

E4 IB – Part 1 Summer Reading: *The Blind Owl* by Sadegh Hedayat

Part I: Read and annotate the novel.

Part II: Directions: You will annotate the following motifs. I encourage you to use COLORS for each one. You know that you must do more than label.

1. Light/Dark + shadows
2. Isolation
3. Mirrors, Mirror Images/Reflections/Circularity
4. Eyes
5. Old men
6. Jars
7. Architectural metaphors and details: buildings, rooms, windows
8. Wine
9. Knife
10. Horses
11. The butcher

Part III: Directions

- Write a minimum of 350 words in each response to FIVE of the prompts and/or questions below. **You must each address question #1; then select four of your own choice.**
- Each response must include textual evidence using MLA format. These quotations should be “snippets;” you are text blending not quoting long passages. Use only parts of the passages that are germane to your position. You must follow formal mechanics rules. Example: write in 3rd person, present tense verbs, incorporate proper punctuation for all quotations. Also, you must be keenly aware of YOUR writing style for each entry: vary sentence beginnings, vary sentence lengths, use elevated register, etc.
- All entries **hand written** into a composition book. Part of my scoring is based upon the independence of your thoughts. One of the reasons that I chose this is because it does not appear on Spark Notes, etc.

Journal entries:

1. Structurally and thematically, how are the five chapters linked? What is the purpose of each? What would you title each chapter?
2. What effects do narrative and descriptive doubling and repetition achieve in the novel?
3. Exactly how does Hedayat create a sense of mystery and urgency in the novel? In other words, discuss techniques and effects.
4. How and where does Hedayat cross two cultures? What is the effect on the protagonist’s identity?
5. Examine the moments of peace that the protagonist experiences. What are the commonalities in those moments? Look at words, phrases, experiences. What differences are there? As a result, what can you conclude about the author’s concept of peace?
6. What roles are women assigned in the novel? To which woman or type of woman is the protagonist most attracted? When does he seem most sexually frustrated? What do his reactions suggest about him and about women in this era and culture?
7. Discuss how and why the protagonist becomes the old men who terrify him throughout the novel.
8. What details in the chapters undermine the narrator/protagonist’s credibility?
9. What is the significance of the protagonist’s job – decoration pen cases, especially in light of chapter 3 and his efforts to capture the dead girl’s face in Chapter 2.

10. Analyze the passage on page 139 (bottom) and page 140 (top) in which the narrator compares himself to the shadow of the blind owl. After reading the whole novel, what is the significance of the novel's title? Who or what IS the "blind owl"?