

Semiotic Analysis of the Image in *the Blind Owl* of Sadeq Hedayat

Marzieh Baliqi^{1*}, Arezou Abdi²

1. Assistant Professor of French Language and Literature, Tabriz University, Tabriz, Iran.

2. Ph.D. Candidate in French Language and Literature, Tabriz University.

Received: 08/07/2017

Accepted: 24/12/2017

The presence of the images in different layers of *The Blind Owl* of Sadeq Hedayat is one of the characteristics of this novel that makes its nonverbal analysis possible. The images with their specific characteristics are at the service of development of the story and its multi-layered signification. Analysis of these images to achieve the hidden meaning behind them, requires a scientific method to explain the connotation of the images. It seems that the visual semiotics is a practical method to decode the images of *The Blind Owl*. Using the visual semiotics, we analyze the images of this novel, relying on the relationship between signifier and signified and utilizing the mechanisms which consider the images like a discourse. Considering the image as a discourse is an important innovation in this research.

The Blind Owl narrates the story of an unnamed painter, the narrator, who sees the nightmares originating from a terrible crime. The narrator recounts, on the night of the crime, the story of what happened to him, and tries to recall everything and to write them. What distinguishes *The Blind Owl* from other literary works, is the coincidence of the narration and the images. Sometimes, the author draws and sometimes, he describes some paintings in the text. In fact, *The Blind Owl* is a combination of written and visual discourses, but the visual indications are more meaningful than the written indications. In this research, the main issue is to examine how the visual discourse is created in *The Blind Owl*, and then we consider how the image is promoted to the position of a discourse. Considering the image as a discourse is to find the answer to this fundamental question: how verbal discourse interacts with visual discourse in this work? Assuming that the visual discourse is at the service of the written discourse, the goal of this study is to analyze the metalinguistic aspects and then connoted and secret meaning of the images. In order to achieve this goal, our analysis is based on a semiotic/semantic approach. According to the linguistic theory of Roman Jakobson, the image have three levels of meaning: the apparent meaning, the implicit meaning and the codes, all three levels analyzed in detail in this study.

The results of semiotic/semantic analysis indicate that the images turns into a dominant discourse in *The Blind Owl*. The visual discourse in this novel work as a

* Corresponding Author: E-mail:balighi@tabrizu.ac.ir

mirror that represent the narrator mental chaos. The visual and verbal discourse in collusion with each other, reflects the root of the tragedy in the narrator's life. In addition to the implicit meaning of the two discourses in question, in deeper layers, the codes are also considerable to find the secret meaning to this novel. These codes that appear in two visual and verbal discourses, reflect the relationship between the personal world of the narrator and the world of myth.

Keywords: *The Blind Owl*, Visual semiotics, Visual discourse, Connotation, Code.