



Woman in Culture and Arts

The Phenomenology of Estrangement in Goli Taraghi's Stories (Case Study: The Incident, Two Worlds, and Scattered Memories)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 18 December 2024 Received in revised form: 9 July 2025 Accepted: 1 November 2025 Published online: 1 July 2026</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Alfred Shutes, Estrangement, Goli Taraghi, Phenomenology.</i></p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Estrangement is an existential, archetypal concept and an eternal experience that is shared by all humans. It is a sentiment that is rooted in humanity's nostalgic inclination toward the past—an emotional, abstract phenomenon that is rooted in human relationships. By examining its various dimensions, new insights into the interactive experiences between humans and their lifeworlds can be gained. Throughout history, many thinkers and scholars have explored this concept from diverse perspectives, particularly within the humanities, including philosophy, mysticism, and psychology. Phenomenology, as a methodological tool for understanding existential phenomena, offers an effective framework for recovering and redefining the meaning of estrangement through various levels of human experience.</p> <p>Phenomenology is an experiential approach that facilitates the awareness of the perceptual aspects of an object or concept, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of it. According to phenomenologists, the recognition of the "sameness" of phenomena is achieved through various experiential levels, including direct, indirect, historical, and anticipatory.</p> <p>The primary objective of this study is to elucidate the dimensions of estrangement in the works of Goli Taraghi (1939) and to examine the diverse aspects of this concept in her narratives. Estrangement is depicted in Taraghi's works as an experiential-historical and lifeworld phenomenon that is experienced in different forms by different individuals. Taraghi has endeavored to elucidate this concept from multiple perspectives for her readers, having personally experienced migration and the resulting sense of estrangement. As estrangement is the central theme and structural axis of her stories, a phenomenological examination of this concept can offer a more profound understanding of estrangement as perceived by Goli Taraghi and, by extension, the migrant individual, given that a substantial portion of her work is classified as migration literature.</p> <p>In Taraghi's narratives, estrangement is a multifaceted phenomenon. In her opinion, the "sameness" of this concept is reflected in the multiplicity of its meanings. Moreover, the universal and abstract "sameness" of estrangement in actuality is connected to the totality of estrangement in her perspective. Thus, the objective of this investigation is not to investigate the absolute concept of estrangement, but rather to concentrate on the comprehensive depiction of estrangement in Taraghi's narratives. The phenomenological claim that "sameness lies beyond the realm of phenomena" (Sokolowski, 2007: 81) and that "the existence of sameness is to some extent elusive and evasive" (Sokolowski, 2007: 81) is consistent with this approach.</p> <p>Taraghi has authored numerous books in which estrangement and nostalgia, along with the reality of migration, are particularly prominent. The writer and her characters are enveloped by these themes, which are akin to the inseparable boundaries of a geometric figure. In other words, estrangement, along with its significant consequence—nostalgia—functions as an invisible thread that unites all components of Taraghi's narratives. Three of her works are particularly suitable for examining the motif of estrangement in her thought and writing: <i>The Incident</i>, <i>Two Worlds</i>, and the short story collection <i>Scattered Memories</i>.</p>

The author endeavors to illustrate the dual and continuous aspects of migration, which are nostalgia and estrangement, in "The Incident." "Scattered Memories" is a collection of eight stories, while "Two Worlds" is a collection of seven stories, continuing some of the narratives introduced in Scattered Memories. In this research, the first story of Two Worlds, titled "The First Day," is specifically analyzed.

As the feeling of estrangement is an enduring and ever-present experience in the life of an estranged individual, it plays a critical role in shaping their ontological perspective. An individual can gain a more comprehensive comprehension of themselves by recognizing the diverse aspects, effects, and consequences of estrangement on their mind, psyche, and lifestyle. Additionally, the examination of the detrimental effects of estrangement may provide effective solutions for mitigating its deleterious repercussions. Accordingly, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most conspicuous manifestations of estrangement in Goli Taraghi's stories, and how are they depicted in the images, dialogues, and descriptions?
2. What are the various levels of human experience that influence the perception of estrangement in her stories?

Methodology

Phenomenology is a method that is effective in the conceptual comprehension of concrete and abstract manifestations of existence. Consequently, it has the potential to be employed to elucidate the human concept of estrangement, which is a critical subject in the recognition of human identity. The current research has examined the subject of estrangement by employing the methodical approaches of phenomenology, specifically Husserl Schutz's phenomenological method, and the qualitative method based on phenomenology, as it is the human interaction with the social environment and, in other words, the world - his life. Qualitative research is a practical and effective approach to the investigation of a variety of human sciences, particularly in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, and gender studies. This is due to the fact that it allows the researcher to utilize the necessary methods to comprehend social subjects. It is important to note that the research is implemented through a library, and the statistical community consists of stories titled "The Incident" and "The First Day" from the collections "Two Worlds" and "Scattered Memories."

Results

The research results suggest that the experiences of estrangement in Taraghi's works are the result of four experiential levels: direct, indirect, historical, and anticipatory. The most prominent manifestations of estrangement are observed in themes such as the desire to return, escapism, and loneliness, which are the result of a variety of factors, including the emergence of various conflicts, environmental and climatic incompatibilities, cultural and linguistic disconnections, a sense of otherness or alienation experienced by migrants, non-acceptance of migrants by the host country, non-acceptance of the host land as "home" by migrants, fear of the host society, and identity anxiety, among others.

Conversely, cultural disillusionment and the desire to assimilate into the host culture, as well as striving for uniformity and conformity with it, represent other dimensions disclosed through the experiential perceptions of Taraghi's characters.

Conclusion

In Taraghi's stories, estrangement is a comprehensive concept that is derived from its eternal and absolute essence, as well as a perception of this phenomenon within her lifeworld. Taraghi endeavors to depict a universal abstraction through the diverse experiences of her characters, but it is an entity that is distinct from the actual concept of estrangement in the external world. Furthermore, she strives to communicate the interactions between her characters and estrangement to her readers through a variety of representations. The multiple dimensions of estrangement in Taraghi's stories result from the diverse perceptual experiences of her characters and reflect four distinct experiential levels. Collectively, they create a thorough representation of the "sameness" of estrangement as it is

perceived by migrant individuals and as it is understood by Taraghi.

Examining the motif of estrangement from a phenomenological perspective illuminates the neglected and unknown aspects of this phenomenon in Taraghi's stories, while also providing a more profound epistemological comprehension of modern humanity and its lifeworld.

Conflict of Interest

This article is free of any conflicts of interest.

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