

ВСЕОБЩАЯ ИСТОРИЯ

The Ideology of Women's Emancipation as Ontogenesis of the Subject

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For citation: Hambardzumyan N. V. The Ideology of Women's Emancipation as Ontogenesis of the Subject. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History*, 2023, vol. 68, issue 4, pp. 962–973. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu02.2023.410>

The article focuses on the issues of Christian national minorities (Armenians) who lived in the Ottoman Empire during and after the Tanzimat period: their national identity, women's issues, the possibilities of developing the ontogenetic concept of female subjectivity. Such development can be defined as ontogenesis of a social and a literary-cultural subject, which involves capacities of a woman and potential for social and cultural integration. The study aims to identify the features of the subject in the context of the transformations of literary-cultural and historical-political concepts based on the philosophical and anthropological worldview of female authors and typology of culture in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century. The study examines and interprets how an Armenian woman living in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century underwent a gradual transformation from being a silent object of subjugation and domestic captivity into a social, literary-cultural, and historical-political subject. The actuality of the research lies in its interdisciplinary nature: the material was analyzed through connections between Literary Studies, History, Philosophy, and Sociology, by means of historical-comparative, phenomenological, and socio-philosophical research methods. Following the geopolitical changes in the historical-political, socio-eco-

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The work was supported by the Science Committee of the Republic of Armenia, within the framework of Research project no. 21Г-6В118.

Работа выполнена при поддержке Комитета по науке Республики Армения в рамках исследовательского проекта № 21Г-6В118.

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nomie, and legal systems of the Ottoman Empire during the period in question, the social role of women was reconsidered based on the ideology of women's emancipation, which was defined as ontogenesis of the female subject. The analysis of this kind has been attempted for the first time.

Keywords: women's emancipation, Western Armenia, ontogenesis, Ottoman Empire, Constantinople.

Идеология женской эмансипации как онтогенез субъекта

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Для цитирования: *N. V. Hambarzumyan*. The Ideology of Women's Emancipation as Ontogenesis of the Subject // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. История. 2023. Т. 68. Вып. 4. С. 962–973. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu02.2023.410>

Статья посвящена национальной идентичности подданных меньшинств (армян), проживающих в Османской империи как в годы Танзимата, так и после него. Впервые были проанализированы кризисные ситуации, связанные с проблемами армянских женщин, пути их преодоления и возможности формирования в этом контексте онтогенетической концепции женской субъектности. Подобный ход развития можно охарактеризовать как становление социально-общественного и литературно-культурного субъекта, который включает в себя способности и возможности социальной и культурной интеграции женщины. Цель исследования — выявить особенности трактовки субъекта в контексте трансформации литературно-культурных и историко-политических концепций, в основе которых находились философские и антропологические мирообразы женщин-авторов, с учетом типологии культуры второй половины XIX столетия в Османской империи. Задача исследования — рассмотреть и интерпретировать условия, в которых армянка, жившая в Османской империи во второй половине XIX в., лишенная права принимать решения, постепенно из объекта бессловесного порабощения шаг за шагом превращалась в социально-общественный, литературно-культурный объект и историко-политический субъект. Границы ее функциональности и субъектности, помимо общественной и благотворительной деятельности, постепенно расширялись в области литературы, искусства, культуры, переводческой, издательской деятельности и других сферах. Актуальность работы обусловлена междисциплинарным характером исследования, в соответствии с которым материал был проанализирован в контексте взаимосвязей между литературоведением, философией и социологией. При написании статьи были использованы феноменологический, историко-сравнительный и социально-философский методы исследования. В результате геополитических изменений и процессов, происходящих в историко-политической, социально-экономической и правовой системах Османской империи, предполагалось перераспределение социальной роли женщин, которое происходило на основе идеологии женской эмансипации и характеризовалась как онтогенез женщины-субъекта.

Ключевые слова: женская эмансипация, Западная Армения, онтогенез, Османская империя, Константинополь.

After the proclamation of the first phase of the Tanzimat¹ in 1839, *Gulhan, e Hatt-i Serif*, the Turkish government was forced to grant social and political privileges to the national minorities living in Turkey, which were reflected in a range of reforms. In con-

¹ Tanzimat — in the Ottoman Language, Code of Reforms, the Basic Principles of which were set out and published in decrees *Gulhan, e Hatt-i Serif* in 1839 and *Hatt-ı Hümayun* in 1856 which envisaged

trast to the previous reforms, the Tanzimat included not only military, but also economic, political, legislative, socio-cultural, educational, religious and national issues².

Due to this, the Sultanate government began to pursue false social, political and economic policies, to carry out false changes, and to subject press to censorship. Yet, the initiated reforms were mostly not implemented.

On November 3, 1839, after the enthronement of Sultan Abdul Majid, the situation relatively changed. On February 18, 1856, through the mediation of the great powers, Sultan Abdul Mejid issued *Hatt-ı Hümayun* decree³, committing himself to implementing many democratic reforms and granting special privileges to Christian subjects living in the Ottoman Empire, who represented a national minority.

It was thought that the promises made in the Sultan's decree, the mediation of the great powers in Europeanisation of the Ottoman Empire⁴, the commitments made by Abdul Mejid would open up prospects for Western Armenians, for whom *Hatt-ı Hümayun* was of significant importance. Therefore, Western Armenian intelligentsia and businessmen adopted a serious approach to implementation of the provisions of the decree.

Inspired by the prospect of *promising reforms*, young Armenians, educated in foreign universities and obsessed with the ideas of enlightenment and literary-cultural and social progress, started to set up schools, colleges, magazines, newspapers, publishing houses, educational and national charities, social and public companies, trade organizations, etc., in the major cities of Ottoman Empire, in Constantinople in particular. They tried to promote Armenian social and political thought; to attract publicity; to boost publishing business, culture⁵, movements, socio-economic ties and relations.

Naively inspired by the false agenda of reforms pursued by the Ottoman dictatorship, young Western Armenian intelligentsia, educated abroad and obsessed by emancipation movements and values, spread the ideas of the European Enlightenment and freedom in Constantinople and the neighboring cities. In the 1850s–1860s, they also initiated the Armenian National Constitutional Movement having become its founders⁶. For Western Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire the basic principles for the implementation of the Armenian National Constitution were derived from various circumstances. Such were

reforms which were not implemented. Tanzimat reforms were passed in the Ottoman Empire in 1839–1876, at the same time when the first constitution of the empire was adopted.

² It was initiated by an educated group of Turkish bureaucracy led by Mustafa Rashid Pasha.

³ The decree in question actually predetermined the second phase of the Tanzimat.

⁴ Փափուզյան Ա. Թուրքական վավերագրական նյութեր Օսմանյան կայսրության ոչ մահմեդական ժողովուրդների մասին (1839–1915 թվականներ). Ե., 2002. Էջ 27–35 [Papazyan A. Turkish documentary materials on Non-Muslim peoples of the Ottoman Empire (1839–1915). Yerevan, 2002. P. 27–35].

⁵ At the beginning of the 20th century, the above-mentioned processes were interrupted as a result of the Armenian genocide and the policy of the Turkish government to persecute the Armenians.

⁶ In 1853, with the consent of the bodies elected from the representatives of the Armenian community of Constantinople, the National and Religious Assemblies, an Educational Council was formed, whose members were Nahapet Rusinian, Grigor Otian, Nikoghayos Palyan, Serovbe Vichenian (Servichen), Karapet Utujyan, Grigor and Mkrtich Aghaton brothers. In 1857, they developed a charter related to religious, national, cultural, and public life called the Constitution by the suggestion of Nahapet Rusinian (Constitution 1863). It was written on the basis of the main principles of the Belgian Constitution and bore the ideological influence of the 1848 French Revolution. After many intrigues and long struggles, the final and revised version was accepted and ratified by the Ottoman government and was handed over to the Patriarchate on March 17, 1863 (Ninety-Nine Articles). The revised constitution was adopted by the National General Assembly on March 20, 1863.

the crises related to the national identity of the minorities (Armenians); to women's issues; to religious intolerance; socio-economic persecutions; arbitrary administrative system; exploitation on the part of aghas and beys; control of national viability; censorship of the press; restraints, violation of people's legal and political rights by the Turkish government, etc.

The Christian national minorities living in the empire quickly realized that Turkification of the subject nations was taking place within the reform movement, and the so-called reforms were a myth because they were never put into practice. The fact of submitting the Armenian National Constitution (Armenian National Constitution 1863)⁷ for ratification on May 24, 1860, also contributed to the activation of the social, educational, cultural, and legal⁸ life of Armenian women, as this document, regulating the internal life of Armenians, in addition to a number of social, economic and political issues, defined women's rights to receive equal education along with men, to have social security, and to be involved in social activities⁹. It was these challenges that began to condition the issues of emancipation of Armenian women living as a national minority in the Ottoman Empire, as well as their spread and development in various directions, which promoted the concepts of education, upbringing, freedom, right and equality, labor, and economic independence.

The ontogenetic processes of the realization of a woman as a *subject*

Although during the years of Tanzimat laws on privacy and property security, and freedom of religion of the people living in the Ottoman Empire were declared, before the 1850s and 1860s Armenian women were not engaged in the activities of educational institutions, humanitarian, non-governmental, charitable organizations and societies, as well as publishing, editorial work, literary and cultural life. This was due to the patriarchal stereotypes of the society; traditionalism; gender, religious, and domestic inequality; and absence of social rights. This issue was covered as a deep and radical phenomenon by the press of the time: "One of the preconditions of the nation's friendly development and advancement is the education of both sexes, <...>: When the two sexes equally have the same moral and intellectual capacity, then by joining the enlightened ideas of both sides they can overcome all the difficulties that ignorance causes to impede progress"¹⁰. However, as the contemporaries testify, "an awakening took place in *favor of the intellectual development of the nation*"¹¹ synchronously with the processes of the Armenian constitutional movement. As a result, in the 1860s–1880s (and in the subsequent years)

⁷ Hambarzumyan N. Existential-ontological Manifestations of Time in Khrimian Hayrik's Essay "Time and it's Essence" // *Wisdom*. 2022. No. 3 (2). P. 48–54.

⁸ In the Armenian reality, the problem of gender equality was not new. It was formulated as far back as 1773 in "The Snare of Glory" published by the brothers Shahamiryan, which, in particular, states: "Every human being, be it a representative of an Armenian or another nation, be it a man or a woman, born in Armenia or abroad, must live in equality, be equal in his activities". See: Նոր տեսութիւն, որ կոչվում է հորդորակ. Ե., 1991. Էջ. 8 [New Pamphlet, which is called Exhortation. Yerevan, 1991. P. 8].

⁹ Hambarzumyan N., Parsadanyan S. The Philosophy of Education and Upbringing as the Quintessence of Women's Emancipation // *Wisdom*. 2022. No. 4 (3). P. 75–82.

¹⁰ Մասիս. Կ. Պոլիս. 1864. Թիւ 636. Էջ. 3 [Masis // Constantinople. 1864. No. 636. P. 3].

¹¹ Հանեսյան Մ. Հարիւր քսան եւ հինգամեայ յորելեան Բերայի Ս. Երրորդութիւն եկեղեցւոյ, Կ. Պոլիս, 1932. Էջ. 135 [Hanesian M. One hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of St. Bera Trinity Church. Constantinople, 1932. P. 135].

Armenian women began to play an active role in social, political, educational, literary and cultural life in Constantinople. New educational institutions such as maidens' schools and colleges were set up¹². In addition, new humanitarian, charitable societies and unions for the poor and orphans were established¹³ run not only by men but also by educated women (Nazly Vahan, Srбуhi Tyusab, Zapel Asadour, Arshakouhi Theodic) who were undertaking numerous patriotic initiatives, in this context forming the *ontogenetic* concept of female subjectivity in the realm of being.

Thus, in 1861 in the Peshiktash district of Constantinople, a group of young Armenian women organized the "Armenian Women's Association" (Hay Tiknants Ynkerutyun) which dealt with the guardianship of schools¹⁴. In 1863, the society "Scholarship for Girls' Upbringing" (Aghjkants Dastiarakutyanyan npastamatuyts) was founded in Constantinople, the charter of which comprised seven points: "The goal of my society is to educate poor girls as best we can in a good school, taking care of the expenses required"¹⁵. The students of the Hripsimyants College set up the "The Hripsimyants College Maidens' Society" (Hripsimyanyan Varjarani Oreordats Ynkerutyun) in the Ortagyugh district of Constantinople¹⁶.

On May 1, 1879, the "School-Loving Ladies' Association" (Dprotsaser Tiknants Ynkerutyun)¹⁷ was set up in Ortagyugh to promote education and upbringing of Armenian girls and train them as instructors on the initiative of the Hripsimyants College students and several women-sponsors. It was initially called "School-Loving Women's Association" (Dprotsaser Kanants Ynkerutyun). The founders of the society were Mrs Nazly Vahan, Srбуhi Tyusab, Mrs Taguhi Paltazarian, Miss Nurik Simonian, and Zapel Asadour (Sipil). Srбуhi Tyusab¹⁸ and her mother, Nazly Vahan, greatly assisted with the organizational work¹⁹. They were the moving force behind the already established movement: they organized book presentations, charity dinners and balls, held auctions, ran charities, raised donations, and had the freedom to speak, act, and struggle²⁰.

¹² Համբարձումյան Ն. Կ. Պոլսի հայոց բարեգործական ընկերությունների և վարժարանների դերակատարությունը կանանց ազատագրության գործընթացներում 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին, «Գիտական Արցախ». 2021. Թիվ 4 (11). Էջ. 35–43 [Hambardzumyan N. The role of Armenian charities and colleges in the process of Women's Emancipation in the second half of the 19th century in Constantinople // Scientific Artsakh. 2021. No. 4 (11). P. 35–43].

¹³ Ibid. P. 61–70.

¹⁴ Արեւելք. Կ. Պոլիս. 1898. թիւ 3854. էջ 164 [Arevelk // Constantinople. 1898. No. 3854. P. 164].

¹⁵ Յերկրագունտ. Կ. Պոլիս. 1883. թիւ 4. էջ 166 [Yerkragunt // Constantinople. 1883. No. 4. P. 166].

¹⁶ Պողոսեան Ե. Պատմութիւն հայ մշակութային ընկերութիւններու, Վիեննա, հ. Ա, 1957. Էջ. 277 [Poghosian Y. History of Armenian cultural associations. Vol. A. Vienna, 1957. P. 277].

¹⁷ Չեփիւռ Հայրենեաց. Կ. Պոլիս. 1863. թիվ 19. Էջ. 147 [Zephyur Hayrenyats // Constantinople. 1863. No. 19. P. 147].

¹⁸ Srбуhi Tyusab was married to Paul Tyusab, a high-ranking French official in Constantinople, who had full respect for Srбуhi's freedom to lead this unusual struggle.

¹⁹ Adult women and girls could join the Association by a majority vote at the general meeting. The monthly membership fee was one ghurush. Men could join the company, but they did not have the right to vote. At the time of its launch, there were 37 members in the Association and by the end of the year — 380 members. See: Պողոսեան Ե. Պատմութիւն հայ մշակութային ընկերութիւններու. [Poghosian Y. History of Armenian cultural associations]; Թերմեզյան Էֆքար. Կ. Պոլիս. 1882. Թիւ 1378. էջ. 2 [Terjmany Efkear // Constantinople. 1882. No. 1378. P. 2].

²⁰ In March 1880, the "Patriotic Armenian Women's Association" held a charity ball under the auspices of the Sultan, donating half of the proceeds to the poor of Van, Bayazet, and Vagharshakert. In 1882, the "Patriotic Armenian Women's Association" launched a lottery, during which numerous gifts were collected: gold ball ornaments, embroidered handkerchiefs, paintings, rugs and other valuables, as evidenced by the

On November 5, 1879, the College of the “School-loving Ladies’ Association” (Dprot-saser Tiknants Ynkerutyun) was set up, which, by the end of 1880 already had thirty-five female students. The educational program of the college “School-lovers” (Dprot-saser) opened by the association envisaged a two-year preparatory course and a five-year pre-school course. Such societies and associations, schools and colleges had a direct impact on the formation of a woman as a subject²¹ and promoted the processes of their realization and subjectification.

Thus, the activities of the established societies and women’s involvement in them played a significant developmental role in the national Armenian awakening, which was considerably influenced by the Armenian National Constitution, ratified and eventually adopted in 1863²².

For female representatives of national minorities (Armenians, Greeks, Jews) living in the Ottoman Empire, women’s education and upbringing in the 1860s, 1870s, and in the subsequent period were conditioned by social demands which arose as a result of the development of the society, where a woman developed into a *subject of social relations*. Such a process of a woman’s development and progress can be defined as an *ontogenesis of a social subject*, which included the ability and potential of a woman to integrate into the society.

The scope of an Armenian woman’s activity and subjectivity, apart from her social charitable activity, gradually extended to other fields, in particular, literature, art, culture, translation, printing. Thus, an Armenian woman gradually transformed from an object of silent subjugation, domestic captivity, of the one deprived of the right to make decisions into a *social, literary, cultural, historical, and political subject*.

The examples are numerous. For instance, in 1861 an actress Miss Arusyak Papazian and later Mrs Pezirchian of the National Theater of Constantinople won the first prize for the best acting and Natalia Mirzoyan published her works in “Crane of the Armenian World” (Krunck Hayots Ashkharhin) in Tpghis in 1860–1864.

In 1862, the first Armenian-language magazine “about women and for women”, the “Gitar”, was issued by Elpis Kesaratsian under the pseudonym E. K. T. Hayuhi. Miss Olga Amedi published her translations from Langlois in Rafael Patkanian’s “North” (Hyusis) in 1863–1864. Srбуhi Tyusab (Vahanian) published her first poem entitled “Spring” in “Bazmavep” in 1864. In 1868, Sofya Arakelian worked for the first issues of the magazine “Ararat” in Vagharshapat.

The problems of women’s social and cultural role penetrated into fiction. Each of the characters in Sipil’s (Zapel Khanjian) novel “A Girl’s Heart” (1891) had a specific occupation: Boubul painted well and attended painting classes, Sophie was a teacher, Meline

large list of contributors included in the Association’s report. See: Թէրճէմանը Էֆրէար. Էջ. 2 [Terjemany Efkear. P. 2]. According to eyewitnesses, Srбуhi Tyusab was so obsessed with raising funds for the Association that during one of the exhibitions she managed to sell Hovhannes Ayzovsky’s paintings and transferred all the proceeds to the Association’s fund.

²¹ A subject — narrowly meaning an individual who possesses conscious experiences, such as perspectives, feelings beliefs and desires, a being who has a unique consciousness and/or unique personal experiences, or an entity that has a relationship with another entity outside itself (called an object). A subject is an observer and an object is a thing observed (*Solomon R. Subjectivity // Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford, 2005. P. 898–899).

²² Ազգային Սահմանադրութիւն Հայոց. Կ. Պոլիս, սպ. Յ. Միւհնտէտեան, 1863 [Armenian National Constitution. Constantinople, 1863].

was a sculptor who presented her sculpture and won one of the sculpture competitions in Paris.

The above-mentioned processes changing the status of women took place mainly in the Armenian-populated cities of the Sultanate Empire, in Constantinople and in Smyrna, in particular, and later — spread to other cities and provinces, with patriarchal environment and the poorest societies. Such a development was a new attempt at the establishment of female *subjectivity*, which was confirmed by the independence, freedom, practicality, authority, responsibility, and other abilities of the woman-subject. Consequently, subjectivity was not an abstract category, because, in a broad sense, the educational, socio-psychological role of a woman was being formed in the society. The problem of subjectivity is that of *ontogenesis* of an active, responsible, integrated personality through which a woman adapted to rapid movements, to constantly changing biological and social conditions, realized herself in difficult social context, withstood adverse influences, and was able to control herself and her life activity.

It should be noted that Western Armenian women were well informed about various social and political movements carried out by European women. Western Armenians inspired by the European women's movement pursued the goals of reforming and healing the society. Materials and speeches covering the issues of European women's fashion, taste, morals, aesthetics and ethics were also published in press²³.

In the patriarchal society of the Ottoman Empire, the priority in the second half of the 19th century became the restoration of Western Armenian women's and girls' rights (in the first place, the rights to freedom of speech and expression)²⁴ in men-women relationships, women's education and upbringing, their social activity, as well as equality and emancipation.

The reflection of processes of ontogenesis of a subject and subjectification in the context of literary and cultural life of Armenians in Constantinople

In the second half of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, the *social* changes that encompassed the customs, traditions, community affairs, administration, social behaviour and value systems of the national minorities (Armenians) living in the Ottoman Empire were important steps towards the emancipation of women. The extent of the changes that took place during the Tanzimat years as a result of the privileges granted to the subject nations living in Sultanate Turkey can be inferred from Western Armenian lit-

²³ See all the issues of daily "Masis" published in Constantinople.

²⁴ In the second half of the 19th century, one of the most famous novelists Raffi, traveling around different villages, provinces, and cities of Tačka-Armenia, in a number of his publicistic works, describes the lifestyle, customs, habits and manners of the Armenian population of the Caucasus. In particular, in 1878 he wrote a work entitled "The Armenian Woman", in which he comprehensively considered the Armenian family, its hierarchical and traditional structure, the place and role of the Armenian woman in the family, according to which the Armenian family, living under foreign rule, was persecuted. In order to avoid external violence and vandalism, it was forced to keep an Armenian woman at home behind the closed doors, which is a full expression of self-preservation: "In my opinion, there is no other reason than that the Armenian is able to maintain the purity of the family in its ancient sanctity, although there are abductions and rapes by Muslims, these cases give more opportunity to maintain the inaccessibility of women. Violence leads to self-preservation, and dangerous is the freedom that comes with moral corruption". See: Րաֆֆի. Երկերի ժողովածու. հ. 11, Ե., "Նաիրի" հրատ. 1991. Էջ 114–115 [Raffi. Collection of Works: The Armenian Woman. Vol. 11. Yerevan, 1991. P. 114–115].

erature, press²⁵, factual sources, and documents related to publishing sphere that directly reflected cultural changes.

Until the 1850s, the issues of female subjectivity were either not addressed or only partly examined in the Armenian literature and press, in such aspects as inability to manage one's own life, lack of freedom of independence (also in financial matters), freedom of speech and expression, freedom of decision-making.

They were mainly reflected in various works of art, articles, and essays, whose the authors represented the male hierarchy²⁶. This problem was first overcome by a woman in women's writing in 1861–1862, when Elpis Kesaratsian (an Armenian woman-journalist, who founded and published the first Armenian-language women's magazine "Guitar"²⁷ "about women and for women" in Constantinople) introduced herself to the Armenian community in Constantinople as an editor and essayist voicing the issues of women's emancipation. In 1862, Kesaratsian published her essays on the protection of women's rights, education, and upbringing entitled "Exercising the Right is not Audacity", "Upbringing of Maidens", and "The Benefits of Friendship" in the "Guitar", after which the "Guitar" was closed. Following that, the woman-editor ceased her involvement in the literary and cultural activities for about ten years, and only in 1879 she published a collection of poems and essays "Collection of Letters to a Reading Armenian Woman"²⁸, the entire proceeds of which were donated to the fund of "Patriotic Armenian Women's Association" (Azganuer hayuheats ynkerutian)²⁹.

It should be noted that the the term *subjectivity* is generally used when it is necessary to describe an individual's activity and the extent to which they are able to use their mental capacity to achieve goals. Arguably, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to affirm that Kesaratsian³⁰ acted as a *subject*, and her activity related to the editing and publishing of the "Guitar" is undoubtedly a manifestation of her subjectivity. In this context, the essential characteristics of female subjectivity are built around the category *subject*, which, being integrative in nature, connects the notion of *subjectivity* to the concepts *activity*, *consciousness* and *personality*. Moreover, subjectivity and subjective activity, in this case, are perceived as the highest expression of an individual's mental and psychological manifestation. As for Elpis Kesaratsian, she felt the first brunt of the struggle for women's emancipation as she was subjected to bilateral pressure. On the one hand, the "Guitar"

²⁵ See all the issues of daily "Masis" published in Constantinople.

²⁶ In 1885, Arpiar Arpiarian included his stories "The Convict", "The Price of a Dream", "A Joke", in his book "Images of Life" in which he depicts the incompatibility of the ruling manners and traditions with the realistic values appreciated by man. A good example of this is the heroine of the story "The Convict" Satenik who becomes a victim of the choice her father makes by selecting her husband. This causes her death. See: Արփիարփյան Ա. Երկեր, Ե., Սովետական գրող. 1987. Էջ 40–75 [Arpiarian A. Works. Yerevan, 1987. P. 40–75].

²⁷ "Guitar" was founded in 1861, but the first issue was published in August, 1862. See: Կեսարացյան Է. Ներածություն, Կիթառ, տպ. Ռ. Քիլոբջեան, 1862. թիւ. 1. էջ. 1–2. [Kesaratsian E. Introduction. Guitar // Constantinople, 1862. No. 1. P. 1–2].

²⁸ See: Կեսարացյան Է. Նամականի առ ընթերցասէր հայուհիս, Կ. Պոլիս, տպ. Յ. Սիւհնտեսեան, 1879 [Kesaratsian E. Collection of Letters to a Reading Armenian Woman. Constantinople, 1879].

²⁹ See: Պողոսյան Ե. Պատմություն հայ մշակութային ընկերություններու [Poghosian Y. History of Armenian cultural associations].

³⁰ As mentioned above, in the 1860s, the founder of the Armenian community living in the Ottoman Empire (especially those in major cities) and the first Armenian female editor was the writer, publicist, and journalist Elpis Kesaratsian, although some scholars mistakenly attribute that role to Srбуhi Tyusab (Srбуhi Vahanian), and others to Sipil (Zapel Khanjian).

was censored by the Sultanate government; on the other hand, she was perceived in the Armenian community in Constantinople, which was directly influenced by Turkish patriarchal stereotypes, as an Armenian woman daring to do *man's* job³¹. It seemed outrageous for men that a woman could be an editor and hence she was advised to do a *woman's* job: to spin, to cook, and not to do editorial work. From the perspective of ontological reversal, this phenomenon reflects not a spiritual trait of a woman, but rather the system of values and semantic mental basis for her individuality, as *in a transforming social environment a woman realizes what makes sense of her vitality and practicality. She chooses and develops inside herself what matches her true characteristics and worldview.*

In 1883, Srбуhi Tyusab made her debut in the literary field with the novel “Mayta” as she was the first female novelist and also raised women-related issues via the main character Mayta. Moreover, she was ahead of her western colleagues and friends in the issues of *emancipation* of women, emphasizing *the need for women's economic freedom as a precondition for their social freedom*³². Prior to that, the issue of women's economic freedom and independence had not been addressed in the West. In this context, a woman's presence in the intuitive-creative processes ensures her individual development as an *ontogenetic* process, according to which it is *possible to define the concept of development from a subject to an individual*. A woman has the opportunity to become an individual, because only by doing so can she transform into the subject of her activity, but her subjectivity may be different.

In 1883, the novel “Mayta” was subjected to criticism by a wide circle of conservative critics and by the general public³³, but Tyusab continued to write ignoring it. She did not even try to respond to those critics by writing articles in local magazines or periodicals. Although Tyusab's and other female authors' struggle did not yield results in all cases, they had a tangible impact on the Armenian society. This struggle reflects the difference between the 1880s and the first decade of the 20th century, when the issue of young girls being forced into marriages by their fathers' pressure was raised as in the case of Arpiar Arpiarian or Tyusab's hero in the novel “Siranush”.

Subjectivity is a behavior, and in the case of the manifestation of such behavior it is not in the realm of the natural, but is consistently in the realm of experimentation, where transference to new psychological processes and new behaviors takes place.

Cultural development also presupposes the development of cultural behavior. The Armenian intellectual woman in Constantinople is related to this circumstance, and her individual behavior is described through it. There also existed inherently hidden and invisible factors that prevented women of Christian national minorities living in an Islamist environment, in provinces in particular, from leaving home, and causing them to dress like Turkish women, instead of pursuing European taste, quality, and fashion: “Like Turkish women, they wore feraji or entari, disguised with yashmaz or a plain veil, as was the custom with their class”³⁴. This circumstance can be explained by at least two factors: firstly, that *Christians were afraid to stand out*, because beautiful girls were immediately ab-

³¹ Արեւմուտք. 1864. Թիւ 2, էջ. 10–13 [Arevmutq (West). 1864. No. 2. P.10–13].

³² *Տյուսաբ Ս. Երկեր, Մայրոս, Ե. Սովետական գրող. հրատ., 1981. էջ. 15–149* [Tyusab S. Works: Mayta. Yerevan, 1983. P. 15–149].

³³ Երկրագունտ. Կ. Պոլիս. 1883. Թիւ 4. էջ. 166 [Yerkragunt // Constantinople. 1883. No. 4. P. 166].

³⁴ *Եսայան Չ. Սիլիհսարի պարտեզներ, Ե., Անսարթս հրատ., 2018. էջ. 12* [Yesayan Z. The Gardens of Silihdar. Yerevan, Antares publ. house, 2018. P. 12].

ducted and sold or presented to Sultan and taken to his harem. Beautiful married women were no exception. Armenian women found themselves in a narrow circle in which they had lived and survived for centuries. They were often not saved even by wearing Turkish costumes, keeping silent, not protesting or disobeying, keeping the windows of the house closed, as Turkish farrashes lurked near Armenian churches, abducting Armenian women in Turkish costumes when attending church services³⁵.

That is why, even if relatives tried to take a fourteen-year-old Armenian girl out of the house (so to say “to go to the public”), they were accompanied by at least two elderly women as guarantors. It is most noteworthy that even if Turkish farrashes did not manage to abduct the girl, they would touch her, and if the veil covering her face fell, then the girl would be considered “defiled”³⁶, gossip would start in the communities, and no one would marry her anymore as was the case with Zapel Yesayan’s great grandmother: “It is at this time that at the age of fourteen, for the first time Grandma (tutu) leaves the house with her old relatives to go to church”³⁷.

Women were silent to muteness, because they had nowhere to go. Influenced by Muslim traditions, fathers often married their 14-15-year-old daughters to men over 40 because they were rich and gave good bridewealth³⁸ to the girl’s father. And the mother had no say in what happened in her daughter’s life, because she was deprived of the right to speak or make decisions at all. It can be stated that the woman was experiencing violence, domestic slavery, and captivity before the 1850s and long after that. Such patriarchal traditions and stereotypes were gradually changing in Constantinople under the influence of the growing women’s movement. This movement made Zapel Yesayan’s parents send her to Paris to study at Sorbonne University in 1895 (evidenced by Yesayan in her work “The Gardens of Silihdar”)³⁹.

The fact of leaving for Europe was itself a great step forward in overcoming moral and social perceptions of the time. It was deeply emphasized in the contrast between Yesayan’s generation and the two or three generations prior to hers (for example, at the age of fourteen), the author’s grandmother was hastily married to Shirin oghlu Hakob, a handsome coachman, whom a mediator woman had found from Skyutar)⁴⁰. This generational difference is marked in Zapel Yesayan’s views on the issues of possible progress and freedom in managing one’s life as exemplified in “The Gardens of Silihdar”: “Life opened up before me in wide paths. At that time everything was clear, easy and it seemed to me that overcoming the existing difficulties was a game. My appetite was great, my aspirations were varied, my tense nature was looking for an opportunity to express itself with extravagance and passion”⁴¹. Such processes of women’s emancipation were especially noticeable in terms of women’s *participation or involvement*⁴² in the area of the secularization (lan-

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The girl whose face or part of the body was exposed to a stranger (man) before marriage was considered “defiled”.

³⁷ *Եսայան Չ. Սիլիհսարի պարտեզներ*. Էջ. 12 [*Yesayan Z. The Gardens of Silihdar*. P. 12].

³⁸ The bridewealth could consist of various material means, from gold to a few heads of sheep; often even nothing if the girls were “defiled”.

³⁹ *Եսայան Չ. Սիլիհսարի պարտեզներ* [*Yesayan Z. The Gardens of Silihdar*].

⁴⁰ Ibid. P. 8.

⁴¹ Ibid. P. 153.

⁴² In the second half of the 19th century, women’s emancipation movement was embodied in women’s philanthropy, in societies for orphans and the poor, in educational and humanitarian associations, in

guage) processes in the Armenian communities of the major cities of the Ottoman Empire (Constantinople, Smyrna), not in terms of relative emancipation from domestic slavery or domestic captivity, although, as mentioned above, the second factor was pertinent in provinces and rural areas.

Conclusion

There are very few or no studies at all on multicultures of previously existing empires with ethnic minorities, especially from the perspective of women's issues. In this context, the article is important and actual and seeks to fill this lacunae in the scholarship. The novelty of the article lies in the first attempt to study the issues of women's emancipation related to ethnic minorities (Armenians) living in the context of patriarchal Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century and the ideology originating from it, which was realized in several directions: social, educational, literary-cultural, and economic. It was largely due to the gradual formation, the *ontogenetic process* of the woman-subject took place. The social roots of the origin and meaning of women-men rights in general are enduring problems of history, as the socio-historical, socio-political, literary, and cultural development of mankind has spanned millennia and has always been at the core of a new political, legal, ethical, religious, and philosophical concepts.

The concept of "*subject*" borrowed from philosophy endows man with features of freedom and independence, as it is only a human-specific life activity that is material in the realm of exercising intellectual and material abilities. As a result of geopolitical events and tectonic changes in the socio-economic and legal-political systems of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century, the social role of women was redistributed, which led to the development of the idea of equality between men and women and was reflected in the literature and press of the time. Women's emancipation movement in Constantinople in the second half of the 19th century pursued various goals: issues of education, upbringing, rights and gender equality, as well as social inclusion.

Consequently, the evolving historical-political, social and literary-cultural environments in all spheres presupposed circumstances legitimizing gender equality, causing women to choose their own path in a world of conflicting values, appreciating them as subjects overcoming their natural and social obstacles and constraints, like Elpis Kesarsatsian, Srбуhi Tyusab, Sipil, Haykanush Mark, Zapel Yesayan. In this context, the subject is not a perfection, but a continuous advancement towards perfection. The subject is the creator of her own story (subjectivity), because *she is able to unite her own* intellectual and material potential. In this sense, in the second half of the 19th century, subjectivity, as a phenomenon, was involved in the historically legitimized higher mental processes of the woman, who was gradually liberating herself from traditions and stereotypes. The socio-historical functions of the latter's mental development constituted the methodological basis for subjective development. Therefore, it is possible to clarify that in the second half of the 19th century in Constantinople, the ideology of women's emancipation, as *ontogenesis of the subject*, was realized in several aspects: social, educational, literary-cultural and economic.

non-governmental organizations, in active involvement of women in social life, in their provision with work, which was really impossible to achieve in the absence of close family and civic relationships.

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Статья поступила в редакцию 15 декабря 2022 г.

Рекомендована к печати 17 июля 2023 г.

Received: December 15, 2022

Accepted: July 17, 2023