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# Games of Identity and Alterity in the Novels

# of

# Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul

– teză de doctorat –

– SUMMARY –

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# Games of Identity and Alterity in the Novels
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# Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul

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The Ph. D. dissertation entitled **Games of Identity and Alterity in the Novels of Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul** is 227 pages long. It is divided into five chapters, one of which is synthetic and four of which are analytic. A further section is devoted to the various conclusions arrived at as a result of the work. Whereas the dissertation, through its theme and subject can be considered as a contribution to research in the field of postcolonial literature and culture, the approach is multidisciplinary in essence, and embraces various other fields of research such as comparative literature, and the philosophy of alterity or imagology.

The presence of and the encounter with the Other has been extant in the human mind and thinking ever since Antiquity, when man must have been surprised to see, as the well-known Polish writer Ryszard Kapuściński writes, that there are other people on the planet as well: 'What an important moment in the history of the world, what a major discovery – the discovery that there are people in the world too!'[1] From that important discovery up to the present moment, the fascination with the Other has remained the consistent. Nevertheless today, what we can call hybridity – that is a mélange of cultural elements our environment consists of – ultimately means no longer homogeneous or racially pure civilizations, and the consequence is, as the same Kapuściński formulated in 2006, that 'culture is becoming increasingly hybrid and heterogeneous.'[2] Along with the development of media and communication, as well as the emergence of new states – former colonies, which become independent – new cultures start to gain confidence and follow their urge to attain affirmation, finding their way back to the centres of the European continent, thus remaking the journeys proposed into the heart of the colonies by another Polish born, yet controversial writer, Joseph Conrad.

Moreover, Marc Augé, in his book *A Sense of the Other*, states that '[…] the individual is by definition composite: relation is at the core of identity. Otherness and identity are

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[1] Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Other*, Translated by Antonia Lloyd Jones, with an introduction by Neal Ascherson, London and New York: 2008, p. 80.
[2] Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Other*, p. 89.

inconceivable one without the other, not only in the social systems […], but also in the instituted definitions of the individual that is part of those systems.'[3] Also, to express the almost obsessive preoccupation today with the presence, understanding, or defining the Other – Augé also adds that 'modern nations are haunted by the great Other – colonizer, developer, Christian God or Great Satan.'[4] Definitely, any other qualifier for the Other can be added here – especially after September 11 – when Islamism became more *othered* than  other religions – and under the different ideologisations of different trends or concepts such as the terms *postcolonialism/postcoloniality* themselves.

This is the direction in which, in the context of Postcolonial literature of English expression, the present PhD dissertation analyses the works of two writers of Indian origin, who, coming from actually two opposite directions, meet and fulfil their destiny as writers in England, their lives and works illustrating the challenges and new trends in post-(post)modern culture today.

In the context of all the epistemological crisis post-(post)-modern/contemporary culture goes through today, and in the context of Postcolonial literature of English expression and of all the individualizations that Postcolonial theory and literature are undertaking now, the present dissertation aims to detect and even question the game of identities and alterities in the novels of two English language writers of Indian origin, one coming from India – Salman Rushdie, and the other from Trinidad Tobago – V. S. Naipaul, both of whom meet and fulfil their destiny as writers in England. At the same time, the aim has also been to identify and analyse what the same Marc Augé has named '*les regles du je/jeu* – the rules of the I/game'[5]. Consequently, I have started from the premise that the 'I' presupposes the potentiality of a 'game' both with reference to its relation to the Self, and to the Other, i.e. from the premise that all relationships, cultural, political, social or erotic, function according to rules similar to games.

One of the main aims of the dissertation is thus to discuss the modality in which the Self and the Other interfere and inter-react in the novels of these two writers, in what I have called a game-like relationship, i.e. a relationship whose purpose is not necessarily to win whatever game is played, but rather to perform an action which, like almost all man's actions, has the

[3]Marc Augé, *A Sense of the Other. The Timeliness and Relevance of Anthropology*, Translated by Amy Jacobs, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 102.
[4] Marc Augé, *A Sense of the Other. The Timeliness and Relevance of Anthropology*, p. 93.
[5] Marc Augé, *A Sense of the Other. The Timeliness and Relevance of Anthropology*, p.22.

structure of a game, as Huizinga puts it in *Homo Ludens*[6]. The result of such a game is the encounter with the Other. This game between identities and alterities is seen as performance to reach to and manage the Other or the Self, first at the cultural level, then as projection at the narrative level. These intrinsic relations that appear at the level of narration and culture, as well as of language, and thus at the level of perception of the world envisaged and created, take place and develop in what Homi Bahbha called 'the third space'[7]. This is the space of hybridity, where differences do not turn into *islands of identity*[8], but meet other differences. The space where identities and alterities are born and function is where 'The Other must be seen as the necessary negation of a primordial negation of a primordial identity – cultural or psychic – that introduces the system  of differentiation  which enables the cultural to be signified as a linguistic, symbolic, historic reality.'[9] This topos is seen in the context of a, conventionally named here, *Postcolonial literature*, a term which already for some time has seemed to be unsatisfying, because it lacks 'race and gender' and lies the emphasis on the patriarchal, European roots, rather than on the *cultural diversity* of each of the former colonies, as Boyce Davies argues it. Concurrently its corresponding term, *post-coloniality* rather can read as *post-European-(colonial)ity*[10] in the opinion of the same literary critic. Nevertheless, as conventional as this Postcolonial background can be, it will be in its hybrid, third space context that the two novelists are discussed, especially because both of them, similar and different in life as well as in their work, challenge the proximity and the meeting with the Other, in all major segments that make up the dimension of identity and consequently alterity*: time, history, memory, narrative, space and place, migrancy, journey and/or encounter*. However, these are major themes discussed in my analysis, which, because it is rather multidisciplinary in its approach, resorts to derivating themes and issues, such as *autobiographical discourses, heterotopias and isotopies, spectrality* and *epiphany*, even though they will not be seen as subsidiary from the point of view of their importance.

The first chapter of the dissertation, **Postcolonialism/ Postcoloniality: Directions, Assertions, Interrogations** intends to present the main characteristics in the evolution of

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[6] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play-Element in Culture,* London: Routledge, 1950.
[7] Homi Bhabha, *The Third Space: Interview with Homi K. Bhabha*  in  *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.*  Ed. Jonathan Rutherford.  London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p. 211.
[8] Homi Bhabha, *Boundaries, Differences, Passages*, VolkswagenStiftung – A Foundation of Knowledge, http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/fileadmin/downloads/Bhabha__Homi.pdf.
[9] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 52.
[10] Boyce Davies qtd. in Patricia Krüs, 'Myth and Revolution in the Caribbean Postmodern', *Cultural Identity and Postmodern Writing*, Edited by Theo D'haen and Pieter Vermeulen, Amsderdam – New York, Rodopi, 2006, p. 151.

Postcolonial fiction, where identity and alterity, inherited as main engines from colonialism, are put to work and create a new space of discussion and affirmation made up of several defining elements through which identity and alterity become shaped and function. These elements which are, ultimately, defining for any self or identity, become almost vital in Postcolonial literature and culture. Time, individual/national history, memory, space, place, journey, story and narrative become thus the main points in the network of identities and alterities that create the texture of the novels of the two writers interrogated here. Therefore, these elements are approached at two levels: on the one hand, these elements as seen more strictly and generally from the perspective of Postcolonial studies. On the other hand, the same elements have been treated from the more individualised perspective of each of the two novelists, and in the context of several of their most relevant novels. In the first chapter, all these themes – time, history, memory, place, space, narration formulate, in a broader context, as Elleke Boehemer puts it, four major aims of Postcolonial literature: the quest for personal and racial/cultural identity built on the spiritual guardianship of traditional laws, the belief that writing is an integral part of self-definition, the emphasis on historical reconstruction, the ethical imperative of reconciliation with the past.[11] Consequently, the first chapter of the dissertation attempts to prove that, broadly, following Homi Bhabha's theory of the discourse of a nation[12] that turns into an identity – and we could add – identification narration, the postcolonial discourse comes to resettle, redefine, and reconstruct the boundaries, form and message, and thus history, from the perspective of the margins themselves. Nevertheless, one of the paradoxes of the postcolonial discourse and its redefining forms lies at the very centre of the former colonial world. Writers such as V. S. Naipaul, who comes from Trinidad, or, for example, Chinua Achebe and many others, have managed to give voice to a nation whose history and tradition of writing came, and was learnt only from the European colonists. This is one of the paradoxes of the game between conquerors and the conquered, that the counter-discourse – either historical, cultural, political or literary is based and relies on the very initial monologic and exclusive European one .

The second chapter, **Playing Time and Identity,** approaches one of the main elements that will, by the end of the dissertation, create a structured body of analysis, together with space and journey. There is a well-known sentence of Salman Rushdie's – '[...] the past is a country

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[11] Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature. Migrant Metaphors*. Second Edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005,  p. 221.

[12] Homi Bhabha, *Introduction: Narrating the Nation* in *Nation and Narration*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

from which we have all emigrated [...]'[13], – which, he explains, is truer and closer to the experience of the migrant, he who no longer has a country of his/her own, or a language and a home. The two migrant novelists, both Rushdie and Naipaul, find themselves embracing this perspective of a relation with a past that is scattered and the temptation to come and 'add' new history and complete, but thus change the tradition of their own culture. From this situational perspective, this chapter dedicated to time and the way it affects the identity or alterity of the characters interrogates how the self relates both to the individual, limited time and the general inexhaustible time that one cannot catch or stop. In novels such as *Midnight's Children*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* or *Shalimar the Clown*, as wherever in Rushdie's novels, the relation of the characters with time is not a broken one, or, in other words, there is always an attempt of the individual to transgress the limitations of his or her own time, and touch, in a way or another, or reintegrate in the universal time, in what can be called 'the out-of-time' space. With Rushdie, the temporal visions are *chronotopic* because history can be 'pickled', 'revisited', it can be known through smells and spices, or time becomes itself an Orphic song without an end – as in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Definitely this desire to reintegrate in a sort of primordial time is not naively presented as such – this desire remains always to be detected in the attitude of the characters both to the past, to themselves and/ or the others. There is a relevant scene in the novel *Shalimar the Clown,* where time and place are drawn together through the ritual of performing sacred stories: Muslims and Hindus sit at the same table in the controversial Kasmir, and 'inhabit each other's story in imagination'[14], in a carnival time, where the story and the roles function as rituals meant to refresh the time and the place of performance. '[...] time and experience are so intimately interrelated that their measurements would be reckoned by events that are themselves important and connected with experience'[15]. Such an experience of time, actualised through the performance of the stories actually permits the meeting with the other, diversity becomes celebrated in a double cultural perspective. It is the story which is actualised, and which has the power to render the mythical view on the participants, whose identities become defined by the story itself. The confrontation of the mythical, premodern time with the modern, Western time takes place in the confrontation between characters such as Shalimar and Ophulus, and the winner is Shalimar – or time itself.

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[13] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 12.

[14] Couze Venn, *The Future of Dialogue: Narrative Identity, the Exchange of Memory, and the Constitution of New Spaces of Belonging*, www.uel.ac.uk/cnr/documents/Venn3.doc.

[15] Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality. Its History and Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 64-65.

On the other hand, if in the case of Rushdie, time, though polyvalent, in the combination with the story reveals its cosmic side, and space and time are brought to a unity, with V. S. Naipaul, time is frozen – as in the case of Mr. Biswas, who all his life tries to fill in the gaps of his existence which seems to be emptied, forsaken, time for him is resourceless. In *The Enigma of Arrival* – his autobiographical novel, where the journey to the centre is described, there is again a complete dissonance between time and place, between what the narrator sees as a perfect scenery, but 'with a sense of glory dead' and the sense of time he has. Generally, in all Naipaul's novels, time cannot be reintegrated in the texture of the place and space. And if in Rushdie's case, the story is the one which unifies the two elements, in Naipaul's case, the story is born out of this continuous dissonance. With both writers, the stories that need to be told either result from or give birth to visions of time and space. The stories themselves are like monads, which govern the centres of the narrative discourses, and it is the stories which the characters carry with them, tell or listen to, write or imagine that also create the rules of the game. Moreover, these stories – such as Saleem Sinai's life story or the one that the Narrator in *The Enigma of Arrival* writes – engage an identity dialogue both to the self of the narrator and to the other, the listener, if there is any. So if we have Padma who listens and gives meaning to Saleem's story, or the Emperor who finally listens to Mogor's entire story in *The Enchantress of Florence,* there is no one to read Mohun's beginning of the story, or the narrator's story in *The Enigma of Arrival*. If we speak about time, story and narrative, then an important element in the creation of the two writers' narrative discourse is the major role of memory and imagination. 'The country named past' which both of them in a way try to reshape, redefine, regain for themselves, when confronted with the map of the present memories, turns into a shifting space, memory seems to grow out into imagination, and the borders between history and memory, fact and imagination, the self and the other become blurred.

That is why, paradoxically, in Naipaul's case, the author becomes narrator and character at the same time, and his discourse seems to be characterised by struggles and exhaustion, which is characteristic of all his characters because their relation to the past, and consequently their narratives are neurotic because they find it impossible to relate to their own past, which is scattered, fluid, fragmentary and disrupting. On the other hand, even if characters such as Rushdie's Saleem seem to suffer from neurosis as well, their relation to the past, and the way the self relates to the remembered-imagined narration is one which is continually renewing so

their relation with their own memory, past and thus history is full of potential, as their history is pickled, preserved. One of the main conclusions of the chapter is that for Rushdie, time – in its forms: past, history, change, perception of change, activeness, passivity – is meaning-creating, and characters face time in such a way, that individual time becomes cosmic time and their essence is saved, and in a way or another time returns to space and become one. On the other hand, Naipaul's characters are always captured in time, which prevents them from reaching a sense of the self, and rather amplifies the sense of loss, so well expressed by the incongruency of time and its chaotic form, as time for Naipaul's characters always resonates the absence of a link, of a unity with space.

The third chapter, **Memory and Narration or *Memini Ergo Sum,*** is a continuation of the previous chapter, and aims to identify the type of relation between memory and narration in the novels of the two novelists and the way the identity and/or alterity of the characters is/are shaped by them. In Rushdie's case, characters revigorate their selves through the possibility to maintain a coherent discourse about the past – as Saleem Sinai does – and they maintain it through the balance between, in Ricoeurian terms, *mêmeté* and *ipséité.* We know however that a character, for example, Saleem Sinai, is the same (Ricoeur's terms: Latin: *idem*, English: *sameness*, German: *Gleicheit*, French: *mêmeté*)[16] from the beginning of the novel till the end, but what he changes along with the change of name and the different stages and experiences of his life is the *self* (Ricoeur's terms: Latin: *ipse*, English: *selfhood*, German: *Selbstheit*, French: *ipséité*)[17]. And what creates the identity of Rushdie's characters is the permanence in time and the relation between the different selves of the characters (this is most obvious in Saleem's case), *i.e.* between the different forms these characters take, when they change their names and start their new life, according to the mechanism expressed by Paul Ricoeur. This mechanism means that the elements of the selfhood (*ipse*) are acquired in time by the sameness (*idem*), and, accordingly, ensure the permanence of the identity in time; thus the narrative discourse about the past – in the form of *periautography*[18], is a healing one. A conclusion which can be drawn from these two *periautographic* discourses, an Augustinian one for Salman Rushdie and a Beckettian one for V. S. Naipaul, is that, even if for the former, memory and imagination liberate the narrative process, and help to maintain *the self as another* so that at the end the self returns to the narrator, as it happens with Saleem, while the

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[16] Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre,* Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1990, p. 140.
[17] Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre,* Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1990, p. 140.
[18] James Olney, *Memory and Narrative. The Weave of Life-Writing*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. IV.

listener has the role of confirming the story, he or she enables the story to be told and the self to relate to its own past. With the latter, we are dealing with more or less the same Narrator who narrates the same story or, with what James Olney names, quoting Damaso – *dispositional representations* – i.e. 'key events in an individual's autobiography, on the basis of which a notion of identity can be reconstructed repeatedly'.[19] It is these dispositional representations – the same journey, the return, the frustration at the end that construct the identity of THE NARRATOR, and the relation he has with the world in the case of Naipaul, which turn the self into a stranger to himself.

In this chapter, applying the Ricoeurian perspective of '*Soi-même comme un autre*'[20], it is to be seen that both writers' characters become characters in their own stories, yet the effect of this is different for them as follows: The Narrator in *The Enigma of Arrival* writes a story inspired by De Chirico's painting, a story about a Narrator who experiences foreign landscapes and sceneries, and at the end, he realises it was his life he has visited, by living it – which is in fact the story narrated in *Half a Life*. The same frame story seems to be found in *New Clothes*, a *metatext*, where the Narrator explores unknown spaces, and reaches the same feeling of exhaustion at the end. Consequently, all these narrative frames seem to be one, and all these Narrators that tell stories seem to be self-projections of the same author-narrator who needs to remember and tell in order to live. Nevertheless, with both novelists and in the case of both narrative discourses, characters, all along their process of memory and narration lead their lives starting from the stage *'Memini ergo sum'* – I remember therefore I exist. – to *'Scribo ergo sum'* – I write therefore I exist.

If the previous two chapters explore the relation between the self and time, memory and narration, and the way the self is defined by them, the next chapter, **Migrating Identities: Space, Place, Home,** approaches the dimension of space and place as active generators of identity and imaginary maps. If the migrant's relation to the past is one directly related to his or her inner self because self recognition, and the relation to others depend on how he or she relates at the level of memory and discourse to his or her self of yesterday and/or twenty years ago, and also because the past builds up the collective memory and thus the sense of belonging, the relation with the home, place or space is just as organic. People are defined by the place/space they inhabit, visit, or leave behind because it offers them a perspective on

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[19] James Olney, *Memory and Narrative. The Weave of Life-Writing*, p. 343.
[20] Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre,* Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1990.

which even their relation with the past depends. Moreover, place and space imply a presence and/or an absence either of a person or of another place or space. Consequently, in this chapter I try to identify, through the theories proposed mainly by Michel Foucault[21] (*heterotopias*) and Henri Lefebvre[22] (*heterotopias, u-topia, isotopy*), how different kinds of space and place function in the novels of these two writers. In both cases, we are dealing with imaginary spaces, maps of the mind which create homely or unhomely backgrounds for the self to move, live, create or die. For Salman Rushdie, spaces function as productive reservoirs for the whole universe – in his case, very often we have the identification of place and space, such as the washing-chest from where Saleem Sinai connects with the children of midnight – a *heterotopia* of production, or Princess Qara Köz, who is a *heterotopia* herself in that she reflects the whole world around her. In all cases, all these spaces are *places without a place*, that is *u-topias* as seen by Henri Lefebvre, and confirm that 'a place is an encounter with events'[23]. This is characteristic of the novelistic universe of Salman Rushdie, where place and space become reunified, just as space becomes re-unified with time (time can also be defined as a succession of events), and the self can see the world in its totality, as if from an Alephic point, as happens in *The Satanic Verses*. On the other hand, with Naipaul, place is separated from space and from time as well, and the characters are always in search of a home(-ly place), such as Mohun Biswas, whose purpose is to find a house for him and his family. Even at the end, after many miseries, the house he finds seems to be a fake of a house. Naipaul's characters seem not to find the reverberation of the places and spaces they inhabit or travel on, there seems to be a continuous dissonance between the self and the place. And if we have the same narrative scheme in many of his novels, the spaces envisaged are always replicas of the same initial *topos*, they become what Lefebvre called *isotopies*, i.e. everything that creates and *makes a place the same place*[24] – in Naipaul's case every place being a replica that resembles the other ones and also the whole compound of places. They are also compensatory spaces for the identities that cannot find a homely place for the being. In either case, whether we speak of Salman Rushdie's *heterotopias* or Naipaul's *isotopies*, the relation between space, place and time is very tight, while the frontiers fluctuate so that these spaces become spaces of negotiation for the identities of the characters who seem to have to reconfigure the

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[21] Michel Foucault, *Preface* to *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Random House, Inc., New York, 1994; *Des espaces autres*, http://www.foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia.

[22] Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, Translated by Robert Bonono, Foreword by Neil Smith, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 1991.

[23] Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality. Its History and Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 64.

[24] Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 37.

relation between space and time. Therefore, characters, through their migrating journey, create visions of the world they inhabit and travel along, which also include the participation and presence of the other.

The journey, which represents movement, action in time and space brings together all these elements and implies a scope and a destination, which even if it is ultimately, through objectivation, a part of and outside the person who starts the journey, the journey leads either to the Self or the Other. The last chapter of the dissertation, **The Journey to the *Self*, the Journey to the *Other***, more innovative through the approach, attempts to prove that the characters in the novels of the two writers have spectral identities, and in their journeys the reflection of their spectrality determines the nature of the relation with the Other. Consequently, starting from Jean Baudrillard and Marc Guillaume's theory of spectrality, and continuing with Henry Corbin's term *Mundus Imaginalis*[25] based on the philosophy of the Sufi, Sohravardi, and Jacque Derrrida's theory of *paleonymies*, I intend to prove that the characters in Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence*, for example, (princess Qara Köz or her servant The Mirror) or Saleem Sinai have a prismatic spectrality. Their journey is the journey to NA-KOJA-ABAD (in Persian – *the Land of No-Where*), at the end of which they meet the Other in a form of epiphany in the sense given by Lévinas. On the other hand, in the case of V. S. Naipaul, characters such as Salim and Yvette or the Narrator wear masks, they are not able to reach truly to the other, so they are haunted by an *ectoplasmic spectrality*, also because of the permanent struggle which arises from the attempt of the Sartrean being-for-itself (*le pour-soi*) towards the being-in-itself (*l'en soi*). This proves that the identities meeting for example in the novel *A Bend in the River* are *diasporic identies*, which dissipate themselves in the struggle between the true self an the image imposed by the others. At the same time, an important issue in this chapter is the role of women in the novelistic universe of the two writers. In Rushdie's novels women are the central engines which start and keep the world moving, and through whose role the identity of a male character is saved, such as in the case of Saleem and Padma. Conversely, in the case of Naipaul, except for the character Yvette in the novel *A Bend in the River*, which changes his feminine typology, all feminine identities are just mere shadows, caricatures who sometimes do not even have a name of their own. One such example is the case of Jack's wife in *The Enigma of Arrival*. Consequently, the world of

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[25] Henry Corbin, '*Mundus imaginalis* or The Imaginary and the Imaginal' at The Hermetic Library, Copyright © 1996–2009, John G. Bell , August, 2009, http://www.hermetic.com/bey/mundus_imaginalis.htm.

Naipaul's novels seems incomplete, while the encounter with the Other seems to never turn into Lévinas's *epiphany of the face*.

One of the statements that the dissertation represents therefore is that in the complex universes belonging to the two writers, the game of identities seems to display different sets of rules of accomplishing the encounter with the Self or with the Other, in which the goal and the means at the same time seem to be to remember and to tell *a story* or *the story*, for the reason that people need to and can live only by telling their story. In the case of Salman Rushdie, the spaces inhabited are always regenerating spaces of presence. The story told is invariably new but from the early novels until the most recent – *The Enchantress of Florence* – always marks the movement of the self to the other, thus reaching the opposite of the Sartrean conclusion ('L'enfer, c'est les autres.'[26]) by saying that 'Hell is not other people'[27]. On the other hand, when dealing with Naipaul's novels, which concentrate mostly on the same narrative schema, and which coagulate within the same space(-s) over and over, the result is a vast narrative web composed of several lesser stories, where time is either frozen or absent, and where the story has no listener to validate it. In both cases, the two novelistic universes prove that the game is to come and tell the story, thus presupposing a transgression-journey from *Memini ergo sum* to *Scribo ergo sum.*

By analysing three major segments necessary both for the affirmation and the maintenance of an identity, the research addresses the novelistic universes of the two writers, and through the game-like relationship with the Self or with the Other which are shaped by the three elements time, space and journey, it illustrates the story that needs to be told. The novel aspect of the research resides in its multidisciplinary approach and in the multi-layered analysis of the texts seen in a comparative perspective, thus offering a view both of the main traits of Postcolonial literature powerfully marked by the works of Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul, and a very deep understanding of the relation between a character and his/herself, between the self and the other and/or the self and the world.

It is also important to allude to the fact that in the present approach the choice of the novels is not exclusive and it actually may be seen to represent , in every case, a pattern and a premise

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[26] Jean Paul Sartre, *Huis clos. Twentieth Century Texts,* Abingdon Oxon : Routledge, 2000, p. 95 (Engl. *Hell is other people*.)
[27] Salman Rushdie*, The Enchantress of Florence,* p. 504.

that can be extended to other novels, to which in certain cases only occasional reference is made. This pattern, whether we speak about time, memory and narrative, spaces and places and ultimately the journey to the other serves as a medium in the experience of two migrant writers may coagulate, writers who, paradoxically, refusing to be tagged in any way, consider themselves to be two separate voices but which determine, influence and unify both the literature of the centre and that of the margins.

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