

# The Surrealist Dialogue Between Franz Kafka and Sadegh Hedayat: A Comparative Reading of “A Country Doctor” and “Three Drops of Blood”

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This paper aims at presenting an analytical reading of two short stories—Franz Kafka’s “A Country Doctor” and Sadegh Hedayat’s “Three Drops of Blood.” It also concentrates on the close affinities between these two narratives. Not only that Hedayat has been influenced by Kafka, both writers show great impact of Freud on their work of art. Thus the focus of attention has been on Freudian psychoanalysis. To justify why the stories are told in the form of dreams, a secondary analytical reading has been carried out by devoting emphasis to the school of surrealism and its stress on the unconscious. Given these analytical frameworks, the paper emphasizes on two major characters/narrators and the way they deal unsuccessfully with their surroundings, incidents, and other characters so as to create a balance between the internal conflicting forces of their personality. The paper concludes that both narratives follow roughly the same pattern of thought and ideology.

## Introduction

Kafka’s (1993) “A Country Doctor,” published in 1917, and Hedayat’s (2008) “Three Drops of Blood,” published in 1932, are among those narratives that lead the reader into a convoluted maze of symbols and significations which require an in-depth background of knowledge in a variety of fields. However, the two stories have numerous elements in common that force one to ponder if they follow the same pattern of thought and to try to resolve all the abstruseness through a specific theoretical/ideological design. Thus, the

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aim of this paper is to provide the readers with a psychoanalytic reading of these two stories so as to shed light on their hidden corners, such dark spots that disclose the hidden aspects of the human mentality.

The scope of the paper extends to world literature since it analyzes and then compares and contrasts one Austrian and one Iranian story. As Burt (2001, 224) states, it was in 1883 that Kafka was born and then raised in a Jewish middle-class household in Prague, and later he studied law. According to Katouzian (1991, 17), Hedayat was born in Tehran into a prosperous family in 1903. In 1926, he was sent to Europe to continue his academic studies; nevertheless, it is not clear what he studied there. Based on one account, he started studying dentistry, then turned to engineering, and finally gave up his studies before returning home (Katouzian 1991, 32).

Recent trends in literature have led to a proliferation of studies that focus on comparative literature and tend to analyze works of literature put forth by writers of divergent nationalities. Nonetheless, there seems to be a gap in this respect concerning Iranian literature, particularly those that have been under the influence of towering figures of world literature. Hence, this paper tries to fill the academic gap regarding the work of the prominent Iranian author, Hedayat, who has been influenced by the Austrian writer, Kafka. As Rahimieh (2008, 129) claims, Hedayat's (Kafka 1977) "The Message of Kafka" [*Payām-e Kāfkā*] reveals that he practically had read Kafka's correspondence, works of fiction, and fragments. Consequently, this paper addresses Kafka's influence on Hedayat, focuses on this gap in comparative literature, and attempts to bring home to the readers the complexity of the authors' maze-like narratives.

On rigorous scrutiny, however, it becomes apparent that the complexity of the two stories can be solved in the light of Freudian psychology, concepts of psychoanalytic approach, and precepts of surrealism in literature. Considering the aforementioned conceptions, the two narratives follow the framework of dreams instead of the reality, since they both occur in the unconscious world and focus specifically on the desires and urges of the major characters. As Friedländer (2013, 119) claims, Kafka in his personal correspondence has compared writing to "a sleep deeper than that of death." He also talks of powers that are "almost inaccessible under normal conditions," powers that "shape themselves into literature" (Friedländer 2013, 118). Therefore, the significance of the unconscious and the realm of dreams are embedded in his works.

Freud's theory concerning the construction of the individual's psyche and its division into the conscious and the unconscious, and, in particular, the incorporation of the workings of the unconscious in the school of surrealism is the basic theoretical ground. Hall (1979, 54) maintains that Freud has further divided the psyche into the threefold id, ego, and superego, which sheds light on the deep layers of meaning in both narratives. Thus, first, the doubling of the storylines is discussed and then the triple construction of major characters is analyzed. Finally, the significance of dream-like quality of the stories is taken into account.

In this paper, the framework of analysis of the two short stories would be based on a psychoanalytic approach, specifically Freudian psychoanalysis, that is, its emphasis on the dual construction of conscious and unconscious and the tripartite division of psyche into id, ego, and superego. Surrealistic concerns would be of secondary importance, yet pivotal to a comprehensive understanding of the narratives. The importance of this study is based on the fact that these two narratives have never been compared and/or contrasted with each other, notwithstanding their uncanny resemblance to each other. The similarity between the two works and the fact that both of them are heavily under the influence of Freudian psychology is a slight indication of a chain of influence which is at work. This apparent chain of influence is yet another reason for the purpose of analysis in this paper. The series of influences might be as follows: Freud has had a major impact on Kafka and in turn Kafka has had a great influence on Hedayat.

The research question that this study endeavors to address is as follows: How far has the realm of the unconscious mind been instrumental in the composition of these two narratives and what does the above-mentioned chain of influence reveal about the nature of these stories and the psychological disposition of their authors?

Generally, as Wake and Malpas (2006) propose, literature and art can be regarded as spheres that allow the expression of repressed desires, those of the author in particular, in a specific form which is socially agreeable. Moreover, what psychoanalytic critics have tried to discover has been a content of prohibited sensual desires which are latent and concealed artistically beneath the surface of the work of art (Wake and Malpas 2006, 70). Both Kafka and Hedayat led internally conflicted lives, and these contradictions have gracefully found expression in their fiction. As Friedländer (2013, 149) suggests, Kafka plainly refers to his bewilderment in life when he describes his efforts to delineate truth as “beating your head against the wall of a windowless and doorless cell.”

These two specific stories have been chosen for a variety of reasons. First, the two narratives mirror each other’s elements—storyline, characterization, themes, and symbols—as though they had been written for the same literary and ideological purpose. In both stories, firstly, the doubling of the storyline occurs, so as to reflect the conscious and the unconscious mind, and then the triple construction of main characters comes to the fore, to stress id, ego, and superego. Secondly, they are both structurally similar. Both were written during the heyday of psychoanalysis in their respective societal contexts of composition. The two narratives equally follow the guidelines of psychoanalysis and surrealism in terms of employing the norms of the unconscious mind as delineated by Freud. They are both incomprehensible without considering the workings and the precepts of psychoanalysis. Finally, these two stories seem to offer the same pessimistic viewpoint toward the world, that is, death is the final yet imminent stop in the journey of life.

The revealing findings of this study solidify the assumption that both writers have been deeply influenced by Freud’s psychoanalytic precepts and that their narrative strands would reach nowhere without considering the workings of the unconscious mind. Moreover, it appears to be reasonable to claim that both stories function as the two supplementary

episodes of one larger than life narrative, one that applies to the reality of every human's life story, the one that held true for both Kafka and Hedayat.

## Literature Review

There have been numerous studies done on the two stories analyzing them individually from various viewpoints. However, this pattern of influence has never been directly referred to in any publication thus far. References to Freud's influence on Kafka and Kafka's impact on Hedayat have been separately made in numerous publications.

In this paper, the focus of attention has been on Freudian psychoanalytic concepts as elaborated in Freud (1913), Hall (1979), Heller (2005), Thurschwell (2000), Muckenhaupt (1997), and Lear (2005). In order to look upon the psychoanalytic approach toward literature, three publications have been instrumental in the process of this study: Leitch (2001), Eagleton (1983), and Wake and Malpas (2006). For the purpose of further analysis, the fundamental ideas supporting the school of surrealism were inspected in Breton (1969), Ross (2003), and Abrams and Harpham (2009). In order to take into account the influence of Freud on Kafka and also his style of writing, the following publications have been influential: Preece (2002), Sokel (2002), and Rolleston (2002).

The following studies have concentrated specifically on the analysis of "A Country Doctor": Bregman (1989), Leiter (1958), Marson (1964), Lawson (1957), Webster (1950), Guth (1965), and Gray (1995). One point of weakness found in these studies, however, was that they scarcely have taken a panoramic view of the narrative and have usually focused on one specific aspect of the story. They examine the narrative from a psychoanalytic point of view, but they never account for the dream-like features of the story and why it has been told in a fragmentary and non-chronological fashion. This paper, on the other hand, while concentrating on the various individual dimensions of the story, tries to employ a holistic outlook to find relevance to the generic formulations of Freudian psychoanalysis and their relevance to surrealism and dreams. It also attempts to analyze the deliberate application of these theorizations as has been employed by the author.

Hedayat's life, his literary output in general, and the influence of Freud and Kafka on him have been scrutinized by Tamimi and Roozbehani (2012), Zarshenas and Sarshar (2005), Zarshenas and Parviz (2005), Najafi (1992), and Parsinezhad (1999). A recurrent flaw that was found in these studies was that they have centered their attention on just one or two of Hedayat's works among a plentitude of other equally famous publications, as though this prolific writer was defined only through one or two writings. Hedayat has put forth around sixteen works of fiction, three plays, two travelogues, eleven translations, and other works including criticism, studies, and so forth. And, the focus of this paper has been on a story that has rarely been explored so far, notwithstanding the fact that it is heavily loaded with iconic significations.

The following publications have focused specifically on the analysis of "Three Drops of Blood": San'ati (2011), Ghasemzadeh (2003), Toloo'ee (1999), and Hedayat (2008). Nevertheless, the drawback of the aforementioned publications with regard to Hedayat's

story is that they have failed to notice its uncanny resemblance to Kafka's, in spite of the fact that Kafka's influence on Hedayat is almost an unmistakable issue and it has reached its pinnacle in this narrative. Although some critics like San'ati have employed a psychoanalytic approach, none of them has concentrated on the fact that the story has been narrated within the framework of a dream, a revealing proof of the author's familiarity and obsession with Freudian precepts. By contrast, this paper attempts to establish a network of resemblance by founding an almost one-to-one correspondence between each element of the two narratives. It also tries to reveal that this resemblance does not necessarily mean that Hedayat has blindly imitated Kafka's narrative. On the contrary, Hedayat digested Kafka's ideas and indigenized his fabulous story. In addition, the paper focuses on Hedayat's precise implementation of Freud's ideas.

### **Toward the Framework: A Psychoanalytic Approach**

Eagleton (1983, 155) claims that analysis can concentrate on the writer of the work of fiction, on the contents of the work, on its construction in terms of form, or on its readers. This paper, firstly, presents a psychoanalytic analysis of the content of both stories and then tries to compare and/or contrast the relevant elements that comprise these two narratives. It remarks on the characterization technique and, in particular, the characters' unconscious desires. Moreover, in terms of events or objects, the paper puts psychoanalytic emphasis on the ones that are of paramount importance because they serve as the link between the two stories; also, it tries to interpret the two frames of each story and the triad of personality in each major character. Sporadic attention has been paid to the unconscious motives of the authors; nevertheless, it has not been the paper's center of interest. The authors' unconscious motives have not been stressed in this analysis in order not to grind to an inevitable halt in the pathway toward intentional fallacy.

Therefore, in terms of psychoanalytic analysis, attention has been centered on the elemental content of the narratives, their relevance to each other, and their affinities with the unconscious motives of the major characters, and the pertinence of these factors to the psychoanalytic formulations of Freud. Freud paid paramount attention to the unconscious as the most influential section of the psyche in the two-part division of the mind into the conscious and the unconscious (Hall 1979, 54). With respect to the three-part demarcation of the psyche into ego, id, and superego, the id became mainly accountable for the desires that were earlier assigned to the unconscious, the same desires that form one's peculiar disposition (*ibid.*).

The main responsibility of the id, the hub of the instincts, is to fulfill life's primordial principle, without any morality or logic (Hall 1979, 22-26). Contrastingly, the superego embodies the judicial side of the psyche, providing the individual with psychological punishments and rewards, representing societal traditional ideals and values (Hall 1979, 31-34). Finally, the ego holds the id and the superego in check and keeps interaction with the outer world. It is administrated by the reality principle. However, if the ego gives in to the orientations of the id or the superego, psychic chaos will rule over the individual's

personality (Hall 1979, 28). Taking the Freudian conceptions into account, the psychoanalytic framework employed in the analysis of this paper attempts to pin down the corresponding elements of the narratives which relate to these formulations. It further tries to suggest that both stories relay the account of two individuals who suffer from internal conflicts that torment their psyches, and to demonstrate the resulting disharmony which haunts their personal and social lives—a disharmony which is the consequence of their psychic disability to form a balance among the three sides of their personality.

Hence, the analysis moves on multiple planes, two of which are characterization and symbolism. Firstly, it tries to establish the connections between the delicate triple constructions of the major characters. Secondly, it endeavors to account for the reasons that each character in each triad individually stands for a corresponding aspect of the individual's personality in terms of Freudian psychology. Thereafter, the focus of analysis revolves around the narratives' use of symbolism to strengthen the links among the three parts of each character and the whole coherence of the stories on account of their pertinence to psychoanalysis.

### **When Kafka and Hedayat Meet Freud**

Regarding Freud's influence on Kafka, Sokel (2002) reminds us that Kafka regularly made references to psychoanalysis and his letters portray his familiarity with the conceptions of psychoanalysis and their relevance to literature. For instance, he approved of Freud's attribution of immense significance to early years of childhood experience, a fact that is evident in his "Letter to My Father" (Kafka 1919), an autobiographical correspondence, where he has applied Freud's Oedipus complex to his own life. A close analysis of Kafka's fictive corpus reveals that his works of fiction are both compatible with and incomprehensible without Freud's thought (Sokel 2002, 153-155).

Marson (1964, 150) points out that Kafka wrote "A Country Doctor" during the time he was most intensely preoccupied with psychoanalytic theories. Thus it could be sensible to say that this narrative is rich in Freudian psychoanalytic theories and it is yet another index of the influence under discussion.

Regarding the influence of psychoanalysis on Hedayat, San'ati (2011, 1) claims that psychoanalytic narratives are not much popular in Iran, because reputable psychoanalytic texts have rarely been translated into Farsi and the ones that have gone through the process of translation are rendered poorly into the target language. However, a limited number of authors have made an attempt at writing such stories because of their familiarity with the world literature. The most successful among these authors is Hedayat, and among his works the one which is hugely under the influence of psychoanalysis is "Three Drops of Blood."

Some critics claim that Hedayat followed the developments in the realm of art and literature in Europe and changed his style of writing accordingly (Tamimi and Roozbehani 2012). It was in 1928 that Hedayat, with a group of university students, went to France, and their arrival coincided with the popularity of surrealism in France, in particular, their

special attention to the unconscious side of the psyche which was evident in their activities and among their works in art galleries (Tamimi and Roozbehani 2012, 98). On the other hand, Hedayat was specifically drawn to Kafka and even translated some of Kafka's short stories, namely, "In the Penal Colony" (1919), "The Hunter Gracchus" (1931), and "The Metamorphosis" (1915), into Farsi.

During the last years of his life, Kafka became the core of attention in Hedayat's literary activities. Hedayat wrote, in 1948, a paper, "The Message of Kafka" [*Payām-e Kāfkā*], which still is the best source for Kafka studies in Iran. He wrote this paper as a long preface to a translation of one of Kafka's works, *In the Penal Colony* (Kafka 1977), translated by Hedayat and Hassan Ghaemian and re-titled *The Condemned Group* [*Gorooh-e Mahkoomin*].

Most of the critics who have read and analyzed Hedayat's paper claimed that it is about Kafka, however Parsinezhad (1999, 299) believes that it is Hedayat's artistic last will and a testament to prove Kafka's influence. In this paper, Hedayat has tried to delve into Kafka's works and excavate his worldview. This specific worldview, which is elaborated in detail, is in agreement with Hedayat's concept of the world found in his works.

In his analysis of Hedayat's paper, Najafi (1992, 32-41) proposes that Hedayat compassionately defends Kafka, and it seems that he regards Kafka as a close friend with the same concerns and attitudes. "The Message of Kafka" reflects Hedayat's sympathy with Kafka and many similarities in their lives: both of them had boring occupations, hated their fathers, lived as recluses, were vegetarians, led celibate life, were preoccupied with death, and wanted their works to be destroyed after their death. Thus, it is rather evident that Kafka had a major impact on Hedayat in terms of both lifestyle and literary output.

Aside from the chain of influence, the two narratives share so many elements and thematic threads as if they had both been written by a single author. In his analysis of Kafka's narrative, Thurschwell (2000, 79) argues that the story, being told in two frames, hints at Freud's primary division of the psyche into the conscious and the unconscious. This trend also holds true for Hedayat's story. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that any story told in two frames is an application of Freud's division; one draws such a conclusion solely based on the other suggestive elements of the narratives.

### **The Storyline: From Two Frames to Triad**

In terms of storyline, "A Country Doctor" starts at the front yard of the doctor's house and then progresses to the farmyard of the patient. By contrast, the first episode of "Three Drops of Blood" happens in the present time at a mental hospital, while the second part happens in the past at another location. The two stories indirectly pit innocence in one frame against sinfulness in another. Additionally, the major characters in the narratives are multiplied as if they were standing in front of three-piece mirrors, which is

an indication of Freud's division of the psyche into id, ego, and superego. In both stories, there is an element which links the two frames and all three sides of the major characters' consciousness, reflected in the multiplication of the major characters. Above all, the stories give the impression of being narrated in the framework of dreams, because there are numerous illogical occurrences which can only be explained in terms of the workings of the dream-world as explained by Freud. Every element in the story stresses the pattern of similarity and influence between the two stories.

In order to follow Freud's twofold division, in Kafka's narrative, we have a clear-cut doubling of the first scene with all its elements repeated in a disguised form in the second appearance. And, Hedayat's story is also told in two different time frames and places, with the repetition of major elements.

So, as far as the storyline reveals to the reader, in "A Country Doctor," the courtyard is immediately replaced by the farmyard; the snow and cloudy weather gives way to clear sky and moonlight; the father, offering the doctor some rum, stands in the role of the groom, since alcohol brings to surface the repressed unconscious desires and the groom is the representative of the unconscious urges; the patient's sister, waving a blood-covered towel to the doctor, replaces Rosa, as Leiter (1958, 343) suggests. Both of them echo reverberations of the color red, as this color is one elemental sign in the story that is ever-present in the name Rosa, the groom's biting marks on her cheek, and the color of the wound on the patient's hip. Finally, the patient replaces the doctor in that they both eventually share the same sickbed and the same mysteries. Since these symbolic elements have recurred in the two frames, they bear significant implications.

By the same token, Hedayat's storyline consists of two complementary sections: mental asylum and the past. The first slice of the story happens in the present time at a mental asylum and has ten characters, including the yet unnamed narrator who seems to be recovering from his mental illness. Aside from the narrator, Nazem is the character who creates the link between the first and the second part of the story. He is present in the two frames as the head supervisor of the mental asylum. The narrator defines him as the most insane of all. Nazem is the enemy of a cat that, as he claims, has eaten his canary. The animalistic and instinctual actions of the cat and its treatment of the canary establish close affinity between the cat and the id. On the other hand, the canary represents childhood innocence. Hedayat (1970, 105)<sup>1</sup> has implicitly referred to this at the beginning of the narrative when he describes the mental asylum as a place for "poets, children, and second childhoods." By "second childhoods," he refers to those adults who retain their innocence for the rest of their lives, like the canary. In addition, the canary and the cat in the narrative are in fact the representatives of the two sides of Rokhsareh's personality, i.e., the Madonna and the whore, respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequent citations from this source include only the page numbers.



This lost innocence is yet traceable in another character, a dual multiplication of the narrator, that is, Abbas. What links him to Mirza Ahmad Khan, the narrator, is that both of them play the *Tār*, a Persian musical instrument, and both recite exactly the same poem. Supposedly, Abbas is the narrator's friend and neighbor and considers himself "a prophet and a poet" (107). As might be expected, prophets are virtuous souls, and poets, as the narrator mentions at the beginning of the story, are as innocent as children. The reader realizes that Abbas' innocence is apparently lost when the narrator describes him as having a "pock-marked face" which "wasn't good-looking" when he kisses an unnamed girl (108). Additionally, the narrator believes that the unnamed girl, who has come to visit Abbas, loves the narrator instead, and she is in fact attracted to him. Thus, the pocks on Abbas' face are apparently the signs of sinfulness. Accordingly, just like the groom, Abbas "take[s] the girl aside and kiss[es] her" (ibid.).

However, in the second slice of the story, the narrator remembers his past and there are four characters: the narrator; Siavush, who was once the narrator's neighbor and best friend; Rokhsareh, who is Siavush's cousin and allegedly the narrator's former fiancé; and ultimately, Nazeer, a pet cat that supposedly belongs to Siavush. At the end of the story, a conversation reveals that the narrator's name is Mirza Ahmad Khan.

In the second frame, again, there is the presence of a cat and it still is the representative of instinctive desires, while Rokhsareh represents lost innocence, since she passionately kisses a man when she finally concludes that her former fiancé, Mirza Ahmad Khan, is mentally disturbed. The other two ever-present components that bind the two parts of the story are a musical instrument and a revolver. The *Tār* binds Abbas and Siavush to the narrator since they either play *Tār*, teach, or sing with the music. A revolver attaches Siavush and Nazem to the narrator because Siavush is a good hunter and Nazem kills the cat with a revolver and the narrator wishes to use it. Both components make the multiplication of the major characters plausible and subject to further analysis. This evident linkage between the two fragments of both stories hints at Freud's initial splitting of the psyche into two sides and shows that the two slices in each narrative are in fact the two sides of an individual's personality, be it Kafka's doctor or Hedayat's Mirza Ahmad Khan.

Apart from the two-piece organization of the two stories, a more consequential multiplication comes to the fore, that is, the threefold organization of the major characters: the doctor, the groom, and the patient—Mirza Ahmad Khan, Siavush, and Nazem. Now the parser scrutinizes the links between the trio.

Kafka gives various clues so as to join the doctor and the groom together: As Leiter (1958, 343) concludes, the groom is responsible for the female-male horses, representing the feminine-masculine sides of the doctor's personality. The groom comes out of the pigsty, which is a dark part of the doctor's house, representing his unconscious. Ultimately, when he bites Rosa, the groom does what the doctor should have done, since later the doctor claims that the servant girl, his object of desire, has long been in his house, another emblem of his unconscious that he barely noticed, i.e., repressed desires.

Moreover, the groom is representative of the id for a multitude of reasons: the fact that he crawls out of the pigsty on all fours shows that he is half-human and half-animal, thus possessing animalistic instincts. The important scene where the door was kicked open by the doctor indicates that the dark unknown pigsty symbolizes the id and its door signifies the censoring wall between the unconscious and the conscious holding back impulsive urges. The groom is seen to be a stranger to the doctor, another indication of him representing the repressed desires, since they reside in the unconscious part of the psyche of which human is unaware. Ultimately, when he, all of a sudden, turns to Rosa and bites her cheek, it is seen as a sign of impulsive action. In Freudian terms, desires erupt from the id into the consciousness and the individual makes a slip or mistake. At another level, Leiter (1958, 344) suggests that the patient is linked to the doctor, in that, besides the fact that he finally lies next to the patient as if he were a terminal patient too, the doctor confesses that he prefers to die, which is the same request that the patient initially made.

When the doctor is incapable of diagnosing the real cause of the illness, the choir and the neighbors, the ones who represent the society and its corrective powers, gradually show up. The patient reveals to the doctor that he has no faith in him, and ultimately the society comes to help them be cured, and hence the choir, the patient, and his society collectively embody the superego. Kafka portrays the presence of the superego through three distinct parties so as to emphasize the importance of this mental authority in human beings. More importantly, he opens with the choir, the representative of the church, since he was more or less a religious person. As Friedländer (2013, 4) delineates, Kafka seemed to be “a neurotic Jew, a religious one.” Hence, that is how the three sides of the doctor’s psyche are intertwined in the story, with the doctor representing the ego, trapped between the conflicting forces of the id (groom) and the superego (the choir, the patient, and his relatives).

More or less in the same way, Hedayat weaves the threefold threads of personality in his narrative through subtle but unmistakable signs. On the one hand, Mirza Ahmad Khan and Nazem, the head supervisor of the mental asylum, are doubles; for Nazem once in the past had a canary that he loved so much, and now that the cat has eaten his canary, he uses the canary’s empty cage as a bait to lure the cat in and kill it. As San’ati (2011, 5) claims, the same event has occurred to Mirza Ahmad Khan; once Rokhsareh was his fiancée, and now that he is apparently insane, Rokhsareh turns to Siavush and kisses him in the courtyard.

On the other hand, the cat has a more important role to play in the story, as it links Siavush and Nazem, the head supervisor of the mental asylum, to Mirza Ahmad Khan in the most elaborate manner and completes the threefold construction of the major character. The cat emerges in the narrative in two different ways. The first one is an unnamed cat that appears in the mental asylum; and since it has eaten Nazem’s canary, he chases the cat, then the cat climbs a pine, and finally Nazem commands the guard to shoot the cat dead. Because of this occurrence, there are now three drops of blood down the pine

(107). Nevertheless, in the second slice of the story, the cat seems to have a name, Nazeer, and to have an owner, Mirza Ahmad Khan's best friend and neighbor, Siavush.

In the course of the story, it is realized that both Siavush and Mirza Ahmad Khan have a revolver in their drawers, also a cat is shot dead, and again there are three drops of blood down another pine. Apparently, it seems that Siavush has killed the cat. However, in a conversation that ensues between Rokhsareh and her mother, Siavush pulls a revolver out of Mirza Ahmad Khan's pocket and says that he has killed the cat. Ironically, Mirza Ahmad Khan approves of his story (113). Thus, there is only one person who shot the cat dead, that is, Mirza Ahmad Khan (Ghasemzadeh 2003). Nonetheless, there are other indications connecting Siavush, Mirza Ahmad Khan, and Nazem: both Siavush and the narrator have a Târ in their rooms; the walls of their rooms are both painted dark blue; they both have revolvers; and, Nazem and Siavush both kill the cat (Ghasemzadeh 2003, 225-231). Moreover, the fact that the walls are portrayed as "bruised blue" instead of dark blue reveals the violence in the environment, just like what happens between the groom and Rosa, and it also shows the bruises on the psyche.

Consequently, in Hedayat's version, Nazem, who is in charge of the rules and regulations, represents the superego. From the other point of view, Siavush embodies the id, since he owns Nazeer, the cauldron of instinctual and sexual desires. Furthermore, his passionate kiss also reminds the reader of Kafka's groom's action. In this organization, the narrator, who is the intermediary, acts as the embodiment of the ego. Yet another factor which solidifies the threefold construction of the characterization in the story is the very concrete structure of the narrative. Hedayat's story is divided into three separate parts by three sets of asterisks, which in turn is a slight indication of his preoccupation with the Freudian concepts concerning id, ego, and superego.

To continue the strand of instinctive desires, it is worthy to note that in both stories the preoccupation with animalistic imagery and animals is ever present. Never does Kafka omit the animals' presence from his short story. As Lawson (1957, 267) puts forth, horses and pigs are basically a recurrent presence. Moreover, even his characters behave like animals, and the groom is the most emblematic of all in this respect. The doctor whose clothes are finally stripped away symbolically represents the removal of the human layer, in other words, the ego finally surrenders. Additionally, the doctor is completely under the control of his unruly horses.

Ghasemzadeh (2003, 225) points out the same trend in Hedayat's narrative, that is, most of the characters are described in just a few words or at the most one or two sentences, whereas the description of Nazeer, Siavush's pet cat, occupies almost more than two pages, as though it were another human character. Since in Iran writing about sexual encounters explicitly is a taboo, it seems Nazeer and its partner reflect Rokhsareh and Siavush's relationship. Thus, the cats' encounter, of which Hedayat provides a graphic explanation, is actually between two human characters. As a proof, within the narrative, human features have been assigned to the cat; for instance, describing the cat, the narrator assumes the cat to be a lady wearing makeup, "as if she wore eyeliner" (109). Consequently,

the sexual affair has occurred between Siavush and Rokhsareh, and it is the thought of this romance that keeps the narrator awake at nights, which, as a matter of fact, he projects on to the cats. Another duality featured in the story is the id represented in the dual picture of Rokhsareh and Siavush and the cat and its partner, each pair mirroring the other one flawlessly.

Most importantly, the cat's sexual life is described in minute details. Therefore, this ubiquitous company of animals in the two narratives, on a symbolic level of interpretation, shows the id overpowering the other two psychic forces, the ego and the superego. It seems that animals are usually the typical image of repressed instinctive urges freed, the ones that must be satisfied regardless of societal rules and regulations.

Nazee and its partner are satisfied with their sexual life, since the suppressive forces of the superego and its punishments are absent in this animalistic relationship of the two emblems of the id. However, Mirza Ahmad Khan and Rokhsareh, formerly engaged to be married, are no longer with each other, for the narrator is mentally ill as a result of being encumbered with the guilt complex imposed upon him by the superego. This guilt complex is referred to through numerous examples within the narrative: An insane man in the mental asylum "tore open his own stomach" (106); another mentally ill patient "popped out his own eye" (107); the narrator himself could not blink an eye at nights when he was first brought into the mental asylum since he thought "they were going to kill [him]" (106). Thus, the characters in the narrative assume that they deserve some form of punishment, either self-inflicted or performed by another person. Consequently, the narrator's superego, Nazem, the head supervisor, keeps him in the mental asylum and away from Rokhsareh. Moreover, the thought that Rokhsareh is with other men, depicted in the sexual affair of the cats and the kisses, keeps him awake at nights (105).

Yet, what makes the situation even more complicated is, the readers realize, and as Freud (1913, 113) concludes, that wish-fulfillment plays a prominent role in dreams, and in fact our dreams are the continuation of the dreamer's thoughts from the state of wakefulness into sleep. Consequently, one might say that what both narrators are firmly opposed to in the stories is in reality their innermost desire guised as a painful experience, since what appears in the story is the latent content of these dream-like narratives. Thus, it is the doctor who wants to bite Rosa's cheek in Kafka's narrative; and in Hedayat's story, it is Mirza Ahmad Khan who desires to kiss the unnamed girl and Rokhsareh. Hence, the conflict between the id, the ego, and the superego reaches a feverish peak.

In terms of narrative coherence, in each story, there is an element that merges all the other supposedly irrelevant components into a coherent whole. Therefore, in "A Country Doctor," this joining force is embedded in the image of Rosa, a recurrent character that emerges from the very beginning of the story and holds on to the end. Gray (1995, 60) found that this signifier operates concurrently as a character's name, the rosy color of the patient's wound, and the color and name of a flower, that is, rose.

The story revolves around the doctor's repressed desires, supposedly toward Rosa, and his inability to create a balance between the rebellious forces of the impulsive desires of his id and the corrective power of his internalized voice of authority and conscience,

that is his superego. Thus, this repressed urge is first exposed in the bite-mark on Rosa's cheek, created by the uninhibited action of the groom, and which is naturally blood-colored. Then, it appears a second time in the shape of the wound on the patient's hip, again rose-colored, and ironically it is described as being like a flower. Moreover, this wound suggestively appears on the patient's hip, which is clearly the seat of sexual desires.

This imagery of flower echoes the image of the rose. In his analysis of the story, Bregman (1989, 77) describes the ambivalence in the image of rose since it is the combination of softness and thorns. Thus, it stimulates positive images such as innocence and negative ones like death, illness, and destruction. This ambivalence is reechoed in the patient's wound. It is this wound that is killing the patient, while it is described as a flower. As a result, Rolleston (2002, 273) concludes that devastation, sickness, and sexuality are all related to each other in the mark on Rosa's cheek. Accordingly, the concept of innocence is pitted against that of sinfulness in the image of Rosa—something that the doctor explicitly hints at when he thinks of Rosa recurrently and implies that she was an entity that is now lost forever and nothing can bring her back. To state the matter differently, innocence cannot be regained once lost in the face of sin.

In a similar vein, the scattered particles of Hedayat's tale are assembled together by the welding power of the image of the cat. In fact, the cat exposes the fact that a number of characters are all multiplied versions of one character, Mirza Ahmad Khan, wearing a variety of masks in every episode of the story. Furthermore, as was mentioned in Kafka's story, the narrator, or the ego, cannot form equilibrium between the other two sides of his personality. Hence, the strict corrective action of Nazem, the head supervisor of the mental asylum, the superego, leads to the murdering of the cat, the id, in the course of the story.

By the same token, the excessive uninhibited sexuality of Siavush's cat again leads to destruction, since it kept the narrator awake and forced him to kill the cat. In turn, the repeated killing of the cat in the second frame links Nazem, Siavush, and Mirza Ahmad Khan. Thus, once more, destruction and sexuality are merged together in one single image, the cat. Additionally, the narrator mentions that "Nazee's nocturnal lovemaking kept me awake" (111). This excerpt shows that Nazee and its partner are in fact emblems representing Rokhsareh and Siavush. Thus, Mirza Ahmad Khan is jealous of them and finally kills the cat for its unfaithfulness. After murdering the cat, he still suffers from guilt complex: "the terrible screams of this cat keep me awake" (112). This represents the punishments of superego on his part.

There are numerous clues in the narrative which confirm Nazee as the embodiment of the id. Firstly, the cat is described as "greedy" (107), and greed is one of the seven deadly sins. Secondly, its favorite person among others is "the cook" (110), since the cook helps the cat satisfy one of its instinctual desires, hunger. Then, it is mentioned that it fears "the old housemaid" (ibid.) who is a religious person, i.e., representative of the superego; thus, naturally, the id stands against the superego. Most importantly, its "animal instincts" are aroused the most when "a bloody head of a rooster fell into her grasp" and the cat becomes a "vicious beast" (ibid.); therefore, the cat's hunger for violent behavior

links it to another deadly sin, wrath. Finally, Nazee's sexual disposition reveals yet another deadly sin, lust. The narrator says that the cat licks "my forehead with her rough tongue, begging for a kiss" (ibid.), and this plainly reveals the whore side of the cat and in turn shows how Mirza Ahmad Khan feels about Rokhsareh, an unfaithful partner.

The narrator views Nazee in the same light that he regards the unnamed girl who comes to visit Abbas and then kisses him, and also his own former fiancée, Rokhsareh. He believes that both women have come to visit him, however they both hug and kiss other men, a shocking occurrence which arouses his jealousy. This allegedly illegitimate relationship is clearly depicted in Nazee's sexual acts and Mirza Ahmad Khan's jealousy, resulting in his murdering the cat, and in fact, by imputation, he symbolically kills Rokhsareh, the unnamed girl, and both their lovers. Thus, in a convoluted turn of events, the innocence that is seen in the image of fidelity is now lost due to the sinfulness.

Another recurring aspect in a cyclical manner of both short stories is the number three. In Kafka's version, one cannot fail to notice the fact that the groom and his two horses are the most revealing hint at number three. However, the groom is equated with his horses for a number of reasons, among which is the certainty that he addresses them as sister and brother. Secondly, just like an animal, he resides in the pigsty and crawls like a four-legged animal. Thirdly, he is as uncontrollable as his powerful horses, for he readily surrenders to his instinctive desires. Another clue which points at number three is the color red that is repeated three times: in Rosa's cheek, in the wound, and in the bloody handkerchief used by the patient's sister.

In "Three Drops of Blood," number three has become so bold since it is represented even in the title. Then, "three drops of blood" is a recurring concept in the story that, apart from the cat, is yet another constituent which cements the two episodes of the narrative and the three characters together. First, it is Nazem, the head supervisor of the mental asylum, who, having commanded the murdering of the cat, claims that the three drops of blood do not belong to the cat, instead "they belong to the Bird of Truth" (107). Then, the same claim is restated by Mirza Ahmad Khan at the end of the story, where he claims they belong to the "owl who eats three grains of wheat belonging to a child" (113) and accordingly, as a punishment, "must scream every night until three drops of blood trickle out of his throat" (ibid.). It also hints at guilt complex and the punishments administered by the authority of the superego.

Taking the psychoanalytic influence on both authors and its reflection in their works into account, number three could be associated with the threefold construction of the human psyche and the inevitable battlefield of unleashed desires of the id and repressive actions of the superego in every individual's personality. If an adjustment between these forces could not be made, the result would be disastrous. Lear (2005, 145-147) points out that Freud expressed neurosis as a manifestation of psychological discord and that neurotics' inclination to take evasive action against reality is the core feature of their existence.

## From the Storyline to the Writer's Personal Life

This trend is noticeable in the personal lives of the writers. Accordingly, Kafka and Hedayat led, more or less, similar lives and they both found their existence insufferable. Najafi (1992, 41) has referred to this bitter reality of their lives, since both these talented authors had a constant preoccupation with committing suicide. Unfortunately, Hedayat proved successful in his effort. As Friedländer (2013, 122) proposes, Kafka, in his personal letters, claimed that he desired to become “like a dead man” (Slavitt 2014, 57) to be able to write. Kafka (1988, 259) has pointed to his own proclivity toward suicide in his diary entry on February 15, 1914. This obsession with death shows that he, like Hedayat, had a proclivity to evade reality as a result of neurosis. Hence, it might be plausible to say that they have projected their own psychological conflicts in real life and their own tendency to evade from reality onto their narratives and characters. Subsequently, both stories are told within the framework of dreams, and the major characters of both tales have a propensity to escape from reality and the circumstances in which they are unlikely to improve their conditions.

As an almost parallel trend to this escape from the bitter reality of life, there is the apparent proclivity toward death as the final cure in both narratives. For Kafka, sensuous existence was seen as the ailment for which there is only one remedy, death (Sokel 2002, 154). In his narrative, however, there are two straightforward condemnations of life or, in other words, inclination toward death. On the doctor's arrival, the patient murmurs in his ear, “Doctor, let me die” (Kafka 1993, 159), and later on, the doctor realizes that this is the point they have in common, since he desires to die as well (Kafka 1993, 161). The bitter reality from which they are running away seems to be the same issue that Kafka was indicted—sensuous life. This mark of inevitable, destructive sensuality first appears on Rosa's cheek and finally on the patient's hip, both of which are places to practice sexual desire. In Hedayat's account too, the narrator recites a poem, supposedly composed by himself, which is also recited by another character, Abbas, in the story. The theme of this poem is that death is the only cure for the sadness of this world: “the remedy is not sorrow but death is mine” (114).

Both authors have chosen the framework of dream in order to weave the warp and woof of their narratives. In fact, the French poet, anarchist, and writer, Breton (1969, 12), who founded surrealism, has solved this dilemma. He argues that what one observes in one's dreams reveals more authentic details of the genuine reality of one's life. This state of mind has a proclivity to dispense with its genuine orientations (as exposed in the process of mistakes and slips), and it actually reacts to everything, except for the suggestions coming from the very recesses of mind whose bearings are revealed in the dark night (Breton 1969, 12-13). Moreover, Breton (1969, 13) claims, “The mind of the man who dreams is fully satisfied by what happens to him.”

Thus, the surrealistic structure justifies the use of dream-like frames in the two stories and comes to rescue by resolving the ambiguities inherent in these texts. Breton (Ross 2003, 51) is of the view that modern individuals are dissatisfied, since they have been

estranged from the realm of imagination in their fantasies and dreams. Moreover, he states that insane individuals and younger children tend to have more liberty of thought, as they are not encumbered by the significance of logical thinking. To him, the world of dreams has its own specific brand of reality and it could be more real than the often stressed reality of the “real life.”

Since both writers are discontent with the embittered reality of their lives, they delve into the dominion of the unconscious mind so as to shed light on the rational irrationalities of the world of consciousness. In both narratives, the narrators cling on to the fragmented and disintegrated nature of their existence and strive to find meaning in the world in which they reside, notwithstanding all the internal conflicts and oppositions they have to bear.

Therefore, both protagonists start their journey toward finding meaning in their lives through the unconscious world of dreams and finally come to the conclusion that there is no hope in the world of reality, a fact that has so far been hidden to them, since they were looking for it in the world of consciousness. In Kafka's (1993, 164) account, the major character concludes that all the cards are stacked against him and he cannot escape his doomed fate, and subsequently he feels “betrayed.” Similarly, Hedayat's protagonist starts his way back through his memory, saying that when he was finally provided with pen and paper, he could do nothing but irrationally doodle on the paper (104), which is practically the sign of the workings of the unconscious mind. He too comes to the conclusion that he is betrayed when Rokhsareh claims that the narrator is “insane” (114), and then she and Siavush start laughing and leave the room holding hands.

## Conclusion

This paper tried to trace a pattern of influence between two canonical authors, Kafka and Hedayat, who were almost equally under the effect of the ideological movements of their own times, and also to make sense of their two stories by interpreting them within the frameworks and formulations of Freudian psychoanalysis and its interconnectedness with the school of surrealism.

To do so, the paper moves on two parallel lines, that is, it first analyzes the elements in the light of theory and then finds analogous features between the two stories. Thus, it readily comes into sight that there is an almost one-to-one correspondence between the elements and concepts of the two stories: the choir and the patient and his relatives as the representatives of the superego in one story, and Nazem, the head supervisor of the mental asylum, and the guard as a parallel in the other. The narrators of both stories serve as the embodiment of the conflicted ego, or, on another level of signification, the reflection of the corresponding authors in the stories. The groom and his horses and Siavush and his cat are emblems of the id. The pigsty in one story and the room with its dark blue-colored walls in the other represent spaces occupied by the mysterious unconscious, illustrated by the darkness of both places. Rosa and Rokhsareh are the symbols of innocence and, respectively, the impulsive bite on the cheek and the passionate kiss as the initiation of the



loss of innocence. Furthermore, number three appears in the form of threefold symbols: Rosa's cheek, the wound, and the bloody handkerchief in one account; and three drops of blood down the pine, three grains of wheat, and three drops of blood from the owl's throat in the other. The dreamlike quality of both stories, the inevitable escape from reality, and death as the sole cure to the conflicted psyche are also discussed.

This correspondence, however, makes perfect sense only when it is analyzed within the framework of psychoanalysis and surrealism. Kafka and Hedayat have manifested modern life with its unavoidable incongruities. For them, life is meaningless if one tries to interpret it through rationalities of the state of wakefulness. Additionally, they have emphasized that the domain of the unconscious, as manifested in dreams, has been neglected so far. Thus, if anyone desires to come to terms with the genuine reality of his existence, he has to reconcile himself with his innermost repressed urges and try to create and sustain a balance between these desires. This is exactly what the major characters try to do, but prove to be unsuccessful, and hence the consequences are dire.

Moreover, following the Freudian trio of the psyche, it is revealed that there is an unmistakable interconnectedness between Freudian conceptualizations of the psyche, specifically the unconscious, and the precepts of surrealism. Thus, to wholly grasp both narratives, one has to consider both authors' familiarity with and their use of these concepts.

As for future studies, it is suggested that other works by Kafka and Hedayat be analyzed in order to pin down further points of similarities and/or differences. Nonetheless, it is vital to state that the pattern of influence that exists between the two authors is not a slavish one, and Hedayat has elaborately indigenized the contents of his stories to the Iranian culture and has created his own signature. Moreover, research in this realm might be able to shed more light on the nature of their works and bring home the complexities of their intricately designed narratives. ■

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