

through headphones. For example, tongue-twisters like "The press published the poem and promised to pay for permission", which is a meaningful acceptable tongue twister or "The puppies puzzled the peninsula and processed to please for paper", which is a meaningless and unacceptable tongue-twister took longer to be judged for semantic acceptability than the phonetically neutral sentences. The reason why tongue-twisters take longer, according to McCutchen and Perfetti, is that they effect similar phonological representations and this similarity causes confusion. Their argument is that "If phonological activation were an optional strategy, one would think that subjects would have abandoned it when faced with phonologically confusing sentences and dealt solely with the meaning of the sentence." (p. 685).

However, as Marefat (1990) puts it, the conclusion McCutchen and Perfetti (1982) draw from their experiment is not without its shortcomings. They have found that tongue-twisters require more time to verify than the phonetically neutral ones. At the same time, they report that as far as the two types of tongue-twisters are concerned, "There was a significant tongue-twisters effect for unacceptable items... and a non-significant difference for acceptable items..." (p. 678-79). If phonological activity is an automatic process for access to meaning, then both types should have been significantly subject to interference. Marefat (1990) refers to this problem and finds a solution to interpret this finding in a direct visual access framework. As she says, if automatic phonological activation theory is taken as a basis for interpreting this finding, one finds no answer for this difference. But according to the post-lexical phonological activation theory, this finding can be easily interpreted. The point is that acceptable sentences are identified earlier through the graphemic representation with no need for phonological recoding. But as for the unacceptable sentences, the subject feels safer to check all resources he has at hand. So, he resorts to phonological recoding and then gives his "no" response. Besides, McCutchen, Bell, France, and Perfetti (1991), revisiting the tongue-twister effect say: "... the tongue-twister effect appears to occur during the memory and comprehension processes involved in sentence processing, not during processes involved in isolated word reading" (p. 87).

PHONOLOGICAL RECODING AS A POST-LEXICAL ACTIVITY

There exist various pieces of evidence coming from experimental studies which are against the phonological recoding hypothesis. Martin (1982) conducted an experiment in which he compared the reaction times for "no" responses to three types of non-words: Pseudo-homophones, visual

controls, and other pronounceable non-words which were not as visually similar to words. Visual controls were non-words made from words with a change made in them to produce pronounceable non-words. For example, "Meen" was considered to be a pseudo-homophone non-word made from "Mean". And "Plen" was a control non-word made from "Plan". In both cases, the non-words were produced by changing only one letter of the words. Through a pilot study, Martin ensured that a significant number of subjects agree that pseudo-homophones were actually pronounced like the intended words and the control non-words were pronounced like words and that the third type of non-words were not even similar to words. Examples of this third group were "Phou", "Gher", etc. The rationale was that if phonological recoding is activated in parallel with visual access, then phonological similarity of the pseudohomophones to words will result in longer reaction times than the visual controls, whose phonological representations are not like words. And if, on the other hand, the determining factor is the visual similarity of non-words to words, rather than the phonological similarity, then there should not be a difference in reaction times between pseudo-homophones and visual controls. The results showed that the pronounceable non-words which were not as visually similar to words (the third type of non-words) took shorter time to reject than did the pseudo-homophones. This result was interpreted to be due to the greater visual similarity of the pseudohomophones to words than the non-words. The main finding in Martin's study was that reaction times to reject pseudo-homophones were no longer than those to reject the visual controls. In this way, Martin showed that reaction time for rejecting pseudo-homophones was the same as that for the visual controls, implying that phonological representations have no role.

Another piece of evidence disproving the necessity of phonological activation comes from Kleiman (1975). He demonstrated that when phonological recoding is suppressed, decision times for phonological judgements take longer than for semantic judgements. If phonological recoding preceded meaning access, the semantic and phonological judgements should have been equally affected.

In this part, the role of the grapheme-to-phoneme conversion process was discussed. But the field of mental lexicon is clearly in need of more explanatory accounts for many different areas. To take an example, consider the case of a speech input which contains a speech error, like "boiled icicle" for "oiled bicycle". These kinds of errors are easily missed, and it is quite likely that the hearers will report that they heard the intended rather than the uttered form. The question which raises here is: What does the lexical access

system do in this situation? Does it identify the intended form or the uttered form? Does the lexical access system have such a power to discover the intended form? Or does recognition take place by the help of recognition system?

So many other questions in word recognition and mental lexicon remain to be answered. Among these, to name a few, the bilingual lexicon, the similarity between first language and second language mental lexicon in the same individual, and the relevance of these psycholinguistic findings to teaching make up rich fields of research for years to come.

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OEDIPUS AND *THE OWL*

Dr. Bahram Meghdadi

منتقدانی چون امبرتو اِکو (Umberto Eco) و رولان بارت (Roland Barthes) از متن «گشوده» و «نوشتنی» سخن به میان آورده‌اند که از آنها تفسیرها و تأویل‌های گوناگون می‌توان کرد. در متن «نوشتنی» نویسنده جاهای خالی یا فاصله‌هایی به وجود آورده که خواننده باید با به کارگیری تخیل خلاق خود آن فاصله‌ها و یا جاهای خالی را پر کند. در نظریه ادبی جدید، هرچه متن «گشوده» تر باشد و جاهای خالی بیشتری داشته باشد، آن متن از ارزش ادبی بالاتری برخوردار است و چنین است رمان مدرن ایرانی بوف کور که تأویل‌ها و تفسیرهای بیشمار می‌طلبد که هیچ تأویلی ناقض تأویل دیگر نیست و همین ویژگی باعث جهانی شدن این رمان ایرانی است. یکی از روش‌های نقد ادبی، روش روانکاوانه است که با استفاده از آراء و عقاید زیگموند فروید و دیگر روانکاوان، اقدام به تفسیر یک اثر ادبی یا هنری می‌کند و در این مقاله نویسنده کوشیده است تا با تحلیل روانکاوانه، یکی از مشکلات اساسی و پیچیدگی‌های بنیادی این اثر را حل و فصل کند و لازم به توضیح نیست که نقد روانکاوانه فقط یک روش است که جنبه‌ای از جنبه‌های این اثر ادبی شگرف را مورد بررسی قرار می‌دهد.

This paper offers a fresh interpretation of *The Blind Owl*, combining the suggestion of a literary analogue which may illuminate aspects of its superficial organization and psychological analysis or model which may account for its deeper design. Both parts of the discussion should, at the very least, lay to rest the persisting notion that *The Blind Owl* is structurally haphazard or incoherent.

First of all, *The Blind Owl* warrants comparison to *The Divine*

Comedy. For its structure bears an interesting resemblance to Dante's masterpiece. That is to say, *The Blind Owl* is Hedayat's vision of hell, purgatory, and paradise. But Hedayat reverses the order of Dante's visions.

The first part of *The Blind Owl* begins with page 1 and ends with page 43 (covers sections 1 and 2).¹ This part parallels Dante's paradise because it is similarly removed from harsh reality and revolves around the image of an undefiled, beautiful, unattainable woman, who has a "slender, ethereal, misty form" (p.22). In this part of the book, the woman visits the protagonist in his room. Though she seems to be the fulfillment of the protagonist's desire for the example of perfect womanhood, she comes to his room only to "surrender her cold **Boyd** and her **Shadow**" to the protagonist.

The second part of the novel is brief, covering pages 44 and 45. This section corresponds to purgatory, the transitional stage between heaven and hell, between subjectivity and objectivity, between the dream and the reality. Immediately after this section, the reader encounters the objective world, which represents reality of the consciousness of the writer, his daily hell. Therefore, the third part of the novel starts with page 67 and continues to the end of the novel. This third part is the opposite of the first part because it deals with the bitter reality of the objective world and it may be seen as a parallel to Dante's *Inferno*.

Thus, it becomes clear that the conscious, organizing powers of Hedayat are very much at work in this novel and that the bewilderment of the critics cannot be attributed to any disorderliness of the author. The framework is also a clue to Hedayat's purpose: it suggests in its reversal that the novel is not a "comedy" in the same sense that Dante's work is. Though it is necessary to recognize this order in the novel, it is just as important to acknowledge the superficial nature of this organization. Similarity of structures in two masterpieces by itself cannot confer merit on a work of art: it needs its own particular and individual design appropriate to what is being said. And *The Blind Owl* has this deeper design, this more profound exploration of human relationships.

Behind the plot, beneath the Dantesque organization, there is the "psychological" truth of the novel, as cunningly concealed as in a novel by Kafka, or a psychoanalytic truth of Freud.

From a psychoanalytical point of view, the first part of *The Blind Owl* seems to depict the unconscious aspect of the psyche, the second part depicts the subconscious, and the third part deals with the consciousness of the narrator. In the third part of the novel, the image of the woman is entirely different from the image projected in the first part. In the third part of the novel, the woman is no longer the Madonna, the multifoliate Rose of Dante,

no longer the symbol of purity; she has changed into a lascivious woman who responds to every man who summons her. This "split" image of the woman often has its roots in the Oedipus complex, for in the literature of classical cases of Oedipal obsession, the neurotic has a "split" image of the dominant female figure or the mother "surrogate" (or mother): on one side is the pure "ethereal" woman who should be placed on a pedestal and worshipped from a distance; on the other is the lascivious mother who responds to father whenever he demands her company:

The narrator presents the image of the woman in the first part of *The Blind Owl* in these terms:

... it was not possible that she should be connected in any way with the things of this world: the water with which she washed her hair came from some unique, unknown spring; her dress was not woven of ordinary stuff and had not been fashioned by material, human hands. She was a creature apart. I realized that those flowers of morning glory were no ordinary flowers. I was certain that if her face were to come into contact with ordinary water it would fade; and that if she were to pluck an ordinary flower of morning glory with her long fine fingers they would wither like the petals of a flower. I understand all this, this girl, this angel, was for me a source of wonder and ineffable revelation. Her being was subtle and intangible. She aroused in me a feeling of adoration. I felt sure that beneath the glance of a stranger, or of an ordinary man, she would have withered and crumpled. (p. 13)

And again in the first part, the protagonist states:

My heart stood still. I held my breath. I was afraid that if I breathed she might disappear like a cloud of smoke. (p. 18)

Elsewhere in the same part, he says:

I wished to say something but I feared that my voice would offend her ears, her sensitive ears which were accustomed, surely, to distant, heavenly, gentle music. (p. 19)

Here is depicted the Beatrice figure who sits at the portals of paradise, blessed with heavenly effulgence. But the third part of the book presents a

contrasting and opposite image of the "woman". It is the same woman, but observed from a different angle, from below, as it were:

... 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. She appeared to be well pleased with life. She was unconsciously holding the index finger of her left hand to her lips. Was this the same graceful girl who, in a black pleated dress, had played hide-and-seek with me on the bank of the Suran...? (p. 111)

In the first part of the novel (that is, the unconscious aspect of the narrator's psyche, which Hedayat seems to equate with the innocent and the pure), there are three main characters. One is the narrator, the second is the "ethereal" woman who enters the narrator's room and dies there, and the third is the hearse-driver. This trinity reappears in the third part of the book, but distorted and changed; in other words, they are essentially the same characters but they have been transformed into variations of the image: the "ethereal" untouchable woman of part one is transformed into a libidinous woman and sometimes appears as the "butcher" and sometimes as the "odds-and-ends" man of part three. In fact, all of the characters in the novel are in one way or another extensions of the three prototypes of part one. Analysis of these three prototypes reveals that two of them are father and mother figures and that the father figure (the hearsedriver, the butcher, the odds-and/ends man) always interferes with the narrator's relations with the mother figure. This phenomenon is clearly noticeable in part three:

... Late at night, after everyone had gone to bed, I got in my nightshirt and drawers and went into the dead woman's room to say goodbye to her for the last time. Two camphor candles were burning at her head. A Koran had been laid on her stomach to prevent the Devil from entering her body. I drew back the sheet which covered her and saw my aunt again, with her dignified, pleasant face, from which, it seemed, all traces of earthly concerns had been effaced. She wore an expression before which I involuntarily bowed my head and at the same time I felt that death was a normal, natural thing. The corners of her lips were fixed in a faintly ironical smile. I was about to kiss her hand and

go out when, turning my head, I saw with a start that the lewd who is my wife had come into the room. There in the presence of her dead mother she pressed herself hard against me, held me close and kissed me long and passionately on the lips. I could have sunk into the ground with shame, but I had not the strength of mind to do what I should have done. The dead woman, her teeth visible, looked as though she was mocking us. I had the impression that her expressions had changed from the quiet smile she had been wearing before. Mechanically I held the girl in my arms and returned her kiss, when suddenly the curtain draped across the doorway leading to the next room was drawn aside and my aunt's husband, the lewd's father, came into the room. He was a bent old man, and he was wearing a scarf wrapped around his neck. (pp. 60-61)

Three personages function in this scene, although there are actually four persons present: the dead woman is the mother figure of the narrator; the lecherous woman who enters the room is an extension of the mother figure, or any woman with whom the narrator would like to have relationships. But there are negative elements in the scene which prohibit the possibility of such relationships. For instance, the "change" in the dead woman's smile indicates the narrator's guilt feelings regarding sexuality (her "mocking" smile is disapproving). Thus, the mother figure (the aunt) dominates the scene and prevents the son (the narrator) from establishing relationships with a woman (the lecher³). The husband of the aunt, who enters the room at the climax of the scene, represents the guilt-inducing Freudian father figure, who interferes in the mother-son relationship. In this scene, he is a manifestation of the narrator's father, or the rival of his love for the woman⁴. Thus, the trinity is here repeated, with the mother and father disguised as aunt and uncle (the lewd as one side of the split mother figure), and the son cast in the role of the observer-victim.

The following excerpts indicate the narrator's unhealthy cathexis to his mother and his extreme hatred of his father:

... the only thing in this mean world which I desired was her[mother's] love; if that were denied me I wanted the love of nobody. Was it possible that anyone other than she would make any impression upon my heart? But the hollow grating laughter, the sinister laughter of the old man [father] had broken the bond which united us. (pp. 11-12)

The hatred of the father is revealed in the third part of the novel thus:

It seems to me that this man's face [the father's] has figured in most of my nightmares. (p. 63)

And again in the same part of the book the narrator states:

There, beside the curtain, sat one fearful shape. It never stirred, it was neither gloomy nor cheerful. Every time I came back to my room it gazed steadily into my eyes. Its face was familiar to me. It seemed to me that I had seen that face at some time in my childhood. Yes, it was on the thirteenth day of Nowruz. I was playing hide-and-seek with some other children on the bank of the river Suran when I caught sight of that same face amid a crowd of other, ordinary faces set on top of funny, reassuring little bodies. It reminded me of the butcher opposite the window of my room. I felt that this shape had its place in my life and that I had seen it often before. Perhaps this shadow had been born along with me and moved within the restricted circuit of my existence... (p. 92)

According to Freud, one of the signs of an Oedipal conflict is regression to childhood. That is to say, since the afflicted person desperately needs his mother's attention, he regresses to a stage where in his fantasies he may again become eligible for such maternal concern. This tendency is exemplified very well at the end of part one of the novel:

... Then I felt as though the course of my life had been reversed. One by one, past experiences, past states of mind and obliterated, lost memories of childhood recurred to me. Not only did I see things but I took part in the bustle of bygone activity, was wholly immersed in it. With each moment that passed I grew smaller and more like a child. (pp. 42-43).

Elsewhere the narrator says:

I often used to recall the days of my childhood in order to forget the present. (p. 83)

or:

I felt I had become a child again... (p. 67)

or:

I was convinced that I had become a child again and that I was lying in the cradle. (p. 68)

or:

When I awoke in the morning my nurse said to me, "My daughter" _ she meant the lewd, my wife _ "came to your bedside and took your head in her lap and rocked you like a baby..." (p. 68)

Often a person suffering from an Oedipal conflict will seek to escape from his surroundings, where he is insecure and anxiety-ridden in his relationship with other people, because all relationships are extensions of the anxiety-inducing family triangle. The place where he seeks refuge may be a solitary room or an isolated enclosed place, perhaps a reminder of the womb to which such troubled spirits allegedly wish to return. Safe within the confines of four walls, the afflicted person can regress to the prenatal stage of his life:

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. (p. 5)

Or again he states elsewhere:

My room, like all rooms, is built of baked and sun dried bricks and stands upon the ruins of thousands of ancient houses. Its walls are whitewashed and it has a huge frieze around it. It is exactly like a tomb. (p. 50)

Although the tomb is usually associated with death and demise, here the image seems to suggest an escape to the security of the unconsciousness, the removal from the condition of sentience, and appears to be as much an image of regression as Eliot's "pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas."²

Later on in the novel, he returns to the image of a snug, silent, lightless

place of refuge:

Was not my room a coffin? This bed that was always unrolled, inviting me to sleep, was it not colder and darker than the grave? The thought that I was lying in a coffin had occurred to me several times. At night my room seemed to contract and to press against my body. May it not be that people have this same sensation in the grave? (pp. 97-98)

One of the most recurrent symbols in the novel is the "morning glory", and curiously enough it is frequently associated with a scene of security, peace, and isolation. The narrator always connects this flower with purity and innocence in women. In the first part of the novel, where woman is depicted as a Madonna, the image of the morning glory occurs frequently:

On the other side of the hill was an Isolated enclosure, peaceful and green; it was a place which I had never seen before and yet it looked familiar to me, as though it had always been present in some recess of my mind. The ground was covered with vines of blue, scentless morning glory. I felt that no one until that moment had ever set foot in the place. (p. 31, emphasis mine)

The virginity of the place, at least for the narrator, symbolizes virginity in women, "No one had ever set foot in the place" suggests his fantasy that no one before him had ever touched the woman whose remains he is carrying in his suitcase. In this part of the novel, after burying the woman's body, he says:

"... when the trench was filled in I trampled the earth firm, brought a number of vines of blue, scentless morning glory and set them in the ground above her grave" (p. 34).

In the third part of the novel, citation there is hardly any mention of "morning glory," but when there is, the narrator has been removed from reality through fantasy and has returned to the subjective world of the first part. For instance:

I had nearly reached the river Suran when I found... the level ground was covered with vines of morning glory. (p. 75)