In Search of Mundus Imaginalis or Mirror-ed/-ing Worlds in The Enchantress of Florence by Salman Rushdie

IN SEARCH OF MUNDUS IMAGINALIS OR MIRROR-ED/-ING WORLDS IN THE ENCHANTRESS OF FLORENCE BY SALMAN RUSHDIE

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In his article "Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal", Henry Corbin, following the Sufi philosopher Sohravardi, introduces the term Mundus Imaginalis, which designates a world between the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, and which is a world of the Image. The present paper, adopting Henry Corbin's philosophy, aims at identifying the structures of a possible Mundus Imaginalis in Salman Rushdie's latest novel, The Enchantress of Florence, and the mirroring process through which epiphanic meetings take place along or at the end of a journey. Spectral characters such as the enchantress Qara Köz or her servant, The Mirror, reflect both people and worlds, yet their spectrality is not one which affects the self, their spectrality is the spectrality of NA-KOJA-ABAD (in Persian – the Land of No-where), which transgresses the being, reduces it to its essence and frees it from the bonds of the world of the senses. At the same time, the author of the paper would like to demonstrate the way in which the journey to Mundus Imaginalis and the spatial and temporal maps that characters such as Qara Köz or Mogor dell'Amore follow on their journey shape their spiritual world, and how, at the end of their journey, both the travellers/migrants and those who await them realise that "This may be the curse of the human race. [...] Not that we are so different from one another, but that we are so alike." (S. Rushdie, The Enchantress of Florence)
urn:oclc:record:236463569. The Enchantress of Florence is the story of a woman attempting to command her own destiny in a man's world. Salman Rushdie has done his research extremely well: Both Fatehpur Sikri and Florence come alive in multicolored landscapes, vibrant with life and symbolism. Of course, there's never any jealousy between the enchantress and the mirror over the second husband, nor is the mirror ever shown to care that her mistress basically whores her out to the second husband. That would require them to be presented as human, when really the women in this book are ciphers for male fantasies. Salman Rushdie's The Enchantress of Florence finds him on familiar, East-meets-West ground, as a Florentine refugee turns up at the Mughal court, says Tim Adams. Florentine society had its mirror on the subcontinent in the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar in his glorious palace complex at Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar, as depicted here, is a made-to-measure Rushdie hero, a one-man land of contrasts. He is 'a Muslim vegetarian, a warrior who wanted only peace, a philosopher-king; a contradiction in terms'.