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The Study of Goli Taraghi's Fiction in the Light of the Migration Literature Theory

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Abstract:

The study of the general framework of migration literature shows that the major principle of this literature is that the author or the protagonist of his work does not cling to his past ethnic morals, cultural traditions or the happy memories of the lost fatherland. Rather, the protagonist of the migrant work endlessly recreates itself in its daily encounters with the new forms of social life it is experiencing in the new environment. Goli Taraghi is the Persian migrant author, living in France, and her works are frequently labeled as the migrant literature. The present research aims to approve the fact that Taraghi's characters live in their world of past memories and most of her stories describe the events through a nostalgic lens which excludes this author's works from the circle of migration literature.

Keywords: migration literature, hybridity, nostalgia, Taraghi

1- Introduction

Migration, the phenomenon that is defined as "the movement of large numbers of people, birds or animals from one place to another" (Oxford Advanced Dictionary, 7th ed.), has a history of hundreds of years. In its modern usage, it refers to the trend of displacement and movement made by individuals with the hope to find more personal convenience or better their material or social conditions. Among the huge amount of the migrants, there have always been intellectuals and artists who had left their land willingly or by force and chosen another spot of this infinite world to live in. Examples can be taken from among Arab, Lebanese or Palestinian poets who desperately left their homelands after their occupation by the colonizers. Edward said, the Palestinian literary theorist and public intellectual who is a founding figure of the critical field of post colonialism, migrated to America in his youth and is known to world through his powerful storytelling of the characters who are migrant like himself, and for his fundamental role in the struggles of the Palestinian people to regain their cultural identity (Bove' 8).

However, the migration of the intellectuals is not limited to the third world countries and this trend includes the developed countries such as Ireland, Spain, Greece and the old Soviet Union. As a result, such great figures as James Joyce, Milan Kundra, Alexander Nabokov and Joseph Conrad could successfully gain the universal attention by creating memorable masterpieces and even win the Nobel Prize for literature.

That's how a new type of literature has emerged which is called the literature of migration and whose aim is to illustrate various narratives of the social, cultural,

economic and political aspects of the migrant's lives in their alien conditions of the host societies.

To speak generally, migration literature would have to include all works "that are produced in a time of migration or that can be said to reflect on migration" (Adelson; Cited in walkowitz 533). This means that to be a migrant writer or even describe the character's experience of migration in the work of literature does not necessarily classify the author's work as the literature of migration. A work has to possess some certain characteristics in order to be considered as a migrant piece.

One of these features is that the migrant protagonist is depicted in its struggles between the limbo of the past and the shadowed future beyond. The characters suffer from confusion; the confusion over "past" and "present", "home" and "away" and "here" and "there". What comes up as the result of these conflicts is a "self – recognition", and understanding of the selfhood which is not confined to any particular nation, culture or geographical place. It is a universal and transnational identity. "The awareness of multi-locality stimulates the need to conceptually connect oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there'" (Vertovec 18). Thus, migration literature is composed of "ever-changing representations which provide an imaginary coherence for a set of malleable identities" (ibid).

Most critics of modern Persian literature would agree that the Persian migrant literature forms an inseparable and significant part of the modern Iranian literary trend, in which such concepts as identity, othering, nationality, unfulfilled hopes and unfamiliar spaces challenge the current themes of traditional literature back then. By the acceleration of the Iranian migration trend, a great number of intellectuals and artists have spread around the world and established publication centers and created so various forms of books, magazines and professional journals that "the contemporary history of Iran is not possible to be composed while neglecting this branch of the tree of the Persian literature" (Saifi 26).

Goli Taraghi (1949), the Iranian writer, having been living in France for about 25 years, and the author of several works of fiction such as *Two worlds (1381)*, *A mansion in the skies (2003)* and *Scattered Memories (1992)*, is considered by critics in various anthologies to be a migrant Persian author (Mirabedini 1403). However, the fact which is ignored is that living outside the geographical borders of one's country does not necessarily result in the classification of one's work as the literature of migration and a work should meet some certain requirement to acquire such labeling.

The aim of the present research is to study a number of Taraghi's short stories in order to show the fact that the term "migration literature" should be applied by the critics with more care and attention. The researchers intend to find an answer for this crucial question: does living as a migrant writer guarantee the produced works to be migrant literature? In particular, to what extent does Taraghi's fiction correspond to the framework of migration literature, assumed and defined by such postcolonial critics as Edward Said or Homi Bhabha?

Finally, the authors of this research feel the obligation to mention the important point that for Taraghi's works to be classified as migration literature or not does not decrease the value and significance of the writer's attempts at all. That's just a remainder – and a crucial one – for the critics within the country to study the principles of literary criticism and the basic rules of every form of literature before granting literary productions labels which seem to be proper merely in appearance.

2- Migration Phenomenon: An Overview

Migration is certainly not a recent phenomenon; on the contrary, it has been part of the human history since its very beginning. International organization of Migration (IOM) traces the history of migration back to prehistoric era. It explains how the historians and anthropologists agree that major climatic shifts would have provided the impetus for large-scale migratory flows. While we do not know exactly how prehistoric populations moved over the earth's surface, in Europe, for instance, there would have been movements southward to escape the spread of ice sheets during periods of glaciations, and reverse migration northward after the glaciers melted. (IOM, Migration in History 7)

Early myths and legends in many parts of the world often refer not only to ancestors who came from afar, but also to natural disasters that led them to leave their place of origin or the desire for adventure that motivated them to leave. In either case, the matter to consider is the knowledge they came with or the skills they brought to their new locations.

All of these population transfers helped shape the modern world by producing profound and lasting changes in lifestyle, language and culture, social and economic structures, and political and administrative systems. Piore (1979) argues that a crucial turning point in the history of migration occurred about 500 years ago "with the voyages undertaken by European explorers that led initially to the discovery of 'new worlds' such as Americas and Asia, and then on to the development of colonial endeavors" (21). The most important factors influencing transoceanic migration were "mercantile and strategic" (ibid). All major European economic and political powers competed for access to supplies of much-sought-after commodities and control of strategic locations. "The gathering of detailed and reliable geographical knowledge", "the production of accurate maps", and the development of "new technology" such as navigational instruments" and safer and faster seagoing vessels are among the factors combined to create the appropriate conditions for the migration flow in this period of time in history (23).

The emergence of new industrial technologies, the mechanization of means of production, and the reinforcement of industrial activity, all contributed to the displacement of large number of people. The wealth built up in European colonizer's countries through their colonial exploitation was to provide the foundation for an industrial revolution that would, in turn, create the impulse for a period of renewed and intense migratory activity. Instant fortunes were rarely achieved, but a wide range of opportunities for economic improvement was available on farms and ranches, on road and railway construction sites, or in fast-growing industrial complexes (Granovetter 482). Thus, the main reason for moving home during the 19th was to find work.

The period between the two World Wars became a time of reduced international migrations. This was due, partly, to economic stagnation, and in part to the general decline of uncertainty and insecurity. The Second World War is often identified as another important epoch in the history of migration. Migration at this time began with the expansion of Hitler's Germany and later through forced or inevitable evacuations with people attempting to escape from the war and the relocations which followed in its wake.

So, a great number of displacements, in particular in Europe, after World War II belonged to the victims of persecution, who took refugees in other countries to flee maltreatment. This was the beginning of a new era in the history of our time which

many experts call "an age of unparalleled mobility, migration and border crossing" (Moslund 1). This has become a distinguishing figure of the postwar world and acquired a central position in contemporary literary and cultural studies. The contributing factors that accelerated mass migration and global movement in the present time are various and the conjunction of several historical events have led to this phenomenon. Among the social and political factors, one can refer to the countless regional wars, the process of decolonization, and the emergence of totalitarian regimes that played major roles in bringing about the waves of migrants, refugees and exiles.

The last decades of the 20th century were characterized by an increase in the movement of goods and people internationally. This constant movement is known as globalization (Ros et al 6). Distances have shrunk and ease of movement has become the key factor in international communications. Globalization has created an "interconnected" society, or in the words of Castells (1996) "a networked society" (1149).

3- The Birth of the Migration Literature

Human displacement, with whatever reason, is manifested in cultural artifacts of many kinds – new forms of dress, of food cultures and of consumerism, new styles of music and of poetry, new political ideologies, new forms of literary productions. All of these can be seen to have their own claims in their professional fields. However, the aim and focus of this study is to explore just one aspect of these representation – that of literary output – and apply it to an individual work with a migratory record.

A vast amount of scholarly literature on the role of migration in literary history has been written the past fifty years or so. Characteristic of this literature is that it deals primarily with postcolonial themes, which means that migration is regarded as a phenomenon strongly related to marginalized people or the subalterns. This is how migration literature is born – if not to say from the postcolonial mother – in close association with the postcolonial studies. If migration literature is the story of wanderings, postcolonialism can be a good context for its study and a proper basis to understand the characters that are considered as minorities in their new homelands. A great portion of migration literature tends to highlight those aspects of human conditions through the study of individual cases. This includes the individual's relation with others, the matter of language, the multiple identities and the disharmonies that migration brings about in lives of both migrant and the societies in a larger scale.

3-1- The General Framework

As it was explained in the previous section, physical mobility often heightens the spiritual or psychological sense of alienation from the places one continually moves between. Amit Shankar Saha in his article "Exile Literature and the Diasporic Indian Writer" (2009) interestingly indicates the existentialist alienating nature of migration. From this perspective, the world, in existentialist terms, appears absurd and indifferent towards one's needs. In such a situation one cannot help but feel like an outsider. Therefore, it is well agreed that exile is a part of human experience (187). As a result, migration appears both as a liberating experience as well as a shocking experience. The paradox lies in the fact that the tension that keeps the strings attached between the writer's motherland and the place of migration affect the writer's work.

Whatever may be the geographical location of the exiled writer, in the mental landscape the writer is forever entangled among the strings attached to poles that pull in

opposite directions. Even if a writer intentionally attempts at justifying one end, simultaneously, but unconsciously, there arises a longing for the other. This is the point that the fascination of the literature of migration lies in and that's the point that cultural theorists and literary critics all agree.

As the result of the review over the critics' classifications and various categorizations of the functions of migration in literature, the present research tends to give a framework that determines what distinguishes migration literature from other kinds of literature.

Thematically, the literature of migration portrays characters who try to cope with migration in different way. This reaction varies from the experience of the uncertainty of the displaced characters as "destructive, agonizing, and painful" to the experience of migration as "productive, fascinating, and appealing", both of which work towards the same end of "rewriting identities in order to evoke their impure and heterogeneous character (Frank 18-19).

The protagonist of the migrant work endlessly recreates itself through its encounters with cultural complexities and discriminating experience of being a minority, which results in its identity to go beyond the memories of past and reach a sort of maturity or as Frantz Fanon admits to participate in the "creation of a human world – that is a world of reciprocal recognition" (Cited in Bhabha 8). It should be reminded here that for Fanon, the way to reach this personal maturity and multi-layered recognitions passed through clinging to cultural traditions and lost or repressed – in the case of colonized migrants – histories. This is in contrast with the principles of migrant literature which emphasizes on "un-homeliness". Bhabha declares that sticking in to past histories and cultures would bring about dangers of "fixity and fetishism of identities" (9) and as a result prevents that illuminated experience of recognition for the artist which moves it beyond the borders of this nation (his homeland) or the other (his new home). The migrant writer reflects a "transnational" tradition in his works, which means neither the superiority of national traditions nor the universality of human traditions, but a representation of those in-between spaces that go beyond the existing binaries and makes a bridge "between the home and the world" (Bhabha 13).

This is how un-homeliness no more suggests a negative connotation, but a condition of "extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (Bhabha 9). This distinguishing feature of contemporary migration literature is cultural "hybridity" which manifests itself in the experience of "cultural in-betweenness, processes of intermixture, fusions or doublings of two or more cultures or two or more systems of significations" (Moslund 4).

Sten Paultz Moslund (2010) speaks of Roy Sommer's novel labeling of the migration works with the central theme of hybridity. Sommer uses the term "transcultural" literature as equivalent for hybrid work of migration literature and believes that this name can illuminate the cultural up-rootedness of this kind of fiction as opposed the stability of homeland and rootedness in traditional works. Among other characteristics, Sommer sees the transcultural, hybrid literature as involving "visions of the dissolution of fixed cultural identities and the assertion of cosmopolitan hybridization and ethnic fragmentation" as counter-models to "exclusive national or ethnic identities" (Sommer, 2001; cited in Moslund 5). He advocates the fluid nature of this fiction because of such inherent features as "in-betweenness", "borderless cosmopolitanism" and "transitory identities" as inseparable parts of the theme. These features – which have their root in Bhabha's concept of hybridity – have now become the basic characteristics to classify a

literary work as the literature of migration. These capacities of migrant literature has made it the hero of the present fictions; a new kind of literature that deals with multiple, fluid identities, replacing the old identities of stability and belonging. Due to these qualities, the hybrid migrant hero is supposed to possess – in Moslund's words – an "inclusive vision and sensibility, a double vision that is particularly conducive for the heterogeneous complexity and perspectival uncertainty of novelistic modes of representation" (6).

The migrant writer should not limit himself in the borders of the cultural engagements, because they risk the experience of development and recognition. The African-American artist, Rene'e Green, emphasizes the necessity of moving beyond the "self" and the "past" in order to recreate a more mature and dynamic identity within the confinements of the new and strange social context he is located in, arbitrarily or by force: "I wanted to make shapes or set up situations that are kind of open... my work has a lot to do with a kind of fluidity, a movement back and forth, not making a claim to any specific or essential way of being" (Green, cited in Bhabha 2-3). The implicit consequence of accepting this definition for literature of migration is, in Leslie Adelson's words, the statement that "the literature of migration is not written by migrants alone" (Cited in Walkowitz 533).

Opposingly, a writer can be accounted as a migrant artist in his own homeland, because what distinguishes the migrant writers from the non-migrant is not the geographical borders and places, but the hybrid nature of their works. Carine Mardorossian (2003) proposes that being a migrant writer or even writing about the experience of migration does not guarantee that one will produce migrant literature. Mardorossian associates migrant literature with an aesthetic program rather than an origin or topic; for her, that program involves rejecting the "opposition between the modern and the traditional, the country of destination and the country of original" (21). This means that even nonimmigrant writers who portray characters crossing the geographical boundaries and cultures, and who demonstrate the formation of a hybrid selfhood from the heart of cultural conflicts, could be producers of immigrant fiction.

In this respect, the old notions that a migrant moves between two distinct worlds and the migrant writer brings with himself a completely distinguished unique literary system to the new land is no more applicable in the comprehension of a work of migration. In other words, what has happened to the writer – his biography and past memories – is much less important than the ways that the writer shows mobility, hybridity, transnationalism and in-betweenness in his work. Thus, it is vital for the migrant author to "think beyond the narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (Bhabha 1).

Significantly, this hybridization is the essential point of interest in migration literature, rather than the description of the nostalgic sentimentalities. The most recent theorists of the migration branch of postcolonial criticism such as Bhabha and Spivak, are against the writer's excessive involvement in homesick feelings of the migrant characters or focusing on the theme of nostalgia – which was once a favorite topic for writers to illustrate the strong ties of home and past – as the main framework of their migrant fictions. Therefore, the concepts of homeland and identity in this age of global migration form a complex structure.

According to the critics like Homi k. Bhabha, Artar Brah and Stuart Hall, the floating nature of home and fluid identity have replaced the old concepts of fixed

"home" and identity as well. The idea of "home" in their idea "evokes the spatial politics of home, the sense of self, its displacement, intimacy, exclusion and inclusion" (Dutta).

The flow of people across different countries breaks this concept of true home. The notion of home not only represents the sense of self, but also ties with the human emotion, feelings, sentiments and intimacy. Beyond the geographical territory, "home" is associated with emotional territory. The hybrid identity that the immigrants carry, creates a confusing situation regarding the belongingness. In the opinion of Bhabha, hybridity is the "third space" which makes the other positions to emerge. The identity as suggested by Bhabha, indicates the impure identity rather than fixed identity.

Hybridization constructs a new identity in one's created home of familiarity in the overseas countries. Fixed identities or "ethnocentric" ideas cannot and should not survive in an ever-changing postmodern world. Being alert of these limitations, such ideas and groups feel the necessity to move into a postcolonial postmodern migratory space marked by "cultural hybridity" (Bhabha 4-5). Nevertheless, the dislocated tend to look back with nostalgia at their origins, both national and personal. As a result, what Gayatri Spivak discussed in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" becomes appropriate, namely that "a nostalgia for lost origins can be detrimental to the exploration of social realities" (87).

Given the predominance of transnational flows and migration, Bhabha dismisses the conceptual validity and usefulness of homogenous national cultures, and instead validates the third space of borderlines and hybridities. With respect to this idea, an admirable writer of migrant literature is the one who depicts his "unhomed" characters in their attempt to fulfill this "third space" and "find 'home' in the moment of hybridity" (Jussawalla 72), rather than yearning for the lost home out of their inability to accomplish the process of adjustment.

As a result, the art of the migrant artist "does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as contingent 'in-between' space that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present" (Bhabha 7).

4- Discussion

Goli Taraghi (b.1939) is an Iranian novelist and short story writer who migrated to Paris in 1980 and has lived and worked there since then. Her works are usually categorized as migration literature by different critics.

Taraghi is regarded as a contemporary migration woman writer in most of the articles in *Goli Taraghi: A Review of the Works*, edited by Ali Dehbashi (2004) which considers the subject of migration as the most significant concept in her works. *Sad Saal Dastan Nevisi-ye Iran (One Hundred Years of Fiction Writing in Iran)* by Hasan Mirabedini (2004) which is one of the major contemporary texts of Persian literary criticism, refers to Goli Taraghi as a Persian migrant short story writer whose works depict a nostalgia for lost home which gradually becomes one with lost homeland, a movement from personal nostalgia to a cultural one (1403).

However, the authors of this research tend to advocate the idea that this frequent classification of Taraghi's works under migration literature does not correspond to the most recent theories about migration by such prominent postcolonial critics as Bhabha and Spivak. This is done by an attempt to study and analyze the dominant themes of Taraghi's fiction to see if they agree with the presupposed definitions of this genre.

Almost all of these stories deal with the protagonist from Iran (the writer herself) and the movement of this "other" to the West, actually to Paris, which plays the role of

the host to this migrant protagonist. In each story, the researchers will look at the relations between migrants and the cultures to which they migrate, and in this respect, the speed of "becoming" that is ascribed to the central hero's hybridizing and heterogenizing gazes will be examined; the speeds with which the migrant characters are assumed to transform the sameness and traditional recognition of their host cultures.

The scale of becoming in these stories is measured by the protagonist's amount of flexibility in confrontation with the sameness of the host culture on the one hand, and her attempt at letting loose of her own national identity on the other hand. The result, however, tends to demonstrate that the processes of hybridization are not visibly part of the work's overall framework, which means that Taraghi's migrant characters still live in a homogenizing universe although being in a diverse geographical context.

While the migrant literature basically deals with the protagonist's identity crisis in the new environment and his attempts for integration and adjustments, Taraghi's protagonists live in their memories of the lost home, family ties and in general the past life. Zarlaki (2010) highlights this nostalgic aspect of Taraghi's work as follows: "Goli Taraghi has not returned [to homeland] and is pleased with that untouched world of memories... her heart lives in memories, and she writes of past and of motherland. This is the nostalgic nature of Taraghi's stories" (112).

The aim of this section is to study three collections of short stories by Taraghi namely, *A Mansion in the Skies* (2003), *Scattered Memories* (1992) and *Two Worlds* (2002) in order to show the fact that the term "migration literature" should be applied by the critics with more care and precision. As a result of this study, the current theme of most of the stories in the three collections is nostalgia without any particular emphasis on "transcultural", "hybrid" experiences. This nostalgia is manifested through three distinguished contexts that the authors of the present research classify them as: nostalgia and the time, nostalgia and the place, and nostalgia and the objects.

4-1- Nostalgia and the Time

This conflict with time is a universal motif in the literary works and each author illustrates his worries and fears of the passage of time through various images and characters. Taraghi in an interview with "Hamshahry-e-Mah" magazine emphasizes the human bondage with time: "human being lives in time while time is in him. Time and man cannot be expressed or interpreted independently..." (2001).

Most of her stories begin at the present time, but an event, a scene or sign takes her back to the past and this past is usually the years she was living in Iran before her migration abroad.

In most cases, future does not have any significance in the stories, and the characters migrate to their past life, not to define a new identity, but to find a secure place in the past memories. "Taraghi lives in a huge fear of a terrifying emptiness" (Zarlaki 80) which is felt in her confrontation with the new home after migration. She finds that the only way to escape this emptiness is to take refugees in the "hidden layers of memory" (Zarlaki, 81). Memory is activated and the past events find a new life on the paper sheets:

In that terrifying emptiness and in the strange place, I had to find a refugee. I had to, in Nima's words, 'hang this ragged garment of mine' to somewhere. The only real thing for me was the past time. I remember that I had a great nostalgia for past. Memory has a strange scope; it is much stronger than the present events. At the same time, I got

depression, a severe depression, which made me hospitalized. You know, depression is usually accompanied with a return to past. I became a child again, and took refugees in my childhood sweet memories. (Taraghi; in Hasan Zade 29).

This escape from the present and finding peace in past memories is manifested in many of her stories. The narrator in "The First Day" (Taraghi, *Two Worlds*). Confesses that "I have to go beyond the past and come back to present. I have to know this present 'I', but I can't. I'm afraid of the future. The past is only real and like mother's colorful skirt, embraces me within" (19).

She watches the sudden snow in Paris and remembers the winters in Tehran in a story entitled, "Shemiran Bus": "I am put in mind of Tehran in winter, dominated by the tall, snow clad Alborz peak underneath the turquoise-blue skies, the bare, sleeping trees in the far end of our garden, dreaming of the return of migrating birds. In my childhood, snowy days had no end..." (*A Mansion in the Sky* 9). Paris snow brings the image of her lost grandmother to her desperate eyes who used to say that "the angles are house cleaning. They're dusting the clouds and sweeping the carpets of the sky" (ibid).

In "The Other Side of the Wall", the narrator goes back to her fourteenth and describes her worries and involvements: "The fourteenth, colorful, full of sweet temptations is sitting at the end of the hot summer days, waiting to take me with it. I'm frightened and stick to the remaining days of the secure and peaceful childhood... I don't want to grow up and no one understands me" (*Two Worlds* 65).

4-2- Nostalgia and the Place

Home has got a peculiar position in Taraghi's stories. It is the framework within which most of the events take place. Home is the lost paradise for the narrator, and with its destruction, the happy years of cheerful past come to an end. The best representation of this nostalgia is in the story entitled "Father":

The Shemiran house with its bright days and its trees casting mysterious shadows: its magically translucent nights echoing with the deliciously muffled voices of neighborhood boys outside its walls; its immanent apprehensions and sorrows; its surface benevolence and deepest malice; its transient revelries and resilient doubts; its dynastic ostentations. It sits under the blue sky, a fertile uterus, and father for the hundredth time blurts out, "This is exactly the house I want. My very own house"! (*A mansion* 59).

My house. Father's house. That's a universal nostalgia. Childhood house, good or bad, has a colorful and pleasant disposition in our memory. That's the very first place we have come to know; a building at the farthest end of our memory; the most secure place on the earth.

Later on, at the midst of the bitterest moments of living in a strange land, during the early years of migration, the narrator blames herself of causing her children leaving behind this secure paradise of home: "The children do not understand. They feel exiled from the warm bosom of grandma and aunts and relatives, and from among a non-ending source of love and kindness, to a land of coldness, sorrow, and darkness and do not comprehend the meaning of this injustice" (*Scattered Memories* 143).

In *Two Worlds*, there is a story with the name of "The First Day" in which Tehran is illustrated as a utopia, emerging from the far end of narrator's memory: "Tehran, with that playful letter "R" that rolls under the tongue, and that long "A", like the tempting gate of a colorful bazaar, pulls me in. Someone calls me from far away, someone beyond those mountains and seas" (*Two Worlds* 13).

In "The Bizarre Comportment of Mr. Alpha in Exile", Mr. Alpha lives and breathes with the memories of Iran, which are kept alive by the letters he receives regularly from his friends in the homeland:

He drifted to the visions of the moon sailing past the tall aspens and the craggy heights of the Alborz, the sun-filled houses, dusty lanes. In his nocturnal fantasies, Mr. Alpha was transported to his ancestral home and the neighborhood in which he had grown up. Within the safe radius of these old remembrances of hereditary forms and native tribal sounds, he felt himself in a secure orbit in which he could sleep. (*A mansion* 119).

Sometimes, this nostalgia moves beyond the general concept of a certain city or country (here Tehran, Iran) and includes the streets, markets, cinemas and other components of the lost society: "... I could think of bike-riding in nearby streets, Friday-evening strolls in the public square, Bahar movie theatre, Vila ice-cream, neighborhood boys, the Shemiran bus, and Istanbul Avenue" (*A mansion* 58). Or: "... I love Istanbul Avenue. The odor of fish and aroma of coffee and roasted nuts and seeds blend in my nostrils feel steeped in languor and drowsiness". (*A mansion* 49).

4-3- Nostalgia and the Objects

There are certain dear objects for Taraghi, which she remembers in the isolation of migration and soothes her worries by clinging to the memories they evoke. These are the objects of the past life. One of these objects is Shemiran Bus, whose image and memory is so vivid in the narrator's mind that she can imagine herself in her tenth, waiting for the Shemiran bus and its driver, Aziz Agha, whenever waiting at the bus station in Paris:

I can hear the groan of the approaching bus. Hassan Agha jumps up, but I am not sure if we will board this bus. "If the bus flicks its lights," I tell myself, "we'll get on it. Otherwise we'll wait for the next one". This is a secret that no one else knows about. It is just between me and Aziz Agha: A bus that does not flick its light is not driven by Aziz Agha... (*A Mansion* 13).

The objects in her childhood home are often referred to nostalgically. One of them, which is repeatedly referred to, is the statue of a mermaid at end of the pool in their dreamy garden: "At the far end of the pool, a chunky mermaid, not unlike Fakhr-Azam Khanum in contour, has raised herself on its gilded tail, balancing a blinking light upon her head" (*A Mansion* 60). This mermaid becomes a central motif when the narrator remembers his father's illness and death: "The Shemiran house is spiritless and cold and the winter harsh and implacable. Under the cover of snow, the figure of the mermaid in the yard looks like an old, bent-over woman" (68). Even the destruction of Shemiran house after a governmental decision to make highway, is depicted by the mermaid at its center:

The demolition day arrives. We wonder if this is a bad dream. Or perhaps the Shemiran house was a dream from which we have now wakened... A thick cloud of dust like the fiery breath of a gargantuan monster engulfs the flowerbeds and manicured lawns. The house itself, with its ostentation and showy adornments, slips out of sight like an evanescent memory. The mermaid holding the light over her head drowns in a sea of debris and is no more. (70)

5- Conclusion

Creative or imaginative literature has a power to reflect complex and ambiguous realities that make it a far more plausible representation of human feelings and

understandings than many of the branches of scientific researches. In migration, above all topics, the levels of ambivalence, of hybridization and plurality, of shifting identities and transnationalism are perhaps greater than in many other aspects of life.

The present research has been carried out with the aim of analyzing the works of a contemporary migrant Iranian author, Goli Taraghi, to see if they can be classified as the works of migration literature. The result indicates that the processes of hybridization, ambivalence or adjustment are not visibly a major part of Taraghi's works. In other words, Taraghi's characters still live in a homogenized universe and define their identities by clinging into their past life. Consequently, nostalgia becomes the central theme of Taraghi's fiction and this insistence on past rather than creating a bridge between the home and the new world, exclude her works from the circle of migration literature.

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