



Distortions of Perception: A Psychoanalytic Study of Alice in Wonderland Syndrome in Sadegh Hedayat's *The Blind Owl*

Noor Ahmad Hameed Almsrhad

University of Babylon, College of Engineering, Mechanical Engineering Department

Email: noor.hameed.eng@uobabylon.edu.iq

Abstract in English

Paper Info

Abstract

This study establishes a detailed critical analysis of *The Blind Owl* by Sadegh Hedayat using the integrative theoretical framework, based on the synthesis of psychology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and literary modernism. The study avoids a fractious methodology of analysis, therefore taking the novel as a literary case study of perceptual and psychological disintegration. It shows that the hallucinatory experiences of the narrator are the direct reflections of the clinical symptoms of the Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS), but are also the symbolic expressions of the repressed trauma that can be observed through the Freudian psychoanalytic prism. Further, the paper asks the question of how the narrator loses his lived body and his deep alienation with reality through the phenomenological philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Keywords

Keywords: *Sadegh Hedayat, The Blind Owl, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, Alice in Wonderland Syndrome, modernism, perceptual distortion, embodiment, literary analysis.*

The paper argues that **the coherent yet fragmented and circular nature** of the narrative of Hedayat is, in fact, the end aesthetic realization of the fractured consciousness of the narrator, and as such, this places the novel squarely in the tradition of high modernism. **Finally**, the study explains how the novel, *The Blind Owl*, is an important testimony to the frightening instability of the human mind and the artificiality of reality with the help of a smooth flow of analysis and multiple block quotes and the scholarly work produced during the period.

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1.Introduction

Perception forms the nexus between human consciousness and reality ; it is what the reality and the imaginary world interfere with, as well as the internal and the external world. Once perception is distorted, the boundaries between these spheres are torn apart, with huge psychological and literary consequences. A rare neuropsychological disorder characterized by visual and spatial distortions, depersonalization, and distorted body image, Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS), **functions as a delicate lens through which these disturbances becomes** . Even though the syndrome takes its title after the works of Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, the syndrome is much more relevant than just Victorian fantasy, as it has been found to shed light on substantive overlaps between psychology, neurology, and literary studies.

The Blind owl by Sadegh Hedayat (1937), expresses an extreme experience of fractured perception and mental instability. The disjointed storyline, the surreal iconography, and an interest in mortality and repetition in the novel reverberate the perceptual anomalies that AIWS identified. Through psychoanalytic examination of the main character, Hedayat, in his work, the current paper will examine how his sense of time, space, and self is distorted to make it a pathological and existential crisis.

This paper establishes *The Blind Owl* as being framed in a psychoanalytic paradigm that combines Freudian constructs of the unconscious with the clinical aspects of AIWS. It argues that Hedayat transfers the neurological distortion into the metaphor of the disintegrated modern psyche where the madness functions as a form of perception and the story itself becomes a symptomatological result. By this meeting of both psychology and literature this study attempts to explain how distortion does not just serve as a sign of disorder but also a creative force that reforms the outlines of literary presentation.

Literature Review

Much academic research has focused on the works of Sadeeq Hedayat in *The Blind Owl* and the neurological Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS). *The Blind Owl* has been analyzed on autobiographical, philosophical, temporal, and postmodern levels by literary critics, medical and neurological studies have scrutinized AIWS as a type of perceptual and cognitive impairment , especially in children. In spite of this cumbersome corpus of research, there has been a general developmental isolationism regarding the investigation of these two fields, little interdisciplinary discourse between the analysis of literature and the neurological theory.

The first literary treatment of the novel appears to be that given by Hillmann (1989), titled *Hedayat's The Blind Owl: An Autobiographical Nightmare*, who was one

of the first thorough analyses of the novel by setting it in the environment of an autobiographical nightmare. Hillmann is reading the text to mean a psychological fragmentation of Hedayat and is preempting a theme of obsession, repetitive and mental fragmentation. Such interpretation creates the disrupted narrative voice and hallucinatory imagery of the novel as a starting point to further psycho- existential interpretations.

Drawing on classical and intertextual approaches, Simidchieva (2007), in *Sadeq Hedayat and the classics: the case of The Blind Owl*, places the relationship of the Blind Owl to classical texts in an overall context of modern literature in its place. She emphasizes the work with canonical motives and structures of narration by Hedayat, stating that the seeming incoherence of the novel is actually a process of recreating classical forms of literature. This analysis serves to strengthen the complexity of the text and the inability to interpret it linearly.

This shift toward postmodern and theoretical reading can be seen in Mansouri-Zeyni (2013), in *Haunting Language-Game: Baudrillardian Metamorphoses in Sadeq Hedayat's The Blind Owl*, who uses a Baudrillardian approach to study the linguistic games and metamorphoses of the novel. The paper views *The Blind Owl* as a site of hyperreality whereby signs lose their ground with signs and reality becoming collapsible into a simulation. This view relates the disjointed vision of the novel with the wider postmodern issues of representation and the vanishing of the real.

Lastly, Farahbakhsh and Haghshenas (2015), in *Exploring Bergsonian Time in Sadeq Hedayat's The Blind Owl*, discuss the concept of Bergsonian time in *The Blind Owl* and state that the novel prefers the disruption of linear time by the concepts of *duree*, or lived time. Such fluidity in time reflects the psychological instability of the main character and confirms the sense of a dream in the novel.

In line with these literary trends, the neurological scholarship perspective on AIWS started gaining fresh attention. Lanska and Lanska (2013), in *The Alice-in-Wonderland Syndrome*, differentiate somesthetic and visual impairments in AIWS, which presents a clinical classification of syndromes. Their contribution highlights the diversity of the perceptual distortions of patients, such as body image, spatial and time distortions. The next step in terms of clinical knowledge development, Liu et al. (2014), in *„Alice in Wonderland” syndrome: presenting and follow-up characteristics*, discuss the presentation and prognosis of AIWS among children. Their results emphasize both the ever-changing but very disturbing nature of the syndrome and its common connection to migraine and infections. The paper adds an empirical level to the medical portrait of AIWS.

Farooq and Fine (2017) in *lice in Wonderland syndrome: a historical and medical review*, and Lanska and Lanska (2017), in *Alice in Wonderland syndrome: somesthetic vs visual perceptual disturbance*, provide more detailed medical accounts. Farooq and Fine give a historical and medical overview of AIWS, which includes its conceptual development and clinical presentations, whereas Lanska and Lanska are a great source where one can find an official review of the neurological basis of the syndrome. Combined, these researches unify AIWS as an acknowledged perceptual condition that is manifested by a severe distortion of the size, space, and reality.

Despite the fact that the studies of both *The Blind Owl* and the growing medical literature on AIWS have been the focus of several studies, no previous research has placed these two domains in dialogue with each other. Although literary critics have discussed the perception distortion, time, and the reality in the novel written by Hedayat and neurologists have reported similar anomalies in AIWS, no theoretical and

interpretative overlaps between the two have been discussed. This paper fills this urgent gap by providing an interdisciplinary reading of the gap between the neurological perception theory and the modernist literary analysis, hence, will be of interest to both disciplines.

Research Problem

The main research question is aimed at explaining the functioning of distorted perception as both a psychological and literary phenomenon in the novel *The Blind Owl* by Sadegh Hedayat. Although there has been an outburst of psychoanalytic commentary on the novel, very little has been done to analyse it through the specific conceptual prism of Alice in Wonderland Syndrome, **a condition that combines psychological disturbance with a perceptual distortion. As a result, the current investigation will be based on the following problem;** how does the fact that Hedayat depicts the fragmented perception in *The Blind Owl* reflect the symptoms and implications of AIWS in a psychoanalytic paradigm?

Significance of the Study

The importance of this inquiry is that it is an interdisciplinary synthesis of literature, psychoanalytic theory, and medical psychology, therefore, offering a fresh insight into one of the most complex modernist works in Persian literature. Using the framework of the AIWS, the study adds depth to the critical understanding of the madness, alienation and distorted reality depicted by Hedayat. Also, it helps expand a wider scholarly discourse around the role of neurological and psychological disorders on literary imagination and narrative form, and hence, it broadens the critical nexus between psychology and literature.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the psychological aspects of perception and illusion in *the Blind Owl* using a strict and close textual analysis based on the psychoanalytic theory.
2. To discuss the evidence of the Alice in Wonderland Syndrome in the novel by comparing neurological symptomology with textual, visual, temporal, and spatial aberrations, which are evident in the novel .
3. To decode the reading of the fragmented consciousness on the part of the protagonist through constructs of Freudian psychoanalytic theories that include repression, the death drive, and the unconscious through comparative theoretical analysis .
4. To examine how Hedayat aestheticises the psychological pathology by placing the novel into the context of existentialist discourse and modernist narrative features .
5. To use an interdisciplinary approach to merge psychoanalysis, neurology and literary studies as the methodological approach to literary analysis.

II. Theoretical Framework: Alice in Wonderland Syndrome

The essence of psychology is concerned with the nature of the connection between the inner world of psyche and the exterior world of reality. The two worlds are bounded by perception, the intricate mental process that the psyche uses to assemble and make sense of sensory data in building a meaningful interpretation of the surrounding world. Perception is not a passive process of receiving objective data, it is an active process of interpreting information, which is influenced by memory, emotion, and unconscious drives. Being the root cause of our experience of reality, its stability

is the most important aspect of psychic wellness. The conceptualization of psychology views perception as a way through which people create reality. In the event that this process is broken, a blurred boundary between the real and the imagined is the consequence- a theme of psychoanalysis and modernist literature.

The psychological causes of perceptual distortion have been issues of interest since time immemorial. **Hallucinations, derealization, the perception that the external world is not real, and body-image disorders are viewed as major psychological experiences rather than neurological errors.** They are a kind of break in the psyche mechanism to sustain a coherent and stable relation with the world. Sigmund Freud presented one of the most valuable models of explaining this fracture. His theories of the unconscious as a reservoir of repressed ideas and desires, and dream-work, how our unconscious tries to disguise itself through images of symbols, imply that which we are conscious of is subject to influence by forces outside our **awareness.** To Freud (2015), “psychosis involves a critical feature of the inability of the ego to differentiate between inner fantasy and outer reality caused by a disruption in reality testing”(p.159). **This disturbance generates an intersection of personal fantasies of the inner world and the outer world in which they are formed into an objectively veridical world. Nevertheless, the psychosis is limited to one potential explanation by the formulation, and thus may fail to capture neurobiological and phenomenological dimensions overridden in modern psychiatry. In this respect, the proposition will be analytically useful in the context of psychoanalytic discourse but will require a contextualization in the framework of interdisciplinary or clinical discourse.**

These psychoanalytic ideas prove a very important principle: we have an objective opinion on the world, which can be distorted at the most profound mind layers. The external world cannot be passively captured but is actively construed and

in fact distorted by the inner world of the psyche. The clinical presentation of the theoretical connection between psychological states and perceptual distortion in the situation of Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS) is the brightest. AIWS “is a neurological disorder characterized by episodes of bizarre perceptual distortion, not hallucinations or illusory phenomena” (Todd, 1955, p.185), it is first described formally by British psychiatrist Dr. John Todd in 1955. The syndrome was described by Todd as the effect of the novel *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) by Lewis Carroll, in which the symptoms were very similar to those of Alice, as she shrinks and grows, and observes the world in its state of flux. There is more than mere coincidence between the two; researchers have long theorized that Carroll, a migraine sufferer himself, might have also had creative inspiration in having these peculiar perceptions of his own (Podoll & Robinson, 1999; Rolak, 1991). The Alice in Wonderland Syndrome is characterized by distinctive and atypical symptoms. This describes a perceptual phenomenon resulting in temporary instances of distorted perception and disorientation, known as metamorphopsias. Individuals with this uncommon condition may experience transient sensations of perceiving themselves as larger or smaller than their actual size. Their perception of the room's size may differ significantly from its actual dimensions. The furniture surrounding these individuals is likely distorted. The whole perceptual system is impacted by **this syndrome**; vision, touch, and hearing are all impacted to the same degree. These perceptions do not stem from problems with the eyes, ears, or hallucinations. Rather, it involves changes in the brain's perception of the environment (Hernandez, 2023, p.30).

The AIWS has a startling set of symptoms which, clinically, upsets the perceived stability of both the body and the environment. Such distortions, which are commonly referred to as metamorphopsia, are usually either visual or somesthetic,

concerning the body, More than 40 different types have been determined through a systematic review (Blom, 2016). Although AIWS can be attributed to certain neurological factors, such as migraines, Epstein -Barr virus infection, and the impairment of the temporoparietal-occipital carrefour (TPO-C), where sensory data are processed (Mastria et al., 2016), it can be considered as a phenomenon that goes beyond a mere medical diagnosis. AIWS is more than a medical origin, a strong metaphor of the human mind's instability, where imagination is not differentiated from psychosis. It is a condition of suspension of the elementary principles of reality, and the relation of the self to its own body and surroundings grows horrifyingly fluid. This makes AIWS a perfect example that can be followed in more thorough theoretical research, to match the neurological phenomenon to its deep psychological and existential interpretation.

To comprehend the ramifications of a condition like AIWS, it is necessary to go beyond what is described in clinical terms and include deeper theoretical perceptions.

Psychoanalysis provides an interpretation of the meaning of the distortions whereas phenomenology is an explanation of the distorted experience structure. Psychoanalytically, the unusual perceptual experiences of AIWS may be regarded as a temporary, but dramatic failure of the ego reality-testing role. This biological glitch, which is the neurological vulnerability, leaves an opening into consciousness by which unconscious content finds its way out in disguised, symbolic manner. The particular form of the distortion ,such as perceiving a figure as dangerously big or seeing self as frighteningly small, may be viewed as a compromise formation, a symbolic act of a repressed fear or desire that cannot be recognized by the conscious mind in any other way. It is not a coincidence but a message of the unconscious, even though it was written in a code that is difficult to understand (Hossain, 2020 , p.393).

Phenomenology, and especially the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, provide an alternative viewpoint, dwelling on the order of embodied living experience. To Merleau-Ponty (2004), “perception does not constitute a mental activity but a practice of lived body or a corps propre” (p.19). The body serves as a medium through which we perceive the world, acting as our point of reference and spatial orientation. The body schema represents a dynamic pre-reflective understanding of our bodily situation and performance, organizing the entirety of our perceptual domain. The somesthetic distortions associated with AIWS, such as the perception of limb shrinking or expanding, represent a significant failure of the body schema. When the lived body loses its stable sense of self, the experienced world also loses its stability. The fact that the external world seems to be too big or too small is a direct correlation with the fact that the scale of the body is in crisis. Merleau-Ponty et.al (2013) posit that “the body serves as our primary means of engaging with the world” (p. 147). When such a medium is destroyed, the world is consequently deformed.

The academic literature is effective to shed light on the intersection point between a clinical syndrome like Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS) and its human implications. Artists and writers have long been interested in these experiences of perceptual anomalies as constitutive of the human condition even before neurologists started to have a clinical interest in them. The period of the work of the twentieth-century modernist literary movement developed a sense of fragmentation and distortion of aesthetics which was a manifestation of the psychological and perceptual alienation of the modern person; it should be pointed out though that literary modernism was not an analytical or scientific process, but rather an aesthetic and artistic one. Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce rejected the stable and objective reality of the

nineteenth century realism in favor of a more fluid, subjective and frequently fragmented inner reality.

This literary tradition shows that the experiences similar to AIWS, even though clinically distinct are based on the ancient human concerns on the safety of oneself and the world around. Modernist literature offers both a rhetoric model and a set of aesthetic strategies of the subjective experience of a fractured reality, which makes it possible to establish the more detailed analysis of how these distortions of perception can be found in certain literary works, such as *The Blind Owl* by Sadeq Hedayat.

III. Discussions :Psychoanalytic Explorations of Reality Distortion and Fragmented Consciousness in *The Blind Owl*

Sadeq Hedayat (1903 – 1951) is recognized as Iran's leading modern author of prose fiction and short stories. He dedicated his life to the study of Western and Iranian literatures and cultures, as well as to literary criticism and translation, primarily from French and ancient Persian. He was a prolific writer, producing numerous short stories and novellas, two historical plays, a travelogue, several satires, and over ten translations, including Chekhov's *Gooseberries*, Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, *Before the Law*, and *The Metamorphosis*, as well as Sartre's *The Wall*, all within a brief literary career before his suicide in his Paris apartment. He has authored a collection of fictional works, the most significant of which is *Buried Alive*, published in 1930. *Three Drops of Blood* (1932), *The Blind Owl* (1937), and *The Stray Dog* (1942).

In his essay “Tracing Narratology in *The Blind Owl*,” Mahmoodi asserts that Hedayat, in his novel, “expatriates his dreams and his odd reveries” (2009, p. 3). *The Blind Owl* is a true literary depiction of mental breakdown; the story not only describes madness but acts it out. The novel received acclaim from several notable figures, including Henry Miller and André Breton. This work is regarded as a significant

literary achievement in Persian. The novel is characterised as a "psycho-fiction" that integrates philosophical and ontological elements (Katuzian, 2005, p.83). Its hallucinatory and circular form is a perfect corpus on which the interaction of an integrated theoretical framework to perceive perceptual distortion as phenomenon at the same time, both psychologically, neurologically, symbolically and phenomenologically. The hero of the novel, a pen-case painter who becomes trapped in a cage of confining reality, is a rich study on how the ability to create a stable world by the mind is in the process of being stripped away. The protagonist, in his first confession, which is not to the reader but to himself, and a shadow, manages to create instantaneously a state of absolute mental division, a closed circle of agony that has separated him with the rest of the rabble. **Instead of showing spiritual revelation, the boundary between internal disturbance and external social reality is used to show the ego surrendering collective reality to a privately internally consistent fantasy world. As a result, the quotation can be understood as a primary expression of repression and alienation experienced by the narrator, which preempts the perceptual and psychological deformities that support the logic of the narrative in the novel** ,he writes:

There are certain sores in life which, like a kind of canker, slowly erode the soul in solitude. It is impossible to reveal these sorrows to anyone. For the general run of people, the "rabble," are accustomed to believing in the reality of things that are visible and tangible, things which they can classify and categorize, and they will greet any manifestation of the spiritual life with a smile of derision. (Hedayat, 1957, p. 1)

This speech puts the story into the context of trying to explain an incommunicable pain, a trauma, which has broken his understanding of reality itself. The world around the protagonist is not the mirror of the objective external reality but

rather a kind of projection of his tormented psychology. This mental weakness is expressed through a succession of particular and planned perceptual abnormalities that directly match the clinical symptoms of the Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS). His existence is marred with metamorphopsias, or the distortions in the perception of objects, and an extremely unstable perception of time and self also , its important to note that the narrator is a fictional character, not a patient :

Was it possible that all that I had seen had been a dream, a hallucination?

But in that case what was reality? Was I myself not a mere handful of shadows which have come into existence only that they may mock and cheat me? Is not everything that I feel, see and think something entirely imaginary, something utterly different from reality? (Hedayat, 1957, p. 15)

This mental fault is expressed as a chain of certain and systematic distortions of perception that project onto the symptoms of Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS). The reality of the subject is marred by metamorphopsias or distortions of perception of objects, and an extremely unstable time and self consciousness. The image of the ethereal girl, the old man and the cypress tree is recurring, obsessive, not a memory but an inescapable, fixed, forced image, which the subject must paint, this distortion of vision has become the organizing principle of his world. When he first sees her through the transom, his reality has been forever changed and he recalls that experience as “a delicious, horrible fit of trembling” (Hedayat, 1957, p. 9). This is a psychic break, and henceforth, the path of his life will forever be different. His time experience is also fundamentally disturbed, which is a typical symptom of AIWS. He clearly opposes the idea of linear, objective time, which is shown to be a condition of fragmentation of time

that cannot be solely attributed to a literary device but a phenomenologically factual experience of a mind that has lost its anchor.

Past, future, hour, day, month, year—these things are all the same to me. The various phases of childhood and maturity are to me nothing but futile words. They mean something only to ordinary people, to the rabble... But my life has always known only one season and one state of being. (Hedayat, 1957, p. 35)

The repetitive, compulsive image of the ideal girl, the aged man, the cypress tree is not a remembrance, but a permanent, obtrusive image that he feels he must paint; it is a visual distortion that has now become the structuring principle of his world. His time perception is essentially disrupted, as a typical symptom of AIWS. He specifically denies linear and objective time, a condition of discontinuity in time that is not only a literary convention but a phenomenologically true description of an optically disoriented mind. A failure to maintain a linear time is reflected in a failure to maintain his own body image or schema. The main character constantly mixes his own identity with the one of the old man, his mirror image, and sees himself as a shadow. The hideous and cold deeds of dismembering the body of the woman can be interpreted as the hideous externalisation of this broken body schema, he must disembowel because his own perception of embodied wholes has failed. **The grotesque and chilling scenes of mutilating the body of the woman can be interpreted as externalization of disrupted body schema of the narrator. The reasons behind such compulsion to disembowel are that the narrator does not perceive embodied wholes, which then follow clinical descriptions of a perceptual disorder where a size and shape perversion, as well as a body image perversion, are indicative of a destabilized body-in-space representation (Blom ,2016,p.87).** On the last scene in the novel, he stares at the mirror and sees not

himself but the old man which is an example of the most sombre distortion of the self-image, the embodiment of the somesthetic distortions of AIWS.

Although AIWS offers a clinical map of reality distortion and fragmented consciousness , a psychoanalytic perspective makes it possible to interpret the more profound symbolic interpretation. According to Freudian, the textbook case of the “return of the repressed” is *The Blind Owl* (Freud, 2015). The traumas did not find a way out, and the narrator is haunted by them, which cannot be accessed consciously, and this material erupts into consciousness when he sees some distorted images, symbolic. The idealized and desexualized psychic image of an object of desire, presumably a mother figure, that he is fixated on serves as an ethereal, angelic woman. She is being compared to the beast, his carnal loathed wife, who symbolizes the threatening sexuality of the real world that he is unable to incorporate. This stereotypical Freudian division of the Madonna and the whore is the main contradiction of his psyche (Farid, 2015). He talks about his wife in disgust, but he does it in a strongly contrasting way to the ethereal girl by pointing out her physical presence.

She was plump and comfortable-looking. She had on a cloak of Tus material. Her eyebrows were plucked and were stained with indigo. She was wearing a beauty spot and her face was made up with rouge, ceruse and kohl. In a word she was turned out to perfection. (Hedayat, 1957, p. 87)

The portrait of the woman given by Hedayat:—She was fat and cozy-looking. She was wearing a cloak of Tus material. Her eyebrows were plucked and were coloured with indigo. She had on a beauty spot and her face was rouged and caught up with ceruse and kohl. A word she was turned out to perfection (Hedayat, 1957, p. 87) is much higher than a literal physical depiction. The detailed account of her external

appearances prefigures the fascination of the narrator with the superficial beauty and the pretense of social appearance which is sharply contrasted with the psychological disintegration of the narrator. Symbolically, the painstakingly designed exterior can be seen as an extrapolation of current norms and expectations in society and hence shedding light on the conflict between the conspicuous perfectionism and the disintegrated internal state of the perception of the narrator. As a result, the passage works on two planes: it is both a critique of aesthetic idealization, but, at the same time, it is a prism that enhances the perverted perception and existential alienation of the narrator. This corporeal, material depiction of his wife who is termed as the bitch is a stark contrast to the dream like unperceived nature of the idealized female figure. His violent behavior may be seen in terms of compromised constructions, which are metaphoric displays of sublimated sexual and aggression urges. The murder and dissection of the woman, the being that is a combination of angelic and butch qualities, is an act of rage and a desperate attempt to prove that he is able to exercise control over the object of his obsession.

This perceived empowerment of him after her death is unpleasantly clear: Henceforth she was in my power and I had ceased to be her creature. I could see her eyes whenever I felt inclined to do so. (Hedayat, 1957, p. 30)

The story, a desperate attempt to tell his story to his shadow is a kind of compulsive repetition: an attempt to process the initial trauma by constantly re-enacting it. In line with this psychoanalytic interpretation, a phenomenological approach, in the tradition of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, sheds some light on the architecture of lived experience of the protagonist. His body has a catastrophic breakdown of the lived body (*corps propre*); he is severely estranged to his own physicality saying he was

disembodied as an observer. This disruption of the body schema (pre-reflective, dynamic experience of the body) that forms the basis of perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2013) disorientates the world of perception. The dream-like landscapes, which he revises over and over, the claustrophobic room, the distorted bodies then are a natural consequence of his unattached, disembodied viewpoint. He is no longer an object of perception but a lost object in a world of other objects. His words, "I was not made for this world, or for any other world," is a cry of phenomenological despair from a subject who has lost his "general medium for having a world": his own body (Merleau-Ponty, 2013). *The Blind Owl* presents a complex interplay of real and surreal scenes, resulting in numerous aesthetic gaps for the reader to explore. A discerning reader is required to identify the gaps in the text to achieve a coherent understanding. Hedayat has created distinct realms of factuality and fictionality that are intertwined and superimposed upon one another. Upon examining the text, the reader will encounter shifts in narratology, transitioning from one distinct vein to another, where it becomes challenging to discern the metaphorical realm from the independent imaginative domain. This conjecture explores the extended and elaborated imaginative reality through metaphorical elements, such as seemingly real apparitions, shadowy figures, and dream-like memories. Hedayat accounts for the creation of a unique hesitation or "epistemological uncertainty" (McHale 2004, p. 74).

Hedayat used a fragmented, circular storytelling in order to create an aesthetic of distortion, thus placing the novel squarely in the high modernism tradition with Kafka, Joyce, and Woolf. The shape of the novel is reflected in its contents: this two-part, second half, which appears to be a nightmarish, degraded duplicate of the first one, captures the reader inside a compulsive, looping psychology of the protagonist. According Marziyeh Kameli(2025), "the story is based on illusive scenes and topics,

which make the context change at all times” (Kameli,p.18). This ever-changing is the fundamental aspect of the instability in perception of the protagonist. The unreliable narration, the time loops and surreal imagery are not just the stylistic devices, but they are the essence of the novel, a direct transfer of mental state into a literary text. The very plot is the ultimate twist in perception and makes *The Blind Owl* a masterpiece and scare of the human mind.

V. Conclusion

For incorporating a common integrated theoretical approach, Sadegh Hedayat in his work, *The Blind Owl*, creates a complex and manifold built-in madness. The novel is simultaneously a clinical description of a perceptual distortion on a par with that of Alice in Wonderland syndrome, a psychoanalytic play of repression and trauma, a phenomenology of a fragmented embodied self, and a paradigm of aesthetic innovation in modernist aesthetics. The speech of the narrator having a wound that will never be healed here is the acknowledgement that the reality we experience in life is a fragile creation, vulnerable to the acidic effects of the unconscious and the unsteady nature of the human eye. This assumption highlights the critical questioning of the novel of the weakness of subjective experience.

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قدمت هذه الدراسة تحليلاً نقدياً مفصلاً لرواية "البومة العمياء" لصادق هدايت، مُعتمدةً على إطار نظري تكاملي، قائم على توليفة من علم النفس والتحليل النفسي والظاهرية والحدائث الأدبية. تتجنب الدراسة منهجية التحليل المُشتملة، مُتخذةً الرواية كدراسة حالة أدبية للتفكك الإدراكي والنفسي. وتُبين أن التجارب (AIWS) الهلوسية للراوي هي انعكاسات مباشرة للأعراض السريرية لمتلازمة أليس في بلاد العجائب ولكنها أيضاً تعبيرات رمزية عن الصدمة المكبوتة التي يُمكن ملاحظتها من خلال منظور التحليل النفسي الفرويدي. علاوةً على ذلك، تطرح الورقة سؤالاً حول كيفية فقدان الراوي لجسده الحي، واعترايه العميق عن الواقع من خلال الفلسفة الظاهرية لموريس ميرلوبونتي. تجادل الورقة البحثية بأن الطبيعة المتماسكة والمجزأة والدائرية لسرد "هداية" هي في الواقع التجسيد الجمالي النهائي لوعي الراوي المتشتمت، وبالتالي، يضع هذا الرواية في سياق الحدائث الراقية. وأخيراً، توضح الدراسة كيف تُعد رواية "البومة العمياء" شهادة مهمة على عدم استقرار العقل البشري المخيف وتصنع الواقع، وذلك بفضل انسياب سلس للتحليل واقتباسات متعددة، بالإضافة إلى العمل الأكاديمي المُنتج خلال تلك الفترة
