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# Sadeq Hedayat and Super-Modernism: An Ontological-Structural Study of *The Blind Owl* through Application of Dualities

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to explore an ontological and structural study of Sadeq Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* through application of binary oppositions of *Time/Timeless*, *Modern/Postmodern Narratology*, *Theosophical Mythology/ Historical Representation* and *Interior Monologue/ Stream of Consciousness*. The present article argues that there are certain exclusive elements represented in the narratology of *The Blind Owl* which takes this text beyond the techniques of modern and postmodern into a kind of super-modern, especially through application of specific element of time, point of view and techniques of narration. Hedayat, in this text, as the author believes, masterfully presents a number of technical manipulations of narratology which counts for surpassing from some typical modern and postmodern European novels like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. These breaking grounds include representation of the common elements between stream of consciousness and interior monologue, drawing a perfect interior ontological complexity, enriching the text with theosophical Iranian myths and a circulatory representation of time which is unique in Hedayat's *The Blind Owl*.

**Keywords:** *The Blind Owl*, Stream of Consciousness, Theosophical Mythology, Postmodern narratology, Ontology, Binary Opposition, Super-modernism

### 1. Introduction

A significant feature of Modernist and postmodernist literature is reinterpretation of, and experimentation with structure and form and specially time and focalization. At the turn of the 20th century, structure and time, as essential elements in the literary texts, began to trespass its traditional conventionality, linearity and logical sequence and found a novel quality marked by subjectivity and relativity. The late 19th century Impressionism and the early 20th century Dadaism and Surrealism, among other avant-garde movements and practices in the literature and the arts of the first half of the 20th century, triggered the real shift from traditional level to a self-expressive level. Nowadays, however, due to the common qualities of modernism and postmodernism regarding the narratology and structure, it is a difficult task whether to distinct clearly to categorize the works as a modern or postmodern. *The Blind Owl* by Sadeq Hedayat is one of those controversial works among the critics to discuss its unique qualities as a modern or postmodern novel.

This paper tries to specify the qualities of *The Blind Owl* and study this particular work through application of structural binary oppositions of *Time/Timeless*, *Modern/Postmodern Narratology*, *Theosophical Mythology/ Historical Representation* and *Interior Monologue/ Stream of Consciousness*. Since it is thought that through the differences the true identity can be defined. As F. Saussure states that binary oppositions are the "means by which the units of language have value or meaning; each unit is defined against what it is not" (Haghshenas 2011, 2). Essentially, the concept of the binary opposition is a propensity to organize everything into a hierarchical structure; terms and concepts which are believed to be the main qualities of *The Blind Owl* are discussed according to the categorical separations. Therefore, the principle questions are, firstly to specify in what veins, does Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* share specific qualities of modernity and post-modernity. And secondly to specify whether is it possible to consider *The Blind Owl* as a super-modern (the author do not mean to suggest a new philosophical or literary trend rather simply meant going beyond postmodernist techniques) or not? Firstly a brief summary of Sadeq Hedayat's biography and his novel *The Blind Owl* will be presented.

Sadeq Hedayat (1903 – 1951) is Iran's foremost modern writer of prose fiction and short stories. He devoted his entire life to Western and Iranian literatures and cultures, literary criticism, and translation (mostly from French

and ancient Persian). As a prolific writer, he published a large number of short stories and novellas, two historical plays, a travelogue, several satires, and more than ten translations including Chekhov's Gooseberries, Kafka' In the Penal Colony, Before the Law, and The Metamorphosis and Sartre's The Wall in his short literary life span and before he committed suicide in his flat in Paris. He has written a coterie of fictions, the most important of which are 1930 Buried Alive. A 1932 Three Drops of Blood, 1937 The Blind Owl and 1942 The Stray Dog. He also has worked on Drama (1930–1946) like The Fable of Creation, and criticism including Khayyam's Quatrains 1923, Man and Animal 1924 and The Message of Kafka 1948. Hedayat subsequently devoted his whole life to studying Western literature and to learning and investigating Iranian history and folklore. In Bombay, during 1937 to 1939 he completed and published his most enduring work, The Blind Owl, whose writing he started as early as 1930 in Paris. The book was praised by many including Henry Miller and André Breton. It has been called "one of the most important literary works in the Persian language". His short stories and novellas are characterised by gritty realism and a general sense of melancholy, Kafkaesque absurdism, insanity, pessimism, nihilism, and fatalism. Hedayat's masterpiece, The Blind Owl, a "psycho-fiction" that combines the philosophical with the ontological (Katuzian, 2005, 83), was first published in Bombay in 1937; the manuscript was typed by himself in his year-long stay in India. Coutler writes that The Blind Owl, employs many aspects of Western literary tradition; its genre, for instance, is evidently occidental in nature, for it is the first novel to be written by an Iranian writer. Ironically, however, despite its "Westerness," it is deeply rooted in Iranian culture (2000, 2). Heidary holds that the whole story turns around the deliriums, delusions, and nightmares of a deeply traumatised and paralysed mind (2006, 15). The narrator of the story confesses his hideous crime to an owl-like shadow reflected on the wall of his gloomy and bleak room. His confessions and reminiscences do not follow a chronological or linear order and are often cyclically repeated with ironical nuances in themes, characters, and structural details, which embody recurrent motifs. Some of the prominent features of the novella are stream of consciousness, cyclic time, incremental character development in various settings and times, hallucination and fantasy, mystery and open-endedness, cinematic effects, and Expressionistic elements such as horror, shadow, gory episodes containing mutilation and eye slashing (analogous a scene in Dali and Bunuel's Surrealist 1929 short film, An Andalusian Dog). The Blind Owl, in Coutler's words, lays bare the mental turmoil of an individual who falls deeper and deeper into the abyss of uncertainty and madness (2000, 2).

The Blind Owl is the story of an unnamed pen-case painter who is crippled by horrific visions, feverish nightmares, and an existentialistic obsession with death: "We are the offspring of death and death delivers us from the tantalizing, fraudulent attractions of life … Throughout our lives, the finger of death points at us" (Hedayat, 1957, 55). The first part of the plot is unfolded through a dreamlike and timeless representation of events and the narrator is constantly chased by the phantom of a celestial woman, whom he later cuts into pieces, and an old and sinister-looking hunchback. In the second section, characters are in effect the distorted images or versions or apparitions of the people who appeared in the first section. In his hallucinatory time travels, the narrator finds himself in unknown places and meets people who look strangely familiar. In the last section, which includes the climax of the story, the narrator is metamorphosed into the old hunchback. The story ends where it started: the narrator's shadow on the wall of his dim room becomes the owl-like shadow he was confessing to in the beginning of the story.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1. Time/Timeless

In such a hallucinatory and dreamlike world, temporality becomes ostensibly disorderly and chaotic in that the episodes of the story can be shuffled and rearranged in any order without actually damaging the overall organicism of the narrative. Every character gradually becomes the "mirror image" of any other character (Katuzian, 1982, 570) and soon they become indistinguishable from one another. For instance, the future of the young narrator and the past of the old bent man are constantly intermingled in the present; they keep echoing each other's image in different times and places. The conspicuous similarities among male and female characters lead to the suspicion that the old man, all other characters, and the narrator himself are "one and the same person" (37); at the end of the narrative, when the narrator's shadow and the mysterious and ominous owl-like shadow projected on the wall of his gloomy room become identical, the suspicion is effectively replaced by certainty. This unparallel and unprecedented narrating involving the realism and surrealism intertwined with the religious and mythological philosophies and visions of human nature, differentiates between The Blind Owl and rather all the other European works.

A distinctive feature of Sadeq Hedayat's The Blind Owl (1937) which rates it among the postmodern salient works is the apparent traces of Bergsonian terms, durée and simultaneity. Henri Bergson (1859 – 1941), a French philosopher who regarded intuition as a means of attaining knowledge and tried to reconcile scientific theories of

evolution with spirituality. In his doctoral dissertation, *Time and Free Will* (1889), as well as in his other influential books like *Matter and Memory* (1896) and *Creative Evolution* (1907), Bergson asserted that time is the summation of the past and the future in the present and defined time in terms of simultaneity, durée, indivisibility, and the succession of conscious states, intermingling and unmeasured. According to Tom Quirk, Bergson "serves as an important influence upon the [modernist] age and upon any number of individuals within it" (1990, 6).  As Nathan Wagner has contended, many modernist writers are heavily indebted to Bergson's theory of time, including Fitzgerald, Eliot, Frost, Cather, Stein, Miller, and Faulkner (2010, 1). Similarly, in *Bergson, Eliot, and American Literature* Douglass writes that Bergson's "vocabulary unlocks the modernist literature, and plays a decisive role in 'modern' philosophy and literature" (1986,5). In Nakano's words, "Bergson suggests that both realists and idealists are wrong to maintain that objects exist only in themselves or only in our mind, respectively. In contrast, his *Matter and Memory* attempts to prove that both objects and mind co-exist"(2003,26).

Bergsonian duration or durée is a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without any specific or predictable pattern (Pearson and Mullarkey, 2002,104). Duration for Bergson, therefore, is to be defined in terms of continuous multiplicity (Harris, 2004, 111) in that any new experience in the present time finds its meaning by countless previous experiences in the past and immediately dissolves in them to construct an indivisible, flexible, and ever-increasing temporal whole. What Bergson means by "simultaneity", which he describes as "the intersection of time and space" (in Pearson and Mullarkey, 2002, 80). Simultaneity underscores the coexistence of all (artificial or imposed) chronological and spatial divisions of time and views time as a unified whole which is the intersection of the planes of the past all at once in the present. Hedayat's masterpiece, *The Blind Owl*, is a "psycho-fiction" that combines the philosophical with the ontological (Katuzian, 2005, 83). Coutler writes that *The Blind Owl* employs many aspects of Western literary tradition; its genre, for instance, is evidently occidental in nature, for it is the first novel to be written by an Iranian writer. The narrator's trance-like state and his bemused oscillations in temporal divisions and consciousness and unconsciousness  give a meta-fictional edge to his narrative, wherein time is ultimately contained within an organic whole which is radically Impressionistic and subjective. In his crisis of cognition, the nameless narrator cannot tell the world of reality from the world of shadows: "My shadow had become more real than myself. The old odds-and-ends man, the butcher, Nanny and the whore, my wife, were my own shadows – shadows in the midst of which I was imprisoned" (95). Given the absence of a chronological order in the structure of the narrative; time is characteristically disruptive and chaotic (Sadeqi, 2004, 2). Here, time is more poetic than prose-like; the past, the present, and the future are all placed on the same plane and the present becomes the amalgamation of all the moments of the past (Nafisi, 1980, 16).

The same description occurs in different contexts: "Through the fog, I saw an old man with hunched shoulders. He was wearing a large scarf; his laughter sent shivers down my spine" (26).The old man's horrifying laughter, his scarf, and his handkerchief keep reappearing over and over again, both when the narrator is describing the old man himself and other characters: "Suddenly the echo of a dry, repulsive laughter jolted me back into reality. It was a figure whose head and face were covered in a scarf. The figure sat beside me, holding an object wrapped in a handkerchief" (29)" or "I came to a butcher shop. There I saw a man who resembled the rag-and-bone dealer, who sits in front of our house, he was wearing a scarf" (52). It follows that any moment in the present, in Gex's words, triggers a surviving memory from the past, which leads to endless other memories in a free and uninterrupted association (1989, 8).

In *The Blind Owl*, the treatment of place, too, is characterised by uncertainty and unexpected shifts. Such oscillation gives the setting a peculiar and even paradoxical nature: "the scene appeared to me to be far and near at the same time" (18). None of scenes and incidents of the narrative remain stable in, or are reducible to, a certain time or place (Kazemi, 1985, 380). What we observe here is not a logical progression from point A to point B; sometimes, the narrator starts his reminiscences or narration with describing his bleak room or people about him, but ends up living in an exotic land in a very distant past: "I moved in the regions where life and death fuse together and perverse images come into being and ancient, extinct desires, vague, strangled desires, again come to life and cry out for vengeance " (64) or "I realised that I had an ancient partner in sorrow. Was he not that ancient painter who hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years ago had decorated the surface of this jar?" (35). At times, an imaginary journey to an imaginary place takes him to, or is unexpectedly replaced by, yet another unknown place: "suddenly I realised that I had left the city gate behind, with a thousand sucking mouths" (44) or "I moved in another sphere beyond the boundaries of the ordinary world. My thoughts were freed from the weight of material reality and soared towards the blessings of tranquility and silence" (68), and elsewhere, "All at once I found myself wandering freely and carelessly through an unknown town, along streets lined with weird houses of geometrical shapes" (74). The chain of seemingly unrelated scenes and images that parade in the narrator's mind can be likened to Bergson's "succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another" (2001, 104). As Tasdelen explains, Bergson's durée can be described as the flow of memory and consciousness or the summation of conscious states (2003, 8).

Aspects of Bergsonian durée are also discernible in the narrator's train of disruptive, yet interrelated memories in which the past, the present, and the future constantly interact with one another. In *The Blind Owl*, the narrator's memories are usually linked to some observation or contemplation in the present time, thereby underscoring the ever-flowing stream of his consciousness: "All the thoughts which are bubbling in my brain at this moment belong to this passing instant and know nothing of hours, minutes and dates. For me, an incident that took place only yesterday is less significant, less recent, than something that happened a thousand years ago"(42). This conjures up Bergson's contention that "distinct states of the external world give rise to states of consciousness which run into one another and are imperceptibly organised into a whole, and bind the past to the present by this very process of connection" (2001, 121). In *The Blind Owl*, most of the narrator's memories share identical or recurrent details; "maggots" and "blister-flies," for instance, keep reappearing over and over again in different contexts: "tiny maggots were wriggling on her body and a pair of blister-flies were circling in the light of the candles" (25), or "Two blister-flies were circling around me and a number of tiny maggots were wriggling on my clothes" (31), or "Two blister-flies were circling about me, and tiny white maggots were wriggling on my coat" (100). 'Come, let us go and drink wine; let us drink the wine of the Kingdom of Rey. If we do not drink now, when should we drink?'" (83), "a band of drunken policemen … were marching along the street … they sang in chorus 'Come, let us go and drink wine; let us drink the wine of the Kingdom of Rey. If we do not drink now, when should we drink?'" (90). Novels such as *Ulysses* or *The sound and the Fury* though written on SOC technique, in the final run, fundamentally depict a linear progression from point A to point B. On the contrary, Hedayat in *The Blind Owl* creates a vicious circle in which not only in its microcosm, the structure and sections of the text, portray a non-linear progression, but also the macrocosm, the general outlook of the story, is yet non-linear. This circle-like coalition of microcosm and macrocosm in *The Blind Owl* in comparison with the other novels in which linear pattern is seen at the final outlook, is responsible for its exclusiveness.

### 2.2. Modern/Postmodern Narratology

Unlike postmodernist texts, the most famous and known of which can be Jayce's *Ulysses* and Virgina Woolf's *Ms. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* and so many other European modernist in which the narrator is like Marlow in *The Heart of Darkness* by Conrad, a distinct speaker from whom the text is recounted through his point of view. *The Blind Owl* is a highly phenomenological novel in which the internal ontological constitution and articulation of the fictional text is portrayed through its intrinsic narrative complexity. This complexity as Ingarden[1] holds lies first of all in its being heteronomous, existing both autonomously, in its own right, and at the same time depending upon the consciousness of the reader to unscramble it (As qtd in Mchale, 2004, 30). In *The Blind Owl*, readers need to put the pieces of different sections into one another to get to the big picture of the text as it is divided un-perceptibly into two worlds of real and ethereal. Thus, the reader's consciousness while in the process of reading for unscrambling the really complex and unfathomable, in some points, scenes, actions, speeches together to shape a meaning for himself in the mind. *The Blind Owl* is an arena of superimposed conglomeration of real and surreal scenes which leaves to the reader, uncountable aesthetic gaps. In the final run, it takes a conscious reader to figure out the gaps of the text for sake of a comprehensible whole. In such vein, Hedayat has produced different worlds of factuality and fictionality intertwined and superimposed into one another. Reading through the text, reader rightly and surely will encounter shifts of narratology from one distinct vein into another labyrinth where he seems highly sporadic to reckon the metaphorical world from the independent imaginative world. This conjecturing the extended and elaborated imaginative reality with such metaphorical, like the seem-real apparitions, shadow like figures and dream-like memories, accounts Hedayat for creating such a unique hesitation or "epistemological uncertainty" (McHale 2004, 74) i.e. supernatural events are ultimately accepted as such, where in other words, supernatural becomes the norm along with total physical real world. Such a fantastic narrative ultimately resolves itself between natural and supernatural vacillations which are thus the underlying principle of *The Blind Owl*.

Few texts manage to maintain this delicate balance to the end. Hesitation, whether ultimately resolved or unresolved accounts for most of the confusion of natural/supernatural world in the text. What Hedayat has also dramatically and dexterously displayed in the very text of *The Blind Owl*, is envisioning the metaphoricity as a reference to the state of an independent fictional world (McHale, 138). Moreover, the mode of being between

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[1] Roman Ingarden (1893 – 1970) was a Polish phenomenologist, ontologist and aesthetician. A student of Edmund Husserl's from the Göttingen period, Ingarden was a realist phenomenologist who spent much of his career working against what he took to be Husserl's turn to transcendental idealism. As preparatory work for narrowing down possible solutions to the realism/idealism problem, Ingarden developed ontological studies unmatched in scope and detail, distinguishing different kinds of dependence and different modes of being. He is best known, however, for his work in aesthetics, particularly on the ontology of the work of art and the status of aesthetic values, and is credited with being the founder of phenomenological aesthetics. His work *The Literary Work of Art* has been widely influential in literary theory as well as philosophical aesthetics, and has been crucial to the development of New Criticism and Reader Response Theory (www. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ingarden/ 2013).

existence and non-existence would keep the reader in the shock of whether 'it happened' or 'it didn't happen'. These ontological peculiarities in *The Blind Owl* apparently both do and do not happen or in which the same event happens in two or more different ways. The emergence of the old bent man, for example, in the beginning of the novel or the first section so as to speak, as corpse undertaker, in the second section as an old bent knackers, and in the end as his bitch wife's lover and ultimately as the narrator himself, anticipates the bifurcation of possible and impossible worlds which cannot so easily be realized at a time. In addition, representations of displaced figures and narrative lines, Hedayat in *The Blind Owl* tends to encourage a deliberate misleading of the reader into regarding the embedded worlds, secondary or third as the primacy in their own terms. This deliberate mystified hypertrophy[2] is followed by demystification in which the true ontological status of the supposed reality of the text is revealed and the entire ontological structure of the text consequently laid bare. The purpose will probably be to depict the confusion of the world around the writer's time and era. *The Sound and the Fury,* as an agent of a European typical modern novel is "clearly" divided in four parts which constitute four different narratives mainly because of the fact that there exists a different narrator in each of them. *Ulysses,* on the other side, shares the same structure in sections. Like his contemporaries in the 20s, Faulkner too makes radical innovations in technique in *The Sound and the Fury* as Evelyn Scott noted in her famous 1929 review, "The method of presentation is, as far as I know, unique" (Hargrove, 1991, 207). In comparison with Hedayat's *The Blind Owl*, such clarity of distinction among the parts is literary complex. In Faulkner's, although there are many flashback and flashforwards in the narration, but lastly the fiction traverses a linearity in its narrative structure, whereas in Hedayat's, the second section which is related to the world of reality is, as critics believe, to be preceding the first section which suggests non-linearity and entrapping in a vision circle in its narrative structure. As among the forms of textual infinity, infinite bifurcation and infinite circularity and infinite regress speculate a recursive structure in which there is the emergence of perpetual haunting back and forth throughout the story. The narrative of *The Blind Owl* defies rather all the traditional narratologists' views and norms. The infinity of regressions will not aptly be limited to development of the text's structure. Infinity can also be approached, or at least be evoked therefore in the points of view by the repeated inside-outside jumps to the levels of speaking as well as to the speaker of the narration.

### 2.2.1. Factual Ontology/ Fictional Ontology

In structure of Hedayat's *The Blind Owl*, the narrator is not recognizable and vacillates between the surreal to real, and real to ethereal and dreamlike worlds.

> "For that space of time I was severed from nature and the phenomenal world and was prepared to accept effacement and dissolution in the everlasting flux. I murmured again and again, 'Death, death … where are you?' The thought of death soothed me and I fell asleep. In my sleep I dreamed. I was in the Mohammadiyye square" (Hedayat 64)

Hedayat masterfully trespasses the boundaries fictionality into the factuality and vice versa. Reading throughout the lines, the reader is promptly shocked by the confusion of real-like characters appearing into the fictional world without clear separate line between them i.e. while reading through the passage, the reader suddenly finds himself/herself stretched from a plausible narration into a surrealist narration. On the other hand, there exists also the confusion of surrealist descriptions stretched into the real like world. This superimposition of the ontological worlds of the text gets really invisibly intertwined wherein the reader cannot find the difference and distinct line between the two. "Opening off my room is a dark closet. The room itself has two windows facing out onto the world of the rabble. One of them looks onto our own courtyard, the other onto the street, forming thereby a link between me and the city of Rey, the city which they call the 'Bride of the World- on the wall inside my room hangs a mirror in which I look at my face - A little further away under an archway a strange old man is sitting with an assortment of wares spread out in front of him on a canvas sheet" (44-45). Hedayat starts by a real description of the house and city but plausibly and smoothly, he brings the old bent man which is the same old man who took him into the ancient Rey's graveyard. As seen, there is no irregularity or illogicality and separate line between the real and fictional world are seen in the narration. This hypertrophies create a believable and at the same time unbelievable confusion.

> "All of my attention was concentrated on my feet. I did not walk in the normal fashion but glided along as the girl in black had done. When I came to myself I found that I was back in the city and standing before my father-in-law's house. I

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[2] A metaphorical world which is so extended and elaborated that it approaches the status of an independent fictional world of its own, an autonomous imaginative reality.

do not know why the route I had followed had chanced to lead me to my father-in-law's house. His little son, my brother-in-law, was sitting on the stone bench outside" (63)

Infinite regress into the world of reality and fictionality are found in some parts of the novel like; "Relief from it is to be found only in the oblivion brought about by wine and in the artificial sleep induced by opium and similar narcotics (6) to "After she had gone I withdrew from the company of man, from the company of the stupid and the successful and, in order to forget, took refuge in wine and opium. My life passed, and still passes, within the four walls of my room. All my life has passed within four walls" (10) and "In the course of a single second I lived a life which was entirely distinct from my waking life. I breathed a different atmosphere in some far-off region" (57) to "the subject I had chosen, a dead woman, had a curious affinity to my dead manner of painting" (24) and "she was quite dead. But why, how, had her eyes opened? Had it been a hallucination or had it really happened?" (25). To the extent to which the point of view is concerned, *The Blind Owl* accounts for a quite different, so as to speak, representation of view point in comparison with its peers like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* or a coterie of other great literary works.

### 2.3. Theosophical Mythology/ Historical Representation

Hippolyte Taine, in *The History of English Literature* (1863) crystallizes what is now known as the historical approach to literary analysis believing that a text is like a fossil shell naturally contains the likeness of its inhibiters (Bressler, 2007, 39). Taine asserts that to fully conceive a literary text, the environmental causes which participated in creation of the work are to be examined. In the first approach to *The Sound and the Fury* , a cultivated reader will notice that the story is a representation of a family though based on SOC, full of sound and fury. For instance, Benjy seems to narrate in timeless since there is a vacillation between the past and present and based on the process of association of the ideas which stresses the importance and immediacy of mental activity. This process continues to the end of the story. According to this historical approach, *The Sound and the Fury* also reflects more or less, the historical background in which time it was created. Faulkner limits the scope of the novel, unconsciously to the Taine's milieu, moment and dominant faculty, reverberating much of 1920s through the characters representations. While his extensive experiments with multiple view points, the influence of silent films of the 20s on his style has been less often acknowledged and as Edward Murray suggests, *The Sound and the Fury* is a "highly cinematic novel" (1972, 157). Hargrove, in her essay *Reflections of 1920s in the Sound and the Fury* continues tracing 1920s' reflections in this novel contends that this novel also reflects in stunning fashion the emotional climate of the 20s, a climate which, beneath the veneer of frivolity and exuberance, was somber and melancholy. Thus the theme of disillusionment runs in a variety of forms through many works: in bleak scenes such as the swarms of lost souls going to dull jobs in the offices of London's City district in *The Waste Land,* in disillusioned characters like Nick Carraway, Jake Barnes, Frederic Henry, and Yank, or the colossal parties in *The Great Gatsby. The Sound and the Fury* also echoes this contemporary sense of malaise and despair in the many losses that fill the novel--from Luster's relatively insignificant loss of his quarter to Jason's losses on the cotton market, from Quentin's and Benjy's loss of Caddy to Caddy's loss of her baby, and so on (1991, 59). However, this is not to refute that *The Sound and the Fury* does not bear any myth or lessens its scopes to any grounds.

However, Hedayat's *The Blind Owl*, as critics believe, reflects an extensive number of myths, ritual rites, superstition and traditional customs besides its historical and cultural representation of old Rey and Pahlavi's time (the king which crowned and ruled Iran in Hedayat's time). Mousavi in *Ideal Celestial Worlds in the Purgatory of The Blind Owl* contends that Hedayat, consciously, intertwines perceptional complexities with metaphysical sensations. For nurturing these intricate moments, Hedayat uses Iranian ancient theosophy specially the worlds of ether, instance and limbo (1985, 372). The story is in two sections, a surrealist first part in which the celestial figure of the woman is represented, and the second real part in which the celestial figure is anthropomorphized in a bitch-like woman, his real wife seemingly. "the story forms in two parts in which all the men are one and all the women are but one and the first second, regarding the nature of time, is a sequence of the second part" (Heidary 129). Heidary explains that two different women [celestial and the bitch] represent the duality of their nature, one from the mundane world and the other the metaphysical world (ibid; 129). "The fineness of her limbs and the ethereal unconstraint of her movements marked her as one who was not fated to live long in this world. No one but a Hindu temple dancer could have possessed her harmonious grace of movement" (Hedayat 1957, 13). Mousavi in the same essay, glorifying the theosophical themes of the novel contends "Dr. Yarshater, in the introduction of his book *The Excerption of Hedayat's works*, introduces Hedayat as the truthful and true speaker of ancient and traditional realities of Iran. Dr. Yarshater hints to Hedayat's influence from religious martyrdom, absurdism and mournful traditional music of Iran (1985, 377). After some time, my father fell in love with a girl called Bugam Dasi, a dancer in a lingam temple. Besides performing ritual dances before the great lingam idol she served as a temple attendant" (47), "Before the two were shut up in the

dark room my father asked Bugam Dasi if she would perform the sacred temple dance before him once more. She agreed to do so and, by torchlight, to the music of the snake-charmer's pipe, she danced, with her significant, measured, gliding movements, bending and twisting like a cobra"(48) and "He was sitting under a cypress tree, holding a musical instrument that resembled a *setar.* Before him stood a beautiful young girl, such a girl as I imagined Bugam Dasi, the Indian temple-dancer, to have been" (66). Hedayat connects through his text, the performance ancient Buddha's dance tradition. Throughout the text, as Mousavi contends, Hedayat envisions the duality of human's soul creation, the spiritual celestial and mundane part[3] (1985, 357).

> "The radiance of her eyes, her complexion, her perfume, her movements, all appeared familiar to me, as though, in some previous existence in a world of dreams, my soul had lived side by side with hers, had sprung from the same root and the same stock and it was inevitable that we should be brought together again. It was inevitable that I should be close to her in this life. At no time did I desire to touch her. The invisible rays which emanated from our bodies and mingled together were sufficient contact. As for the strange fact that she appeared familiar to me from the first glance, do not lovers always experience the feeling that they have seen each other before and that a mysterious bond has long existed between them?" (Hedayat 14).

### 2.4. Stream of Consciousness/ Interior Monologue

Hedayat text as Mahmoodi claims is grouped as a modern text. In his essay "*Tracing Narratology in The Blind Owl*", he holds that Hedayat in *The Blind Owl* expatiates his dreams and his odd reveries ( 2009, 3). Katuziyan, in *The Death of the Author and Sadeq Hedayat* claims that Hedayat in most general view of his works, stands aloof and does not judge anything while in some of his works, his appearance is touching" (2005, 35-39).

The term Stream of Consciousness firstly used by William James, American philosopher and psychologist (1842-1910). He firstly coined and used in his *Principles of Psychology* written in 1890. He contends that the creeds and thoughts, senses and memories exist beyond the circle of our primary consciousness though stream not to us in a regular pattern. Robert Humphrey believes "a novel based on stream of consciousness is recognizable from its topic and not necessarily through its themes and techniques. After careful dissection of the text it will be clear that its subject is recognition of perception of one or more characters" (Humphrey, 1962, 2). Understanding of the perception signifies the nature of stream of consciousness. Mahmoodi in the same vein explains that perception is not to be confused with "memory" and "intelligence". What is meant is divulgence of the different layers of mental processes and perceptions of the characters (2009, 9). Stream of Consciousness technique, by the way, tries to organize the deep mentality and perception of hidden layers of character's mind, therefore, retrieval of such layers perpetually lacks structure, organization and integrity (*Encarta online Encyclopedia* , 2008). As mentioned before in section of 2.1., "Time is nothing but space and space is what enables us to distinguish a number of identical and simultaneous sensations from one another. The succession of mental images is converted into simultaneity and is projected into space hence succession is at the very centre of simultaneity" (Bergson, 2001, 118-162). Humphrey holds the same view saying that a novel of stream of consciousness emphasizes first and foremost on excavation of mental and deep internal perceptional layers to set forth an analysis of mental and psychic aspects of the fictional characters (Humphrey, 1962, 4).

There are two terms required to be differently defined, "psychological novel" and "stream of consciousness". Though interchangeably used by some critics, what is obvious is that every psychological novel is not necessarily written in stream of consciousness technique (Mahmoodi, 2009, 11). Harmon & Holman and Woolf Seminar similarly state that the writers of stream of consciousness focus on suggesting us to listen to the perceptions, feelings and uncensored mentality of the characters (2000). Therefore, the very first step for creation of such technique would be to purvey a hierarchy of chained internal mental perceptions of the characters in which by no means the author or the writer leaves a trace of oneself. The writer ought to separate himself from the fictional characters so as to provide a ground for the character to transfer his uncensored perceptions. The relationship between the writer and his work resemble the existence of God in his creation, invisible but invincibly apparent (Edel, 1955, 26). On the other side, stands "Interior Monologue" which is defined as obligation of writer to get out of narrative himself to give the speech control to his character to speak his mental ebbs and flows (Mahmoodi 2009, 14). Though interchangeably used with stream of consciousness, interior monologue differs in one principle aspect in which the story is written on one

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[3] For more information and understanding, refer to Mousavi's paper on *Ideal Celestial Worlds in the Purgatory of The Blind Owl* which discusses largely about how Hedayat has described mythological themes in his text.

integrated point of view and we the readers will discover all the perception and mentality from the window mind of one of the characters.  Shamisa believes that however *The Blind Owl* has vicinity with stream of consciousness, but it is not precisely a stream of consciousness writing. The story represents conscious, subconscious and unconscious aspects and perceptions. In this vein, it shares points with SOC[4]. Emphasis on pre-speech levels[5] is the ultimate concern of SOC rather than rational verbalization; *The Blind Owl* may have the traces of these pre-speech levels, but it lacks a full domination to be called SOC. *The Blind Owl* is an integrated and coherent story consisted of two related fictions (Katuziyan, 1377, 12). It defies the principle of SOC which is based on incoherence and mal-organizations on perceptions and memories of the character.

What differentiates *The Blind Owl* with SOC is the non-linearity and non-chronological time or timelessness[6]. The linear time breaks in *The Blind Owl* and its time can be called parallel time (Shamisa 1997, 108). As in SOC novels like *Ulysses* by James Joyce, wherein the same perceptions  and memories appear, in the final run, in a chronological pattern (Mahmoodi 2009, 19).  Hedayat, on the contrary, quite consciously tries to put the pieces together. This conscious writing can be seen in the way he brings into the text the memories as saying "I just try to narrate one of the events happened for myself" (Hedayat, 1354, 10). This will definitely defy the nature of SOC which puts emphasis on automatic and unconscious and tumultuous narration of the events wherein the author's authority in selection is illogical. Considering the interior monologue definition, as the name suggests, interiority, on the other side, Hedayat innovatively conveys exteriorly which is also an act of defiance against interior monologue.  The narrator in *The Blind Owl*, time and again, reiterates that he is writing for his shadow which is on the wall (1957, 10). "I shall introduce myself to my shadow on the wall" (ibid: 12).  Therefore, the narrator in *The Blind Owl* is not without any audience which distinct it even with interior monologue to something like "exterior monologue". Mandalipoor contends that *The Blind Owl* is not an interior monologue since the narrator repeatedly states that he is writing for his shadow (1379, 94).

Therefore, Hedayat in this sense takes steps further from interior monologue and SOC which account for modernist and postmodernist trends in narratology. It can be said that Hedayat has created a kind of narrative which postmodernism is not an enough word to contend it. It rather trespasses the boundaries of postmodernist narrative and goes beyond it to a kind of "super-modernism" in which there is postmodernism plus the new ingredients added and in particular the "exterior monologue" which is almost not commonly and conventionally practiced.

## 3.   Conclusion

To conclude, as already mentioned, structural binary opposition is a propensity to organize everything into a hierarchical structure. It is through the differences that the meaning is founded. Certain aspects of binary opposition qualities of *Time/Timeless*, *Modern/Postmodern Narratology*, *Theosophical Mythology/ Historical Representation* and *Interior Monologue/ Stream of Consciousness* have been traced in *The Blind Owl* with a look held on some European novels like *The Sound and the Fury* to discuss the superiority of The *Blind Owl* and its super-modernist qualities. Of course, this is not to claim that the other mentioned novels lack anything less than modern or postmodern qualities, but the main aim has been to glorify the modernist Iranian writer, Sadeq Hedayat, and to establish a better understanding of this writer and his fictions'.

Hedayat in *The Blind Owl*, through superimposition of Bergsonian timeless, Ingarden's interior ontological complexity, insertion of rich theosophical myths, smooth vacillation between the real and unreal ontological world including hypertrophyical and metaphorical worlds intertwined with real descriptions, inserting the common elements of SOC, Interior monologue and soliloquy and at the same time, breaking the laws of these techniques through inclusion and establishment of a different narrator which makes the text seem like an auto-biography and surreal fiction simultaneously, establishes an exclusive fictions which surpasses the post-modern qualities of the novel writing and takes it to a level of super-modern specially through presenting a unique point of view and narration technique

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[4] Stream of Consciousness

[5] Pre-speech Levels are the main concern in stream of consciousness writing since this stream is supposed to be those perceptions which exist in character's mind and he feels it before it comes into the actual speech.

[6] For Bergson, time and consciousness are radically inseparable from one another; time is to be defined in terms of continuous multiplicity in which past, present and future are indivisible connoting the idea of timelessness. views time as a unified whole which is the intersection of the planes of the past all at once in the present.

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