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**Rushdie meets Cervantes:  
Mirrors, Fiction and Possible  
Worlds in *Don Quijote* and  
*Quichotte***

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**Abstract:** This undergraduate dissertation comparatively analyses how fictionality is built in Miguel de Cervantes' *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605) and Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* (2019) with the aid of the Possible Worlds Theory. The aim is to determine how the theory can be used to study fictionality in these novels and how it accentuates the social critique the authors were striving for. The novels illustrate the societies of their respective timeframes in a light that causes the traditional perception of reality to become oneiric, calling into question the principles and values of the society of each respective author. By providing a method to study multiple layering of meanings and multidisciplinary nature, the Possible Worlds Theory proves to be a most suitable tool for the comparative analysis of fiction in Cervantes's masterpiece and Rushdie's novel.

**Keywords:** Possible Worlds Theory, Miguel de Cervantes, Salman Rushdie, *Quijote*, *Quichotte*, fiction, liquid worlds.

**Resumen:** Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado analiza comparativamente cómo se construye la ficcionalidad en *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605) de Miguel de Cervantes y *Quichotte* (2019) de Salman Rushdie con la ayuda de la Teoría de los Mundos Posibles. El objetivo es determinar cómo se puede utilizar la teoría para estudiar la ficcionalidad en estas novelas y cómo acentúa la crítica social que los autores buscaban. Las novelas ilustran las sociedades de sus respectivas épocas bajo una luz que hace que la percepción tradicional de la realidad se vuelva onírica, cuestionando los principios y valores de la sociedad de cada respectivo autor. Al proporcionar un método para estudiar las múltiples capas de significados y la naturaleza multidisciplinaria, la Teoría de los Mundos Posibles demuestra ser una herramienta más que certera para el análisis comparativo de la ficción en la obra maestra de Cervantes y la novela de Rushdie.

**Palabras clave:** Teoría de los Mundos Posibles, Miguel de Cervantes, Salman Rushdie, *Quijote*, *Quichotte*, ficción, mundos líquidos.

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## INTRODUCTION

The influence of Miguel de Cervantes' *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605) is nothing short of outstanding. The novel has proven to be impactful not only in Spanish culture, but in Western culture as a whole. In English letters, according to Zenón Luis-Martínez,<sup>1</sup> the first allusions to *Quijote* address the windmills of the eighth chapter, with dramaturges like George Wilkins and Thomas Middleton representing madness and uproarious wrath through the figure of the knight (546). It was the year 1612 that saw the first translation of the novel into English under the tutelage of Thomas Shelton, which was the first translation of *Quijote* into any other language (546). After the theatrical mentions, the work would go on to influence plays in their totality, with Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1612) being "the first full-fledged imitation of Don Quixote" (548). Not only the work itself as a whole proved to be influential, but also the stories told within it. John Fletcher and William Shakespeare curated the now lost *The History of Cardenio* play around the character of Cardenio from *Quijote*'s chapters XXIII to XXVI (548). In the novel, Henry Fielding inaugurated the Cervantine tradition with *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* in 1742. The novel was accompanied by the subtitle: "in imitation of the *Manner* of Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*" (553). Contemporary of Fielding, Laurence Sterne found inspiration in Cervantes' *Quijote* and crafted *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–67). These two authors, alongside translator Tobias Smollet (who published the translation *Don Quixote* in 1755), were responsible for the change in how *Don Quijote* was perceived in Britain, turning from pathetic lunatic into "a complex, humorous, and lovable character" (555). Another notable mention from within the numerous pieces of literature *Quijote* has influenced during this century would be Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), novel that stands out for its gender reorientation that would later favour the female novel in general terms.

Salman Rushdie took the world by storm during the eighties. The publication of *Midnight's Children* (1981) attracted the attention of a wide range of readers, but it was

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<sup>1</sup> Given all references in this paragraph address Zenón Luis-Martínez work, his last names are omitted in further citations.

1988's *The Satanic Verses* that caused a complete revolution. The novel was met with both appraisal and outrage, critics appreciated the aesthetics and concern with migrant experience but Muslims all around the world felt the Anglo-Indian author was mocking their religion: "Protests were held, the book was banned in numerous countries, fire-bombs were hurled through stockists' windows and the novel's Japanese translator was stabbed to death" (Haidrani). Needless to say, Rushdie established himself as part of the most thought-provoking writers in recent history, and had to even go into hiding under the protection of the government of the United Kingdom. Subsequent releases from Rushdie did not see the same chaos revolving their release, but the author never stopped targeting the sensitive, yet necessary, topics of displacement, capitalism, globalisation, religion and conflicting cultural and national identities. During the last decade, Rushdie placed the focus of his novels on America. 2019 saw the release of *Quichotte*, a novel that tackles the United States under Donald Trump's presidency through Cervantes' knightly feverishness. The novel is the testament of *Quijote*'s expansive influence through the years, generations and borders. Among a myriad of authors who have taken inspiration from the novel in order to create their own stories, Rushdie stands out for his intelligent use of Cervantes' fictionality.

In this final dissertation, I will perform a comparative analysis of *Quijote* and *Quichotte* through the lens of the Possible Worlds Theory in order to understand how their fictionality is built and how social critique is embedded into the novels. The first section of the dissertation is dedicated to explaining the principles of the theory, with a following subsection detailing how it will be applied to the novels. The second and largest section is where the main analysis is located, and it is divided into six different subsections. The first subsection collocates the novels in their respective timeframes and classifies their system of possible worlds. The second subsection deals with the figure of Cide Hamete Benengeli and Sam Duchamp as narrators, studying their involvement in the articulation of the possible worlds and social commentary. The third section compares and contrasts the adventure of the windmills of *Quijote* and the mastodons of *Quichotte* and their significance. The core of the fourth subsection is studying how liquid worlds and the concepts of time work in unison with possible worlds in order to elevate the dream-like state of the novels. Moreover, it also connects how this liquid state of worlds can contribute to address social issues. The fifth

subsection explores how characters are built in both novels, studying their equivalence and how it affects the application of the theory. And lastly, the sixth and final section focuses on how the means of transport of the protagonists and love make the system of possible worlds be functional. The third main section looks at how Rushdie's novel is compared to Cervantes' in the eyes of the critics and finds the answer as to how to address *Quichotte* correctly in relation to Cervantes' work.

In closing, and bearing in mind all aforementioned aspects, the conclusions will show how the Possible Worlds Theory serves as an invaluable tool for studying fiction thanks to its furnishing of social commentary and how it highlights the complexity of *Quijote* and *Quichotte*'s fictionality.



## 1. THE POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY

The Possible Worlds Theory and its understanding of fiction and fictionality have been subject of study since its inception in the mid-1960s, and has attracted numerous scholars who have explored its multidisciplinary nature. The antecedents of theory lie in “the conceptual integration of mimesis, fiction and narration”, which was studied by authors like Paul Ricoeur and would result in the understanding of “autonomous and meaningful space in its own right” or “fictional worlds” (Planells 53). Before the Possible Worlds Theory, and after fictional worlds were coined in modern times, the idea of fictional worlds and their framework was studied by Étienne and Anne Soriau,<sup>2</sup> who explored the concept of diegesis (*diégèse*) in 1951 (Le Tinnier 138). This concept, which was originally aimed at cinematic universes, proposed the delimitation of fictional worlds in which stories take place, consequently, it also proposed the study of both extradiegetic (whether the story is being told from inside or outside of the fictional world) and intradiegetic space (if the narrative itself is internal) (Fludernik 40). The concept found success in literature studies thanks to its usefulness when analysing and theorising fiction, with both authors and readers being able to adapt the fictional universe to a structure within the range of human comprehension. In this way, the concept soothed the assimilation of possible worlds and the study of their referential systems: “ultimate meaning of the story: it is fiction in the moment it not only takes shape, but becomes a shape. Its meaning is broader than that of history, which it ends up encompassing” (Aumont 144).

It was only after the useful contributions of the Soriau father-sister duo that the possibility of possible worlds was considered, with the earliest proof being Félix Martínez Bonati’s *La estructura de la obra literaria* (1960). Bonati was then followed by other authors, with the most influential being Umberto Eco, Tomás Albaladejo, Thomas Pavel and Marie-Laure Ryan, among others. From that period on, the Possible Worlds Theory cemented itself as the “macrofictional structure that, based on preestablished true or false propositions, creates a world furnished – with characters, objects, states, actions – as a dynamic system of attribution and creation of valid meaning under the fulfilment of propositions by the enunciator and receiver” (Planells

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<sup>2</sup> Fiction was first theorised by Aristotle with his theory of mimesis (Doležel 475).

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Fore-front scholar of the Possible Worlds Theory Marie-Laure Ryan's proposes the following description of the theory: "the set-theoretical idea that reality—the sum of the imaginable—is a universe composed of a plurality of distinct elements. This universe is hierarchically structured by the opposition of one well-designated element, to all the other members of the set" ("Possible-Worlds Theory" 446). In other words, the Possible Worlds Theory is composed by a source world based on the laws of objective reality which gives birth to other possible worlds within the realm of fictionality. Even though it is true the theory as its core has never seen itself questioned, there are discrepancies between authors regarding different issues. Ryan's own model proposes a system that identifies objective reality as a collection of actual worlds, those being individual interpretations of objective reality that overlap and work together; possible worlds are born from this representation of objective reality, and they are also formed by multiple perspectives ("Possible-Worlds Theory" 446). While Ryan's perception of objective reality is based on a net of actual worlds birthed by perspectivism, another renowned scholar, Albaladejo, proposes a different approach to the theory. Albaladejo addresses in his approach to the Possible Worlds Theory the world-model types or structure of referential sets, which are arranged as follows:

Type I of world model is that of the true; to it correspond the world models whose rules are those of the objectively existing real world. [...]

Type II of world model is that of the plausible fictional; it is the one to which the world models whose rules are not those of the objective real world, but are constructed according to them, correspond. [...]

Type III of the world model is that of the non-credible fictional; To it correspond the world models whose rules are not those of the objective real world nor are they similar to them, implying a transgression of the same. (26-27)<sup>3</sup>

For Albaladejo, the relationship between objective reality and possible worlds is regulated by the information provided by the different world-model types, providing us with the composition of the possible worlds. When Albaladejo considers this arrangement of world-model types, the author is comprehending objective reality as a

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<sup>3</sup> Translation of Spanish quotations is my own, here and elsewhere, which will be indicated as [MOT].

singular entity, which proves to be very useful when grouping possible worlds and grounds the otherwise extremely metaphysical aspect of the theory:

A distinction is maintained here between a real objective world, a possible world actually realised, and some possible worlds differentiated from it; it is necessary to make it explicit that this distinction is located in the field of explanation of the system of worlds regardless of the linguistic expression of reality. (Albaladejo 35)<sup>4</sup>

Contrarily to Ryan's, Albaladejo's approach has an individual objective reality, and for some scholars, like Planells, this may result troublesome: "Albaladejo's typology [...] addresses the composition of the world from its design and assumes some premises – such as objective reality – that may be questionable" (59). Planells' claim opens up the debate of how effective Albaladejo's theory is regarding its individual nature. However, Planells fails to point out that in Albaladejo's understanding of objective reality as a single unit, there is room for multiplicity, for the author only alludes to a set of rules that deal with the natural laws of the world, not the singular scope of a person or character. Moreover, Albaladejo's approach also deals with reality in a multiple sense via the sub-world fragmentation caused by the different characters of a story, so, even though the referential systems are built around a single objective reality, the possible worlds that intervene in it are not singular in the slightest. Unlike Ryan or Albaladejo, other authors like Pavel propose possible worlds to be completely autonomous while at the same time being in relation to other worlds, but in this way, they are not simply satellites of other structures (175).

Another interesting aspect regarding the Possible Worlds Theory that must not go unnoticed is the evaluation of the figure of the narrator and how it functions within the story. For Albaladejo, the narrator is the direct tool for the author to organise the possible world, and if the narrator happens to be present in the narration the organisation turns richer (62). Ryan believes the narrator is important due to its vital presence in the act of world recentring, as it navigates the reader through the universe and accommodates the knowledge of the fictional world (*Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* 26). This brings us to the next and final point in our overlining of the Possible Worlds Theory, world recentring. This concept explains the

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<sup>4</sup> [MOT].

explicit explanation of determinate features, qualities or laws that are alien to objective reality in possible worlds. This is best illustrated with an example: in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, when the White Rabbit is presented, there is not an explanation of the characteristics of a rabbit (four-legged mammal, two ears, etc...) but the story must determine that the White Rabbit can talk, or else "the reader's real knowledge will deny it" (Planells 61).

As we have seen, there is still an open debate on the applicability or composition of the Possible Worlds Theory. However, the importance that the theory assumes in critical analysis remains certain, for it can function as the animated axis that regulates how a story is studied. Albaladejo's analysis of Leopoldo Alas' short novels and Planells' study of *The Lord of The Rings* are illustrative examples as to why the theory is genuinely effective. Nonetheless, whether objective reality is approached as singular or plural, the Possible Worlds Theory grants an organised tool for studying fiction with its mirror-like arrangement of reality and fiction. It is this approach that will be at the heart of my analysis of Cervante's and Rushdie's novels.

### **1.1 APPLYING THE POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY: A TOOL FOR ANALYSIS**

Possessing now a clear overview of how the Possible Worlds Theory is presented by different authors, it is necessary to state how the theory will be applied to the comparative analysis of Rushdie's *Quichotte* and Cervantes's *Quijote*. As the aim of this dissertation is to analyse the stories through the usage of possible worlds as a tool for criticism towards Rushdie and Cervantes' societies in *Quichotte* and *Quijote* respectively, the criteria must be focused on these aspects. For this reason, the approach taken towards the Possible Worlds Theory will be that of Albaladejo's, the reason behind this being the author's understanding of objective reality as singular, the usage of the world-model types system and his remarks on the figure of the narrator, which cannot be understated given the type of analysis. Even though Albaladejo's approach is perfectly fitting for the analysis, there are some features of his theory that will be stripped down in order to keep the intelligibility and volume of the dissertation. Most importantly, the premise of sub-worlds presented by Albaladejo will exclusively be applied to that of the protagonists in the general comparative analysis, and will only be

extended to other characters when they are individually compared, as can be found in section 2.5 (The palette of characters: Breaking the mirror). And secondly, the concepts of intension (what the possible world strictly is) and extension (what the possible world could be or become) can appear in the general analysis but will not be studied in depth.

Talking about the possible worlds themselves, it is important to note that Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte* presents a possible world inside another possible world (Ismail Smile's inside Sam DuChamp's), and while both will be essential in the general comparative analysis, special emphasis will be put in the former. Considering all of the aspects already mentioned, the starting point of the analysis of the system of possible worlds would look like fig. 1:

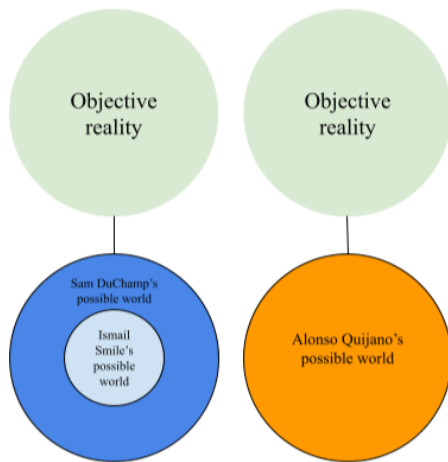


Figure 1. Possible Worlds System in *Quichotte* and *Quijote*.

The figure of Cide Hamete Benengeli as narrator is analysed alongside Duchamp's in section 2.2 (Layers and guidance in possible worlds: The narrators). However, he is not included in any other analysis. This is due to Duchamp's greater role in the story of *Quichotte* as character and sole narrator of the stories in contrast to Benengeli's smaller role as one narrator among multiple ones.

To summarise, the approach of the Possible Worlds Theory applied to Rushdie and Cervante's novels will be limited to the study of the subworlds of the protagonists except where explicitly stated, and even though some other discipline may be mentioned, it will be a literary analysis, achieving then a comprehensible and clear narrative.



## 2. CERVANTES' *DON QUIJOTE* AND RUSHDIE'S *QUICHOTTE* FACE TO FACE

### 2.1 DON QUIJOTE AND QUICHOTTE, CHILDREN OF THEIR TIME

While Cervantes wrote *Quijote*, Spain and the whole of Europe swam upstream in search of something that would redeem them from the crisis of the 1600s (Vilar 125). The Spain Cervantes inhabited was coated by a fake gold layer which hid the struggle underneath. In international affairs, the reign of Philip II suffered before achieving to break through as a European powerhouse, but it came with the price of being seen as a heartless imperialist nation. In spite of this, Spain held cultural prestige in Europe, and the language started to pick up the interest of francophones, with the appearance of anthologies, dictionaries and translations of literary pieces spreading the language in France, in Cervantes' own words: "in France neither man nor woman fails to learn the Spanish language" (*Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* 326).<sup>5</sup> The Old Regime still marked rule in Spain and the rest of Europe. This system was formed by limited and heterogeneous privileged classes (clergy and nobility) and a large non-privileged class with large internal economic differences. These differences were at same time subject to the affairs of the privileged, showcasing a crisis of civil solidarity (Domínguez 29). In the face of national crisis, the people forgot about ideals and principles, something Pierre Villar would describe as: "a society in which the picturesque abounds, and kinder, in some respects, than Puritan society; but, in other respects, rotten, and in any case doomed" (126).<sup>6</sup> To say that Spain was in social jeopardy would be an understatement.

One of the most commonly known features of *Quijote* is the explicitly stated and constantly referenced critique of chivalric novels. The ongoing tremor of Cervantes' times does not go unnoticed in the novel, it finds release in the aforesaid chivalric element. This overarching element elevates the issues presented in the story to a magnified scope. Far from being unaware, Cervantes transported the issues inside one of the most important bodies of literature of all time with *Quijote*: "Cervantes is in no way alien to the anxieties and concerns of Spain at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, the same ones that Don Quixote, with immense

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<sup>5</sup> [MOT].

<sup>6</sup> [MOT].

vividness, recovers, repeats and transforms” (Dopico 352).<sup>7</sup> Cervantes’ voice in the novel is articulated through the narrators and Alonso Quijano himself, actively reflecting his disenchantment with Spanish society.

Not even in times of early modern history was the world, the homeland to objective reality, stagnant, but perhaps, if there is a time of absolute fluidity and change, our century comes victorious. The twenty-first century graced capitalist societies with false tranquillity against the constant shape-shifting nature of reality bestowed by the absence of Eastern conflicts, and in this ocean of facades, Rushdie sailed with *Quichotte* as his ship. Amidst the chaotic Trump administration, which lasted from 2017 until 2021, the United States lost grip on what was to be considered true if it even understood the concept of truth anymore. Everything not convenient to the former reality show star was deemed as “fake,” process also known as “post-truth.” Rushdie had already explored this phenomenon in his 2017 novel *The Golden House*: “that these invented American personae living in their palace of illusions were so unquestioningly accepted by us, [...] tells us much about America itself, and more about the strength of will with which they inhabited their chameleon identities, becoming, in all our eyes, whatever they said they were” (14). During those times, the growing economic breach and social crisis that roved the country was muffled by pop culture and social and mass media. Similarly to how Cervantes’ society shone thanks to its external affairs while the people suffered, Rushdie’s America marketed itself as the pinnacle of civilisation while immigrant children rot in cages and social media influencers flashed their wealth over the almost-starving population. As Rushdie indicates, money dominates and subjugates every other sphere because “the business of America is business” (*The Golden House* 49). *Quichotte* drags inspiration from this liquid world where nothing is reliable anymore, and Rushdie creates this atmosphere of uncertainty by inserting himself in the story thanks to the narrator and Ismail Smile. The novel is also laced with the asphyxiating dilemma of what means to be Indian in the United States, for culture, language and personal identity are all at a critic state for the Indian Americans of this century. Rushdie makes sure to translate this into the possible worlds of *Quichotte*.

The possible world of *Quijote* follows type II of world model, in which we have

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<sup>7</sup> [MOT].



a world of the plausible fictional, where semantic elements like the existence of Alonso Quijano and Sancho Panza (type II) happen in Spain (type I). The possible world where the story takes place follows the rules of our objective world, but Alonso Quijano's subworld offers more of a challenge for the reader. The infamous "madness" Alonso has been labelled with has been subject of study, and it raises the question of whether he does see his possible world in a light that would suit type III of world models. It is in one quote that this question can find an answer: "and in the end, through his little sleep and much reading, he dried up his brains in such sort as he lost wholly his judgment" (Cervantes, *Quijote* I:50).<sup>8</sup> This declaration coming from the narrator demonstrates that Alonso's subworld was conditioned by madness, and that all Alonso claimed to see, he could. This is why Alonso's subworld suits type III, as it breaks the rules of objective reality. For further clarity, I will refer to Quijano as Quijote when focusing on the auto-fictionalisation of the character.

In order to discuss the possible worlds in *Quichotte*, an order must be established. The first possible world we find is that of Sam Duchamp, creator of Smile but at the same time protagonist of his own family-trauma ridden story. Inside the aforementioned world we find Smile's, the quixotic creation. It could be argued that those two worlds are not intertwined, but because the fictionality of Smile's world is dependent from Duchamp's and that the novel culminates with the fusion of both possible worlds, both are best analysed as a set of two. Similarly to Alonso's Spain, the possible world of *Quichotte* takes place in a United States (type I) inhabited by Sam DuChamp, Son and Sister and her family (type II), so it too belongs to the plausible fictional. For the purpose of understanding the nature of Duchamp's subworld, it is convenient to describe the possible world which he created first. The possible world of Smile is located in a United States (type I) where semantic elements like Smile, Sancho and Salma are present (type II) and the natural laws of our objective reality are challenged (type III). The unreality of this world is experienced by all the characters present in the story, as illustrated by the mastodon incident and the splitting of the fabric of reality in New York city directly labelling Smile's subworld belongs as type III.

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<sup>8</sup> Henceforth, *Quijote*, for ease of reference to the work that is the focus of my analysis.

The English version of Quijote's quotations is from Thomas Shelton's contemporary translation of the novel. It will be referred to, here and elsewhere, as [TST].

Now that the nature of Smile's possible world is clear, we can delve into Duchamp's. The nature of Duchamp's subworld poses a slight hindrance, as it stays at a type II level until the very end of the novel, where his subworld merges with the Possible World of Smile: "the microscopic man [...] had brilliantly done the impossible and joined the two worlds, had crossed over from the world of Fancy into the author's real world" (Rushdie, *Quichotte* 390).<sup>10</sup> At this point in the novel DuChamp was probably seconds away from dying, so it could all have been a delusion. Nonetheless, there is evidence of Salma, Smile and Evel Cent crossing and struggling to breathe the thick air of Duchamp's world (*Quichotte* 390). In the end, both possible worlds collided, breaking the referential system of our objective reality, and classifying Duchamp's subworld as type III.

## 2.2 LAYERS AND GUIDANCE IN POSSIBLE WORLDS: THE NARRATORS

The role of the narrators is so prominent in both novels, that a comparative analysis cannot escape a narratological analysis. The narratological aspects of *Quijote* are a vast subject of study alone, so for the comparative purposes the focus will be placed upon the figure of Cide Hamete Benengeli, who gives the platform for the study of fictional worlds and narrators. In regard to *Quichotte*, Sam Duchamp, narrator of Smile's stories, will be analysed.

Before diving into narratology, we must define the role of the narrator as: "the presenter, in the fiction itself, of the system of worlds of the characters" (Albaladejo 62).<sup>11</sup> Additionally, and of great importance for this analysis, the narrators are also an inherent part of the frame of possible worlds (Albaladejo 62). What seems particularly remarkable of the already mentioned narrators is not only their role in the construction of possible worlds, but also how the author determines their roles in the story (Albaladejo 62). It is in this double role of the narrators where the core of this analysis lies. Benengeli and Duchamp are considered pillars of the system of possible worlds and a tool to reflect social critique onto the novels. To further clarify, it must be stated that author and narrator lie in different levels. The narrator is the actual producer of the

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<sup>10</sup> Henceforth, *Quichotte*, for ease of reference to the work that is the focus of my analysis.

<sup>11</sup> [MOT].

text and is, consequently, on the textual pragmatic level according to the amplified TeSWeST II (TextStruktur Welt-Struktur Theorie or text structure and world structure theory) (Albaladejo 62). This level deals with linguistic production, i.e. how a text is constructed and adjusted (Mey 6). The narrator lies in the intensional sphere as part of “the inventio operation” which involves the creation of the semantic elements of discourse (Albaladejo 62).<sup>12</sup> In other words, the authors (Cervantes and Rushdie) are rooted in objective reality while the narrators (Benengeli and Duchamp) perform on a fictional level. Additionally, the narrators in these stories enrich the vertebration of the possible worlds due to their involvement in the story (Albaladejo 62). This benefits the possible worlds because the figure of the narrator is a character, and thus, part of the structure of the referential set. This fact becomes more evident if the narrator partakes in the story, just like Benengeli and Duchamp, with Benengeli as the discoverer of Quijote’s story and DuChamp as the author of Smile’s story and character.

Benengeli is an Arab writer who narrates the adventures of Quixote, but his nature goes beyond this. His writings were miraculously discovered and then later translated into Spanish by an Arab translator from Toledo (Cervantes, *Quijote* II:482), this information being told by an unknown narrator. This confusing succession, according to Alberto Manguel contributes to how “Don Quixote [...] engulfs reality and turns it into fiction, to make it more real” (Manguel 43).<sup>13</sup> This directly pertains to how Benengeli functions in the scheme of the Possible Worlds Theory. It is in the process of building the possible world that Cervantes too performs a layered falsification of objective reality through the nature of Benengeli. The mere existence of Benengeli contributes to form this otherworldly system in a circle of constant layering. Another interesting feature of the Arab narrator resides on his commentary: “that the mockers were as foolish as the mocked, and that there wanted not two inches of the duke’s and duchess’s utter privation of common understanding, since they took so much pains to mock two fools” (*Quijote* II:692).<sup>14</sup> Here, the Arabic voice arranges characters into different groups, something that Jorge Moreno Pinaud ponders as a reflection of a social sector through the lens of satire (2). On this occasion, the reader

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<sup>12</sup> [MOT].

<sup>13</sup> [MOT].

<sup>14</sup> [TST].

is invited to value the power dynamics that accompany the difference of social class. It is because of this that Benengeli does not only function as a stylistic resource to fictionalise reality or parody the narrative structures of chivalric books, as the voice is presented as subjective and biased. In this wise, Benengeli does not work as presenter of meanings, he is also enabling the chance to reflect on the social. On top of this, one of the ways of implementing this social critique is embedded by the Arab origins of the narrator: “the appearance of an Arab narrator [...] simply wants to highlight a political and social conflict between old and new Christians, in a Spain that resented the presence of ‘the other’” (Quintero).<sup>15</sup> Giving the agency of analysing a Spanish reality to an Arab figure creates a sort of distortion, a breach caused by the outsider look into the world that compliments the critique. What is more, this outsiders’ gaze is paired with the tongue-in-cheek words of the narrator, turning the narration ambivalent and chaotic, as none of what is being told wants to or is being boxed as truth, contributing to the building of the possible world. This idea of instability is further explored in section 2.4 (Time and the liquidity of worlds). In short, Cervantes’ execution of the narrator sharply influences the framework of the possible world and functions as a multi-dimensional tool designed for social critique.

Duchamp’s role as a narrator, bearing in mind Albaladejo’s point of view, is even richer than that of Benengeli’s: “he conceived the idea of telling the story of the lunatic Quichotte” (*Quichotte* 21). Needless to say, the importance of DuChamp in the frame of the possible worlds of *Quichotte* cannot go unnoticed. Considering Duchamp is the creator of Smile’s subworld and the former explanation of the different levels author and narrator belong to (text pragmatics and the inventio operation respectively), DuChamp unfolds and not only inhabits his own possible world, but also dictates how Smile’s works through his role as narrator. This prodigious layering, reminiscent of matryoshka dolls, contributes to an intricate design of possible worlds. If in the case of the Arab voice the reader only had access to limited information about him and had to pay special attention to the way events were narrated, DuChamp offers direct access to his background and personality. Unlike Benengeli, DuChamp is the omniscient narrator of the events of Quijote’s possible world, and this gives him the chance to express his

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<sup>15</sup> [MOT].

discontent with society through oneiric stances which are scattered all throughout the novel:

He talked about wanting to take on the destructive mind-numbing junk culture of his time just as Cervantes had gone to war with the junk culture of his own age [...] about Indian immigrants, racism toward them, crooks among them; about cyberspies, science fiction, the intertwining of fictional and “real” realities, the death of the author [...] and of satire and pastiche. (*Quichotte* 289)

DuChamp’s almost delusional and chaotic narration breaks through the decorum he has been inhaling from mass media, and gives space for his trauma to be explored, healed, or simply receive form. Why is it then, that the presence a calm narrator that only presents the world offering minimal brushstrokes results so enticing? This question finds an answer in the constant dialogue between the creator of the world and the world itself, resulting in a mirror-like interaction that exacerbate the social issues presented to such point that the reader is invited to the narration. For this reason, the succession of events that happen in the adventures of Smile would not be as effective if the narrator did not present the possible world in this light, for the actions and speeches of Smile alone do not invite the reader to act as judge. After having explored how the narrators behave, it is also of interest to comment on their degree of presence in the narration. Benengeli’s is present in the narration through, most commonly, brief and sharp comments on the ongoing events, while Duchamp does so by longer additions, as illustrated by previous quotes. This unbalance in their presence is due to how social commentary is presented, for Cervantes opts for a more direct and precise way of addressing them while Rushdie performs a more extended postmodernist elaboration.

As has been brought to the light, Benengeli and DuChamp both influence the system of possible worlds of their respective novels with their multi-layered nature and act as sources for social critique. Both narrators present their own preferential scopes, with the use of irony and disassembled discourse respectively with these preferences also affecting their presence on the narration. All in all, as depicted in this analysis, the presence of the narrators in the fable makes it possible to construct their multiplicity and subsequently benefit the fictionality of possible worlds and aim for social commentary.

### 2.3 UPDATING ICONIC SCENES: THE MILLS AND THE MASTODONS

The episode of the giants and the mills has become one of the most iconic events in the adventures of Quijote, and it is one of the first occasions we get to dive head-first into Quijote's subworld:

It seems well, ' quoth Don Quixote 'that thou art not yet acquainted with matter of adventures. They are giants; and, if thou beest afraid, go aside and pray, whilst I enter into cruel and unequal battle with them.' [...] — 'Fly not, ye cowards and vile creatures! for it is only one knight that assaults you.' (*Quijote* I:76)<sup>16</sup>

This event alone is difficult to interpret, as the reader struggles to understand why the immobile giants would pose a threat apart from their menacing presence and their fleeting sails. Truth is, as Francisco Acero Yus points out, Cervantes is conjuring the newly found traits of social rules into the giants (55), and in doing this, the author calls them into question, giving the reader a chance to analyse them in a not so favourable light. The effectiveness of this transformation lies in how Quijote processes the creatures. In his subworld, the harmless mills turn into the very representation of everything the knight wishes to vanish off of the face of the earth, and this becomes apparent in the second part of the novel: “In giants we must kill pride; envy, [...] anger, [...] drowsiness in temperance, [...] lasciviousness, [...] sloth” (*Quijote* II:404).<sup>17</sup> What Spain had turned into the seventeenth century is embedded into the text in instances like that of the event of the mills and the giants. In a bewildering juggling, the normal, the world in its current state is tossed between Quijote and Sancho in their dialogues, with the knight seeing the problem and the loyal companion staying at surface level. The power of this layering of reality, of signs and signifiers, results in a reader who struggles to identify what is fiction and what is not, and once more, Cervantes manages to hide a critique against the social of objective reality inside his system of possible worlds. It is also important to note that even if Quijote is defeated in the giants incident, as Christoph Strosetzki indicates, it is in failure where Quijote showcases his characteristic courage and resilience best (509).

Using *Quijote* as a base for own's own novel and not furnishing one of the most,

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<sup>16</sup> [TST].

<sup>17</sup> [TST].

if not the most, well-known events into the new piece would be inconceivable. The equivalent counterpart to the episode of the giants in *Quijote* in Rushdie would be the mastodons of the town of Berenger in *Quichotte*. In the course of his adventure, Smile comes across a small town where some of its citizens are turning into mastodons who rumble and refuse to engage in dialogue. Even though these events are parallel, how the events unfold and the implementation of social critique is unlike. This episode borrows elements from Eugène Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros* (1959), with the town being named after the protagonist as a way of addressing the dangers of totalitarianism, and the gargantuan creatures. The mastodons are referred to as *M. Americanum* specimen "last seen in North America perhaps ten thousand years ago" (*Quichotte* 183), an allusion that establishes aspects of the past inhabiting the present, and thus, polluting it. This could be a hint to colonial times, with scholar Ganapathy-Doré claiming that the legacy of "early WASP settlers" refuses "to recognize the transformation of America as a country of immigrants" (51). Furthermore, the mastodons, as Ganapathy-Doré indicates, would be a satirical reference to nationalists and white supremacists who have decided to recover past times of history which empower them, with this ignorant rage being fuelled by Trump's administration (52). This interpretation, while unerring in its tracing of the Indian struggle in the US, fails to address the rest of issues Rushdie tries to. Later in the novel, the TV spats out a discourse which seems to unearth what is behind the mastodons:

The enemies of contemporary reality: the anti-vaxxers, the climate loonies, the news paranoiacs, the UFOlogists, the president, the religious nuts, the birthers, the flatearthers, the censorious young, the greedy old, the trolls, the dharma bums, the Holocaust deniers. (*Quichotte* 326-237)

In Cervantine style, Rushdie compresses the wave of deniers of the twenty-first century into a hyperbole, with a literal mirroring of the saying "the elephant in the room." Nonetheless, all still is not lost in the cracked possible world of Smile, as there are some mastodons which, in a more civilised manner, are open to debate and come closer to our idea of human traits (*Quichotte* 187). Interestingly enough, while we see the mastodons' horsepower in their rampage of the town, we also see bestialised humans who call for an action which is not necessarily peaceful, even more violent than that of the mastodons. This level of fictionality, that could only be reached with a creation of an intricate possible world, not only puts into question the deniers, but also calls the other side into the debate. So great this breach between the inhabitants is that

the town itself disappears into nothingness, with Rushdie using once again an elaborate metaphor that transports the real into the fictional.

As has been exposed, the giants and mastodons incidents share their function as one of the main representators of the overall function of the novels with their astute critique of new social traits, but because Quijote and Smile's goals are different, their attitude towards the events also are. The state of emergency of the United States does not pose a threat for Smile, as he understands the mastodon event as another signal of the fabric of time and space dissolving: "maybe this theatricality was an aspect of that transformation?" (*Quichotte* 190). Quijote, on the contrary, seems very preoccupied with fighting the horrors of the new age. One of the main points in which the novels differ is the momentum hope chooses to appear. *Quichotte* is hopeless from the very beginning in terms of the world changing, with hope towards a change in the world only being born out of the quest for love, as will be illustrated in section 2.6 (The anchoring: From Dulcinea to Salma). Contrarily, *Quijote* is filled with hope right until the end. In this wise, we could say that even though Quijote also ends his adventures drowned in deception, he has fought his way to the end, while Smile has already accepted there is no battle worth fighting for in the "Age of Anything-Can-Happen" (*Quichotte* 7), as he just tries to find his love and not changing the world.

#### 2.4 TIME AND THE LIQUIDITY OF WORLDS

As we had the opportunity to see in the precedent sections, the possible worlds and subworlds presented seem to share an instability which shed a light on the issues of their respective timeframes. This instability is best illustrated under the term "liquid world,"<sup>18</sup> Alicia Mattiazzi and Martín Vila-Petroff see these worlds as "a metaphor to describe the condition of constant mobility and change he sees in relationships, identities, and global economics within contemporary society" (1). One may think this concept is only applicable for contemporary times, but given the amount of proof that has been offered regarding the also volatile times of Cervantes, it is also suitable to say that early modern Spain can be studied through these lenses, albeit not to the same

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<sup>18</sup> Based on Zygmunt Bauman's notion of "liquid modernity": "an individualized, privatized modernity, with the burden of pattern-weaving and the responsibility for failure falling primarily on the individual's shoulders" (8-9).



extent. The times of late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain were slow runners when compared to our fast century, but they also set the foundations for globalization thanks to the wider range of the printing press, the roads opened by sea travels and the creation of gunpowder and firearms among others (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica). Thus, it could be argued that those times started the trend of worlds accelerating their pace in terms of change in a universal manner. Cervantes' commentary on the people's changing social behaviours (direct product of the aforementioned changes) and his own particular change of the cosmovision of time support this idea. If one is still to think this idea must only pertain to contemporary times, Carlo Bordoni firmly states that: "The change - which always characterises social evolution - was slower, and this could give the impression of a certain security" (32). The liquidity was still present, albeit not as swift as ours.

The possible worlds and subworlds turn liquid thanks to the exploration of the nature of time in the novels. The sole fact that there is more than one perception of time in *Quijote* backs up this approach. Firstly, we are presented with fantastic time, described by José Manuel Cuesta as time which "usually manifests itself in an extraordinary condensation of physical time (several years pass in one night)" (342). The clearest example of this kind of time is the famous episode of the Cave of Montesinos, in which Quijote ventures into the cave and stays for one hour according to Sancho, but the valorous knight affirms he spent three full days inside (*Quijote* II:471). It is here where we see an interconnection between the liquid world and the possible world, as both see themselves reflected in this exact adventure. On the one hand, one of the possible readings of this adventure would perceive two different planes of existence: the exterior plane, or possible world, and the "oneiric and contradictory space, the cave of Montesinos" (Paz Gago 113), the embodiment of Quijote's subworld. This would represent how the rest of characters fail to see the flaws of their possible world while Quijote lunges into them in order to erase them (the treasure of the cave being a world without them). On the other hand, the adventure, with its uneven perception of time, causes doubt flood to flood the knight and squire. In a surprisingly refreshing turn of events, Quijote doubts how time is really passing in his adventures, and Sancho too ponders his perception of time (*Quijote* II:529), causing the firm ground of time to be dissolved into liquid. Moreover, we are also presented with time as a

source of anxiety:

The summer follows the spring; after the summer, the fall; and the fall, the winter; and so time goes on in a continued wheel. Only man's life runs to a speedy end, swifter than time, without hope of being renewed, except it be in another life, which hath no bounds to limit it. (*Quijote* II:616-617)<sup>19</sup>

For Quijote, there is no room for rest, the knight struggles to grasp how he is to fit all of his goals in such a transient lifetime. Daniel Eisenberg notes how time finally infiltrates the knight's will: "But, not surprisingly, the effects of time are usually negative. [...] These negative effects are especially serious in regard to the life of man, which is a race" (435-436).<sup>20</sup> The invisible grip of the incapability of man to fight against time, turns human life into a race in a liquid world, where all "insecurity is pervasive" (Bordoni 42).

In a chapter dedicated to Sancho's search for his identity in *Quichotte* (82), Sancho, Smile's ghostly son, is capable of looking back in time and recovering his father's memories so that he can find out of his origins. The possibility of a liquid world does not necessarily need to be accompanied by fictiveness, but in Rushdie's concept of time as an element that can be effectively travelled through in this possible world, it emphasises the formless, liquid aspect. Rushdie's Sancho expects this inwards journey of discovery to be linear, to follow birth, youth, adulthood and old age, but inside his fathers' memories he discovers nothing but chaos. Some memories have been substituted with TV paraphernalia, the ones that remain intact are not chronologically sorted and the inaccessible section of his father-creator's memories has been blocked by trauma. For us to understand this timely travesty we have to jump from the possible world which houses Smile and Sancho to Sam Duchamp's. The frustrated author has lived in such a fast paced in world, he himself has to stop and think about how his life been consumed in front of his eyes swift as lightning. Apart from living a rapid life, Duchamp has lived emotions and experiences which are not linear, as he been trapped in a wheel of having to constantly look back to understand his wrongs and never fixing them, over and over. If the life he lives is not linear, time cannot be it either. DuChamp pours this into the story of Smile, causing this breakage in the linearity of time to be

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<sup>19</sup> [TST].

<sup>20</sup> [MOT].

present in two levels; his subworld and the whole possible world of his story. In a much more physically evident manner than in *Quijote*, this distortion in the perception of time is lived by all the characters of the possible world, specially by Smile and Sancho. At a certain point in the narration, we find Smile and the Trampoline Woman making amends while Sancho listens to their conversation when, suddenly, on the verge of reconciliation:

Time stood still inside the room. Outside, or so it seemed to Sancho, a week passed, a month, a year, a decade, maybe a century. [...] Mighty men and women rose and fell, the world changed, the future enveloped them, and they were leftovers from an ancient past, unknown to all, lost in their own labyrinth of love and pain. (*Quichotte* 276)

This dissonance of the contemporary world, a world that prioritises the technological, political, economic and behavioural, does not let humanity come to terms with itself, and the well-being of the species is relegated to a second plane. Rushdie performs a delicate layering through the possible worlds system that represents the fast phases of adaptation that humans must perform in order to fit into the social system, while leaving their own needs aside. *Quichotte* finds in its malleability of time the greatest source of representation of the new age of humanity, or the liquid world.

As evidenced, the way both authors play with time is different, while Cervantes offers a juxtaposition of different conceptions of time which results more comprehensible, Rushdie pictures a version of time that is completely unpredictable and uncontrollable. The reason why Cervantes' time is more stagnant or easy to grasp would be that during his times, the world was just beginning to turn liquid with changes picking up a quicker pace, whereas Rushdie can play with its malleability due to the world having reached its completely liquid state in the twenty-first century. Additionally, thanks to this analysis, we had the opportunity to see how liquid worlds can complement possible worlds in their mission of bringing social issues to the front. Lastly, it can also be stated that the fictionality of possible worlds benefits from the instability of liquid worlds.

## 2.5 THE PALETTE OF CHARACTERS: WHEN MIRRORS BREAK

Rushdie's mirror image when imitating Cervantes boasts various levels, from the narratological to the eventual, so it comes as no surprise that this sinuous dance also affects the characters. With their subworlds belonging to the same world-type model and their behaviour being almost parallel, Smile and Quijote are birds of a feather. However, if we take a look at the rest of the palette of characters, a more elaborate relationship happens between Salma, Dulcinea (her obvious equivalent), and, interestingly, Cervantes' Sancho as well. Salma's role in the possible world she inhabits cannot be understated. At first, the Indian star seems to solely be Rushdie's parody of Cervantine courtly love, almost unreachable and waiting at the end of the adventure, yet there is more to the troubled media phenomenon. So as to understand Salma's nature, we must first analyse Rushdie's Sancho and the void he opens up in *Quichotte's* narrative. During his trips with his father, Sancho does not truly act as a loyal companion like his Cervantine counterpart, and while the ghostly son grows fond towards Smile, he finally lets go of him: "the youngster still felt a degree of filial loyalty toward the antique gentleman, but he was more certain than ever that his own destiny lay elsewhere" (*Quichotte* 339). This act of putting himself first is understandable for the reader, as his father brought him into a world of chaos and misery. Nonetheless, Sancho fails to show empathy towards his father's family affairs, and reduces his father's experience as a side-effect to certain trivialities: "would it be too much of a fucking extravagance for me to get my own fucking room?" (*Quichotte* 202). What is more, Sancho never tried to actively take part on the life-deciding road trip. This constant negative to engage with the events surrounding him forewarns his destiny to be doomed and represents his immobile character through the novel. In contrast, and as Pedro Laín Entralgo analyses, Cervantes' Sancho maintains at first a camaraderie-like relationship with Quijote, but later develops a genuine bond with the Knight of the Rueful Countenance (28-29). This extends to the point he does not even think about their alliance as work: "he never remembered any of the promises his master had made him, nor did he hold the fetch of adventures to be a labour, but rather a great recreation and ease, were they never so dangerous" (*Quijote* I:77).<sup>21</sup> Cervantes' Sancho has too

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<sup>21</sup> [TST].

his own goals, like reining over an island, however, he never abandons his friend and when Quijote's health dwindles, the tiller stays until his last breath. The subworld of Rushdie's Sancho is then, not an equivalent to Cervantes' Sancho, causing a divergence that opens up for the first time in the comparative analysis of the possible worlds of *Quichotte* and *Quijote*. We come across a role which finds no equivalent, endangering the relationship between both world systems and the way we have studied their fictionality.

The figure of Salma functions as a bridge that repairs the aforementioned disconnection between the novel's possible worlds. It is not until the climax of the novel that Salma steps in to perform her role-compression. After the damsel realises the earth is bursting open and reality is being torn apart, she resorts to aid of the mad traveller, Smile: "They began to work in concert" (*Quichotte* 378). This explicit definition of their alliance as something coordinate is the first step towards the mending of Sancho's void. In their journey towards the machine that would later help them scape their possible world, the unlikely pair's relationship undergoes an interesting transformation. First, they share some of their deepest secrets (*Quichotte* 380), and then: "She said: Hey, let's get a quickie divorce. He said: We can't. We're not married. They laughed hysterically and drove on" (*Quichotte* 381). Reminiscent of Cervantes' Sancho's genuine affection towards Quijote, Salma cannot help but laugh and enjoy Smile's company selflessly. The forging of their bond reaches its pinnacle once Evel Cent tries to talk with Salma privately: "she reached out and took the old man by the hand. "My friend and I have made a long, dangerous, and tiring journey," she said. "I'd like him to hear what you have to say" (*Quichotte* 385). Salma steps up for his friend Smile so that he can also hear the whole truth rendering their past misunderstandings useless, and finally becoming the wanderer's true companion. Salma's actions result in the mending of the rift Sancho left behind, with her subworld being an equivalent to that of Cervante's Sancho, and in the subsequent multiplicity of her persona.

Rushdie makes the uncanny plausible, Salma's role all throughout the novel stays the same, distant and cold, and in the brim of the finale, she metamorphoses from our century's placebo of courtly love into the loyal companion Smile had been missing out. Symbolically, this almost-on-edge flip of the script, which happens in a very short

amount of time and sews both analyses together, is representative of the fast-paced unpredictability of the twenty-first century and liquidity of worlds.

## 2.6 THE ANCHORING: FROM DULCINEA TO SALMA

The possible worlds of *Quijote* and *Quichotte* are intricate systems with their fluidity and layered levels of reality, constantly challenging the bounds of objective reality. This complexity in the nature of the possible worlds raises the questions if they can even be considered worlds as such, and not be labelled with another term that proposes more liberty regarding their form. The answer to this issue lies in two overarching elements that codify and delimit the possible worlds, a minor and a major anchoring.

An adventure against the vast mysterious roads would not take place without a trustful resource to travel through them. The means of transport Quijote and Smile use in their travels are of great importance, and form the minor anchoring. Both Rocinante and the Chevrolet Cruze are barely functioning, their appearance is baffling, they are beyond past their prime and, most importantly, they are to accomplish glorious tasks which do not fit their capabilities. For Smile, his car is a reminder of the world previous to post-truth or the Age of Anything-Can-Happen and in the eyes of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, his steed embodies the times of true courtly behaviour that are now long gone. The reason why these beaten-up elements are not seen in their true decaying light is because they represent the chase, the recovery of knightly values and the love of Salma, for Quijote and Smile respectively. In a journey where places, the stories of those who cross paths and experiences are constantly renewing themselves and never stay the same, the tool for the journey to take place stays unchanged, and they do so until the very end. Christian Andrès recognises the cruciality of the steed in the journey of Quijote: “Indeed, Rocinante not only bears the weight of the heroic Don Quixote [...] but also allows him to live the 'adventures' and fulfil his crazy chivalric desire” (345).<sup>22</sup> The protagonists’ resilience and inhuman fixation with fulfilling their missions endow their vehicles with endurance. In this wise, they become part of the

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<sup>22</sup> [MOT].

spinal cord of the fictionality of their subworlds, as without the security of possessing them, their plans would have never taken flight and the everchanging landscape would have overcome them.

The major anchor in these two novels is no other than the protagonists' certainty of love. The case of Dulcinea, born from Cervantes' wish to mock and mimic courtly love, is remarkable. Dulcinea never physically appears in the novel because she is an imaginary figure product of Quijote, she is based on the tiller Aldonza Lorenzo, who does actually exist, but does not appear either. In the same steps as errant knights, Quijote commends himself to a lady, and without her knowing, Dulcinea becomes the fuel behind all of his adventures. Quijote, tired of Sancho's remarks on the existence of his damsel, ferociously defends the role of his imagined lover: "God knows if there be a Dulcinea or no in the world, whether she be fantastical or not; and these be matters whose justifying must not be so far searched into" (*Quijote* II:523).<sup>23</sup> Lidia Falcón is aware too of the role that the love for Dulcinea plays out: "this platonic love strengthens his will and keeps him alive and active" (210).<sup>24</sup> If Quijote is certain of a single fact, it is that for Dulcinea he wanders and fights, and the fluctuating nature of the possible world and his subworld cannot ever change this. Dulcinea is overarching and codifying in the sense that she is also a cruel reminder of the unattainable satisfaction of fixing the world, for he never reaches her even though she inspires the journey. Hence, Dulcinea is the major anchor for her vertebration of Quijote's destiny and her almost mocking similarity to the impossibility of mending Cervante's objective reality, dichotomy the knight himself seems to funnily understand: "Dulcinea del Toboso [...] my dearest beloved enemy" (*Quijote* I:179).<sup>25</sup> *Quichotte's* Salma, the unimaginable hybrid between Dulcinea and Sancho, performs the same axial role as Quijote's love interest, but they share some differences. For Smile, Salma has the effect on him as Dulcinea does in Quijote, a burning passion that erects the falling apart possible world and subworld. However, instead of said passion being born from courtly love, it emanates from the polluted image mass media have portrayed of Salma. Rushdie's equivalent to the Cervantine critique is rooted in this century's obsession with image

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<sup>23</sup> [TST].

<sup>24</sup> [MOT].

<sup>25</sup> [TST].

and perfection, from which Smile longs to save Salma at any costs, to the extent of getting rid of all his earthly pleasures: “‘because the Beloved is the goal. These other burdens, however, must be shed’ [...] ‘The Grail is the hand of Miss Salma R.’” (*Quichotte* 158). Smile knows reality is falling apart, but none of it matters if he is not to have Salma’s love, such is the power of this feeling, that none of the chaotic events that unfurl in the novel break through Smile’s will. The mirror image Rushdie carefully constructs through the novel as a reference to the falsity of the world is embodied by Salma, but unlike with Dulcinea, the hope of fixing the state of Rushdie’s objective reality is flickering, in hopes a solution is found: “‘Mine is a love story,’ said Quichotte. ‘And love will find a way’” (*Quichotte* 337).

Dulcinea, the lady of hopelessness, and Salma, the birdsong of hope, both stand at the centre and all around the possible worlds of their novels, stabilising and gracing them with form against all liquid odds.



### 3. RUSHDIE'S OWN STORY: A DEFENCE OF THE STANDALONE SPINOFF

The publication of Rushdie's *Quichotte* was unsurprisingly marked by the inevitable comparisons with Cervantes and the question of to what extent the novels are related. Articles by Malcom Forbes and Johanna Thomas-Corr are illustrative of this, with both referring to *Quichotte* as a "rewriting" and "rewrite" respectively. These two examples are representative of most of the reviews and articles on *Quicchotte*. The choice of words used by the aforesaid critics may at first feel reductive, and hence, not the best way to address Rushdie's novel. It is Birgit Spengler's *Literary Spinoffs* (2015) which puts their words into a broader context with its exploration and defence of spinoffs:

fictional texts that take their cues from famous, and often canonical, works of literature, which they revise, rewrite, adapt or appropriate as a whole or in parts, thus producing alternative voices and/or historical or geographical re-locations for texts that are generally well known to contemporary audiences. (11)

Spengler also concludes that referring to a previously published novel or pre-text calls for "cultural re-vision" that includes those who "have been excluded from the world of the pre-text" (21-22). This advantage of curating a spinoff fittingly overlaps with Rushdie's attempt to uncover the hypocrisy of the United States and the struggles of Indian identity. Ergo, Spengler's ideas make the labelling of *Quichotte* feasible, as it is, indeed, taking parts of *Quijote* and adapting them with a specific purpose. It can be understood that critics were not belittling *Quichotte*, as the terms they used appear in Spengler's description, but perhaps, using the umbrella term would have been more accurate. Researcher Rasika Sittamparam has been the only journalist to refer to the novel as a spinoff among media outlets of wide range with her interview "Interview: Salman Rushdie on Trump, Greta and eating the rich" on *Spear's*.

In reference to the nature of *Quichotte* as a spinoff, some clarifications must be made. Thanks to the comparative analysis through the lens of the Possible Worlds Theory in the previous section, it can be seen that Rushdie borrows Cervantes' arrangement of characters and parody of the chivalric quest. Hitherto, this borrowing is not a simple superficial redecoration of what Cervantes had written. What we find in the novel is a complete transformation in which none of the main characters (Smile,

Sancho and Salma) are exactly similar to their counterparts (Quijote, Sancho Dulcinea), with their behaviour and goals all being quite dissimilar, making their story act as a separate entity while still maintaining structural correspondences with *Quijote*. It is true that Rushdie's novel finds at its core a mirroring of the adventures of Quijote; however, this does not mean that *Quichotte* can be reduced to a simple updating of the story. It could be said that Rushdie stripped *Quijote* of flesh and used the remaining skeleton to form something completely new. This enables *Quichotte* to act as a standalone body of work while being a spinoff. *Quichotte*'s situation can be compared to that of Homer's *Odyssey* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, in which the drastic change from the source of inspiration draws the line between them with precision. Just like Leopold Bloom and Ulysses, Quijote and Smile were born from the mind of authors who sought similar purposes, they are together and apart, because one is born from the other but they exist in different circumstances and do not necessarily behave the same against similar situations. Regarding Joyce's example, Julie Sanders refers to the novel as "the archetype of an adaptive text" (5) praising its intertextuality and flexibility of the adaptive technique which result in a "signifying field" that "appears vast" (7). Given the established comparison, it is plausible to say that Sander's remarks do also fit Rushdie's *Quichotte*, further establishing its intelligently dosed use of the pre-text.

Unlike Jorge Luis Borges' "Pierre Menard", whose protagonist wanted to compose *Quijote* word for word, Rushdie has successfully created a novel using the pre-text as the base of his story and as a structural and narrative tool. These choices when creating *Quichotte* successfully showcase Rushdie's mastery as an author. Not only this, but they also shatter the horizon of expectation of readers who expect the story to follow suit and mimic Cervantes completely, creating an original reading experience with an articulate and not overwhelming source of inspiration.

## CONCLUSIONS

Miguel de Cervantes is undoubtedly one of the most influential authors of all time. *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* is a faithful representation of the hardships that flagellated the Spain of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not only paying special detail to the societal elements, but also the economic and political. What makes the novel so efficient in its social critique is the perfectly curated chivalric parody to social analysis ratio, offering both a thrilling journey and the means for social commentary. *Quijote* alone proves to be enough source of inspiration for authors of all kinds of countries and literary periods, influence that is still felt today in contemporary authors. The most recent example of Cervante's influence can be experienced thanks to Salman Rushdie's *Quichotte*, in which the Indian American author demonstrates his capabilities as a storyteller through a layered transformation of Cervantine critique into a jab towards the contemporary world, most specially the United States.

The element which brings out the underlying meanings of *Quijote* and *Quichotte* and carries out a successful study of the fictionality of the works is no other than the Possible Worlds Theory, theory which proposes a system in which possible worlds (the result of fictionality) are born from our objective reality and are organised in a hierarchical order. Due to the theory being thoroughly discussed by many scholars, Tomás Albaladejo's vision of seems to be more fitting for this kind of literary analysis due to his understanding of objective reality as singular, his world-model types system and recognition of the figure of the narrator.

It is thanks to the theory that we get to see the figures of Cide Hamete Benengeli and Sam DuChamp as both erecting elements of the possible worlds systems and harbingers of judgement and perspective, with the former introducing an outsiders' mocking view inside Spain and the latter offering a shattered dialogue between world and narrator. Furthermore, we are also able to study events of the possible worlds with accuracy, as seen in the equivalent events of the mills and the mastodons, which involve the transportation of newly gained social traits into monsters and represent the state of hope for the world at a certain point in the novels. Not only this, but the Possible Worlds Theory co-ordinately works with other terms belonging to different areas of study such

as liquid worlds to further investigate the state of fictionality, as illustrated by the overlapping references to time and the feeble state of the world in *Quijote* and *Quichotte*. Furtherly proving its competence, the Possible Worlds Theory has also been capable of uncovering problems in the relationship between the novels, with the detection of Rushdie's Sancho failing to act as an equivalent to Cervante's Sancho and Salma's fulfilling of this role. The theory has been helpful as well in analysing the overarching elements that shape the novels in the form of the anchoring of the possible worlds, the means of transport of the protagonists and love. And lastly, thanks to Spengler's definition of the spinoff, it has been possible to demonstrate that, in an incredible display of skill, Rushdie uses Cervantes' fictionality in order to create an independent work of his own that can function as a standalone body of work.

The Possible Words Theory makes it possible to study fiction and fictionality in their totality, from the outermost sphere to the most internal and thus, shows beyond doubt that this way of analysing *Quijote* and *Quichotte* is representative of the literary richness found in them.

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