdie draws parallelism between Ismail's situation as a man in cultural collisions and humorous situations which postcolonial immigrants find themselves in. The name of the company, then, points out the contradictions that invoke smiles when the western popular cultural hemisphere does not dovetail with the cultural ontology of the postcolonial identity.

Upon retiring, Ismail adopts the nickname "Quichotte" and embarks on a quixotic quest to win Salma's love. This journey mirrors the adventures of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, complete with absurdities and surreal elements. As Quichotte travels across America, he experiences a series of bizarre and fantastical events that reflect his inner turmoil and the chaotic world around him. One night, filled with longing and desperation, Quichotte makes a wish upon a shooting star for a son. Miraculously, a young boy appears in the passenger seat of his car, seemingly out of nowhere. Quichotte names this boy Sancho, after Don Quixote's faithful squire, thus adding another layer of intertextual reference to the classic tale. Sancho becomes Quichotte's companion on his journey, serving as a sounding board and a source of support as they navigate the strange and unpredictable landscape of modern America.

### **Meta-Narrativity From *Don Quixote* to *Quichotte***

Through this contemporary reimagining of *Don Quixote*, Rushdie explores themes of obsession, identity, and the search for meaning in a fragmented world. Ismail Smile's transformation into Quichotte and his fantastical quest highlight the absurdity and poignancy of human desires, capturing the essence of the original story while placing it firmly within the context of 21st-century America. This novel stands as a testament to Rushdie's ability to blend the mythical with the modern, creating a narrative that is both timeless and uniquely relevant to today's readers.

Yet, the narrative turns out to be a novel within a novel, crafted by a spy novelist named Sam DuChamp, who is referred to as Brother, an unmistakable reference to "Big Brother" in George Orwell's *1984*, in the narrative. This meta-narrative layer adds a complex dimension to the story, as Quichotte, and the world he inhabits, are revealed to be the creations of Brother's imagination. Through this device, Rushdie not only reimagines the classical *Don Quixote* in a contemporary setting but also engages with themes of authorship, reality, and the nature of storytelling. The concept of the post-novel is central to the meta-narrative structure of *Quichotte*. By embedding a novel within a novel, Rushdie invites readers to question the reliability of both the narrative and its narrator. Brother, as the creator of Quichotte, plays a dual role being both the storyteller and a character within his own story. This blurring of lines between author and creation, reality and fiction, challenges traditional notions of narrative truth and reliability.

Rushdie's use of a post-novel structure serves to highlight the fluidity and subjectivity of truth. In a world where multiple perspectives and realities coexist, the novel suggests that truth is not a fixed or singular concept but rather a construct that can be reshaped and reinterpreted. The story of *Quichotte*, viewed through the lens of Brother's imagination, becomes a commentary on the power of storytelling and the role of the author in shaping our perception of reality. Furthermore, by rewriting a classical novel, Rushdie engages in a dialogue with literary tradition. He pays homage to Cervantes' *Don Quixote* while simultaneously transforming it to reflect contemporary issues and sensibilities. This act of rewriting raises questions about originality and authenticity in literature. It also emphasizes the intertextual nature of storytelling, where new narratives are built upon the foundations of existing ones, continually evolving and adapting to new contexts.

The meta-narrative of *Quichotte* also explores the concept of identity, both personal and cultural. Ismail Smile's transformation into Quichotte and his quest for love and meaning mirror Brother's own struggles with his identity as a writer and as a brother. The overlapping narratives of *Quichotte* and Brother create a rich tapestry that delves into the complexities of self-discovery and the quest for personal truth in a fragmented and multifaceted world. In focusing on the concept of the post-novel, Rushdie not only reinterprets a classical work but also engages with broader philosophical questions about the nature of truth, the reliability of narrators, and the power of storytelling. *Quichotte* becomes a vehicle for exploring these ideas, encouraging readers to reflect on their own assumptions about narrative and reality. Through this innovative structure, Rushdie continues to push the boundaries of literary form, creating a work that is both a tribute to the past and a bold exploration of contemporary themes.

In his series of lectures on the aspects of the novel, E. M. Forster identifies "story" and "people" as two of the most fundamental elements of novel writing. Forster emphasizes that the story is "the fundamental aspect without which" the novel "could not exist" (Forster, 2005: 40). He points out that while the story is essential, it may not always be the most admirable aspect of a novel. Forster elaborates on this by suggesting that "the more we look at the story, the less we find something to admire" (Forster, 2005: 40-41). This implies that the plot alone, stripped of deeper context or richness, might not hold as much intrinsic value. Moving beyond the plot, Forster argues that the actors within a novel—its characters—are equally crucial. Since the actors in a novel are human beings and the novelist is also a human being, "the people are the second most fundamental aspect of a novel" (Forster, 2005: 54). Characters give life to the narrative, providing readers with figures they can relate to, empathize with, or even oppose. They embody the human experience, making the story more engaging and meaningful.

Forster's insights highlight that the journey of the novel as a genre has consistently revolved around human actors or other living entities with which readers can identify. From its earliest prototypes, the novel has been a vehicle for exploring human nature, relationships, and society through the lens of its characters and their stories. Characters often drive the narrative forward, their development and interactions forming the backbone of the novel's structure. In contemporary literature, particularly in *Quichotte*, these principles are vividly illustrated. The story of Ismail Smile, who reinvents himself as Quichotte, is not just about the events that unfold but also deeply about the characters themselves. Rushdie's narrative delves into Ismail's psyche, his transformation, and his interactions with others, including his imagined son, Sancho. This focus on character development aligns with Forster's assertion that the human element is central to the novel's appeal.

Moreover, the meta-narrative structure in *Quichotte*, in which a secondary character, called Brother creates the primary narrative, further underscores the importance of character and story. Brother's act of writing *Quichotte*'s story intertwines his own personal struggles and perspectives with those of his characters, reflecting the profound connection between the novelist and the fictional beings they create. Ultimately, Forster's lectures remind us that while the plot provides the skeleton of a novel, it is the flesh and blood of the characters that bring it to life. The enduring journey of the novel as a genre continues to be shaped by this dynamic interplay between story and people, offering readers not only a sequence of events but a deep, resonant exploration of the human condition.

However, Salman Rushdie's narration in *Quichotte* both defies and reconstructs the prototypical definitions of the novel. While he adheres to the traditional elements identified by E. M. Forster—human beings deployed in a story—Rushdie simultaneously introduces a complex meta-narrative structure that intertwines characters, the narrator, and a fictional writer, thereby challenging conventional storytelling norms. Rushdie employs a narrative technique where the boundaries between reality and fiction, as well as between the creator and the created, are blurred. The primary story of Ismail Smile, who reimagines himself as Quichotte, operates within the framework of a classical novel. This narrative follows Ismail's quest, his interactions, and his development as a character, fulfilling Forster's criteria of "story" and "people." Ismail's transformation into Quichotte and his subsequent journey to win the love of Miss Salma R. provide a rich tapestry of events and character interactions that drive the plot forward.

On the other hand, Rushdie complicates this traditional narrative by introducing a meta-narrative layer. The story of *Quichotte* is revealed to be a novel within the novel, authored by a fictional spy novelist named Sam DuChamp, referred to as Brother in the text. This additional layer creates a narrative that is self-aware and reflexive, inviting readers to question the nature of the story and the reliability of its narration. In this meta-narrative, the characters, narrator, and fictional writer are intricately interwoven.

Brother's creation of Quichotte mirrors his own life experiences and struggles, suggesting a deep connection between the writer and his fictional world. The characters in *Quichotte's* story are not merely figments of imagination but extensions of Brother's psyche, blurring the lines between the creator and the created. This interplay between different narrative levels adds depth and complexity to the novel, as readers are encouraged to consider the influence of the author's identity and experiences on the story being told.

Rushdie's use of meta-narrative also allows him to explore broader themes of truth, reality, and fiction. By embedding a novel within a novel, he raises questions about the reliability of narrators and the nature of truth in storytelling. The existence of multiple narrative layers suggests that truth is multifaceted and subjective, constructed through various perspectives and interpretations. This challenges the reader to engage with the narrative on a deeper level, recognizing that the story is not a straightforward depiction of events but a complex, layered construct.

Moreover, the meta-narrative structure in *Quichotte* reflects Rushdie's engagement with intertextuality and rewriting. By reimagining Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in a contemporary setting and incorporating a fictional author within the narrative, Rushdie pays homage to the literary tradition while simultaneously reinventing it. This act of rewriting emphasizes the fluidity and dynamism of literary works, highlighting how stories can be reshaped and reinterpreted across different contexts and times. Thus, Rushdie's narration defies and reconstructs the prototypical definitions of the novel by combining traditional storytelling with a sophisticated meta-narrative. Through this approach, he not only employs human beings in a story but also creates a narrative that is self-reflexive and intertextual, challenging conventional notions of truth, reality, and authorship. This innovative structure underscores the evolving nature of the novel as a genre and Rushdie's ability to push its boundaries, creating a work that is both a tribute to and a reinvention of classical literature.

The narration makes clear that *Quichotte's* story is fictional. This is not only to suggest that what we are reading as a fictional work of a novelist turns into a novel written by a fictional writer employed within the very text we are reading; but also to turn *Quichotte* into a story within a story written by a man referred to as Brother, whose fictional name is Sam DuChamp, an unsuccessful spy novelist that obviously recalls the Big Brother in George Orwell's *1984*, as above mentioned. Unlike the Big Brother and the protagonist in Orwell's text, Brother and Quichotte have a lot in common. They both originally come from India, but live in America and Brother in *Quichotte* writes the story of the person he monitors rather than detecting his life to impose limitations, as occurs in *1984*.

Salma, the TV presenter whom Quichotte is in love with, is the daughter of a Bollywood actress and she migrated to US in her twenties to

present a popular television show. The narrative is full of sudden shifts from one milieu of narrative to another and shifts to Brother's sister referred to only as Sister who lives in England and is elected to parliament as the first non-white woman. Then the story focuses on Dr. R. K. Smile, Quichotte's wealthy cousin who owns the pharmaceutical company where Quichotte works. Dr. Smile uses illegal and unethical practices in pharmaceutical applications and sells huge amounts of addictive pills. The illegal addictive pills that cause hallucinations function as an allusive leitmotif in the background of Quichotte's illusions which Sancho is born out of. Yet, although Sancho is born out of Quichotte's imagination, he has his own will, personality and his own consciousness. Being turned into a corporeal person by a divine force, he wants to quit accompanying Quichotte despite feeling attached to him metaphysically.

Brother, on the other hand, has a son and a sister, like Quichotte. Since he has lost his ties with them, he tries to repair his relations with his family. When he finds out that his son is arrested and his sister is diagnosed with cancer, he goes to London to visit her only to see that she has killed herself to avoid a painful death. Thus, to overcome his grief, he returns to US and decides to finish writing his book in which he creates Quichotte and Sancho.

As famously known, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* follows the story of a middle-aged man named Alonso Quixano, who becomes obsessed with the chivalric ideals found in the books he has avidly read. Embracing the persona of Don Quixote, he decides to embark on a quest to revive chivalry by combating evil and aiding the helpless. His first adventure is a failure, but undeterred, he persuades a laborer named Sancho Panza to join him as his faithful squire. Sancho agrees, lured by the promises of wealth and governance over an island that Quixote vows to bestow upon him.

Central to Don Quixote's quest is his devotion to a woman named Dulcinea del Toboso, who, in reality, is a simple peasant. In Quixote's mind, however, she is a noble princess worthy of his knightly efforts. For Dulcinea, Quixote renounces food, shelter, and comfort, dedicating his every action to her honor. This romanticized and idealistic pursuit becomes a driving force behind his adventures. The narrative of *Don Quixote* is richly layered, comprising the various stories of the people he encounters on his journey. Each encounter adds depth and texture to the novel, creating a complex, multi-layered structure. These interactions not only further the plot but also offer commentary on various aspects of society, human nature, and the boundaries between reality and illusion. Despite the well-meaning interventions of his friends, the priest and the barber, who believe Don Quixote is deluded by his fantastical imaginations and strive to bring him back home, Quixote remains steadfast in his adventures. Their efforts to ground him in reality are met with his unwavering commitment to his chivalric ideals and his quest.

Adding another layer to this intricate narrative is Cervantes' unique storytelling technique, which Rushdie openly alludes to in *Quichotte*. Cervantes presents the story as a historical account, claiming it is a translation of a manuscript written by a Moorish author named Cide Hamete Benengeli. This fictional framing device introduces an additional level of meta-narrative, making Cervantes' narration part of another fictional work. This technique blurs the lines between fiction and reality, enhancing the novel's exploration of truth and illusion. In this way, *Don Quixote* not only tells the story of an individual's quest but also delves into the nature of storytelling itself. The layers of narrative - from Don Quixote's adventures to the stories within those adventures, and finally to the overarching fictional history translated by Cervantes - create a rich tapestry that examines how stories are told, interpreted, and understood. This complexity has cemented *Don Quixote* as a seminal work in Western literature, influencing countless writers and narratives that followed.

These similarities that invite immediate comparisons between the two works unfold the underlying deconstructive novelistic tropes used by Cervantes as the writer of a proto-novel and Rushdie as the writer of a post-novel. In René Girard's reading, *Don Quixote* presents "all the ideas of the Western novel" and the idea of these ideas, "the idea whose central role is constantly being confirmed, the basic idea from which one can rediscover everything is triangular desire" (Girard, 2006: 313). In most fictional works, argues Girard, "the characters have desires" simpler than those of *Don Quixote* and there is no "mediator", whereas, in Cervantes' narration, the mediator is there "radiating toward both the subject and the object" (2006: 295). Girard states that the triangular desire is typically exemplified in the character of Don Quixote affecting his squire Sancho Panza, who represents "realism" as opposed to Don Quixote's "idealism" (2006: 296). As suggested in the narration, "Don Quixote is not the author of this fiction" and "there is indeed the suggestion of a third person" beyond the hero's desires (Girard, 2006: 296). As in the example of Cide Hamete Benengeli from whom Cervantes claims to have translated the story of *Don Quixote*, Rushdie's narration also suggests a fictional author Sam DuChamp, called Brother, as the writer of *Quichotte*'s story. Girard calls this type of novelistic strategy as "the simultaneous presence of external and internal mediation in the same work" (2006: 313).

In Víktor Shklovsky's views, when "the numerous tales and events" in *Don Quixote* are studied, it will be seen that "the beginning of day and the beginning of night play no compositional role in the sequence of events" (2006: 38). The narrative structure of the novel, then, moves away from the realistic atmosphere by disregarding the chronotope. This type of narrative structure that disconnects the relations between time and space in the narrativity takes the text out of the normative definitions of realistic fiction. *Don Quixote*, as argued by Northrop Frye, established a tradition that "continues in a type of novel" looking at a "romantic situation from its own



point of view,” therefore, “the conventions of the two forms make up an ironic compound instead of a sentimental mixture” (2006: 100). Even at the earliest stages of the genre, Cervantes creates an experimental style in *Don Quixote* and deconstructs the norms of storytelling. Defined, by Fredrick Jameson, as “the totemic ancestor of the novel” that “emblematically demonstrates” many definitions of realism (2006: 418), *Don Quixote* easily evolves into magical realism which Rushdie has reformulated and intensified by infusing magic into daily politics and historicism in his experimental postcolonial novels since the beginning of 1980s.

*Midnight's Children* in which one thousand and one children born at the midnight hour of India's independence communicate telepathically; or *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* in which the main character communicates with his twin brother who dies at birth may be cited as examples of striking narratives of magic realism. Also *Shame* in which the main character Omar Khayyam, an extraordinarily marginal character is given birth to by three sisters who share the pregnancy stands out with its characters who can walk through walls. *The Satanic Verses*, his notoriously provocative novel, declares its magic realist characteristics in the opening pages of the novel where the two main characters, Salahuddin Chamchawalla and Gibreel Farishta survive a plane crash by just waving their arms to float in the air. Not to mention his other books, beginning from the early novels like these, Rushdie uses magic realism in order to intensify the effects of the plot rather than a way of manipulating the reality.

At this point, Frederick Luis Aldama questions why “practitioners of magical realism commonly invent storyworlds where Firstworlds” that are traditionally coded as “Western”, “metropolitan” and “civilized” are intertwined with “Thirdworlds” that are traditionally coded as “non-Western” and “rural” (2003: 1). Besides bringing together what Aldama calls as the Firstworlds and the Thirdworlds that do not dovetail each other, the practitioners of magical realism also employ “protagonists of narratives usually identified as an ethnic hybrid and/or diasporic postcolonial subject” (2003: 1). In Rushdie's magical realism, one can find this ethnic hybridity and diasporic identity to represent a “problematic relationship between an author” who represents “his or her worldview” in magical realism and “the narrators and characters depicted in them” (Aldama, 2003: 1).

My contention here is that, as well as affirming Aldama's supposition for the practices of magical realism, its uses could also be observed in lands where different geographical formations come together and create variety of landscapes as the setting of a text. Another purpose of Rushdie in using magical realism is “to critique narratives that produce Us/Them binary opposition” (Aldama, 2003: 90) in order to avoid legitimizing it. Instead, he employs magical realism in his texts, as argued by Aldama, to enable “his cultural and racial hybrid protagonists and characters” to live in the same space as their oppressors (2003: 91). The magic realism in Rushdie's texts mentioned above creates a unique texture in “culturally and racially

complex and comprehensive fourth space” instead of “story worlds and narrators” recreating binary oppositions between a first space labelled as “European, rational, civilized and real” and a third space labeled as “racial other, prerational” and “magical” (Aldama, 2003: 91).

Ursula Kluwick states that Rushdie’s novels function to deconstruct the illusionary mimetic representation generated by magic realism in various forms (106). For example, “the supernatural and the unreality effects” are brought together in his novels with what we may label as postmodernist tropes such as “intrusive metaphors and episodic narrative structures” to block readings with mimetic orientations (Kluwick, 2011: 106). His novels are ridiculously engaged with the patterns of conventional realistic tropes while, at the same time, they refuse to be a part of realism and become a part of a central “counter-strategy to mimetic readings” in which the “discourse levels of the novels are constantly foregrounded” to remind us of “the constructed nature of the texts” (Kluwick, 2011: 106). This prevents us, in Ursula Kluwick’s terms, “from falling completely under the narrative spell of the stories” (2011: 106).

Megalomania, on the other hand, is among the most significant traits that Rushdie’s characters share in relation to “their obsessive search for meaning in the world around them, as well as to their insecurity” about their position in the world which can be commented on “in relation to the identity crisis of the ‘postcolonial subject’” (Kluwick, 2011: 109). Robert P. Marzec asserts that this discursive methodology by Rushdie ends with “the declaration that essentialist beliefs are no more than ideological constructions” and the sense of belonging “to a nation stems from an interpellation by a sociosymbolic order that wishes to homogenize the diversity of the land” that functions to construct a national identity (Marzec, 1997: 154).

Discursivity, on another level, is also used by Rushdie in order to achieve the sort of categorical condition of “the very metaphysical omniscience” that the narration “wishes to call into question” (Marzec, 1997: 154). The anarchic momentum that stands out as a phenomenon in Rushdie’s works to make “the introduction of the stabilizing powers” necessary is an irreducible case that makes his texts interrogate “the fundamental relation between the essentially unstable and chaotic and the stabilizing institutional forces of self-hood, convention, and national consensus” (Marzec, 1997: 155).

### **Novelistic Strategies**

Rushdie’s novelistic strategies, then, stand out not only as the consequences of postcolonial identity but also as the outcomes of multilayered cultural circumstances of the contemporary age. Cultural identities that overlap with the constantly changing dwelling places, as seen in the lives of global migrants, generate multilayered narrative structures that multiply storytelling devices and opportunities. These shifting identities

and habitats allow migrants to draw from a vast array of cultural and imaginative sources, enabling them to craft stories rich in diversity and complexity. In *Quichotte*, Rushdie exemplifies this phenomenon. As he mentioned in one of his interviews (Rushdie, 1982), he employs an oral storytelling style, interrupting his own narrative, inserting anecdotes, and resuming the main story in a manner reminiscent of traditional oral storytellers. This method not only enriches the narrative texture but also serves to deconstruct conventional models of realism and early novelistic forms. By reformulating one of the most canonical novels of Western literature, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Rushdie bridges the gap between historical literary traditions and contemporary storytelling techniques.

In *Quichotte*, Cervantes' tale is revived within a contemporary setting that fuses the experiences of modern immigrants with the themes of the original. The protagonist, Ismail Smile, embodies both the postcolonial migrant identity and the contemporary global immigrant experience. His character reflects the cultural contradictions and identity crises faced by refugees worldwide, bringing to the forefront the complex interplay of cultural assimilation and preservation. Ismail Smile's transformation into Quichotte and his quest to win the love of Miss Salma R. serve as a metaphor for the immigrant's journey toward self-realization and acceptance in a new world. The narrative weaves together elements of magical realism, cultural commentary, and personal introspection, showcasing Rushdie's ability to navigate and intertwine multiple cultural narratives.

By employing a meta-narrative structure, Rushdie creates a story within a story, wherein the fictional author Brother crafts the tale of Quichotte. This approach not only challenges the reader's perception of reality and fiction but also reflects the layered identities of contemporary migrants, who often navigate multiple cultural and social realities. The intertwined narratives of *Quichotte* and Brother illustrate how personal and collective histories can coexist and influence one another, adding depth to the exploration of postcolonial and immigrant identities. Rushdie's deconstruction of traditional realism and early novel forms in *Quichotte* is a testament to his innovative approach to storytelling. He reformulates the classical narrative of *Don Quixote*, infusing it with the contemporary concerns of migration, identity, and cultural hybridity. This reinvention highlights the enduring relevance of classic literature while simultaneously addressing the unique challenges and experiences of modern-day immigrants. Through Ismail Smile's journey, Rushdie captures the essence of the immigrant experience marked by the struggle for belonging, the tension between cultural preservation and assimilation, and the quest for identity in an ever-changing world. *Quichotte* stands as a powerful narrative that not only pays homage to its literary predecessor but also serves as a poignant commentary on the complexities of contemporary global migration and the multifaceted nature of cultural identity.

## Conclusion

Ismail Smile's quest, which parodies and relocates *Don Quixote's* adventures, is not only a postmodernist rewriting of that proto-novel but also an effort to recreate and reformulate the conventions of novel writing in an age where stories overlap within a multidimensional and multicultural milieu. In this context, global shifts of vast populations transform the local into the global, making the boundaries between distinct cultural narratives increasingly fluid. Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is reimagined as a twenty-first-century allegory of fighting against globalization rather than windmills. Through his identity search, which is disguised as a quest to find his lover, Ismail Smile becomes a character that resists global capitalism and its pervasive influence. The pharmaceutical industry, with its powerful marketing strategies, symbolizes the broader cultural dominance of multinational corporations. Smile's transformation into Quichotte, and his subsequent journey, critique this dominance, highlighting the struggle against the commodification and corporatization of essential aspects of life, such as healthcare.

In naming himself Quichotte, Ismail Smile not only adopts the mantle of Cervantes' idealistic knight but also underscores his rebellion against the dehumanizing forces of global capitalism. His quest becomes a metaphor for the broader fight against the homogenizing impact of globalization, advocating for the preservation of individual and cultural identities in a world increasingly driven by corporate interests. Rushdie's narrative strategy, which intertwines meta-narrative and intertextuality, invites readers to reflect on the overlapping stories and cultural identities that characterize the contemporary world. This approach forces readers to engage with the narrative on multiple levels, challenging their imagination and encouraging them to reconsider the boundaries of traditional storytelling.

To conclude, Rushdie's narration once again stretches the imagination of the reader and rearranges the novelistic styles of earlier centuries, attempting to create a new generation of novels that might be labeled as post-novels. These post-novels are characterized by their ability to integrate multiple narratives, cultural identities, and storytelling techniques within a single work. By doing so, Rushdie not only pays homage to the literary tradition but also pushes the boundaries of the genre, offering a fresh perspective on the novel in the context of the globalized, multicultural twenty-first century.

In *Quichotte*, Rushdie successfully merges the classical and the contemporary, the local and the global, creating a narrative that speaks to the complexities of modern life. Ismail Smile's journey is a testament to the enduring power of storytelling to address and reflect upon the human condition, even as it evolves in response to changing cultural and economic landscapes. Through this innovative approach, Rushdie redefines the

possibilities of the novel, making a compelling case for its continued relevance and adaptability in an increasingly interconnected world.

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