

Ajnabi, Or the Xenological Uncanny in Iranian Modernism

by

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From its earliest introduction to the Iranian intellectual sphere in the late nineteenth century, the process of cultural modernization has been tethered to the status of the foreign. Iranian modernity (tajaddod) has generated endless visions and revisions of Iranian traditions. It is characterized by unprecedented modes of literary production: new poetic forms that violated the normative rules according to which Persian poetry had been composed for centuries; the turn to realism and the language of everyday speech in prose narratives; and the introduction of European theater to the Iranian cultural milieu. In all of its aspects, Iranian tajaddod (literally “yearning for new”) was a politically engaged response, on the one hand, to the destabilization of the absolutist monarchy precipitated by the Constitutional revolutions (1905-1911), and on the other, to religious reformist attempts to revise the traditional Islam that was well-established both in court and on the street.

Iranian critics’ accounts of this transformation have resulted in different theories of the origins of modernity and varying perceptions of the extent to which Iran’s cultural renovation is indebted to foreign originals. Nevertheless, in all of these studies, the status of the foreign has been conceived solely as a source of influence, inspiration, and imitation. These studies question the genealogy of the new (naw, as it is called in Persian) in Iranian culture with respect to its endogenous or exogenous nature. Regardless of whether the process of Iranian modernity has

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been parthenogenic or catalysed by the other, the question of the relation of Iranian modernity and the foreign can be reformulated: how modernity is perceived as otherness, how modernization suggests a culture's estrangement from its own norms and conventions. These pages examine how modern Iranian fiction conceptualizes cultural difference. Bringing together the novels of Sadeq Hedayat, Bahram Sadeqi, and Hushang Golshiri, we investigate how the concept of the foreign (*ajnabi*) has been refashioned by Iranian modernism. Along the way, we consider how Iranian writers have constructed their own modernity as a subjectivity haunted by encounters with the foreign.

Iranian literary modernism, we argue, bears the marks of a traumatic encounter with an internalized other. On our account, the hauntedness of Iranian modernity is manifested in three notable works of modernist Iranian fiction, Sadeq Hedayat's *Blind Owl* (*Buf-e kur*, 1937), Bahram Sadeqi's *Heavenly Kingdom* (*Malakut*, 1961) and Hushang Golshiri's *Prince Ehtejab* (*Shāzdeh Ehtejāb*, 1968), each of which develops a different modality of the uncanny.<sup>1</sup> Before turning to these three works, we consider the concept of the foreign in Iranian cultural history. First, we look at its origins in Islamic law. Next, we consider its association with European imperialist aggression in poetry composed under the Qajars (1785-1925) and the Pahlavis (1925-1979). We then outline the three modalities of the uncanny developed by Hedayat, Sadeqi, and Golshiri, respectively: psychic, existential, and historical. Ultimately, we show how Iranian literary modernism turns the concept of the other into an *unheimliche* condition in the Freudian sense, thereby generating an identity crisis that makes the foreign other indistinguishable from the Iranian self. In this way, the protagonists of modern Iranian fiction refract the self-other dialectic that has also shaped European modernism through the frame of Iran's distinctive encounter with imperial rule.

### Hauntology and Trauma Theory

The concept of trauma expresses well Iranian modernity's bifurcated self. The relevance of trauma to the study of literature and culture has been increasingly recognized since the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> The language of trauma has revealed an affinity with literary language, and literary texts have helped to overcome personal and psychic wounds. Literary texts have also served as media whereby new traumatic disorders are revealed. Instead of taking a philosophical approach to trauma (analyzing trauma as a challenge to representation), or an epistemological approach (seeing traumatic knowledge as inherently contradictory), or a historical approach (evoking traumatic memory in its relation to testimony and witnessing), we understand trauma as a condition of ontological indecision.<sup>3</sup> This indecision occurs on two planes, first, the uncanniness of the traumatized subject and second, in the ambivalence of the traumatic memory that is paradoxically manifested in the effort to exclude, efface, and forget.

The term trauma itself evokes the ambiguity between inside and outside, psyche and soma. The Greek tráyma originally indicated a physical wound. Herodotus employed the term figuratively and in the context of war, to denote the "damage" incurred by ships from a "heavy blow."<sup>4</sup> The word is related to the Greek verbs titroskein (to wound) and tetrainein (to pierce).<sup>5</sup> "Trauma" appeared in the English language in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century in a medical context to denote "a Wound from an external Cause."<sup>6</sup> It retained this medical meaning until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when its meaning migrated into the psychic realm.<sup>7</sup> More significant for the study of Iranian modernism, however, is the ambiguity the concept retains in its oscillations between selfhood and otherness, tradition and the foreign. Modernism has been inextricably tied to traumatic shock in recent scholarship.<sup>8</sup> The culture shock paradigm explains modernism as an

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“epistemic trauma” that complicates all relations to “traditional conventions of social behavior, aesthetic representation, and scientific verification.”<sup>9</sup> We expand here on the relation of modernism and trauma in two ways: first, by drawing on the canonical texts of Iranian modernism; second, by articulating the traumatic rupture with tradition in terms other than nostalgia and loss, as is typical of the field of modernist studies.<sup>10</sup> The nostalgic paradigm accounts for the modern tendency to mourn tradition as a lost territory under the influence of foreign social and aesthetic values. Yet, observing the tensions of tradition and modernity in an Iranian context complicates relations with the past and with tradition: tradition itself becomes the foreign, that is, incomprehensible and unjustifiable. Tradition is summoned in the modern subject’s cultural memory only to be forgotten.

In Studies on Hysteria (1893-1895), Freud and Breuer develop a metaphorical understanding of the foreign in order to account for the impact of traumatic experience on the psyche. Here, the memory of trauma “acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work.”<sup>11</sup> This account of trauma illuminates Iranian modernity, evoking an unassimilated foreign body that possesses someone intermittently, causing great disruption. Apart from the ambiguity of psyche and soma, between inside and outside, implied in the term “trauma,” a traumatic memory hovers between presence and absence. The true crisis of the traumatized subject originates in the fact that it is haunted by a memory that it tries to forget. The foreign is incorporated into the subject’s mental landscape in the form of a memory that the self attempts to exclude, suppress, or forget, generating tension through a negative presence that works towards its own obliteration. Transposed to the domain of law, traumatic memory is comparable to the state of exception, which in Agamben’s view is “neither external nor internal to the juridical order” but rather “a threshold, or a zone of

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indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other.”<sup>12</sup> The state of exception is further comparable to the political concept of capitulation, whereby the sovereign state extends its domestic rule beyond its borders, and which in the case of Qajar Iran greatly contributed to the unrest that led to the Constitutional Revolution.

A theory of trauma is thus analogous to a theory of the foreign. Instead of demarcating a clear border between self and other, domestic and foreign, the foreigner penetrates the self and appears to be incorporated within it. Both endogenic and exogenic theories of Iranian modernity account for this involvement with the other.<sup>13</sup> Negative reactions to the imposition of an exogenous modernity within Iranian culture have been expressed in the “return to one’s self [bāzgasht beh khishtan]” theory familiar to readers of the Muslim thinker ‘Ali Shari‘ati (d. 1977). In a lecture titled “Selfless Humanity” (c.1969), Shari‘ati interprets alienation (az khod bigānegi) as demonization (jen-zadegi) and defines it as a disease whereby “people do not feel themselves as they are in truth but find and recognize the demon within themselves.”<sup>14</sup> According to this theory, under the pressure of a superficial modernity derivative of European models, the alienated, third world subject is separated from their traditional identity. Ironically, Shari‘ati appropriated European sources for his theory: on the one hand, alienation, in the Hegelian sense, generating internal tensions that are dialectically experienced in the thesis as the antithesis, and on the other hand, Marx’s theory of the laborer’s estrangement from their labor and production.

In his engagement with Marx, Jacques Derrida assigned to the process of alienation under capitalism the term “hauntology.” The hauntology at stake in Derrida is manifested in a spectralization in which “the commodity haunts the thing.”<sup>15</sup> As Derrida describes, “persons are personified by letting themselves be haunted by the very effect of objective haunting, so to

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speak, that they produce by inhabiting the thing. Persons (guardians or possessors of the thing) are haunted in return, and constitutively, by the haunting they produce in the thing by lodging there their speech and their will like inhabitants” (198). The specter exerts an impact on time: it disrupts the present, making it “untimely” and producing a time “out of joint.” For the haunted, the self is experienced as divided and time is torn apart, as with the trauma victim tormented by the disruption of the past into the present and its subsequent contamination. “To haunt does not mean to be present,” Derrida writes, “and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept. Of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time. That is what we would be calling here a hauntology. Ontology opposes it only in a movement of exorcism. Ontology is a conjuration” (202). Approaching Iranian modernity through such haunting enables us to experience anew its narratives of possession and dispossession.

### Normalizing the Outsider in Islamic Law

How did ajnabi come to be associated with Europe in Iranian modernity? In the Persian lexicon, ajnabi is defined as “bigāneh,” “gharib [alien].” Correlated to power and order, the term also refers to a rebel who “does not take orders [nā-farmān].”<sup>16</sup> In Islamic law, ajnabi signifies someone “who is not bound to an oath, [who is] non-committed.” Legal scholar Khaled Abou El Fadl proposes three related definitions for the term. For El Fadl, ajnabi can signify either “a man who cannot serve as the legal guardian of a woman,” “a marriageable person, according to Islamic law,” or “any man to which the woman could potentially marry.”<sup>17</sup> Ajnabi is thus a defining term of Islamic legal xenology, demarcating a clear border between what is considered intimate (belonging to oneself) and what is not. In its feminine form, ajnabiyya, “foreign” refers to a woman who one can marry. The permission to marry a foreign woman is based on the

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principle that she does not belong to the circle of one's immediate family to which marriage is forbidden, known as mahārem. In the context of religious segregation, ajnabi is also used to denote "non-native" and "non-believer."

In Islamic jurisprudence, ajnabi is a relational term. Islamic family law is structured around a distinction between inside and outside. The law of veiling (hejāb), for instance, requires women to cover themselves in front of a foreigner (ajnabi); they are not required to do so in front of male relatives in her immediate family (mahram). Islamic law distinguishes immediate family from non-immediate (nā-mahram) and draws a clear border between inside and outside, domestic and public. Not only is a woman obliged to veil in public (biruni, the domain of ajnabi); she must also cover herself in the interior domestic space (andaruni) before a man who is not a member of her immediate family.<sup>18</sup>

While it is up to the woman to decide whether to veil or unveil in front of her close family members (Quran 33:55 and 24:31), the expectation is that she will unveil, particularly in front of her husband. Hence, the realm of mahram and the state of exception it implies is inverted by the law of marriage: the woman is allowed to marry only a man who is ajnabi. Marriage with close relatives is forbidden (harām). Another example in Islamic law that clarifies the relation of ajnabi to the state of exception is the crime of passion, referred to in Persian as the law of "murder in bed [qatl dar ferāsh]." According to this principle, a man who finds his wife making love with an ajnabi man and then kills the lovers in rage is exempt from punishment. As the right to sexual intercourse exclusively belongs to the husband, the woman and the foreigner are deemed worthy of murder because they have disrespected the exceptional powers accruing to the husband.

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This legal sense of the word ajnabi is re-iterated in classical Persian literature. The word ajnabi is used in premodern Persian literature in the extended sense of otherness as clearly distinct from the individual self. In Nasrallah Munshi's Kalila va Demna (c. 1144 CE),<sup>19</sup> an early and significant work of Persian literary prose, Dimna summons the word ajnabi in his defense in court to insist on the priority of the self to the other: "No one (zāt) has any right to me as I do to myself. How can I admit of something that I do not with regard to any other (ajāneb)?" (152) The foreigner is treated here as someone who does not enjoy the same rights as oneself. In a lyric poem (ghazal) with the refrain (radif) of āmikhteh ("mixed"), the poet Rumi (d. 1273) developed an erotic allegory that compares inebriation to breaking down the boundaries between the stranger (ajnabi) and the intimate (āshnā). "The beloved," he writes, "has made all drunk with his drunken eyes/ So drunk that the intimate [āshnā] is indistinguishable from the stranger [ajnabi],"<sup>20</sup> implying the abnormality of the state of indistinguishability between the stranger and the intimate.

The word ajnabi evokes segregation for Hafez (d. 1390) who related it to khalvat, a privacy that is exclusive to the poet's most trusted friends and immediate family.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Jami (d. 1492) used the word in the sense of "setting aside" in a poem advising readers to seek the Prophet's medicine, since it "will keep you away [ajnabi] from all sickness."<sup>22</sup> Vahshi Bafqi (d. 1583) used the word ajnabi in close relation to its legal signification as someone excluded and unprotected by law: "We are an exception [ajnabi] to the rule of the world."<sup>23</sup> Finally, a ghazal by Molla Mohsen Faiz Kashani (d. 1680) uses ajnabi as its refrain (radif). While masterfully unfolding the many meanings of ajnabi, Kashani elaborates a Sufi perspective on God as the only true mahram and of creation, including one's very self, as ajnabi: "My tongue wanted to talk of you but it kept silent, saying jealously that speech is foreign [ajnabi]."<sup>24</sup> In all of these examples,

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ajnabi is evoked in contexts that distinguish between what counts as self and what counts as other, denoting intolerance of the presence of another in an intimate relationship.

### Disrupting the Fabric of the Modern Iranian Self

Following Iran's extensive contact with European countries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ajnabi came to refer more commonly to European powers, as determined within a framework of national identity, shaped by concepts such as nation (mellat) and homeland (vatan). The foreignness of ajnabi in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was first and foremost political, and used to refer to the "non-Iranian" and "non-Muslim" who had to be rigidly separated from the Iranian Muslims, like friends from enemies. This meaning of ajnabi is found already in a statement made by the Qajar crown prince 'Abbas Mirza to Napoleon's ambassador, following the signing of the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) that marked the defeat of the Qajar empire by European powers and the acquisition of key parts of this empire by Russia. "I do not know what power you exert on us that has resulted in our weakness and your progress," 'Abbas Mirza declared, "You are masters in war, victory and the use of reason while we are immersed in ignorance and rarely take heed of the future. Are the population, fertility and prosperity of us easterners less than those of Europe? Does the sun shine on us sooner, and benefit our minds less than on yours? O ajnabi! Talk to me. Tell me how to awaken the Iranians."<sup>25</sup>

'Abbas Mirza's words mark the first stirrings of Iranian modernism. They anticipate the Constitutional era that saw the successful if temporary installation of a Parliamentary system of government within a monarchical governmental structure. However, these admiring remarks about European foreigners were gradually replaced by negative connotations, and the word ajnabi came to signify "enemy," "invader," and "intruder." Both nationalist and religious

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motives effected this shift in meaning, which was an implicit critique of the interventions of foreign powers in Iranian politics. From a nationalist perspective, the ajnabi was considered an alien who had illegally penetrated the motherland and did not respect the rules segregating the intimates from the rest of the world. From a religious perspective, the Constitutional era saw the implementation of religious regulations such as the “rule of obstruction [qā’eda-ye nafy-e sabil]” that required Muslims to obstruct unbelievers’ domination over them. An example of the application of this precept was the telegraph from members of the religious elite (‘olamā) to Ahmad Shah after the Russian invasion of Tabriz. The religious elite demanded that foreign armies (‘asāker-e ajāneb) be expelled and that foreign intervention be obstructed.<sup>26</sup>

Subsequent to this politico-religious shift in meaning, ajnabi became equated with the European foreigner in the political poetry of the Constitutional era. In this meaning, ajnabi signifies an enemy and demarcates the border separating the patriot from the traitor. The poet Bahar (d. 1951) further probes these divisions in “The Book of Baba Shamal”: “if it is evil to defend friends, how can defending ajnabi be conceived?”<sup>27</sup> In one of Bahar’s poems, “Ecstasy [Hayajān-e ruh],” composed in prison on the occasion of the 1921 coup that led to the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty, foreigners (ajnabi) enchant the defeated king who has forsaken his duties and abandoned the country in despair.<sup>28</sup> In “To a member of parliament,” Bahar criticizes a member of parliament for seeking support from foreigners.<sup>29</sup> Recalibrated for nationalist purposes during the reformist and revolutionary constitutional movements, ajnabi denoted antagonism toward Europeans and attachment to the homeland (vatan). The religious and political usages of the word converge when Bahar responds to criticisms of Iran by a British newspaper, Near East: “this barefoot homeland [vatan] lost its head the day the bareheaded

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foreigner [ajnabi] gained a foothold here” (1107). Bahar’s use of ajnabi in this pejorative sense extends beyond Europe to encompass all Iranians enamored of the West.

It is in such usages of the word and, in reference to the interventions in the Iranian political scene by imperialist powers, that ajnabi begins to connote a blurred distinction between friend and enemy, and a contamination of the domestic by the foreign. In a fragment (qet’ a) from 1929, Bahar asks: “How can I speak of imprisonment when all of life is a prison [habs] in a country where excellent and the miserly souls are equally contemptible? I enjoyed myself more in prison than I do now in company of these malicious people from Tehran. They are all hypocrites, tale-bearers, bandits and faithless; servants of foreigners [ajnabi], enemies of Iranians.”<sup>30</sup> These complaints reflect how, for Bahar, foreign infiltration has torn apart the fabric of Iranian culture. The limit that demarcated the outside from the inside within Islamic law has become irrevocably blurred.

In ballad (tasnif) no. 24 entitled “Bayāt-e Esfāhān” (1923), ‘Aref Qazvini laments that the palace of the mythical Iranian king Jamshid, who symbolizes Iranian sovereignty across the centuries, has “opened its door to the foreigner [ajnabi].”<sup>31</sup> In an ambivalent amorous-political composition (tasnif), he supplicates the sweet beloved (yār-e maqbul) who has been seduced by the ajnabi. In another composition, Bahar prays that the beloved’s locks of hair will not be raped by the other (18). While Bahar advocates full autonomy from the foreign, he cannot deny that “penetration” has already taken place: “Deceitful fraudulent foreigners (aghyār) invaded us and changed our minds and appearances.”<sup>32</sup> Farrokhi Yazdi’s five-hemistich poem (mokhamas) similarly expatiates on the “separation from the homeland and hatred toward foreigners with the refrain ajnabi ajnabi ast (a foreigner is a foreigner) in which he advises Iranian patriots to give up hope in the foreigner whose enmity does not end.”<sup>33</sup>

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Having offered a genealogy of Iranian modernity as generated by the encounter with the foreign, and at times under the aegis of imperialism, the remaining pages consider how three major modernist novels, by Hedayat, Sadeqi and Golshiri respectively, incorporate the foreign into their protagonists' bifurcated selves. In its classical usage, as we saw, ajnabi is a formal legal category, untroubled by ambiguity. In modernity, as the foreigner becomes a problem, the ajnabi comes to be perceived as an interruption, a disorder that interferes with the domestic order of things. What distinguishes the modernist notion of the foreign from its classical religious and political senses is the interiorized concept of "other" it puts into effect. This alienated self challenges and suspends domestic norms. By analyzing the characteristic features of this literary discourse, we can better see how Iranian modernism embodies what Gayatri Spivak has described as a "position without identity."<sup>34</sup> Iranian modernism's bifurcated self supplements the alleged transnationalism of global modernity with a "critical regionalism"<sup>35</sup> that reveals the differently inflected trajectories encompassed within the time-space of the modern.

#### The Psychic Uncanny: Blind Owl

The first of the three fictions discussed here is arguably the best-known work of modern Persian fiction. Blind Owl (Buf-e kur) is the magnum opus of Sadeq Hedayat (1903-1951). Educated in Tehran in Iran's first modern university, Dar al-Fonun, and at the missionary Collège Saint-Louis, Hedayat was among the students who were sent to study in Europe by the shah in 1925. He failed to obtain a degree due to his lack of interest in the engineering major to which he had been assigned and returned to Iran in 1930 to take up a career as a writer. Hedayat's short stories are foundational for modernist Persian prose. He also translated Franz Kafka and Anton Chekhov's fiction from French as well as Middle Persian texts from Pahlavi.

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Along with modern European literature and the Zoroastrian scriptures, Hedayat's modernism is influenced by his study of Iranian folklore and the pre-Islamic Pahlavi language. In 1934, his writing was banned from publication in Iran. He moved to Bombay, where he published Blind Owl in 1936 in fifty handwritten stenciled copies. Blind Owl was first published in Iran in 1941 in serialized form in Iran newspaper after Reza Shah's abdication. Although he committed suicide in Paris while still in his forties, Hedayat came to be known as one of the most original writers in twentieth century Iranian literature.

In Blind Owl, the foreigner is internalized to make a haunted self. The nameless first-person narrator makes a living by painting pen-case covers as he recounts his alienation and transformation into the other. He paints the same image on every case: a hunchbacked old man sitting under a cypress tree. In front of him across a stream, a beautiful young female, called the "ethereal woman," offers him a morning glory flower. A fateful encounter is narrated with the scene he produces on pen-cases which leads him to murder the woman in his bed, to cut her body into pieces, and bury her. All that remains of her for the man in the end is the painting he makes of her eyes when they gaze upon him for the first and the last time in his bed. The eyes are the same as those of the woman depicted on a vase he found when burying the murdered girl.

While the first part of the story makes the imaginary real, the second part reimagines reality through intermittent opium-induced hallucinations. In the second part, the narrator sets out to record the process that led to his transformation into an old man who is introduced into the text pejoratively, with the epithet "odds and ends." This part of the novel is suffused with hallucinations which recount the narrator's gradual transformation into a despised other. Among the story's darkest moments is the narrator's account of killing his wife. Referring to her as "the bitch [lakāteh]," he describes how he came to suspect her of cheating on him with the old man.

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This discovery is made when he disguises himself in the dark as the old man because he believes this to be the only way that he can make love to his wife. The story ends when the narrator awakens in a hallucination and sees the old man running away with a vase in his hands, leaving him drenched in blood and torn clothes, implicitly affirming his status as a haunted subject who disclaims any responsibility for the murder he committed.

The narrative reveals a traumatic dimension from the very outset by developing the central metaphor of wound. “There are wounds in life,” states the narrator, “that erode the soul like leprosy” (9). The narrative’s status as a trauma story is strengthened by the narrator’s attestation to its incommunicability (“these pains cannot be told to anyone,” 9) and by his desire for oblivion (“the only cure [...] is forgetfulness,” 9). The second episode of the story starts with forgetfulness as well. However, the very fact that the narrator both remembers and sets down his story negates any claim to the pain’s unsayability or to the possibility of forgetting it. While admitting that “forgetfulness is best” (47), the narrator decides to record and “put on paper the pains that have eaten away at me in the corner of this room like leprosy” (47).

The painting on the pen-case cover is the narrative’s primal scene, and it haunts the entire work. The narrator/painter is shown in the act of recording the primal scene of his traumatic encounter. The scene is familiar to every Iranian reader aware of the decorative miniature paintings that feature on pen cases. Known for their generic motifs and impersonal qualities, the images on such tableaus are grouped according to a fixed number of motifs rooted in Persian literary classics such as Ferdowsi’s *Shāhnāmeḥ* epic and the romances of Nezami Ganjevi. These include hunting grounds, battlefields, and the union of the lover and the beloved. Famous versions of such scenes were created by Hedayat’s contemporary, the Persian painter Hossein Behzad (1894-1968) (figures 1-3).



Figures 1, 2, 3. Examples of the stock scenes that served as inspiration for *Blind Owl* (by Hossein Behzad).

Among the most relevant stock motifs in the novel is the depiction of a young girl holding a jar of wine in front of an old man beneath a cypress tree (*sarv*), a symbol of everlasting youth (figure 3). Hedayat individualizes this generic scene, isolates the traumatically repetitious element of tradition, and transforms it into a singular event.

The internalization of the other in *Blind Owl* generates a foreignized temporality in the form of the narrative's disjointed time. The narrative transpires simultaneously in two different directions. First the narrator's time as he narrates his fantastic encounter with the ethereal woman that results in her murder (9-43), and second as he transcribes his more verisimilitudinous version of the same incidents, including his relationship with his wife, which also culminates in her murder (47-114). This second part is distinguished from the first in Hedayat's manuscript as it is entirely contained within quotation marks.<sup>36</sup> There is a brief transition between the first and second parts of the narrative (45-46) and also another one exactly in the end of the narrative (115-116). Both transitions are set in an intermediary twilight zone and both emphasize the movement from one state to another.

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This fissured temporality is welded not only by the twilight thresholds but also by ubiquitous traumatic repetitions that join the two levels of the narrative, repeating the same incident from one level in another dimension. The story can be divided into real and dream episodes, but these two planes mutually inflect each other. Moreover, these two temporal levels are indistinguishable as are the incidents suspended between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the real and the unreal, wakefulness and dream. The pressure of dualities also holds the reader in abeyance as the reader repeatedly feels that they have encountered the narrated events at a previous stage in the story. Readers experience this foreignized narrative time as déjà vu: they witness earlier versions of scenes they have already encountered as for example when the narrator discovers the similarity between the eyes he has copied from the ethereal woman's eyes and the visage on the antique vase he discovers during her burial.

This structural déjà vu can be observed in the characters, as well as in motifs and plot. The protagonist-narrator is multiplied into several others or shadows. The fissured identity is evoked in the narrator's early ramblings: "if I have decided to begin to write now, it is because I want to introduce myself to my shadow, the shadow crouched on the wall as if insatiably devouring everything I write" (10). The old man depicted on the pen-case cover is metamorphosed into the narrator's uncle, an old man he sees from his window, the narrator's image of his father, the narrator himself, the old coach driver and gravedigger, and his wife's "odds and ends." The narrator notices this otherness while viewing himself as an other: "anyone who has seen me yesterday has seen a broken ill young man who today is a hunchbacked old man with white hair, damaged eyes and torn lips. I'm afraid of looking out of my room window, of looking at myself in the mirror. Everywhere I see my doubled shadows" (48). When he looks into the mirror, he evokes an alienated self: "Now that I look into the mirror, I don't recognize

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myself. No, that previous ‘I’ is dead” (49). The ethereal woman too has a shadow in the persona of the “bitch” and recurs in the scene on the pen-case cover and the visage on the vase found after her burial. In fact, the narrator uses the first-person narrative voice to mediate across all his personas, to turn writing into a means of exorcism (“in order to exorcise this demon,” 45), and to discover foreign voices within (“my shadow forces me to speak; only it can know me.” 48).

An important consequence of turning “I” to “he/it” throughout Blind Owl is the introduction of a subject that lacks any sense of agency. By ascribing every activity to the other, the narrator evades all responsibility for the crimes he has committed. There is always a foreigner to be blamed. The passive narrator claims to have been born out of such a state of indistinguishability between the self and the foreign when he recounts the story of his birth. His father and uncle were twins and looked the same: “it was difficult to distinguish between them” (54). His uncle returns from India, falls in love with the narrator’s mother, and seduces her. The similarity in appearance enables him to escape identification and conviction. In order to determine who was guilty, they have to pass a test involving a snake. They are left alone in a dungeon with a giant snake; whomever who escapes alive will be deemed the mother’s husband. According to the narrator, his uncle passed the test: “terrified, my uncle leaves the room with whitened hair” (56). However, we cannot rely on the narrator’s account of his paternity nor on his uncle’s claim that he had “forgotten his previous life and did not recognize the child as he was afflicted by mental disorder due to the test” (57). From then on, the narrator admits, “he was but a ... stranger (bigāneh)” (57).

The narrator’s lack of agency is intensified as he continues: “I don’t know if my arm was in my control then. I imagined if I left my arm by itself, it moved automatically by an unknown impetus without being able to affect its movements” (66). The passage that follows describes a

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subject inhabited by an anonymous other that moves, thinks and talks for the narrator (66-67). The narrator's alienated self exonerates him from his inadvertent murder of his wife, who, as in many of world literature's classic misogynistic texts, is both idealized as ethereal and demonized as a bitch.<sup>37</sup> As Milani observes, "the ethereal girl, the only woman who excites the narrator's aesthetic admiration and desire...is a perpetually silent woman."<sup>38</sup> Thus, with Blind Owl, the internalized other, or, the alienated self symptomatizes a subject that, having discovered a foreign voice within itself, is unable to fully control its deeds and thoughts, and which therefore projects its agency onto the other.

The narrator declares this other to be inseparable from his life. He states: "It was as if this person had a role in my life...this shadow was my persona and was located in the limited circle of my existence," 84-85). He discovers the deepest alienation within himself as a foreigner's voice, and reflects: "I didn't recognize my own voice. Like an external voice, a laughter that was often wrapped in my throat, I heard it speak into my ear," 104). However, he is saved from torment by his ultimate metamorphosis into a foreigner for all seasons who is blamed on the indecision at the heart of Blind Owl, a founding text of modernist Persian narrative.

#### The Existential Uncanny: Heavenly Kingdom

Our second example is the best-known work of the late Iranian modernist Bahram Sadeqi (1937-1985). Born in Najafabad, Isfahan, Sadeqi was educated in the University of Tehran's School of Medicine. His short stories, which are collected in the only book published during his lifetime, The Trench and the Empty Canteens (Sangar va qomqomehā-ye khāli, 1970) offer the best satirical depictions of the emerging middle class in 1960s Iran. A member of Jong-e Esfahan, an influential modernist literary circle that lasted from 1965 to 1981, Sadeqi ceased

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writing during the last fifteen years of his life. He died of a heart attack in Tehran, at the same age Hedayat had been when he died, forty-eight.

Sadeqi's Heavenly Kingdom (Malakut, 1961) is, like Blind Owl, a story of sin and fall. Unlike Hedayat's protagonist who experiences alienation as a psychic reality, Sadeqi creates characters who feel estranged, in an existential sense, from received representations of life and death, and Manichean antagonisms of good and evil. However, like Blind Owl, Heavenly Kingdom is grounded in subjectivities that are permeated by alterity. The story, told in the third-person, transpires within a timespan stretching from midnight until dawn. After the unexpected possession of one of the four companions in a garden by a demon, a certain Dr. Hatam is located to perform the exorcism. The doctor has a patient upstairs, mysteriously named M.L., who has been hospitalized to remove his last remaining organ, his right hand. The dismembered man has a servant named Shaku who has been rendered mute so that he cannot disclose the crime he has witnessed: M.L.'s murder of his son who had been seduced by a stranger. As the reader learns, the stranger is in fact the same Hatam, who mysteriously injects everyone everywhere with a deadly poison which he falsely claims gives more vigor and life.

The day before his departure, Hatam mutilates his young wife after learning that she has been in a relationship with the mute servant. After an epiphany, M.L. decides to halt the amputation of his last limb. Two of the garden companions receive the miraculous injection, and the possessed companion is diagnosed as being on the brink of death from cancer. Convinced that it will allow him to live, he is also persuaded by the doctor to receive the injection. The story ends when the friends learn from the doctor that they are going to die and that Hatam is Satan and that M.L. is God.

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Compared with Blind Owl, Heavenly Kingdom is more explicitly obsessed with possession by the other and the haunted condition. At the outset, the narrator declares: “At eleven p.m., Wednesday night the other week, a genie haunted Mr. Mavadat” (337). With this abrupt beginning, Sadeqi immerses the reader in the liminal state between believing and unbelieving. Similarly to the opening of Kafka’s The Metamorphosis (1915), Heavenly Kingdom challenges the way the reader comes to terms with the anti-realist element in the story. However, as will be seen, the estrangement effect of the opening scene foreshadows the main tension of the story, between existential doubt and transtemporal certainty. In an interview in 1966, Sadeqi described “the state in which I and my characters oscillate between believing and unbelieving.”<sup>39</sup> Compared to Hedayat’s psychological account of haunting, Sadeqi’s existential narrative recounts the traumatic repetition of predestined existential roles to fulfill predestined meanings for life and death. The uncanny in Heavenly Kingdom blurs the boundaries between acting as oneself and playing the roles dictated through traditional values. Whereas this severing of old beliefs and habits is integral to the work’s modernity, Sadeqi’s work exposes the peculiarity of Iranian literary modernism by turning it into a xenological problem. In Sadeqi’s configuration, self becomes all the more assimilated to other in its hostility to what it finds foreign to itself. Thus, Heavenly Kingdom becomes an existential phantasmagoria in which men fall into the trap of death as they escape it, healers disseminate sickness and death when they promise new life, and people kill their loved ones with their hands in fear of death taking them away.

The first appearance of the foreign agent in this narrative is a jinn, a figure familiar to the Iranian folk tradition, that entered European culture in the form of stories about Aladdin and the Lamp from the Arabic story collection, One Thousand and One Nights.<sup>40</sup> In the Persian lexicon, jinn means “demon,” and is derived from an Arabic root that means “covering” or “the covered.”

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In this sense, it is closely related to Sadeqi's title, malakut, a term is used twice in the novel as a proper name, first for the wife of one of the garden companions and secondly for Hatam's first wife. The Iranian lexicographer Dehkhoda relates malakut to the notion of ghayb (the invisible) and introduces it as "the world's interiority [bāten]" as opposed to "the world's exteriority [zāher]."<sup>41</sup> The term Hatam uses for jinn, however, is French: corps étranger. He also translates it into Persian as "the foreign body [jesm-e khāreji]" (343).

This duality can be read in conjunction with the disjointed narrative temporality witnessed above in connection with the Blind Owl. The allegorical narrative of Heavenly Kingdom transpires simultaneously on two different levels. First, a modern one comprising the story of the garden companions, which spans sunset to sunrise; second, a concealed allegory representing the conflict between God and Satan that transpires outside of time. The disjointed temporality identified earlier in connection with Blind Owl is reproduced in the narrative structure of Sadeqi's work. While the story's plot transpires on a familiar plane, a sense of suspicion constantly defamiliarizes the mundane and translates it into an ambivalence to the foreign. Such defamiliarization is suggested at the outset of Heavenly Kingdom, through a narrative style that mixes the surreal with the real: "Mr. Mavadat and his friends were feasting on the grass of a garden on that joyful moonlit night. The full moon was shining, casting a poetic hue on everything and creating hallucinatory shadows, illuminating the brooks, as if giving birth to eternity" (337).

The dual temporality of the allegorical narrative is also foreshadowed by Hatam's hybridity, superficially through his external appearance, and internally in terms of his soul. He has a young vigorous body, "but his head and neck ... [are] the oldest and the most worn out head and neck one might have seen in the world" (341). Two concurrent temporalities, old and

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new, mark Hatam's estranged body, which indexes the duality of his soul. "I have always wondered whether the duality I have always felt in my life has been the result of this condition," he states, "Part of my body calls me to life and another part to death...this duality in my soul is deadlier and more acute" (350). Hatam also admits that he always carries his poisoned young wife, his "invisible faithful companion," Malakut, within himself. For Hatam, this duality has philosophical implications, which he evokes through an oblique reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet: "My problem is believing and not believing, not "to be" and "not to be" ... I wander like iron filings between these two strong and opposite poles" (351).<sup>42</sup>

Like Blind Owl, the narrative itself passes in a double temporality. Some chapters are narrated in third-person, while others shift to M.L.'s diaries. Resembling a caricature of the anatomical model in Hatam's office, M.L. writes memoirs with only a right hand remaining to him. In stark contrast with his memoir writing, M.L. dreams of oblivion, like the protagonist in Blind Owl. "In this strange room where Hatam has hospitalized me," he states, "I look as always and more than ever for oblivion. Again, I want to forget and feel nothing (but O, oblivion, I know you'll never arrive because you do not exist and I know that nothing can be forgotten)" (359). M.L. is haunted by the painful memory of killing his son with his own hands, though he blames Hatam, for this murder and for cutting his servant's tongue. He calls Hatam, "the one who speaks with my tongue and lips, with my tone and voice, who responds. Hatam, who mutilated my son and cut out [my servant] Shaku's tongue with my hands" (363).

M.L.'s voluntary oblivion has a structure similar to traumatic memory: both include and re-iterate what they want to forget. Hatam asks: "You say you must forget and that is why you are performing surgery on yourself. But why must you forget? Where does this obligation come from? Instead of obligation, this is a question of desire. I should say that you want to forget"

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(364). This voluntary oblivion occurs on two levels in Sadeqi's work. First, through M.L.'s note-taking. This is an ambivalent act because it is unclear how oblivion annuls itself in the act of note-taking, and why it is necessary to remove the servant's tongue and make him into a mute witness to crimes when M.L. commits all those crimes to writing himself. Second, by M.L.'s paradoxical act of inscribing oblivion onto his body, when he amputates his limbs one by one. In this way, he turns his body into a palimpsest of missing parts to be remembered in their absence.

M.L. commits this self-erasure in order to take revenge on himself for the sin of filicide. M.L. finds his son estranged after his acquaintance with a mysterious philosopher-poet whom the reader later learns is Hatam himself. The son's transformation was first manifested in his physical appearance and later in his habits. He is described in terms that remind the reader of Hatam's corporeal duality, with a young body and an old man's head: "His fresh young hair was white with thick snow and on his eyebrows there appeared two crystalline strings" (370). The son's alienation from the father is most explicitly described in the moment of the murder, which is itself a dissimulated, alienated version of the Biblical and Quranic story of Abraham binding his son prior to sacrificing him: "My resolute and indecisive hand drew my sharp dagger. He was my son but he wasn't my son" (371). The murder scene becomes ever more uncanny through resonances with the Biblical narrative of Jesus's crucifixion. The son's lament "O father! Why you have forsaken me?" invokes this Christian Biblical narrative. This resonance is strengthened later in the story where Hatam reveals to the garden companions that he is Satan and M.L. is God. The lack of agency that justifies M.L. in projecting his desire onto Hatam is rooted in this metaphysical duplication of roles: In fact, M.L. commits filicide once as father, and once as God, while the latter justifies the former.

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Hatam discloses that he is himself possessed. He murders his wife twice: once as Satan and another time as himself after learning that she has been in a relationship with the mute servant. Allegorizing M.L. as God, Hatam as Satan, and the murdered son as Christ, the story foreignizes itself and opens up to yet other mystic interpretation. Allegory is the uncontrolled reenactment of what is predestined for a character. This makes the character always a surplus other to itself. Critics who read Heavenly Kingdom as an existential or political allegory affirm the foreignizing nature of allegory whereby the surface level enacts a deeper level of meaning.<sup>43</sup> This dynamic relates allegory to the duality of the Sufi categories of zāher and bāten, which, as noted above, resonates with the story's title, malakut. Whereas ghayb refers to the invisible realm, malakut refers to the interiority of all things heavenly and earthly (as in the Quran 6:65). Although these two realms appear to be in tension, they reflect different aspects of the same structure. To adapt Platonic metaphysics, what transpires on earth becomes but a shadow of the veiled heavenly sub-text.

The other in Heavenly Kingdom has an allegorical function. Although, as in Blind Owl, the other is devised to justify the subject's lack of agency, in a more fatalistic stance, any attempt in Sadeqi's existential phantasmagoria to exorcize the demon and begin a new life with agency and responsibility leads to death, the anonymity that devours all agency and, as Blanchot noted, leads the subject from the impossibility of "I die" to the passivity of "one dies."<sup>44</sup>

#### The Historical Uncanny: Prince Ehtejab

Having discussed psychic haunting in Hedayat and existential haunting in Sadeqi, which in both cases are occasioned by the presence of the other within the self, we now turn to historical haunting in Hushang Golshiri's Shāzdeh Ehtejab (1968), a text that estranges the

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protagonist's own past. One of the most influential members of the literary circle Jong-e Esfahan, Hushang Golshiri (1938-2000) was, like Sadeqi, born and educated in Isfahan. In his short stories and novels, Golshiri engages in groundbreaking experimentation with narrative techniques and innovations by grafting narrative strategies from classical Persian prose onto his modernist aesthetics. Golshiri's works during the 1960s offered a new challenge to the socialist realist current of modernist Persian fiction, that operated under the influence of Soviet writers, especially Gorky. His major works, including Prince Ehtejab (1968) and The Book of Jinns (1998), dissolve tradition with characters suspended between changing the world and keeping it as it has been given to them. Golshiri died from meningitis in Tehran after a dedicated life to teaching creative writing, editing literary magazines, and serving the Iranian Writers' Association.

Prince Ehtejab presents yet another tale of sin and fall. In his last day of life, the old dying Qajar Prince Ehtejab, the scion of a powerful but weak feudal family, is, along with his female servant Fakhri, among the last remaining remnants of the glorious Qajar past. Fakhri is forced to play the role of the prince's wife, Fakhr al-Nessa, who has recently died of tuberculosis. The prince's memories reveal a sterile relationship between himself and his aristocratic wife who recurrently teases the prince for his impotence and reminds him of the violence and torture that his ancestors relished. By replacing the lofty Fakhr al-Nessa with the plain Fakhri, the prince endeavors to replace his frustrated desire for the former with his aggression and contempt for his servant. The fluid narrative perspective moves from the prince to the servant, both of whom speak in the first-person, and also occasionally assumes the guise of an omniscient third-person narrator. The story ends with the reappearance of the old family

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servant who has the mission of announcing the death of the prince's relatives and, now, of Prince Ehtejab himself.

In Prince Ehtejab, the trace of the foreign is less psychic (as in *Hedayat*) or existential (as in *Sadeqi*) than it is historical. His own tradition and history come to be perceived as foreign. The prince is haunted by a domestic history replete with violence. He feels pressured by a dynastic gaze and desires purification from what the narrator calls "ancestral fever" (tab-e ajdādi). As the narrator reports: "He pressed his hot brow against his hands to feel the veins better; or to forget the judgmental gazes of his grandparents, parents and aunts, and even Fakhri al-Nessa" (7). The other is ubiquitous in Prince Ehtejab through his gaze. More than the simple fact of being under surveillance, his continuous assumption of that gaze constitutes his subjectivity. The ambivalent female figure in Blind Owl is reproduced in Prince Ehtejab with Fakhri al-Nessa and Fakhri in their relation to the prince. The haunted self is embodied in Fakhri who is obliged, under the prince's gaze, to play the role of his wife.

This doubling becomes symbolic, and indicative of a broader bifurcation within the text. Fakhri sees herself first in her own visage and second as Fakhri al-Nessa, looking at herself, Fakhri. When the narrative unfolds from the perspective of Fakhri al-Nessa, we read that "The prince did not turn. He was kissing Fakhri. He placed his hands around my waist, Fakhri's waist" (59). We then witness Fakhri viewing herself through Fakhri al-Nessa's eyes. The narrative optic moves between seeing oneself in the other's eyes and perceiving oneself under the pressure of a foreign gaze. The bifurcated self is made manifest as Fakhri's narrative optic oscillates between Fakhri-as-Fakhri and Fakhri-as-Fakhri-al-Nessa. The narrator states that "Fakhri and I, no, Fakhri-al-Nessa and I, two lonely women, from morning to night in this house with these walls" (66). The narrative shifts between three points of view: the third-person anonymous narrator, the

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prince's I, and Fakhri's I. This latter narrative optic becomes divided as she is forced to play the role of herself and that of Fakhr al-Nessa.

The prince is also concerned with how he appears in the eyes of others. He assumes the other's role, as for example when he tries to see himself among others from Fakhr al-Nessa's point of view. "What passed behind that smooth brow?" he asks. "How to sit in the place of those eyes and to look through those thick glasses at myself, at Fakhri, at the antiques, at the rows of books and at the mirror that reflects those two ever-deepening narrow lines on the brow?" (84). Immediately following this, the prince tries to assume the role of his "magnificent grandfathers" who tortured a convict under a sweetbrier tree (84-86). His grandfathers tortured convicts in order to "reach the depth of [their] flesh and skin and bones and veins and nerves" (86). In the world of grandparents, the outsider penetrates the domestic through a network of spies who generate written reports. The grandparent punishes the servant whom he discovers to be the prime minister's informant (81) and appoints an informant in the prison to spy on them.

Prince Ehtejab tells the story of the gradual erosion and alienation of tradition itself. The prince's estrangement from his ancestral roots is linked to the demise of his sovereignty.

Shocked that the prince lacks ancestral sovereignty (jabarut-e ajdādi), Fakhr al-Nessa sarcastically hypothesizes that he may be the son of the gardener rather than of the prince (11). In Prince Ehtejab, the guardians of tradition respond to the foreigner's interruption of domestic norms by torturing their subjects. The Grand Prince's murder of a farmer who enters the royal castle and his stepbrother's marriage to another peasant woman (20-21) testifies to an ominous breakdown in the demarcation of outside and inside, foreigner and native. Equally, the torture of the servant Fakhri illustrates the clear demarcation of interior and exterior in the ancestral

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tradition, the violation of which unleashes a cycle of trauma-inducing violence. With the prince's simulated affair with Fakhri, the traditional delineation falls apart.

In contrast to the texts of Hedayat and Sadeqi, the other in Prince Ehtejab emerges from a domestic space. Tradition itself becomes the origin of the subject's estrangements. A past history of violence haunts the prince who feels unable to overcome the impotence that he has inherited from his revered tradition. In the prince's eyes, the gazes in old portraits enliven the dead past. Old images resound in his memory of his wife Fakhr al-nessa reading ancestral history books. Negative traces of the traumatic past can be seen in the prince burning ancestral histories and losing his inheritance while gambling. His insistence on burying and annihilating the past has a reverse effect. Instead of getting rid of his past, the prince becomes immersed in the interiority of his memory.

The foreign haunts the three novels discussed in this article in different modalities: as a psychic uncanny, an existential uncanny, and through the uncanny passage of history itself. At the same time, each text perceives in writing a means of exorcism and a form of surreptitious necromancy. Each text modernizes the classical Persian rhetorical device of invocation (estemdād), generally understood to be a variation on the rhetorical device eltefāt (apostrophe, literally "looking back" or "turning back"), to describe invocations directed at the muse or another inspiring force.<sup>45</sup> When this rhetorical device is deployed, divine inspiration serves as an otherworldly muse that is exterior to the self. The classical poet requires divine possession in order to generate poetry. By contrast, modernists such as Hedayat, Sadeqi, and Golshiri conceive of writing as a secular exorcism. Blind Owl transposes the confrontation with the demon to a psychic plane. Heavenly Kingdom externalizes this dynamic onto an existential plane. Prince Ehtejab locates this confrontation to the realm of history.

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All three novels are misogynistic in their language and plotlines. The narrator in Blind Owl, Hatam in Heavenly Kingdom, and the Prince in Prince Ehtejab all relate to women as to forces that are both loved and despised, internalized and expelled. The negative presence of women in these modernist novels is comparable to the undecidable ontology of the traumatic memory for the haunted subject: it is present only to be eliminated. In all three novels, women emerge with a double face, both asiri (ethereal) and lakāteh (whore), both faithful and traitor, both dignified and humiliated. In these works, it is through a woman that the protagonist's possession by the other is made possible and the male subject's supremacy is undermined. As in Islamic law and the nationalist paradigm discussed above, which strictly demarcated the space of the ajnabi in relation to a feminine figure—the wife in the case of Islamic law and the motherland in the case of nationalism—the male haunted subject in these three fictional works perceives women as potential threats to his masculine, Muslim, and Iranian identity due to her capacity for entering into liaison with an ajnabi.

Generated by convergent strains of Iranian modernism's xenological uncanny, these works by Hedayat, Sadeqi, and Golshiri reveal a non-European literary modernism being constituted through the lens of the foreign. At first glance, the fiction writers we have discussed here appear to assimilate and adopt the core themes of European modernism, from Dostoevsky's Double (1866) to Kafka's Metamorphosis (1915).<sup>46</sup> Yet the material foundations for this conceptual transformation differ from those that informed European modernism. In the act of deconstructing the border between the familiar and the foreign, the Iranian modernist novel exposes the other at the heart of the self. The novels we have discussed here are dialogic in the Bakhtinian sense (hence closely aligned with their European counterparts). Yet a different historical trajectory has produced their uncanny metaphysics (causing divergence from European

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literary norms). As a result of its diverse intellectual lineages, the xenology of Iranian modernism exemplified by such works is comprised of haunted, traumatized subjects whose selves are tethered to psychic, historical, existential forces beyond their control.

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<sup>1</sup> Sadeq Hedayat, Buf-e kur (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1971; first published in Bombay, 1937). Bahram Sadeqi, "Malakut," in Sangar va qomqomehā-ye khāli (Tehran: Zaman, 1961), 335-425, originally published in Ketāb-e hafteh, vol.12 (Tehran: Kayhan, 1961), 7-100. Hushang Golshiri, Shāzdeh Ehtejāb (Tehran: Zaman, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> For various approaches to the uses of the concept of trauma in literary studies, see Roger Kurtz (ed.), Trauma and Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> See, respectively, Cathy Caruth, Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), Geoffrey Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," New Literary History 26.3 (1995): 537-563, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, Histories. Tr. A. D. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), Book VI, Chapter 16.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Partridge, A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English (Abingdon: Routledge, 1958), 4195.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Blankaart, A physical dictionary; in which, all the terms relating either to anatomy, chirurgery, pharmacy, or chymistry, are very accurately explain'd (London, 1684), 284.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of this migration of 'trauma' into the psychic realm, see Laura Marcus, Dreams of Modernity: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Trauma (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 43-44

<sup>8</sup> For modernity as "wound culture," see Lark Seltzer, "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere," October 80 (1997): 3-26. Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner regard trauma as constitutive of modernity in Traumatic Past: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870-1930 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Vargish, "Modernism," in Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 586.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance, Madelyn Detloff, *The Persistence of Modernism: Loss and Mourning in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Jan Parker and Timothy Matthews (eds.), *Tradition, Translation, Trauma: The Classic and the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*. Tr. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1957), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*. Trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 23.

<sup>13</sup> While we focus here on exogenic theories of Iranian modernity, another important strand of Iranian criticism offers an endogenic account. For example, Reza Barahani argues that “World literature, and therefore Iranian literature, has been influenced by European literature (adabiyāt-e gharb), but this influence has not been mechanical” (Barahani, *Kimiyā va khāk* [Tehran: Morq-e Amin Publishing House, 1985], 60).

<sup>14</sup> ‘Ali Shari‘ati, *Ensān-e bikhod* (Tehran: Qalam, 1998). See also his *Bāzgasht beh khishtan* (Tehran: n.p, 1982).

<sup>15</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, The Work of Mourning and the New International*. Tr. Peggy Kamuf (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 189.

<sup>16</sup> These and the next meanings are enumerated in ‘Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, “ajnabi,” in *Loghat-nāmeḥ, vol. 1*, eds. Mohammad Mo‘in and Ja‘far Shahidi (Tehran: Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1998), 1064.

<sup>17</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 299.

<sup>18</sup> While these categories pertain to Islamic law generally, the distinction between the domestic space (andaruni) and the exterior space (biruni) is specific to Iranian culture. See Shireen Mahdavi, “Women, Shi‘ism and Cuisine in Iran,” in *Women, Religion and Culture in Iran*, eds. Sarah Ansari and Vanessa Martin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 21-22.

<sup>19</sup> Nasrallah Munshi, *Tarjoma-ye Kalila va Demna*, ed. Mojtaba Minovi (Tehran: Jami, 2007). Believed to have originated in India, the Kalila and Demna story circulated across the Islamic world and beyond, and made its way into the *One Thousand and One Nights*. For these tales’ Persian literary trajectory, see Christine van Ruymbeke, *Kashefi’s Anvar-e Sohayli: Rewriting Kalila wa-Dimna in Timurid Herat* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Rumi, *Kolliyāt-e Shams*, ed. Badi‘ al-zaman Furuzanfar (Tehran: Hermes, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> *Divān-e Hāfez*, ed. Parviz Natel Khanlari (Tehran: Kharazmi, 1983), 1068.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami, *Masnavi-ye haft ovrang*. Ed. Jabelqa dad Alishah, Asqar Janfada, Zaher Ahrari, and Hosein Ahmad Tarbiat (Tehran: Miras Maktub, 2008), 526.

- <sup>23</sup> Divān-e kām-e Vahshi Bāfqī. Ed. Hosein Nakha'ī (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1958), 130.
- <sup>24</sup> Divān-e Faiz Kāshāni. Ed. Mostafa Fayzi (Qom: Sazman owqaf va omur khayriya, 1992), 334.
- <sup>25</sup> P. Jaubert, Mosāferat dar Irān va Armanestān. Trans. 'Ali Qoli E'temad Muqaddam (Tehran: Bonyad-e farhang-e Iran, 1968), 137.
- <sup>26</sup> Muhammad Turkaman, Asnādi darbāreh-ye hujum-e Rus va Engelis beh Irān (Tehran: Vezarat-e omur-e kharejeh, 1991), 181.
- <sup>27</sup> Muhammad Taqi Bahar, Divān-e ash'ār-e Malek al-sho'arā Bahār (Tehran: Negah, 2008[1965]), 891.
- <sup>28</sup> Bahar, Divān, 281.
- <sup>29</sup> Bahar, Divān, vol.2, 1143.
- <sup>30</sup> Bahar, "Javāb beh qet'a-ye Mahmud Farrokh," Divān, 1104.
- <sup>31</sup> Divān-e Mirzā Abu al-qāsem 'Āref Qazvini (Berlin: Mashriqi, 1924), 58.
- <sup>32</sup> Bahar, Divān, 1107.
- <sup>33</sup> Divān-e Farokhi Yazdi. Ed. Hosein Makki (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1979), 195.
- <sup>34</sup> Gayatri Spivak, Other Asias (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 239-256
- <sup>35</sup> Spivak, Other Asias (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 113, 127. Also see Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983).
- <sup>36</sup> No published edition of *Blind Owl* reproduces this feature of the narrative. This omission is discussed in Mahmud Nikbakht, Butiqā-ye buf-e kur: ravāyat-shenāsi-ye ravān-gosikhtegi dar teknik-e buf-e kur (Tehran: Goman, 2016), 15-36.
- <sup>37</sup> For other dualistic representations of women in world literature, see Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov (New York: The Lowell Press, 1922 [1879]), 107-131, and Estela V. Welldon, Mother, Madonna, Whore: The Idealization and Denigration of Motherhood (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).
- <sup>38</sup> Farzaneh Milani, Veils and Words: The Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 50.
- <sup>39</sup> "Interview with Ayandegan Newspaper," in Muhammad-Reza Aslani, Bahrām Sādeqi: bāzmāndehā-ye gharibi āshnā (Tehran: Nilufar, 2005), 563.

<sup>40</sup> See E. Gaál, “Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 27.3 (1973): 291-300.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, “ghayb,” in *Loghat-nāmeḥ*, vol. 11, 16889.

<sup>42</sup> Dr. Hatam’s reference to Hamlet has an intertext in a poem entitled “Hamlet” by the Iranian poet Ahmed Shamlu (1925-2000) in which the poet declares that to be or not be is *not* the question; rather it is only a temptation (*vasvaseh*). See Ahmad Shamlu, *Majmu‘eh āsār*, vol.1. *She‘rhā* (Tehran: Negah, 2002), 661.

<sup>43</sup> See for instance Mohammad Taqi Ghiasi, *Ta‘vil-e malakut: qesseh-ye siyāsi-ejtemā‘i* (Tehran: Nilufar, 2007).

<sup>44</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*. Tr. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 241.

<sup>45</sup> See Sima Dad, *Farhang-e estelāhāt-e adabi* [Glossary of Literary Terms] (Tehran: Morvarid, 1992), 26 and 34, and Sabzian-Kazzazi, *Farhang-e nazariyeh va naqd-e adabi* (Tehran: Morvarid, 2009). According to the 11<sup>th</sup> century rhetorician Muhammad ibn Umar al-Raduyani (*Tarjomān al-balāgha*, ed. Ahmed Ateş [Tehran: Asatir, 1983], 79-80), *eltefāt* occurs when the speaker shifts from direct (present) address (*mokhātaba*) to indirect (absent) address (*moghāyaba*).

<sup>46</sup> For the modalities of doubling and hauntedness in these two writers, see Robert Rogers, *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).