

The Resonance of Postcolonialism in Hedayat's Stray Dog

Khalil Mahmoodi^{1,*}

Shanthini Pillai

Raihana M M

Esmail Zeiny Jelodar

Abstract: Sadegh Hedayat's *The Stray Dog* oscillates between two geographical locales, native homeland and the land of his master where he spent a part of his life there, Europe. This story can be read as the manifestation of the Iranian identity dilemma which is defined as a confused situation in which a sense of "*sardargomi va sargashtegi*" "confusion and wandering" began to materialize in the main character. This article, through analyzing the story as an allegorical story, will seek to explain the distinctive problem and condition of displacement encountered by an Iranian writer which arise feelings of isolation, estrangement, internal and external psychological trauma which at large prevents identities to be formed at either end and leads into final self destruction and death in Nolandia.

Key words: Self; Other; Unhomely; Sargashtegi; Sargardani

DOI: 10.3968/j.sll.1923156320110203.005

INTRODUCTION

The Cultural and economical dominance of Westerners shook the confidence of Iranian Intellectuals, especially those who had been sent by the government to Europe to educate. They lost their own confidence in their previously held belief in the special validity of Iranian civilization, leading them to a sort of rejection of their traditions and even their people. Rejection of the traditional world views that postulate God at the centre of things and human souls as having the prospect of unending spiritual salvation encouraged them to find themselves as figures who are separated and unappreciated by society. This imbues a sense of nihilism in the characterization, plot and theme of the *Stray Dog*.

Basically, *Stray Dog* depicts alienation, rejection, antipathy toward others, unhappiness, defeat, death, a deformed society, individuals deformed by fate and religion, and meaninglessness of life. Hedayat as an author could be argued to as much on a quest for meaning and for his own identity as the protagonist of the story. As the time and place-fractured narrative unfolds the reader is similarly drawn

¹ School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia, UKM.

* Corresponding Author. Email: Khalil.mahmoodi@gmail.com

† Received April 28, 2011; accepted May 29, 2011.

into the quest to discover the identity of the dog, and to unearth whether the “I” of identity can be maintained in the aftermath of trauma. He has been torn between the worlds of East and the West, trying to use the knowledge and skill taught by the wise fatherly European man to find his way through this unwanted world in which he is captivated but the imported knowledge seems to be inactive in the indigenous situation and it ends in failure and absolute abhorrent. The role of the dog in the short story is the narration of an intellectual who tries to answer the question of “what is the self?” Once the arbitrary social, national, and temporal labels of self have been cast off the dog becomes as close to “himself” as he can become. The dog himself reaches a state where he has almost completely lost any physical existence; his symbolic appearance as a dog is the mask of ‘no identity’ un-presentable identity or as according to Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 294), an identity of “no presence.”

STRAY DOG AS AN ALLEGORICAL STORY

There are many reasons that promoted me to look at Hedayat’s *Stray Dog* as an allegorical story. To be more precise, I see this short story as an allegory of the Hedayat’s life as an alienated intellectual who is renounced by his own society. This is because the dog is symbolic to Islamic society, in general and Iran, as a part of Islamic world in particular. Using a dog as the protagonist of this short story which is regarded as ‘unclean animal’ in the Islamic world that must be avoided will express Hedayat’s internal sense of self alienation and self-separation from his homeland in the best way possible. The other reason for my looking at the dog in the *Stray Dog* as the communal representative of the internally and mentally alienated intellectuals is the name that is given to the story, *Stray Dog*, carries the meaning “wanderer”, “vagabond” or “*sargashteh*” va “*sargardan*” in Farsi, depicting a man with no sense of belonging to any place.

“The theme is familiar from other of Hedayat’s psycho-fictions, except that in those other stories the stray and wandering being is not an animal but a human being” (Katouziyan, 2007, p. 182) What the protagonist of the *Stray Dog* realizes is that “his biggest problem is to be with others” and that he always feels he is an outsider everywhere. Taghi Modaresi (Felehgari, 2010, p. 2), one of the writers of the generation after Hedayat expresses his idea about the *Stray Dog* as follow:

Hedayat’s life is a continuous oscillation between secure and safe atmosphere which is bounded to keep the honor of father’s home and the foreign world. A world which he is deeply interested in as the source of inspiration for the innovation in the form and the structuring of story writing... in Paris he keeps his socialization with his old friends but his only connection is with a young man of twenty one years of age, named M.F. Farzaneh who was financially in shortage like him..; gives his life enjoyable and even tranquillizing moments. Like an excited child he visits the places he has already known in Paris... but such a connection for a person who is condemned to the oscillation between the familiar things and the exciting foreign world cannot last for a long time. Very soon the novelty of Paris becomes old and loses its beauty. Once again the writer of the *Blind Owl* empty-handed and without any relation with the old connections returns to the same loneliness and continuous vacuum.

Stray Dog as an allegorical story, pointing to a psychological as well as an ontological problem that a western-travelled Iranian educated intellectual have faced while returning home. These individuals who are captivated between two cultures, are caught in the “interstitial passage between fixed identifications” in which “the temporal movement and passage... prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 5). As such he fails to attach exclusively to one national identity over another and this initiated difficulties in creating a new subjectivity. Although the main character is living within his motherland home, he is still unhomed, because being “unhomed” is not the same as being homeless. To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home, because you are not at home in yourself. This cultural identity crisis prevents the protagonist from a cultural hybridity. It is not therefore accidental when in the description of Pat at the beginning of the story we read:

Two intelligent human eyes shone from his shaggy forehead; from the depths of those eyes shone a human soul with a message as impenetrable as the darkness that shrouded his whole being...Not only did his eyes resemble those of a human being--they had the same expression...filled with the pain, suffering (Hedayat, 1995, p. 1)

Self and Other View

Under circumstances in which Western-oriented ontological discipline was supporting the Western system and giving out evidences to rationalize the backwardness and intellectual inefficiency and the failure of Iranian leadership in administrating the country many Iranian literary modernists, owing to the 19th- and 20th-century Western literature, began to use a Self and Other view. Using this conceptual framework, they stand themselves apart from their traditional culture and people and give themselves the right to judge them. It is based on a division between the westerners and those who find themselves similar in thoughts and appearance to them, especially the westerly educated returnees, as the symbol of superior race and the Easterners as the Other, symbol of Inferiority (Said, 1978, p. 4). These modernist Iranian writers who "have constituted the one group of Iranians intimately acquainted with the West and Western ideas" and have been supposed to act as the consciousness of Iranians and the voice of the victimized people of their own time have fallen prey to westoxification. These westoxified subjects only mimic the progress and capabilities of Western modernity leaving their own characteristics and history behind. This artificial imposed identity creates a big rift between the metamorphosed individual and the homeland. Hedayat's story, *The Stray Dog*, focuses on an allegorical narration of a dog and his neocolonial imbalance and displacement. The dog's almost mythological migration from the West to the native homeland is a representation of the migrants 'free floating' from culture and history. The dislocation from the Western land and its culture into the traditional and native land is what happens to Hedayat. This is Hedayat's autobiographical and tragic story (kordi, 2009, Aryanpour, 2002, Dehbashi 2003).

Pat's misfortunes began when his rut came on; his master would not allow him out of the house to run after bitches. Then, as fate would have it, one autumn day his master and two others whom he knew and who often visited their house got into an automobile, called Pat and put him beside them in the car. Pat had travelled in a car with his master several times, but this time he was in heat and felt a special agitation and restlessness (Hedayat, 1995, p. 3).

According to Ale-Ahmad's theory of Westoxification, there are two kinds of westoxification, material and ideological. In the case of Iranian western educated intelligentsia, it is the ideological westoxification that has influenced these authors. This westernized ideological adaption initiated a sense of self alienation from the native cultural site and this made them to see themselves different from the rest of their countrymen (Ale-Ahmad, 1984). One of the aspects of these westernized inclinations flourished itself in the mode of rootlessness associated with a sense of fragmented self caused by a sense of not belonging. Hedayat's *Stray Dog* serves explaining not only personal alienation and a lack of self-understanding, but also the struggle to come to terms with the Iranian national identity. The metaphor speaks of a society that is prevalent with ugly outside influences, represented by all those who torture the dog to please Allah and is a society which has been raped and defeated of its beauty, represented by "plane tree that stubbornly spread its crooked and gnarled branches in every direction despite a rotted and hollowed-out trunks ... [and] a *juy* (a narrow stream) clotted with mud and dirt" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 1). This rootlessness is significantly shaped in the protagonist of the story. He is the personification of the struggle for identity; he is everything, and he is nothing. He is Iranian, but he is ugly and embraces a dark reality. At the end of the story, he astonishingly realizes that he belongs to neither of these two places, his master's home and his native home. This is why "he knew neither why he was running, nor where he was running" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 5) and finally while he was running between catching the car with the hope of finding a new master and *Varamin*, the city in which he was trapped, he loses his sensation, lying down on the ground with two vultures waiting to take his eyes out. In this story the duality of the colonial discourse and despair over fixing identities emerges as a "post colonial trope." In the metaphor taken to its extreme, the protagonist is brought back to order through death. The

protagonist falls to die in an undetermined, no-man's land which, on the one hand, seems like a barren territory but, on the other, foretells a representation of escape and displacement.

Sargastegi, sargardani, displacement and self fragmentation were taking place in discrepancies that stem from two traditions and cultural projects, among which the Western culture is hegemonic, in particular regarding the westerly educated intellectuals and writers. According to Michal C. Hillman (1982, p. 20)

These writers were literally stymied or co-opted by the regime, and ill-equipped to provide social or political direction to their readers. They were cynical, distrustful, pessimistic, and warred among themselves as much as with societal ills. It is hardly surprising that modernist Persian literature is mainly a literature of unhappy endings. Or, when the endings are not tragic, they often involve the telling resolution of the plot through the protagonist's withdrawal or escape from the situation that constituted the narrative conflict. Besides numerous poems and stories that embody Hedayatesque themes of the individual wishing he/she had never been born or hoping for a death that re-fuses to free one from life, modernist Persian literature is rife with social and political conflicts from which even the most sympathetic characters eventually extricate them-selves by leaving the conflicts and what appears to be Iran.

Most of these writers were encouraging the propagation of the Western ideas and values. Perhaps one of the greatest concerns of Al-e Ahmad who expressed the fear about the modern Iranian literary writers was that "modernist Persian literature could very well lose its Iranian identity through not recognizing and utilizing its Iranian roots" (Hillman, 1982, p. 24). What are the impacts and signs of Gharbzadagi? According to Jalal Al-e Ahmad (Arbus, 2009, p. 16), it is the plague of the West, attacks Iranians from within, leaving them as mere shells of human beings. He asserts that Gharbzadagi begins by attacking Iran's economy both through Western governments and oil companies and ends up with complete takeover and transformation of cultural identity of Iran. The result of this cultural attack is the transformation of cultural of the people into Occidentotic individuals who "are like strangers to ourselves, in our food and dress, our home, our manners, our publications, and most dangerous our culture" (Ahmad, 1984, p. 57). Garbzadagi brings about the inculcation of Orientalized values and culture in the native people and in consequence prevents them from rebelling against the dominant question. This constructs colonial subjects, colonial individuals who have strong faith in superiority of the Westerners and therefore in their own inferiority.

This promotes a sense of imitation within these people and simultaneously makes them attempt hard to be allowed to enter into the colonizers' world and creates a sense of shame within the colonized subjects concerning their motherland culture. The totality of these two undercurrent flows brings about the construction of the colonial subjects with the associated double consciousness, a way of being caught between two cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community (Tyson, 2006, p. 421). Bhabha refers to this 'ambiguous', in-between space/secluded consciousness, complicated ambivalence in the personality of those crossing cultures to establish several socio-political niches. He proposed "that metamorphoses occur in the process of migration from the Indian subcontinent to the former imperial centre" (Black, 2006, p. 165). What we encounter in this story is a type of western personality which is not plural, but rather fragmented. This self fails to bring the opposites into a reconciliation or unification. "To say that they can merge is to introduce compatibility between them and to deny their essential contrast and conflict... union of opposites is a chimera" (Jung, 1999, p. 5)

Binary Opposition and Intentional Usage of a Dog as the Protagonist

The whole story is built on the basis of binarism. Good in the opposite of bad, Islamic society in the opposite of European society and the Europeans who are represented in the configuration of the Dog's master and his son in the opposite of the natives, materialized in the configuration of the rice-custard vendor, the errand boy, the apprentice and the baker. According to Ashcroft (2001, p. 23)

Binarism comes from 'binary', meaning a combination of two things, a pair, 'two', duality (OED), this is a widely used term with distinctive meanings in several fields and one that has

had particular sets of meanings in post-colonial theory. The binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible – sun/moon; man/woman; birth/death; black/white. Such oppositions, each of which represents a binary system, are very common in the cultural construction of reality.

Binary oppositions are structurally connected with one another, and in colonial discourse there may be a degree of diversity of the one underlying binary – colonizer/colonized – that becomes reemphasised and re-expressed in any particular text in many different ways (Ashcroft et al, 2001).

The Stray Dog is mostly regarded by the critics as one of Hedayat's powerful stories which manifestly depict loneliness and homelieness. Apparently this story is only a simple description of the miserable condition of a dog in the Muslim countries, where it is religiously regarded as an unclean animal, or perhaps the most valueless and loathful creature which is avoided and even outcaste. However, Lashgari (1982, p. 37) believes that Hedayat as "seems clearly to have intended it as parable of...an outcast in relation to the rest of the society." Being unable to communicate, to be understood or to be loved, deprived in body and spirit, he can only "endure through the memory of a lost home and hope of a new one." (Lashgari, 1982, p. 37)

The story takes place in and around the "square of *Varamin*" and it is all about a dog named Pat. The square is filled with so many shops which contains in its shops "all it takes to...supply life's essential needs." Everything within the square suffers from the cruel heat of midday, and it seems everybody is looking forward to the "First breeze of evening and the shadow of night." Meanwhile, though, in the shade of an old sycamore—dusty, twisted, and hollow inside—two small boys shout their wares. And a "thick, muddy stream drags itself laboriously along" by the side of the square. Pat is a Scottish purebred or an aristocratic dog whose master stops for a short time in the square of *Varamin* to take a rest after being on a long trip. Having been sensually attracted to a bitch, he follows her and ends up getting trapped in the drains which lead to the garden of the bitch's owners. By the time pat succeeds to release himself from the drains, wounded, exhausted, and hungry, his master who has lost his hope to find Pat, drives off and leaves him behind in an apparently unknown world or according to Said, the world of 'Impurities' (Said, 1994, p. 15). At midnight he wakes up at his own moaning. He roams around the city and he finally returns to the square where someone throws a piece of bread at him. After a moment of hesitation, Pat ate the bread and wagged his tail for the man. The man who is carrying bread puts a loaf of bread on the platform and asks Pat to eat it and then he opens the collar around his neck but as soon as he wags his tail for the man again with the hope of getting more bread, his side was visited by a hard kick, and he ran off crying. From that day onwards Pat had not received anything from these people except kicks, bricks, blows by wooden clubs, as if they were all Pat's mortal enemies and took pleasure from torturing it.

Sometimes these people hit him; at other times they give him something to eat, but as soon as he gets busy eating it, they ask for the price by kicking and stoning him. It was only on one occasion that someone treats him nicely: a man driving through the village just like pat's master. "He took pieces of bread, dipped them in yogurt and threw them to Pat. Greedily at first and, later, more slowly, Pat ate the bread. Out of helplessness and a sense of gratitude, he fixed his beautiful brown eyes on the man's face and wagged his tail for him" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 5). For once "Pat had a hearty meal without the meal being interrupted by beating" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 5). Pat began to pursue the man and he also caressed him from time to time. But very soon he went into his car and drove off. Having been crushed and upset, Pat ran after the car with the whole of its existence; He ran and ran until he fell down with total exhaustion. After "two winters" of wandering around, living with hunger, being beaten and, worst of all, loneliness and hopelessness, Pat had lost the will to live. He lost hopes, lying down in death agony, while three vultures hovered over its head waiting "to pull out its hazel eyes." Lagarshi states (1982, p. 38) that Hedayat in a paradoxical sentence, describes the dog Pat not only as "a symbol for man, but, doubling back, defines himself as a homeless dog." When everything becomes so unbearable to tolerate he soaks himself into the world of memories of his past life—when he owned a home and a master who cared for him and loved him and had some responsibilities to do in return.

The story starts with a description of the location which seems to be totally cursed. The land of rotten, deformed and diseased trees, mentally ill and in terms of behaviour savage people.

This is the way Hedayat (1995, p. 1) describes the city:

On one side of the square was an ancient plane tree that stubbornly spread its crooked and gnarled branches in every direction despite a rotted and hollowed-out trunk. In the shade of its dust-laden leaves sat a large and spacious platform from which two boys hawked their wares, rice custard and pumpkin seeds. The water running in the juy in front of the cafe, clotted with mud and dirt, pulled on ever so sluggishly.

Later on we realise it is the land of people who torture, beat and hurt the dog, the protagonist, to please Allah. "In their eyes, the torture of an unclean dog, cursed by religion and possessed of seven lives, was quite natural and worthy of eternal reward. To please Allah, they beat him" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 1). This way Hedayat intentionally tries to show how the relationship between followers of Islam and dogs is strange and almost schizophrenic. "Most followers of Islam detest dogs, saying they are unclean beasts, they often neglect, mistreat dogs" (G.M. Woerlee, 2008, p. 1). Hedayat continues saying that "The only building worthy of attention in this miserable hamlet was the famous Varamin Tower, of which half of the cracked cylindrical body and the conical top were visible." (Hedayat, 1995, p. 1) The point that seems very important to mention here is Hedayat's hatred for the Islamic culture and his love for the past history of Iran deployed in the monument of Varamin Tower, a sense that stayed with Hedayat to the last seconds of his life.

Mental Oscillation and in-between Identity

This traumatic cultural placelessness within which one resides is referred to by Homi Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994) as unhomeliness. To be homeless means that you do not feel at home even in your home because you are not at home in yourself; your cultural oscillation deforms you into a psychological refugee, with no place to take refuge in, where you fail to produce a new subjectivity. Corollary to this, colonialism and according to Al-e Ahmad (1984) westoxification fabricates a type of person who is psychologically double-visioned, divided between two antagonistic cultures. This double-consciousness often constructs a shaky sense of self called colonial subject, which is triggered by mimicry, the copying of the other culture, usually the Westernised culture. This results in the fabrication of in-betweenness. Fanon (1967) calls this intellectual as an in-between subject, who is neither accepted by the West nor can be absorbed by the natives.

The story of the *Stray Dog* is the narration of a person who has been isolated from all the places or it is better to claim the story of someone who is driven out from here and left out from there, "in-between". The representation of a colonial subject who cannot come to terms with his traditional atmosphere; an alienated figure who has been separated from his master and got captivated in another atmosphere. Although it seems familiar and perhaps he has roots in that world, he is completely strange with it, because he has stepped into it from another world, the European world, the world of better people. "Although they resembled his master, [these people] differed from him in feeling, behaviour and temperament. It was as though the people in the past were closer to his world; they comprehended his predicament and sympathized with him. They supported him" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 2). Pat is the story of an individual who has no other choices but surrendering at the moment of confrontation the West because it is higher and much more developed. An individual, who has failed to hold firm all his strands with his maternal, traditional, social life and homeland, tolerates a double-consciousness identity which imposes a sense of being double and double-living on him. There is no doubt that such a person will gradually become isolated and lonely among his familial members and fails to transfer what he has inherited to the future generation because his parents have been born in another atmosphere and has no connection of any kinds with his own world.

The situation of Pat, at the end of the story, is like Hedayat's life (Aryanpour, 2002). Hedayat, like the protagonist of his story was born in an affluent family and he had pains totally different from the ordinary people. The pains of Hedayat are the pain of loneliness and "unhomely", the pain of

inarticulateness and the pain of being alone. His pains are the pain of those who have considered their society backward. Fundamentally, most of his works which are mostly classified as romantic nationalism are mostly taking steps toward the Reza Shah's politics and encourages the blood purification and racial superiority. Undoubtedly the *Stray Dog* is one of the most interesting works of Hedayat, because it can be taken as the story of a defeated writer or an intellectual after Constitutional Revolution who has cut off all his connections with his traditional and homely roots. Therefore, one might assert that he is like a wander dog and not a *Stray Dog*, because he is strange to his own native world.

This dog had been ignored by everybody. Whoever saw him either kicked him or throw a stone at him and went away. They even did not turn their face back to see the flowing blood of their stoning. According to Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1977, p. 183) the prominent work of Hedayat is *the Stray Dog* that belongs to another world and had another master and had fallen like a stranger in our world and was convicted to suffer and to fall out of breath at the side of the road. This is the greatest metaphor in the confirmation of what we can say about the westernized intellectuals who are settled in his native atmosphere but are totally isolated from it and he/she is always nostalgic for another place and another master.

Basically the picture that Hedayat portrays of himself in the *Stray Dog* is based on conclusive representation in which everything and every picture of a tradition-struck society like Iran seems to be fixed and unchangeable. The dog is not essentially a vagabond but an outcast that is driven away from everywhere, a point that Hedayat does not assert directly but it is completely obvious through the unwritten layers of the story. The dog is the symbol of an outcast who has come from the Western societies who can be understood and respected only by his owner who is the representation and the superiority of the West and a better culture. As soon as the dog moves away from his true homeland, his secure land, a sense of psychological frustration, internal breakage which is inherently hidden within him reveals. It immediately surfaces as soon as it departs from the cosmopolitan city and it transforms into a type of harsh alienation. Moreover, the main character's experience signifies a level of the Iranian dilemma, in which the internal exile which ensued as the consequence of psychological ejection from Iran's socio-political realm becomes a source of self-alienation. This Internal exilic experience is also characteristic of unhomeliness in the sense that it "relates the traumatic ambivalence of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunction of political existence" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 15). In other words, Hedayat's internalized exile in Iran and later on in a type of self-imposed exile in France leads to a complete estrangement from political sympathy and artistic status in Iranian society.

This sense of not belonging to a place will initiate an ambivalent feeling which gradually leads into the embodiment of a roaming figure, *Avareh*, (vagabond). This feeling makes him as "paralyzed or suspended in an unreal limbo or purgatory (*barzakh*) unable to move forward into a new life, unable to return to their roots. (Fischer and Abedi 255 qtd in Ghorashi, 2003, p. 102) The *Avareh* (vagabond) "refers to homelessness and views the new society as a prison" (Ghorashi, 2003, p. 102). This is exactly what the narrator of the story feels, "During the two winters since he had entered this hell" (Hedayat, 1942, p. 2). To enter this world can drive a person insane- unless one manages to hold on to something. "Pat feels dizzy and tired...confused...A mixture of dread and apprehension seized him. How could Pat survive without his master, his God? His master was like a deity! Surely his master would come back, seeking him out. Terrified, he ran down several roads, but his searches were useless" (Hedayat, 1995, p. 3).

As such, the main character, the dog (the western trained writer) clings to memory, daydream, fantasy and fiction to avoid a lapse into insanity. Hedayat's exilic experiences (internal and physical) and especially the narratives of the *Stray Dog* and *Blind Owl* reflect Zarrin's theory (2007, p. 25) that "exile has no specific geographic realm. One can experience in his homeland the psychological and mental conditions of exile." Hedayat's inner exile was a condition that made him an outsider within his own society (Said, 2000, p. 52). Metaphysical exiles, according to Edward Said, are "at odds with their society and therefore outsiders and exiles so far as privileges, power, and honors are concerned." (Faber, 2006, p. 27) much like a prisoner, inner exiles experience conditions of isolation, alienation, and a sense

of a fragmented self caused by the accompanying sense of “unbelonging” (McClennen, 2004, pp. 38-39).

Double Consciousness and Construction of Self-duality

Double consciousness often leads into a sense of instability in the self-being. Migration is one of the major elements in the intensification of such rupture in the Self rendered by the forced migration colonialism caused either in the form of migration from the rural areas to the cities in search of employment or migration to the western countries in search of new knowledge, something which happened to countries like Iran. This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorders but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives, is referred to by Homi Bhabha (Huddart, 2006) and others as “unhomeliness.” The central theme of the Hedayat’s *Stray Dog* more or less moves around the problem of displacement of the protagonist who is suffering from a split in personality. He portrays all of the symptoms of postcolonial individuals who are mentally and socially alienated. The alienation of the characters colonial identity anticipates Dubois’ writings about the “double consciousness” of being both a Black person in skin color and an American who mentally identifies with White people and European culture (Black, 2007). The problem of being alienated from their own traditional culture and at same time being unable to fit themselves into modernity, produce a big distance between the characters and the context in which they are living. This makes them alone in their confusion, and unable to find anyone in the same predicament. Being caught in the middle of the East/West duality, they are the very embodiment of double consciousness. The sense of displacement, the feeling of not belonging to any place and the sense of alienation are the major problems which lead to the catastrophe of identity, (Al-e Ahmad, 2003). the major focus of this study. These are what exactly traceable and directly or indirectly implied in the *Stray Dog*.

The dilemma of identity is totally obvious in *Stray Dog*. Metaphorically it represents an educated westernized person who is not able to assimilate into his homeland after he had been held in respect among his western masters for a long time. On a trip to his traditional homeland, he goes after a native female (female dog) to satisfy his sexual desires and since he is totally strange with native Iranian women (female dogs) and the atmosphere, he would be rejected by both. Here, he represents a living being who had been left behind from both and nothing but hopelessness, despair and at the end death are what he achieves. Fundamentally what is so revealing about Pat, the main character, is that he is not either able to get along with the people among whom he seemingly had been caught because whatever he struggles to find his master leads to failure and nor any other female dogs. This signals his extreme alienation, a living being has been captivated and is not able to build a relationship between what he used to be and what he is now, or in fact a hybridization. He fails to transgress the borders to create a hybrid space that moves out from in-between and maintain facets of the European culture while engaging with spaces of his homeland. Hedayat in *Stray Dog* says “[his] two brown eyes were filled with the pain, suffering and expectation characteristic of the face of a vagabond dog, nobody saw or comprehended his painful, beseeching expression.” A world in which as McLeod (2000, p. 217) asserts “at the border, past and present, inside and outside no longer remain separated as binary opposites but instead commingle and conflict.” What leads such a relation apparently ends in failure according to the picture drawn by the narrator, the hidden author, are the tradition-stricken and religious people who do not give out anything of themselves but brutality and primordial behaviors.

The dog tries so many times to approach the tradition-stricken people and according to the presented pictures these people are underdeveloped who welcomes him either by stoning or kicking and if they treated him kindly they intend to misuse him like the passerby who gives him a piece bread to open the collar around his neck. “The man then put the bread on the platform of the shop and fearfully and cautiously petted Pat on the head. Using both hands, he unfastened Pat’s collar” (Hedayat, 1995, p. 4).

CONCLUSION

The enduring exploitation of formerly full colonised and semi colonised countries like Iran and the dictatorship of Reza shah and continued reliance upon the imperial power and the West in general brought about a sense of confusion of selfhood for the individual and for the whole nation. Among these people, Iranian intellectuals and literary writers found themselves lived in a void conditions with no ability to construct a unique personal and recognizable selves from different sources. Many of these intellectuals, including Sadegh Hedayat, were not schooled using textbooks reflecting their particular social and cultural situations, or had Western instructors; even their religions did not reflect their own indigenous religious history.

These complex and perplexed conditions inflicted a sort of polemical and contradictory identity which produced a self with multi-layered and essentially fractured elements. These boiling pot situations rendered these intellectuals fail to access the suitable language of communication with the indigenous people and made them to get caught in a situation of bewilderment and in-between status with a sense of not belonging to either pole. This sense of *sargashtegi va sargardani*, confusion and wandering, is completely observable in the story of *Stray Dog*.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, J. A. (1984). *Occidentosis: A plague from the west*. Berkeley: Mizan Press.
- Ahmad, J. A. (2003). Hedayat's Buf-e Kur (Literary Memory about Sadegh Hedayat). In A. Dehbashi (Ed.), *Be yad-e sadegh hedayat (On the memory of Sadegh Hedayat)*. Tehran: Sales publisher.
- Arbus, M. (2009). *Writing the West: Modern Iranian intellectuals and the occidentalist discourse*. Dalhousie University.
- Aryanpour, Y. (2002). *Zendegi va asar-e sadegh Hedayat (Life and the works of Sadegh Hedayat)*. Tehran: Zavaar Publications.
- Ashcroft, B. (2007). *Post-colonial Transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Black, M. (2007). Fanon and dubouisian double consciousness. *Human architecture: Journal of the sociology of self-knowledge*.
- Dehbashi, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Be Yad-e Sadegh Hedayat (In the Memory of Sadegh Hedayat)*. Tehran: Sales.
- Fa'lehgary, M. (2010). Cheragh Keshan, Retrieved November 23, 2010 from www.tebyan.net/index.aspx?pid
- Faber, S. (2006). The privileged of pain: The exile as ethical model in Max Aub, Francisco Ayalia, and Edward Said. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Crossroads*, 3.
- Frantz, F. (1967). *Black skin, white mask*. New York: Grove Press.
- Ghoreishi, H. (2003). *Ways to survive, battels to win*. Hauppauge: Nova Publishers.
- Hedayat, S. (1995). *Seg-e Velgard (The Stray Dog)*. Tranated by Iraj Bashiri. Retrived December 12, 2010, from <http://www.angelfire.com/rnb/bashiri/Stories/The Stray Dog.html>
- Hillmann, M. C. (1982). The modernist trend in persian and its social impact. *Iranian studies*,15.
- Huddart, D. (2006). *Homi K. Bhabha*. New York: Routledge
- Jung, C. G. (1999). *Man and His Symbols*. Translated by Dr. Mahmoud Soltanieh. Tehran: Jaam Publications

- Katouzian, H. (2007). *Sadegh Hedayat: His work and his wondrous world*. London: Routledge.
- Kordi, M. (2009). *Seg-e Velgard Rouyeh Digar-e Sagi Keh Mara Sharmandeh Khod Kard*. Retrieved March 21, 2011 from <http://mohsenKord.blogspot.com>
- Lashgari, D. (1982). Absurdity and creation in the work of Sadegh Hedayat. *Iranian studies*, 15(1-4).
- McClennen, S. A. (2004). *The dialectics of exile*. Purdue: Purdue University Press.
- McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Said, E. (1994). *Representations of the Intellectuals*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Said, E. (2000). *Reflections on exile and other essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University.
- Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide*. New York: Routledge.
- Zarrin, A. R. (2007). *Morouri Bar Chisti-ye Adbiyat-e Mohajerat va Tab'id-e Iran (A glance at the essence of Iranian emigration and exile literature)*. Tehran: Arash.
- Zamaniniya, M. (1983). *Farahng-e Jala Al-e Ahmad (The dictionary of Jalal Al-e Ahmad)*. Tehran: Mo'asar Publications.
- Woerlee, G. M. (2008). *Islam and Dogs*. Retrieved March 14, 2011, from <http://www.woerleenet.nl>.