

**THE PATRIARCHAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PHENOMENON OF
FAMILY IN THE NOVEL “SIRANOUSH” BY SRPOUHI DUSSAP (A SOCIAL-
PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS)⁷**

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Abstract

This study investigates the male-female social-psychological factors and interactions, as well as the causes and challenges of violence in intra-family relationships in Srpouhi Dussap’s novel *Siranoush* in the space-time chronotope of the second half of the 19th century and the patriarchal Ottoman Empire.

The *aim* of the study is to explore the complex dynamics between the eponymous protagonist of the novel, Siranoush, and her family members, analyzing how these dynamics manifest themselves as a social-psychological problem through the lens of patriarchal supremacy.

The *problem* of the study is to analyze and evaluate the phenomenon of *family* and the existential-humanistic crisis in interpersonal relationships from a psychological perspective.

The *scientific novelty* of the study is the investigation of the elements of *patriarchy* and *violence* present in Srpouhi Dussap’s novel *Siranoush*, and of the ways in which national values were incorporated into the fictional text.

The *relevance* of the study is determined by its interdisciplinary nature. The material was analyzed in the context of mutual connections and relationships between literary studies, psychology, sociology and philosophy with the use of appropriate methods, making this study the first of its kind. It is important and relevant not only in terms of interdisciplinarity, but also those of analyzing women’s issues in Armenology. The study also revealed the social-psychological manifestations of the phenomenon *family*, which express the relationships between family members in Srpouhi Dussap’s *Siranoush*.

Keywords and phrases: Srpouhi Dussap, Siranoush, younger and older generations, psychosomatics of relationships, social role, low self-esteem, ameliorative assessment.

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**ԸՆՏԱՆԻՔ ՖԵՆՈՄԵՆԻ ՀԱՅՐԻՇԽԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԴՐՍԵՎՈՐՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ,
ՈՐՊԵՍ ՍՈՑԻԱԼ-ՀՈԳԵՔԱՆԱԿԱՆ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐ, ՍՐԲՈՒՀԻ
ՏՅՈՒՍԱՔԻ «ՍԻՐԱՆՈՒՇ» ՎԵՊՈՒՄ**

ՆԱԻՐԱ ՀԱՄԲԱՐԶՈՒՄՅԱՆ

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Համառոտագիր

Ուսումնասիրությունն ընդգրկում է Սրբուհի Տյուսաբի «Սիրանոյշ» վեպում առկա կին-տղամարդ սոցիալ-հոգեբանական գործոնների, փոխազդեցությունների և ներընտանեկան փոխհարաբերություններում բռնության պատճառների և մարտահրավերների վերլուծությունը, որոնց տարածաժամանակային ժամանակահատվածը XIX դարի երկրորդ կեսն է և օսմանյան հայրիշխանական կայսրությունը:

Ուսումնասիրության *նպատակն* է արևմտահայ կին հեղինակ Սրբուհի Տյուսաբի «Սիրանոյշ» վեպում ուսումնասիրել վեպի գլխավոր կերպարի՝ Սիրանուշի և նրա ընտանիքի անդամների փոխհարաբերությունները՝ որպես սոցիալ-հոգեբանական հիմնախնդիր և հայրիշխանության գերակայության դրսևորումներ: Ուսումնասիրության *խնդիրը ընտանիք* ֆենոմենը և միջանձնային փոխհարաբերություններում էքզիստենցիալ-հումանիստական ճգնաժամը հոգեբանական բաղադրիչների համատիրույթում վերլուծելը և գնահատելն է:

Ուսումնասիրության *գիտական նորույթն* այն է, որ հետազոտվել են Սրբուհի Տյուսաբի «Սիրանոյշ» վեպում առկա *հայրիշխանության և բռնության* բաղադրիչները, ինչպես նաև՝ գեղարվեստական տեքստում ազգային արժեքների ներդրման ուղիները: Ուսումնասիրության *արդիականությունը* պայմանավորված է ուսումնասիրվող նյութի միջգիտակարգայնությամբ, ըստ որի՝ այն վերլուծվել է գրականագիտության, լեզվաբանության, սոցիոլոգիայի միջև փոխադարձ կապերի և առնչությունների

համատեքստում՝ համապատասխան մեթոդների կիրառությամբ: Այսօրինակ ուսումնասիրություն կատարվում է առաջին անգամ: Այն կարևոր է և արդիական ոչ միայն միջգիտակարգայնության, այլև հայագիտության մեջ կանանց հիմնախնդիրների քննության տեսանկյունից: Ըստ ուսումնասիրության արդյունքների՝ բացահայտվել են նաև *ընտանիք* ֆենոմենի սոցիալ-հոգեբանական դրսևորումները, որոնք գործածվել են Սրբուհի Տյուսաբի «Սիրանոյշ» վեպում ընտանիքի անդամների միջև փոխհարաբերություններն արտահայտելու համար:

Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ. Սրբուհի Տյուսաբ, Սիրանոյշ, երիտասարդ և ավագ սերունդ, փոխհարաբերությունների հոգեսոմատիկա, սոցիալական դերակատարություն, ցածր ինքնագնահատական, մելիորատիվ գնահատում:

**ПАТРИАРХАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ ФЕНОМЕНА СЕМЬИ КАК
ГЛАВНАЯ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ПРОБЛЕМА В
РОМАНЕ СРБУИ ТЮСАБ «СИРАНУШ»**

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Аннотация

Исследование включает в себя гендерный анализ социально-психологических факторов, взаимодействий, вызовов и причин насилия во внутрисемейных отношениях в романе Србуи Тюсаб «Сирануш», пространственно-временным хронотопом которого являются вторая половина XIX века и Османская патриархальная империя.

Цель исследования – изучение взаимоотношений главной героини Сирануш и членов ее семьи в одноименном романе западноармянской писательницы Србуи Тюсаб с точки зрения социально-психологических отношений и проявлений патриархального господства.

Задачей исследования являются анализ и оценка феномена семьи и экзистенциально-гуманистического кризиса межличностных отношений в континууме психологических компонентов.

Научная новизна исследования заключается в том, что были исследованы компоненты патриархальности и насилия, присутствующие в романе Србуи Тюсаб «Сирануш», а также пути внедрения национальных ценностей в художественный текст. Актуальность исследования определяется междисциплинарным характером изучаемого материала: он был проанализирован в контексте взаимосвязей и взаимоотношений между литературоведением, языкознанием, социологией с использованием соответствующих методов. Такое исследование проводится впервые, что является важным и актуальным не только с точки зрения междисциплинарных изысканий, но и с позиции изучения «женского вопроса» в арменоведении. В результате исследования выявлены также социально-психологические проявления феномена семьи, которые использовались для выражения отношений между членами семьи в романе Србуи Тюсаб «Сирануш».

Ключевые слова и словосочетания: Србуи Тюсаб, Сирануш, молодое и старшее поколения, психосоматика взаимоотношений, социальная роль, заниженная самооценка, мелиоративная оценка.

Introduction

The founders and followers of the existential-humanistic direction of family relations in social psychology believe that disagreements in interpersonal relations and the resulting crises of intra-family relations is *the replacement of an individual's true identity with their socially imposed role*. This study examines the causes, challenges, and implications of social-psychological problems, object-subject interactions, and domestic violence in male-female relationships [6, p. 56-63] in Western Armenian families living in the patriarchal Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century. In the context of the reforms⁸ that took place in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, it would be reasonable to examine the logic of the dynamics of not only historical-political, literary-cultural, but also social-psychological processes, which is also an extremely important issue.

By studying the linguistic characteristics of the novel *Siranoush* by female Western Armenian author Srpouhi Dussap⁹, a number of nouns and verbs reflecting family relations were identified (according to grammatical meanings). These include the nouns *mother, father, daughter, husband, brother, mistress, boyfriend, girlfriend, patriarchy, violence*, and the verbs *be born, live, love, marry, fight, submit, comply, and die*. Through these words, the author reveals intra-family and interpersonal relationships in the novel and explores the meanings of the main family units, i.e. *father, mother, daughter, husband*, under the collective noun *family*. Analyzing the semantic features present within the phenomenon of *family* in the domain of semiotics reveals all the primary and secondary units characterizing kinship ties, which are directly interwoven around the same axis.

Methodology. In order to carry out the study, we developed two aspects related to the concept of family in Srpouhi Dussap's *Siranoush*: *patriarchy* (violence) and *social-psychological features*, which are directly related to intra-family relationships of national minorities (here, Armenians) living in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century and social-psychological problems. The findings were analyzed by uniting the semantic units (monads) operating in them as a scientific material with the help of an umbrella-shaped technical tool (frame within a frame principle). Our

⁸ Tanzimat – Turkish for *reorganization*, a 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 unimplemented reforms. Tanzimat was carried out in the Ottoman Empire between 1839-1876, during the same time when the first constitution of the Empire was adopted.

⁹ Srpouhi Dussap (Vahanian) was born in 1841. She was the first Armenian female novelist. The core of her work was the issues of women's emancipation: socio-economic, legal, educational, political and national consciousness, their manifestations and protection. Throughout her literary and cultural activity Dussap tried to substantiate one of the most important prerequisites for emancipation, the idea of occupation, which the author considered the first prerequisite for a woman's independence. Srpouhi Dussap is the author of the novels *Mayda* (1883), *Siranoush* (1884) and *Araxi, or the Governess* (1887), publicistic articles and poems. Dussap died in 1901.

results showed that the word *family* was used with different lexical-semantic meta-meanings. The practical significance of the study is related to the possibility of applying the research results to the field of psychology, specifically the domain of male-female relationships, which began to be dynamically studied in the 20th century. Scientists who distinguished the principles of interpretation of social interactions in psychology contributed to this process. In this regard, the neo-behavioral model is noteworthy, within the framework of which George Homans' [7] theory of social interactions, John Thibault's and Harold Kelly's [9, p. 7-24] theories of outcomes and interpersonal interactions were developed, considering the interaction in the exchange process as an interpersonal relationship involving reciprocity of rewards and punishments.

Behavioral theory explores the interaction of human behaviors and its essence, since every interpersonal relationship is an interaction. It suggests that the stability of the relationship is determined by the mutual interests of both parties (material benefits, status increase, power expansion, etc.), that are greater than losses. In this respect, the similarity of people to each other is a reward in itself, because it provides an opportunity to empathize and manifest their own self and values. It is important to note that the understanding of family psychology, both as a theoretical and practical field, has undergone significant evolution in recent times. This field encompasses a wide range of phenomena and places the family unit at the center as a complex social-psychological reality. To analyze this process, Srpouhi Dussap's *Siranoush* was chosen as a study matrix. The old patriarchal and traditional patterns of family relations, described in the framework of the patriarchal ideological discourse as a small cell of the Ottoman patriarchal society, including the Armenian society of the post-Tanzimat period, underwent significant transformations and many displacements during the following 165 years. Therefore, along with the processes taking place in society, the socio-psychological provisions of interpersonal relations in the family have also changed.¹⁰

Existential Oppositions of Family-Violence, Marriage-Power as an Ontological Tragedy

Psychologists, sociologists and psychiatrists (Erich Fromm [5], Karen Horni [13], Erik Erikson [4], Carl Gustav Jung¹¹ and others) consider human-society

¹⁰ It should be noted that as a result of the aforementioned socio-psychological logic of the dynamics of the reform of the historical-political, socio-cultural processes that took place in the Ottoman Empire during and after the Tanzimat period, another extremely significant issue emerged: **the fear of making a final decision**. This fear ultimately led to social impoverishment, economic instability and loss of enormous human resources, the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

¹¹ It is important to note that many of the authoritative philosophers, cultural anthropologists and psychologists who criticized the socio-cultural foundations of the development of society, which they think violate the development of psychologically

relations, as well as the phenomenon of family, to be based on the development of the basic psychological concepts of a certain socio-cultural space, expanding, describing and naming the main social and psychological factors (cultural neurosis, existential crisis) that continue to spread their negative influence. In this context it is noteworthy that the plot of the novel *Siranoush* by Srpouhi Dussap explores and generalizes the author's views on the themes of life and marriage through the depiction of various couples, including Mr. and Mrs. Haynur, Siranoush and Yervand, Siranoush and Darehian, Darehian and Janet, and Zaruhi and Hrant. The main character of the novel, Siranoush, who was trapped in a loveless marriage imposed by her father, struggled with the lack of freedom both in her father's and husband's households, although her situation became more complicated after marriage. In both Mr. Haynur's and Darehian's families, the husbands did not consider the women's opinions important: "Trembling, Mrs. Haynur tried to calm her husband's passion, but he screamed furiously like a monster" [12, p. 89]. Siranoush's mother was deprived of the right to speak out and express her opinion: "The poor mother seemed out of breath, and acted as a noble victim of unique motherly love" [12, p. 89].

Siranoush had the same status in Darehian's family. She suffered from the circumstance of being forced by her father to marry a man she did not love and had negative feelings towards. Siranoush loved Yervand and believed that "there is no rich or poor in love" [12, p. 37], so she desperately wished she could be with Yervand, the man she truly loved. Even though she had to remain married to Darehian for the sake of public opinion, the pain of not being able to be with Yervand was unbearable for her. After being forced to marry by her father, the problem of being unable to divorce and "hiding shame" in public is reflected in Siranoush's attitude towards her father.

Analysts of the ontological and humanistic problems of the family find that disagreements in interpersonal relationships, violence and the resulting intra-family problems are caused by a replacement of a person's real self with their social role, which is a *hidden* issue. Followers of neo-Freudian understandings believe that this is due to a loss of a person's socio-cultural identity [4]. In the case of Siranoush, who lives in a prejudiced society, this is especially true. She is the one who is most concerned and fears of potential judgement from those around her if her marriage were to end in divorce. However, even while living in a prejudiced society, Siranoush is not exempt from having her own prejudices. Above all, she fears that the people around her will find out the truth.

Therefore, no matter how much she thinks about divorce, the negative connotation of the word¹² as a social taboo is reinforced in her, which in the novel is at the same time perceived as *an ontological tragedy*. Siranoush is a triple victim of violation of free will:

favorable relationships in marriage, through their innovative works, became indirect initiators of what is called *a cultural and sexual revolution*.

¹² Legal dissolution of marriage by court or other authority.

a. Mr. Haynur-Siranoush: “‘Mother,’ she cried, ‘Father wants to oppress my will in vain. It is impossible to take back my promise to Yervand, it is impossible to free my heart from his ties.’” [12, p. 85],

b. Darehian-Siranoush: “‘But you never took the time to inquire if my heart was free, and if I could love you, you were pleased to receive my father’s approval. You wanted me and you got me. Therefore, you have no right to complain if I kept my heart for someone else and I will keep it for him as long as I live.’” [12, p. 285],

c. Siranoush-Yervand (lost love): “‘My father will break two hearts, will put an end to two lives’”. “‘It would not matter if he saw me only as a martyr. But to make a martyr of Yervand, to tear his soul, to extinguish his genius, oh, no, no, I can’t do that.’” As a victim [12, p. 86].

Siranoush inevitably dies at the end of the novel.

Consultants of existential sociology and psychoanalysis, as well as psychotherapists in family relationships focus on the problems posed by social-psychological and philosophical thought not only in the 20th and 21st centuries, but also in the 19th century. These include the split of the self, as proposed by R. Laing [10] and J. Deleuze and F. Guattari [3], the lifelessness of modern society, establishment of the false self and suppression of the true aspirations of the psychologically healthy individual. Additionally, false theses and values of family completeness and sufficiency were created through these problems.

For Darehian, family and marriage are an integral part of his standing in society: “The lover of free life became a prisoner of beauty, and virtue triumphed over obsession. From the same moment P. Darehian’s fate was suddenly decided, his mind underwent a revolution and the house glowed like a paradise in his eyes, and Siranoush became the mistress of his soul” [12, p. 89], but despite his immoral lifestyle, he despises the family as a *value*.

At first, Darehian was overjoyed to have become the “owner” of such “beauty”, but it was devastatingly humiliating for him to realize that he could not buy Siranoush’s love with all of his wealth. Darehian never lost hope, even when he brought her to the brink of death. This is a testament to Darehian’s male egoism and his tendency to think of women as mere possessions. Consequently, losing the woman he had fought for so hard caused Darehian to go insane. In this context, the word *woman* acquires an evaluative meaning and is realized as a sin against Darehian’s sanity under the influence of his indecent behavior. This portrays an extremely negative attitude towards women and is further exemplified in Darehian’s decision to marry Janet. As with the above-mentioned context, this case also illustrates the negative attitude towards the woman. This is a case of a man’s mistreatment of a married woman. Here, the use of the word *mistress* as a replacement for *woman* adds to the ontological inversion, highlighting the sinister purpose of Darehian’s marriage to Siranoush, which consisted of having a beautiful and rich wife and fulfilling his indecent desires.

**Psychosomatics of the Relationship Between Young and Old Generations
(father-daughter)
As a Manifestation of Violence**

The deep, archetypal foundations of the social and cultural factors that make up the socio-cultural space for the development of intra-family traditions are also worthy of note. The social-psychological factors under study are part of the cultural and semiotic chronotope of the former Ottoman Empire, where many generations of the Western Armenian society lived. In the process of creating and maintaining family life, in addition to the relationships between husband and wife, generational relationships between fathers and sons are of crucial importance, which, first of all, are manifested through the interaction between parents and children. These social-psychological factors have a direct impact on intrapersonal characteristics in families and on male-female interpersonal relationships and interactions. This part of the study focuses on the relationship between Siranoush and her parents (Mr. and Mrs. Haynur), which testifies to the honest and incorruptible filial feelings of the young generation towards their father and mother, and vice versa, about the parents who subject the girl to the test of violent fate for the sake of wealth. “The two main objects of his love were his daughter Siranoush and gold, he cared almost the same way for one and the other” [12, p. 29].

Mr. and Mrs. Haynur are a middle-aged couple, twenty years apart in age, with their daughter Siranoush. The life of this married couple can hardly be considered happy, because the relationship between husband and wife is originally built on the patriarchal model, with the husband (Mr. Haynur) demanding absolute control and the wife (Mrs. Haynur) submitting to his will. Siranoush’s deep respect, love and pride for her parents, which becomes obvious in the first part of the novel’s plot, is worthy of note. Mr. Haynur is a typical representative of patriarchy, a dictator who forces his daughter to marry against her will, and her mother is a voiceless woman-object [6, p. 56-63] who silently submits to her father’s will, unable to protect her own child: “On hearing her husband’s last threatening words, the lady went into the room to help her daughter. As soon as Mr. Haynur laid eyes on her, he spoke out fiercely, accusing her for destroying her daughter’s happiness, who, as a mother, was blind and useless, and unable to recognize the young man’s self-seeking motives” [12, p. 89]. The conflict created in the family on the occasion of Siranoush’s marriage turns husband-wife (Mr. Haynur-Mrs. Haynur) and father-daughter (Mr. Haynur-Siranoush) relationships upside down.

The girl’s attempt to resist her father’s harsh patriarchal attitude is not successful and is characterized by the author with ameliorative evaluative subcontexts, which contribute to the reader’s awareness of the negative assessment of the older generation, which, in this context, is identified with the word *father*:

“The patient mother would be silent. But Siranoush, unable to tolerate those scolding words, cried out to her mother.

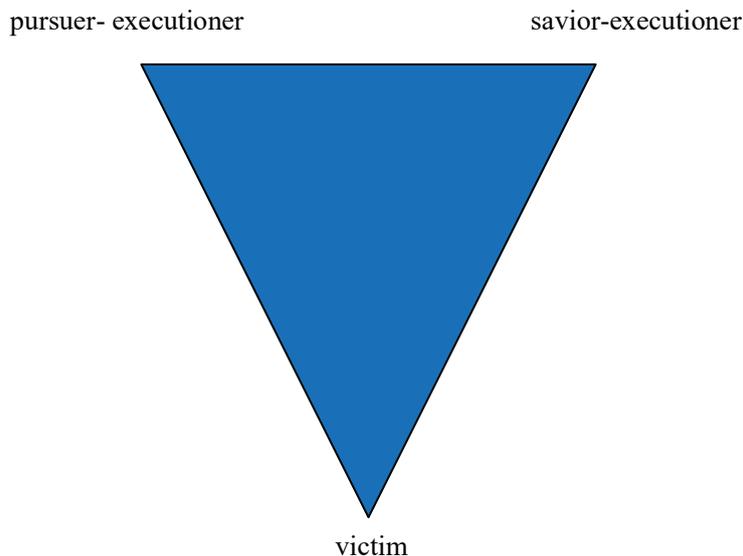
‘Father, why do you blame Mother if she could not restrain that holy feeling of a young man who is honest and virtuous, and whom you honored with your sympathy?’

‘Rebellious girl, do you dare to protect that insensitive one? Get out of my sight!’” [12, p. 89].

Adjectives like *unfair*, *unreasonable*, *weak*, *rude*, *cruel*, whose dictionary meanings do not form a positive attitude towards the word *father*, contribute to the formation of this type of attitude.

Siranoush’s extremely gentle and caring attitude towards her mother is noteworthy, especially in the scene of her mother’s illness: Siranoush stays by her mother’s bedside, who suffers from a severe fever, and remains true to the oath given to her. This oath serves as the pivotal justification for Siranoush to submit to her father’s wishes, which is an important element of the novel’s plot: “Mother, I cannot bear the thought of you dying, I pushed you to death, I will free you from the clutches of death. Mother, you shall live, my filial devotion will save you. Live and I will vow before heaven to sacrifice my heart and all of my being to you, that is, to sacrifice my dear Yervand for you, I vow, Mother, hear me?” [12, p. 96].

However, the feelings and attitudes towards her mother turn into a forced sacrifice in Siranoush’s relationship with her father, leading to psychosomatic phenomena, which are accompanied and sublimated by the multitude of relationships of sacrifice between victim (Siranoush), executioner (Mr. Haynur) and savior-executioner (Darehian), ultimately culminating in Siranoush’s death. As her life progresses, Siranoush increasingly finds herself in a closed circle, isolated from the outside world. This circumstance is called Karpman’s [8] or drama triangle [11; 1] in psychology.



In the novel, the characteristics *rough* and *monstrous* attributed to the father, in general, emphasize the author's attitude towards the derogatory tone of the noun *anger*, which is used in the novel to express Siranoush's negative attitude towards social prejudices. "Siranoush's blood would boil, seeing the low and pitiable position of women in society, when they dared not express a free opinion, and they were unable to realize their natural legitimate rights as individuals, and they didn't have the courage to escape prejudice" [12, p. 31].

Driven by these prejudices, Siranoush's father forces her to marry the adventurous but rich Darehian. It is only then that Siranoush's feelings towards her father are identified with the traits *cruel* and *merciless*, which also imply a negative attitude. Siranoush's warm feelings and caring attitude towards her mother and father are expressed in the young girl's thoughts on them. Thus, while yielding to her father and mother, Siranoush feels responsible for her oath that she made during her mother's illness: "A dear image stood before her, sad and desperate, she would feel her with her soul, would beg her not to sacrifice herself, but love the way she always loved, and to remember the promise of loyalty made to her. It suddenly seemed to her that she would call her "unfaithful" in a sad voice" [12, p. 99].

In this context, the word *illness* bearing a negative connotation shows the warm filial soul of the daughter, which is an authorial device. Such a stylistic device ultimately contributes to a positive assessment of the words *father* and *mother*. Siranoush was very sorry for her mother, who was weak and helpless due to illness: "When Siranoush saw her mother's condition, she forgot her personal weakness, her filial love gave her strength. She put aside all intentions and thoughts, and focused her mind and soul on one point, i.e. her beloved mother, and watched over her continuously, letting no one else take care of her precious life" [12, p. 95]. Siranoush's family is a patriarchal family; therefore, Dussap deliberately pays almost no attention to how Siranoush's mother describes her husband. The author depicts the supremacy of patriarchy through relationships.

The description of the relationship between mother and daughter is practically inferior to that between father and daughter. However, the women in Haynur's family are portrayed as *weak, submissive, compliant* victims. It seems to Siranoush that she overcomes the difficulties she faces, but, in fact, she simply puts up with the circumstances, which in the novel leads to the psychosomatics [2] of the relationship between the older and the younger generations, characterizing it as violence.

Conclusion

The analysis of the relationships between Siranoush and her parents, as well as Siranoush and Darehian shows that the author used the word *family* to materialize them. This means that in both of these families, men treat their wives as *possessions*. This is also manifested in using a family member as a possession and expressing this fact in different semantic contexts, at times with a positive evaluation. Patriarchal attitudes were in no way condemned by society.

In the study, the phenomenon *family* is also analyzed through the word *mother*. In the novel, this role belongs to Siranoush's mother, Mrs. Haynur. This type of analysis of the novel testifies to the key role mothers had in 19th century families. As a long-standing practice, fathers entrusted the care of their children to their mothers, making them responsible for their children's education and upbringing, managing the household, and ensuring the psychological wellbeing of all family members: "As a considerate and caring mother, she personally took care of the child's health and growth, and then she intended to constantly watch over her daughter" [12, p. 29].

The semantic component *husband* of the phenomenon *family* is located in the perinuclear zone of the concept under study. The role of the husband in the novel *Siranoush* is performed by Mr. Haynur and Darehian. The 19th century family was a patriarchal structure in which children submitted to the father and wives submitted to their husbands. Mrs. Haynur's "deep respect" for her husband was motivated by fear, and her silence, when it came to solving important issues was due to the lack of the right to speak up.

Unfortunately, this pervasive issue in the women's novels of the second half of the 19th century has not been properly investigated. A woman was not allowed to make decisions on her own and, as seen in Srpouhi Dussap's *Siranoush*, the mother was not even allowed a say in decisions that were ultimately fatal for her daughter.

It is noteworthy that in all three novels of Srpouhi Dussap, *Mayda* (1883), *Siranoush* (1884), and *Araxi, or the Governess* (1887), there is no close connection with secondary relatives, suggesting that the author did not give much importance to grandparents, uncles, or aunts, or did not consider their role as primary in family life. Although we know from the novels by other female authors, in particular *The Gardens of Silihdar* by Zabel Yesayan, that in the 1860s and 1880s family units were formed around the concept of aunts, uncles, siblings, parents, and grandparents, all of whom were considered equal members of one whole family.

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