



University of Tehran press

Research in Contemporary World Literature

http://jor.ut.ac.ir, Email: pajuhesh@ut.ac.ir

p-ISSN : 2588-4131 e-ISSN: 2588 -7092

The Blind Owl Transformed: Indigenization Strategies in Ruiz's La Chouette Aveugle and Lynch's Lost Highway

Esmail Najar¹ 0000-0002-4004-0838 Mohammad Ali Mansourian ² 0009-0008-7846-2527

1. Department of Drama, College of Arts, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: najar@modares.ac.ir

2. Department of Drama, College of Arts, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: mansourian.m@modares.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Research Article

Article history:

Received: 24 May 2025

Received in revised form: 7 July 2025

Accepted: 8 July 2025

Published online: Autumn 2025

Keywords:

Adaptation, David Lynch, Indigenization, Raúl Ruiz, The Blind Owl

Extended Abstract

This study ventures into the vexed matter of indigenization in two cinematic re-creations of Sadegh Hedayat's *The Blind Owl*, that great Persian novel of inwardness and dread: Raúl Ruiz's *La Chouette Aveugle* and David Lynch's *Lost Highway*. Each film constitutes not merely an adaptation but an act of cultural reinscription, a remaking that insists upon the primacy of culture and vision over fidelity. The question, therefore, is not one of transposition from page to screen, but of what Linda Hutcheon (2006, p. xx) terms indigenization, the transformation of a text so that it speaks from within new cultural and aesthetic orders. Ruiz and Lynch, divided by geography yet curiously united by an obsession with exile, fracture, and hallucination, enact this process with radically distinct strategies. Ruiz's *Chouette* is a Chilean lament disguised as surrealist meditation: the themes of displacement, postcolonial dissonance, and the wandering exile are pressed upon Hedayat's phantasmagoria until it yields a meditation on cultural estrangement. Lynch, by contrast, seizes upon Hedayat's labyrinth of selves only to plunge it into the noir phantasm of late-American cinema. *Lost Highway* is not an echo but a doubling, an Americanizing of Hedayat through the idiom of dread and psychosis. The methodology here is comparative, combining close analysis of mise-en-scène and narrative structure with the tools of film interpretation. What emerges is that cultural context is not an accident of adaptation but its very ground. Without Chile, there is no Ruiz; without the peculiar malaise of late-twentieth-century America, there is no Lynch. Each film is a new work, owing its existence to Hedayat but owing its voice to a different world. The implications are unsettling. Adaptation, when seen through indigenization, ceases to be derivative; it becomes instead an act of invention. Ruiz invents Hedayat for the displaced. Lynch invents Hedayat for the American uncanny. Both remind us that adaptation is never innocent, always interventionist, and that culture, geography, and artistic temperament transform literature more radically than translation ever could.

Cite this article: Najar, E. , and Mansourian, M. A. . "The Blind Owl Transformed: Indigenization Strategies in Ruiz's *La Chouette Aveugle* and Lynch's *Lost Highway*" *Research in Contemporary World Literature*, 2025, 30 (2), 339-368. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jor.2025.395978.2652>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jor.2025.395978.2652>