

**Haykanush A. Sharuryan**

*PhD in Philology*

**Ruzan R. Ghazaryan**

*PhD in Philology*

**CONCEPT OF WAITING IN  
PIERRE LOTI'S AND KRIKOR ZOHRAB'S WRITINGS\***

**Key words** – theme of waiting, French and Armenian literatures, emotional uncertainty, search of daily bread, shared experiences.

**Introduction**

Traditionally, men have been expected to shoulder the financial burden of the family. This role has often necessitated abandoning one's home, wife, and children in pursuit of employment opportunities in distant lands to provide for their loved ones.

The unfortunate necessity of separation, whether temporary or permanent, has given rise to the poignant experience of women waiting for their loved ones' return. The concept of waiting has remained a timeless and universal theme in world literature, with numerous references throughout history, demonstrating its capacity to resonate with people from all walks of life and across diverse cultures.

This study seeks to contextualize a shared thematic connection between two seemingly unrelated literary traditions, French and Armenian. These traditions are interwoven by what can be termed “perpetual themes.” The focus of this study is on two contemporary novelists, **Pierre Loti** (1850-1923) and **Krikor Zohrab** (1861-1915).

Pierre Loti, also known as Louis Marie-Julien Viaud, holds a unique and significant position in European literature. His body of work is marked by the exploration of colonial motifs and vivid portrayals of far-flung lands and cultures.

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\* Հոդվածն ընդունվել է տպագրության 25.03.2024:

Certainly, Loti's profound connection to colonial themes and exotic locales can be ascribed to his personal experiences. Notably, the fact that the writer served as an officer in the French navy played a pivotal role in shaping his perspective. Born into a Protestant family within the community of Rochefort in the coastal province of Charente, Loti embarked on a maritime path from an early age. He entered naval school at the age of 17, dedicating his entire life to voyaging to diverse countries. His foray into literary fiction commenced in 1876 after a visit to Constantinople, when his comrades in the military encouraged him to transform his diary entries into a novel.

This marked the beginning of Loti's first contribution to European literature through the novel titled "*Aziyadé*," which soon found its place on the readers' bookshelves. The work is a lyrical fusion of personal experiences, a compelling love story between a French naval officer and an ordinary Turkish woman. The novel swiftly catapulted the author into fame and subsequently received commendation from none other than the celebrated writer Marcel Proust.

Pierre Loti continued to produce a series of works centered around these fascinating and far-off lands. In 1886, his novel "*An Iceland Fisherman*" (French: **Pêcheur d'Islande**) was published - a literary endeavor that left a lasting impression on readers. The renowned English poet and literary critic, Edmund William Gosse (1849-1928), even went so far as to describe it as "one of his most characteristic productions"<sup>1</sup> in an article included in the 1911 edition of the British Encyclopedia. This particular novel, "An Iceland Fisherman," was honored with the Witte Prize by the French Academy of Sciences. Its focus lies in an exploration of the emotional anguish experienced by a married woman who, compelled by circumstances, anxiously awaits her husband's return.

Krikor Zohrab undeniably stands as one of the most revered luminaries within Armenian prose. Despite being a prominent public-political figure, a distinguished jurist-lawyer, a compelling orator, and an influential publicist during the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Zohrab's most enduring legacy resides primarily within his literary contributions.

Krikor Zohrab's literary brilliance shone most brightly in the realm of short prose leading to well-deserved epithets like the "Armenian Maupassant" and the "prince of the novel." He had an extraordinary ability to transform real-life experiences into timeless literary creations, crafting indelible and universal images that continue to resonate with us today, evoking profound emotional responses.

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<sup>1</sup> Gosse, Edmund W., "Loti, Pierre". In Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. 17 (11th ed.). 1911, pp. 19–20.

Zohrab was known for occasionally disregarding conventional literary norms in favor of emphasizing the author's message. His radiant personality and refined literary abilities drove him to seek the most suitable avenues to convey his ideas. Despite the brevity of his works, his messages carried substantial depth and significance. "Modern life" served as a central theme in Zohrab's and his contemporaries' writings. He authored influential novels that resonated with the social context of his era, a fact that remains indisputable. Nevertheless, a distinctive characteristic of his work lay in the exploration of the "voice of conscience" and the expression of "silent pains," revealing the hidden facets of the human soul that continue to hold relevance throughout the ages.

Krikor Zohrab would distance himself from the debates surrounding his literary works. Nevertheless, on occasion, he would offer insights into his writings, delving into the core ideas they contained. He once said, "Big events leave me indifferent, but the smaller ones, insignificant though in the eyes of others, are a matter of serious reflection for me."<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely these seemingly inconsequential events that form the heart of Zohrab's literary creations, endowing him with a unique place not only within Armenian literature but also on the global literary stage. Zohrab carefully selected 34 of his novels, originally published in the press, and compiled them into three collections: "*Voices of Conscience*" (1909), "*Life As It Is*" (1911), and "*Silent Pains*" (1911). This selection further solidifies his unique role in literature, highlighting his focus on the profound impact of everyday occurrences on the human mental state.

The novel "*Widow*" (1888), featured in the collection "Voices of Conscience," bears a close connection to the subject of our investigation, which is the relationship between Loti and Zohrab. This work delves into a poignant aspect of Armenian life and the repercussions of emigration. Through the tragic tale of a newly-formed family, the author achieves a profound artistic representation, one that maintains its relevance even in modern times. Furthermore, in the context of that era, another universal theme of great significance was the painful waiting experienced by a woman who was left widowed by the decree of fate. This theme harks back to the heart-wrenching waiting depicted in "An Iceland Fisherman," underscoring the enduring nature of such emotional narratives in literature.

The renowned Western Armenian philologist and critic of the 19th century, Arpiar Arpiaryan, also explored the theme of waiting. In his writings, he notes, "This description of waiting is reminiscent of Loti's famous heart-wrenching

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<sup>2</sup> **Zohrab K.**, Collection of Works, vol. A, 2001, pp. 436. Yerevan: Literature and Art Museum Press.

portrayal in “Pêcheur d’Islande” (An Iceland Fisherman). Interestingly, the Armenian author had not even read Loti’s work when he penned “Widow.”<sup>3</sup> It was only several years later that the writer of these lines, Arpiar Arpiaryan, provided Zohrab with Loti’s masterpiece to read, emphasizing the striking similarities in their attitude to the theme of waiting.

### 1. Pierre Loti’s narratives of waiting as a vehicle for exploring themes of love and separation

The novel “An Iceland Fisherman” by Pierre Loti provides a vivid and meticulous portrayal of the challenging lives led by the fishermen in the region of Brittany. Historically, Brittany was situated in the northwestern part of France and encompassed the territory of the peninsula bearing the same name. It is worth noting that Brittany has a rich historical and cultural background, and it served as a resettlement area for Celtic communities that migrated from the British Isles during the early medieval period. This historical context adds depth and significance to the novel’s setting and the portrayal of fishermen’s way of life.

The author, Pierre Loti, dedicated this five-part novel, each with its own eloquently titled sub-chapters, to the French poet and feminist Juliette Lambert Adam (1836-1936), with an inscription that reads, “As a tribute to filial love.” The novel has been adapted into numerous films and stage productions, attesting to its enduring popularity and cultural significance. Furthermore, the renowned Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh, inspired by Pierre Loti’s work, chose the novel as the theme for his painting titled “Lullaby.” This illustrates the novel’s profound impact on the arts, transcending the written word to inspire visual art as well.

The examination of Pierre Loti’s creative legacy reveals his unique approach - blending elements from the French realist school and artistic impressionism. Notably, the diplomat and literary connoisseur Jules Cambon (1845-1935) likened Loti’s art to aromatic poetry, a comparison that emphasized how Loti’s work freed French literature from the confines of naturalism. What distinguishes Loti’s writing from an artistic standpoint is the clarity and distinctness of his language, which permeates into the reader’s soul, leaving a lasting impact. His ability to create lasting impressions through words is a testament to his skill as a writer and his capacity to go beyond traditional literary boundaries.

The novel “An Iceland Fisherman” is dedicated to the poignant love story between the Breton woman Gaud Mével and the ordinary fisherman Yann Gaos.

3 **Arpiaryan A.**, Modern Western Armenian Literature. “Yerker” [Works], 1987, pp. 459. Yerevan. Soviet Writer Publishing House.

Pierre Loti, known for his mastery of precise descriptions, skillfully depicts the world of Icelandic fishermen right from the very first pages of the story, painting a vivid picture of their lives and surroundings:

*“Ces cinq hommes étaient vêtus pareillement, un épais tricot de laine bleue serrant le torse et s'enfonçant dans la ceinture du pantalon; sur la tête, l'espèce de casque en toile goudronnée qu'on appelle suroît (du nom de ce vent de sud-ouest qui dans notre hémisphère amène les pluies). Ils étaient d'âges divers. Le capitaine pouvait avoir quarante ans; trois autres, de vingt-cinq à trente. Le dernier, qu'ils appelaient Sylvestre ou Lurlu, n'en avait que dix-sept. Il était déjà un homme, pour la taille et la force; une barbe noire, très fine et très frisée, couvrait ses joues; seulement il avait gardé ses yeux d'enfant, d'un gris bleu, qui étaient extrêmement doux et tout naïfs.”*<sup>4</sup>

*“These half-dozen men were dressed alike; a thick blue woollen jersey clung to the body, drawn in by the waist-belt; on the head was worn the waterproof helmet, known as the sou'-wester. These men were of different ages. The skipper might have been about forty; the three others between twenty-five and thirty. The youngest, whom they called Sylvestre or “Lurlu,” was only seventeen, yet already a man for height and strength; a fine curly black beard covered his cheeks; still he had childlike eyes, bluish-grey in hue, and sweet and tender in expression.”*<sup>5</sup>

These “five huge, square-built seamen chatting, in Breton tongue, on women and marriage but without saying anything indecent.”<sup>6</sup>

The “Icelanders, a valiant race of seafarers,”<sup>7</sup> were compelled to part with their families each spring and embark on a perilous journey to the shores of Iceland in pursuit of cod fishing.

The author portrays the fishermen’s annual voyage to the distant shores of Iceland with a striking blend of simplicity and profound tragedy, capturing the essence of their challenging and somber undertaking:

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4 Loti P., “Pêcheur d'Islande”. Bouquineux.com.

[http://www.bouquineux.com/index.php?telecharger=777&Loti-P%C3%AAcheur\\_d\\_Islande](http://www.bouquineux.com/index.php?telecharger=777&Loti-P%C3%AAcheur_d_Islande), p. 3.

5 Loti P., “An Iceland Fisherman”. Bookyards.com.

<https://www.bookyards.com/en/author/page/1096/Loti-Pierre>, p 12.

6 Ibid., p. 11, Eng.

7 Ibid., p. 18, Eng.

*“Le prêtre, s'arrêtant devant chacun d'eux, disait les paroles et faisait les gestes qui bénissent. Ensuite ils partaient tous, comme une flotte, laissant le pays presque vide d'époux, d'amants et de fils.”*<sup>8</sup>

*“The priest halted before each, giving them his holy blessing; and then the fleet started, leaving the country desolate of husbands, lovers, and sons.”*<sup>9</sup>

“Orphaned” families found happiness only during the winter months when the men returned, filling their homes with warmth. Yet, not everyone was fortunate enough to savor that joy. Over the years, the unforgiving sea had claimed the lives of many generations. Nonetheless, the resilient fishermen, resigned to their destiny, persisted in fishing the Icelandic waters, providing their families with their daily bread.

Yann Gaos, the central character of the novel, was among these dedicated fishermen:

*“Ses (Jean un nom que les Bretons prononcent Yann) moustaches blondes étaient assez courtes, bien que jamais coupées; elles étaient frisées très serré en eux petits rouleaux symétriques au-dessus de ses lèvres qui avaient des contours fins et exquis; et puis elles s'ébouriffaient aux deux bouts, de chaque côté des coins profonds de sa bouche. Le reste de sa barbe était tondu ras, et ses joues colorées avaient gardé un velouté frais, comme celui des fruits que personne n'a touchés.”*<sup>10</sup>

*“His (Jean which Bretons pronounce “Yann”) fair moustache was rather short, although never cut. It was tightly curled in small rolls above his lips, which were most exquisitely and delicately modelled, and then frizzed off at the ends on either side of the deep corners of his mouth. The remainder of his beard was shaven, and his highly coloured cheeks retained a fresh bloom like that of fruit never yet handled.”*<sup>11</sup>

Yann Gaos resided with his family in Paimpol, the setting of the novel. His good looks certainly captured the admiration of many young women, yet Yann remained resistant to the allure of beautiful ladies, dedicating himself wholeheartedly to the simple joys of a fisherman’s life. To underscore his

8 Ibid., p. 7, Fr.

9 Ibid., p. 18, Eng.

10 Ibid., p. 4, Fr.

11 Ibid., p. 13, Eng.

unpretentious nature, the author recounts a brief incident where Yann once unceremoniously tossed a bouquet of flowers at a singer, only to find that instead of taking offense, she fell in love with him and even gifted him a gold watch. However, Yann dismissed the watch as a useless possession.

As the narrative unfolds, the French writer gradually focuses on a smaller group of characters, revealing the intertwined tragic destinies of two men and two women that form a cohesive whole. Sylvester and his grandmother Yvanna, the captivating Gaud, and Yann all find themselves on the same stage, brought together by the hand of fate, and they all endure their fair share of bitterness. It becomes challenging to discern who bears the heavier burden – those who have departed from this world and joined the realm of the deceased, or those who remain among the living, perpetually awaiting the return of their loved ones, sentenced to a relentless and seemingly futile wait.

Sylvester, a young man of exceptional beauty and a delicate disposition, was raised with profound reverence for the sacred by his elderly grandmother, Yvanna. He had suffered the loss of his mother in his early childhood, and his father met a tragic fate in a shipwreck. Sylvester was engaged to marry Yann's sister, and thus, he worked alongside her on a fishing vessel, anticipating a happy life together. Tragically, this seventeen-year-old was conscripted into military service and, due to the colonial policies of his own country, he was sent to India. There, he met a solitary and untimely demise, far from his homeland, amidst the turmoil of war.

In a heart-wrenching turn of events, Sylvester's comrades in arms consigned his lifeless body to the depths of the sea. His sole remaining relative in the world, his widowed grandmother, was left with nothing but a letter. This moving depiction by the writer vividly illustrates the untimely departure of a young man from this world, conveying both clarity and depth in the portrayal of his fate:

*“Alors on abaissa dessus les paupières avec leurs longs cils et Sylvestre redeuint très beau et calme, comme un marbre couché.”*<sup>12</sup>

*“They closed his eyelids with their own long lashes, and Sylvestre became calm and beautiful again, like a reclining marble statue of manly repose.”*<sup>13</sup>

This episode marks a significant turning point in the novel. Yvanna Mon, Sylvester's grandmother, who, like many women in Paimpol, had been a widow of a fisherman for a long time, undergoes a remarkable transformation. Despite her

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12 Ibid., p. 48, Fr.

13 Ibid., p. 72, Eng.

relatively young age, her friends affectionately referred to her as “Grandma Yvanna” because the hardships of life as a single woman had left indelible marks on her face:

*“Sa figure vénérable s'encadrait bien dans toute cette blancheur et dans ces plis qui avaient un air religieux. Ses yeux, très doux, étaient pleins d'une bonne honnêteté. Elle n'avait plus trace de dents, plus rien, et, quand elle riait, on voyait à la place ses gencives rondes qui avaient un petit air de jeunesse.”<sup>14</sup>*

*“Her venerable face, framed in the pure white pleats, had almost a man's look, while her soft, tender eyes wore a kindly expression. She had not the vestige of a tooth left, and when she laughed she showed her round gums, which had still the freshness of youth.”<sup>15</sup>*

When a cruel twist of fate snatches away the sole source of joy in her life, her beloved grandson Sylvester, Grandma Yvanna is left despondent. She becomes a subject of ridicule even among children:

*“La bonne grand'mère que Sylvestre adorait, toute traînée et déchirée, devenue maintenant une de ces vieilles pauvresses imbéciles qui font des attroupements sur les chemins!”<sup>16</sup>*

*“The good old granny whom Sylvestre had so tenderly loved - her dress torn and bedraggled--had now become one of those poor old women, almost fallen back in second childhood, who are followed and ridiculed along their roads.”<sup>17</sup>*

It is in an effort to care for this helpless woman that the beautiful Gaud Mével moves to live in a humble cottage, finding her own fleeting happiness in this selfless act.

After losing her beloved father, Gaud, who was once a wealthy heiress and harbored unrequited feelings for the young Yann, dedicates herself to the care of the elderly Yvanna. She holds a lasting memory of Yann approaching her during a wedding, offering a heartfelt compliment, saying:

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14 Ibid., p. 8, Fr.

15 Ibid., p. 19, Eng.

16 Ibid., p. 68, Fr.

17 Ibid., p. 98, Eng.



*“Il n’y a que vous dans Paimpol, et même dans le monde, pour m’avoir fait manquer cet appareillage; non, sûr que pour aucune autre, je ne me serais dérangé de ma pêche, mademoiselle Gaud...”*<sup>18</sup>

*“You are the only person in Paimpol, and even in the world, for whom I would have missed a windfall; truly, for nobody else would I have come back from my fishing, Mademoiselle Gaud.”*<sup>19</sup>

Upon hearing these simple yet heartfelt words from Yann, love begins to blossom in the heart of the beautiful young girl. She plucks up courage to drop a subtle hint to the young man about her affection, only to receive a heart-wrenching response:

*“Déjà j’en ai entendu dans le pays, qui parlaient sur nous... Non, mademoiselle Gaud... Vous êtes riche, nous ne sommes pas gens de la même classe. Je ne suis pas un garçon à venir chez vous, moi...”*<sup>20</sup>

*“I’ve heard folks talk about us quite enough already! Nay, Mademoiselle Gaud, for, you see, you are rich, and we are not people of the same class. I am not the fellow to come after a ‘swell’ lady.”*<sup>21</sup>

The twenty-year-old blonde beauty with “great grey eyes between almost black lashes”<sup>22</sup> chooses to forgive the young man’s harsh words and persists in her deep affection for him. Notably, when Pierre Loti describes the novel’s central character, he showcases the artistry of a painter with words, effortlessly conjuring the image of this demigoddess in the reader’s mind:

*“Ses sourcils, blonde autant que ses cheveux, étaient comme repeints au milieu d’une ligne plus rousse, plus foncée, qui donnait une expression de vigueur et de volonté. Son profil, un peu court, était très noble, le nez prolongeant la ligne du front avec une rectitude absolue, comme dans les visages grecs. Une fossette profonde, creusée sous la lèvre inférieure, en accentuait délicieusement le rebord; et de temps en temps, quand une pensée la préoccupait beaucoup, elle la mordait, cette lèvre, avec ses dents blanches*

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18 Ibid., p. 15, Fr.

19 Ibid., p. 29, Eng.

20 Ibid., p. 41, Fr.

21 Ibid., p. 61, Eng.

22 Ibid., p. 20, Eng.

*d'en haut, ce qui faisait courir sous la peau fine des petites trainées plus rouges. Dans toute sa personne svelte, il y avait quelque chose de fier, de grave aussi un peu, qui lui venait des hardis marins d'Islande ses ancêtres. Elle avait une expression d'yeux à la fois obstinée et douce.*"<sup>23</sup>

*"Her brows, as fair as the hair, seemed as if they had a darker streak in their midst, which gave a wonderful expression of strength and will to the beautiful face. The rather short profile was very dignified, the nose continuing the line of the brow with absolute rectitude, as in a Greek statue. A deep dimple under the lower lip foiled it up delightfully; and from time to time, when she was absorbed by a particular idea, she bit this lower lip with her white upper teeth, making the blood run in tiny red veins under the delicate skin. In her supple form there was no little pride, with gravity also, which she inherited from the bold Icelandic sailors, her ancestors. The expression of her eyes was both steady and gentle."*<sup>24</sup>

The tragedy of the girl's unrequited love takes on even deeper dimensions when the reader comprehends that her rival is the unforgiving sea. The young fisherman is hopelessly in love with the sea, which, despite having claimed the lives of many of his ancestors, exerts an indescribable allure over the twenty-eight-year-old man.

The fisherman, who is not yet thirty years old and has a stout and powerful frame, "bending in two like a big bear"<sup>25</sup> as he enters the boathouse, possesses a profound inner world:

*"Mais ce coeur d'Yann était une région vierge, à gouverner, peu connue, où se passaient des choses qui ne se révélaient pas au dehors."*<sup>26</sup>

*"But this heart of his was a virgin wilderness, difficult to explore and little known, where many things took place unrevealed on the exterior"*<sup>27</sup>

After two years of harboring a secret love for the beautiful girl, Yann finally gathers the courage to propose to her. By this time, the beautiful lady no longer possesses the wealth that once made the ordinary fisherman feel uncomfortable.

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23 Ibid., p. 9, Fr.

24 Ibid., p 20, Eng.

25 Ibid., p 13, Eng.

26 Ibid., p. 58, Fr.

27 Ibid., p 84, Eng.

The girl lived peacefully with her elderly grandmother in a humble dwelling, attentively looking after the old woman who was tormented by grief. This particular scene holds a pivotal significance. Yann comes to realize that despite a period in her life where Gaud had experienced the pleasures of Parisian life, deep in her heart, she remains a simple soul who can endure the bitterness of life and face hardships for the sake of her loved one.

It appears that the young couple has finally found the happiness they longed for. However, six days after their wedding, Yann, along with other fishermen, once more departs for the distant shores of Iceland, but this time, he remains forever in the ‘embrace’ of the sea:

*“Lui, se souvenant de Gaud, sa femme de chair, s’était défendu, dans une lutte de géant, contre cette épousée de tombeau. Jusqu’au moment où il s’était abandonné, les bras ouverts pour la recevoir, avec un grand cri profond comme un taureau qui râle, la bouche déjà emplie d’eau; les bras ouverts, étendus et raidis pour jamais.”<sup>28</sup>*

*“He, thinking of Gaud, his sole, darling wife, had battled with giant strength against this deathly rival, until he at last surrendered, with a deep death-cry like the roar of a dying bull, through a mouth already filled with water; and his arms were stretched apart and stiffened forever.”<sup>29</sup>*

In the far-off lands of Paimpol, the young widow continued to wait for her husband.

The teenage girl, without even having the opportunity to savor the joys of family life, is transformed into a widow doomed to hopeless waiting:

*“Cramponnée à l’idée de ces îles où il avait pu relâcher, ayant repris une sorte d’espoir, elle s’était remise à l’attendre...”<sup>30</sup>*

*“She is still clinging to the thought of those islands where he might perhaps have lingered, she was buoyed up by a kind hope and expected him home any day.”<sup>31</sup>*

However, this deceptive hope evaporates when the harsh reality appears in front of Gaud's eyes during another evening of hopeless waiting:

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28 Ibid., p. 100, Fr.

29 Ibid., p. 134, Eng.

30 Ibid., p. 95, Fr.

31 Ibid., p. 134, Eng.

*“L’Islande lui apparaissait, avec le petit cimetière de là-bas, l’Islande lointaine, lointaine, éclairée par en dessous au soleil de minuit... Et tout à coup, toujours à cette même place vide du mur qui semblait attendre, elle eut, avec une netteté horrible, la vision de cette plaque neuve à laquelle elle songeait: une plaque fraîche, une tête de mort, des os en croix et au milieu, dans un flamboiement, un nom, le nom adoré, Yann Gaos!... Alors elle se dressa tout debout, en poussant un cri rauque de la gorge, comme une folle...”<sup>32</sup>*

*“Then Iceland loomed up before her, with its little cemetery lighted up from below the sea-line by the midnight sun. Suddenly in the same empty space on the wall, with horrifying clearness she saw the fresh slab she was thinking of; a clear white one, with a skull and crossbones, and in a flash of foresight, a name--the worshipped name of “Yann Gaos!” Then she suddenly and fearfully drew herself up straight and stiff, with a hoarse, wild cry in her throat like a mad creature.”<sup>33</sup>*

And thus, the ominous prediction that young Yann once shared with Sylvester on the ship, which the boy then recounted to the lovesick girl, tragically becomes a reality:

*“Vois-tu, Gaud, c’est parce qu’il est comme cela; il ne veut se marier avec personne, par idée à lui; il n’aime bien que la mer, et même un jour, par plaisanterie, il nous a dit lui avoir promis le mariage.”<sup>34</sup>*

*“D’ye see, Gaud, he’s like this, he won’t marry anybody, that’s his idea; he only loves the sea, and one day even, in fun, he said he had promised to be wedded to it.”<sup>35</sup>*

This tragic conclusion is also foreshadowed by the tempestuous sea during the wedding, which thwarts the newlyweds’ attempt to reach the church perched atop the cliff, where fishermen’s weddings were traditionally held.

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32 Ibid., p. 90, Fr.

33 Ibid., p. 127, Eng.

34 Ibid., p. 28, Fr.

35 Ibid., p. 44, Eng.

When one of the wedding guests suggests that the fierce wind is a consequence of their wish to indulge in enjoyment, Yann, almost prophetically, remarks:

*“Non, c'est la mer qui n'est pas contente, répondit Yann, en souriant à Gaud, parce que je lui avais promis mariage.”*<sup>36</sup>

*“No, it's the sea that's wrathful,” corrected Yann, smiling at Gaud, “because I'd promised I'd be wedded to /her/.”*<sup>37</sup>

Through a distinctive blend of reality and imagination, the French writer Pierre Loti unfolds a narrative that offers readers a glimpse into the lives of ordinary individuals, who, in the face of a challenging environment, find themselves ensnared by the consuming struggle for their daily bread. Loti masterfully portrays the inextricable link between humankind and nature, with nature often appearing as the harsh provider that ensures these basic needs are met:

*“Avec la mer qui autrefois avait été aussi sa nourrice; c'était elle qui l'avait bercé, qui l'avait fait adolescent large et fort, et ensuite elle l'avait repris, dans sa virilité superbe, pour elle seule.”*<sup>38</sup>

*“It had been his nurse; it had rocked him in his babyhood, and had afterward made him big and strong; then, in his superb manhood, it had taken him back again for itself alone.”*<sup>39</sup>

Man is a permanent toy in the hands of capricious nature.

## 2. Painful repercussions of emigration in Zohrab's heroine's psyche

Krikor Zohrab portrays the heart-wrenching waiting of a widowed woman from a distinct perspective.

The challenging economic conditions in the western Armenian countryside towards the end of the 19th century compelled numerous men to depart from their homeland and seek employment abroad, primarily in Constantinople. However, the majority of them encountered grueling, exhausting, and often degrading labor there. The moral and psychological hardships experienced by these emigrant

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36 Ibid., p. 79, Fr.

37 Ibid., p. 112, Eng

38 Ibid., p. 96, Fr.

39 Ibid., p. 134, Eng.

Armenians were no less severe. Some returned with savings, bringing happiness to their families, while others, having endured various ordeals, died in foreign lands.

Some of these emigrants would suddenly reappear after many years, finding the once-young women who had since transformed into withered flowers continuing their lives “like silent shadows,” carrying on with what felt like “aimless and futile married lives.” There were also those who succumbed to the allure of foreign lands, forgetting their loved ones and never returning. The rural world yearned for its absent children with a poignant and heart-rending longing.

In the novel “Widow,” the Armenian writer delves into one of the most profound sorrows brought about by migration – the tragedy of a young deserted woman. This woman, although technically still married, becomes a **widow**. The **title** of the novel, “**Widow**,” encapsulates this heart-wrenching predicament. The motif is marked by a distinctive developmental structure. The author consistently shifts the setting of the narrative across the eight short segments of the novel, alternating between the allure of the bustling city with its temptations and the rural village with its hardships.

A month or two after marrying a humble village woman named Zardar, Martiros departs for Constantinople to stand in for his uncle, who had been employed as a porter and guard in one of the stores for a decade. The naive young man, barely nineteen years old, possessed a unique blend of masculinity paired with the softness of his youth, as evidenced by his handsome face. He boasted a robust and muscular physique with strong arms. Martiros's “shy modesty” was a novel temptation that only women could fully appreciate.

A young man employed at a women’s clothing store quickly garners the attention of wealthy ladies in Bera, the European part of the capital. He starts receiving generous payments for carrying their luggage as well as lavish gifts. Eventually, Martiros succumbs to the temptations and pressures from numerous seductresses, forfeiting his moral purity and virtue. He sells his honor, the “sanctity” of his family, and forgets about his young wife and parents.

His friend, Khacho, who accompanied him on this journey, makes a different choice. The author highlights the contrasting destinies of these compatriots who find themselves in a foreign land. Martiros, now dressed in new and fancy attire, spots Khacho laboring as a porter along with three other emigrant men on the street. Martiros calls out to him, and the porters, sweating under the weight of their burdens with their clothes tattered, pause briefly to catch their breath but their efforts seemingly in vain. The writer notes:

«Աղքատությունը հարստության դեմ կանգ առնելու իրավունք չուներ»<sup>40</sup>:

*“Poverty had no right to look wealth straight in the eye”*

Khacho is unable to have a conversation with his friend Martiros. Nevertheless, the impoverished porter manages to surmount the challenges. He eventually returns to his homeland, purchasing land and oxen with his savings, and marries his fiancée.

Martiros, on the other hand, doesn't return, even though he initially sent some money to his family. As time passes, he becomes increasingly entangled in a life of sin, descending to the depths of despair. Zohrab writes:

«Մոլությունն ու սպախանությունը սահուն զառիվար սրն է, որուն կեսին վրա կանգ առնելը դժվար է»<sup>41</sup>:

*“Obsession and corruption are a slippery slope, and it’s challenging to halt halfway.”*

Over the years, Martiros loses his appeal and charm, becoming less interesting to the women of Constantinople. The author notes:

«Հարուստ փիկնանց համակրությունը ծառերուն վրա կեցող թռչուններուն պես անհաստատ է»<sup>42</sup>:

*“Rich ladies’ admiration in men is as fickle as birds on trees.”*

By this the author suggests that their attention can flutter away at any moment. Martiros comes to the realization that, like many items in a store, he is now out of fashion. He experiences occasional pangs of remorse, particularly when he receives a letter from his homeland, serving as a reminder of “forgotten and neglected sacred obligations.” Nevertheless, these moments of mental turmoil are short-lived. Soon the young man secretly marries a maid.

Back in his homeland, Martiros's abandoned wife, Zardar, continues to remember and wait for him. Her fate is a sorrowful one. Adhering to the customs

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40 **Zohrab K.**, Collection of Works, vol. A, 2001, p. 91. Yerevan: Literature and Art Museum Press. [English translation by us].

41 Ibid., p. 95, [English translation by us].

42 Ibid., p. 96, [English translation by us].

of the Armenian countryside, she wedded a young man she had never dated. No one had sought her opinion on the matter. She had lived with Martiros for such a short time that she didn't even know if she loved the young man who was her husband. Nonetheless, deep within her heart, she conceals feminine emotions that might erupt in response to a man's genuine love:

«Գորովի և սիրո անսպառ գանձեր ուներ իր սրտին խորը, որոնք մեկ բառով, մեկ զգվանքով թերևս պիտի հայրնավերն»<sup>43</sup>:

*“In the depths of her heart, there existed a wealth of untapped emotions and love, ready to manifest at a single word and a solitary embrace.”*

She couldn't even become a mother. When Martiros departed, just a “bitter drop of tear” fell from her eyes onto the young man's hand. Following that, Zardar served in her husband's household for years with the meekness of a lamb. But no one appreciated her efforts. Instead, she was blamed for Martiros not returning. Zardar, who had grown “weary of waiting,” attended church every Sunday, kneeling before the icon of the Virgin Mary, and reproaching the saints in earnest prayer.

The ending of the novel is both moving and dramatic. Surprisingly, the sentiment of waiting, deeply rooted in a woman's soul, endures. This embodies a beautiful and profound moral value. Zardar continues to wait for her “eternally absent yet living man,” the one who made her a “widow.”

*“She knew, with unwavering certainty that her husband would not return. Yet, as evening descended, almost against her own will, her footsteps inexorably guided her to the very field where she had last glimpsed her young husband. Alone in the vast expanse of the field, her eyes perpetually searching, the widow persisted in her waiting.”*

## Conclusion

In the final analysis, it should be noted that the theme of waiting is a powerful motif in world literature. Waiting is not merely a passive state but a complex and emotionally charged experience. The feeling of uncertainty that comes with waiting creates mixed emotions in the female characters' inner worlds – anticipation, longing, patience, resilience, emotional turmoil, etc.

43 Ibid., p. 89, [English translation by us].



In the works under examination, both heroines persist in their waiting for their husbands. However, the emotional aspects that this theme reveals in both novels are different given the cultural distinctions. Loti's protagonist succumbs to the allure of nature, particularly that of the sea, becoming one with it, thereby leaving his wife in a perpetual state of uncertainty regarding his return. Even though she knows he will never return, she never loses hope. The emotional attachment between Loti's characters is primarily expressed within the context of human-to-human relationships. In contrast, Zohrab illustrates the unwavering resilience of an Armenian woman grappling with emotional turmoil deeply nested within her soul. She awaits her beloved husband for good, not out of obsession, but as a testament to her unwavering commitment to family values. She even sacrifices the joy of conceiving a child for the sake of these cherished family values. Any spark of passion that a man could ignite within her is smothered over time, all in the name of upholding these deeply ingrained family values. Cultural differences are also evident in the fact that Zohrab's heroine holds the saints accountable for her misfortune, thus bringing a religious context into the narrative, highlighting the Armenians' tendency to turn to God in times of hardships. In contrast, Loti's protagonist sees the sea as the sole antagonist, responsible for taking her husband away and leaving her a widow. However, these two contexts serve as a thread that connects the two narratives, revealing the inextricable bond between humankind and nature and the intricate interdependence of the two.

These two writings are also linked by social context. While the authors approach social issues in distinct ways, they both invite readers to engage with profound questions about human nature, morality, and the role of society in shaping individual actions and experiences. In both cases, the man of the family embarks on a journey in search of the daily bread – one to the sea, the other to a far-off land. Social issues serve as a catalyst for human hardships as men try to surmount the challenges they face. Nonetheless, this pursuit frequently demands that they leave their loved ones behind, thus compelling the forsaken women to wrestle with the emotional aftermath of shattered expectations, all the while enduring the uncertainty that accompanies the endless waiting for their beloved husbands.

**Հայկանուշ Ա. Շարուրյան**–գիտական հետաքրքրությունների շրջանակը ներառում է համաշխարհային գրականությունը, թարգմանաբանությունն ու տեսությունը, գրական կապերը և առնչությունները: Անգլո-ամերիկյան գրականությունից թարգմանել և տպագրել է գեղարվեստական բազմաթիվ գրքեր: Հրատարակել է 2 մենագրություն, ուսումնասնաթղթական 2 ձեռնարկ և 40 գիտական հոդված:

E-mail: h.sharuryan@ysu.am

**Ռուզան Ռ. Ղազարյան**–գիտական հետաքրքրությունների շրջանակը ներառում է թարգմանաբանությունն ու տեսությունը, գրական կապերը և առնչությունները: Անգլո-ամերիկյան գրականությունից թարգմանել և տպագրել է գեղարվեստական բազմաթիվ գրքեր: Հրատարակել է 1 մենագրություն, բուհական 1 դասագիրք, ուսումնամեթոդական 1 ձեռնարկ և շուրջ 30 գիտական հոդված:

E-mail: ghazaryanruzan@ysu.am

Ամփոփում

**ՍՊԱՍՄԱՆ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԳԻՐԸ ՊԻԵՌ ԼՈԹԻԻ ԵՎ ԳՐԻԳՈՐ ԶՈՀՐԱՊԻ ԵՐԿԵՐԻ ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍՏՈՒՄ**

Հայկանուշ Ա. Շարուրյան  
*Բանաս. գիտ. թեկնածու*

Ռուզան Ռ. Ղազարյան  
*Բանաս. գիտ. թեկնածու*

**Բանալի բառեր** – սպասման թեմա, ֆրանսիական և հայկական գրականություն, հուզական անորոշություն, հանապազօրյա հացի որոնում, միատեսակ փորձություն:

Սույն հոդվածը՝ «Սպասման հիմնախնդիրը Պիեռ Լոթիի և Գրիգոր Զոհրապի երկերի համատեքստում», նվիրված է գեղարվեստական գրականության մեջ կնոջ սպասման և հավատարմության թեմայի քննությանը:

Սպասման թեման հավերժական հիմնախնդիր է, որը բազմիցս արծարծվել է համաշխարհային գրականության մեջ: Այն ունի հոգեբանական խոր արմատներ, ինչն էլ այս ուսումնասիրության խնդրո առարկան է: Սպասումն առաջ է բերում բազմաբնույթ հուզումների խառնարան, ինչպես, օրինակ, կարոտ, համբերություն, տոկունություն, հուզական ցնցումներ և այլն: Այս ամենն էլ ցայտունորեն արտահայտված են թե՛ ֆրանսիացի գրող Պիեռ Լոթիի և թե՛ արևմտահայ «նորավեպի իշխանի» կամ «հայ Մոպասանի»՝ Գրիգոր Զոհրապի երկերում:

Քննության առնելով մասնավորապես Պիեռ Լոթիի «Իսլանդացի ձկնորսը» խորագրով վեպն ու Գրիգոր Զոհրապի «Այրիհ» նովելը՝ հոդվածագիրները փորձել են պատկերել երկու բացարձակապես տարբեր միջավայրում գտնվող կանանց մտատանջող միևնույն խնդիրը, այն է՝ ընտանիքը լքած անուսնուն սպասելու ծանր ու հոգեմաշ պարտականությունը:

ՎԷՒ հասանալիական հանդես, ԺԵ (ԻՄ) տարի, թիվ 4 (84), հոկտեմբեր-դեկտեմբեր, 2023

Վերոնշյալ երկերի մանրամասն ուսումնասիրությունն ու համեմատությունը բացահայտում են գրական երկու հերոսուհիների թե՛ ակնհայտ նմանությունները և թե՛ տարբերությունները: Դրանք, անշուշտ, պայմանավորված են մշակութային՝ միմյանցից խորապես զանազանվող միջավայրերով: Երկու գրողներն էլ առավելագույնս ընդգծել են կնոջ հավատարմության և անսահման համբերատարության թեման: Եթե Լոթիի հերոսուհին, հստակ գիտակցելով հանդերձ, որ թեև ձկնորս ամուսինը կուլ է գնացել մրրկածուփ ծովի ալիքներին, այնուամենայնիվ, շարունակում է սպասել, որովհետև սիրում է նրան ու չի ցանկանում ընդունել ակնհայտը, սպա Զոհրապի «այրին» որոշակիորեն վստահ է, որ լքված է ամուսնու կողմից: Նա, սակայն, «տարօրինակ» կերպով շարունակում է սպասել՝ ըստ էության դառնալով «սպասման հիվանդ»: Հայ ընտանիքի չգրված օրենքով՝ հայուհին զոհաբերում է անձնականը՝ հանուն շրջապատի, ավելի որոշակի՝ ամուսնու ծոռիների բարեկեցության:

Резюме

## ПРОБЛЕМА ОЖИДАНИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЙ ПЬЕРА ЛОТИ И ГРИГОРА ЗОГРАБА

Айкануш А. Шарурян  
*Кандидат филол. наук*

Рузан Р. Казарян  
*Кандидат филол. наук*

**Ключевые слова** – тема ожидания, французская и армянская литература, эмоциональная неопределенность, поиск хлеба насущного, общие переживания.

Настоящая статья посвящена анализу темы женской преданности и ожидания. Тема ожидания – вечная проблема, многократно поднимаемая в мировой литературе. Излишне говорить, что эта проблема имеет глубокие психологические корни, поэтому она и является предметом нашего исследования. Ожидание выдвигает на первый план конгломерат разнообразных эмоций, таких, например, как тоска, терпение, стойкость, эмоциональное потрясение и другие. Всё это нашло яркое выражение в произведениях как французского писателя, так и западноармянского «принца новеллы», или «армянского Мопассана».

Исследуя, в частности, повесть Пьера Лоти «Исландский рыбак» и новеллу Григора Зограба «Вдова», авторы сделали попытку изобразить одну и ту же проблему, терзающую двух находящихся в абсолютно разных условиях и средах женщин: тягостный и изнуряющий долг ожидания покинувшего семью супруга.

Детальное исследование и сравнение вышеназванных произведений выявляет как очевидное сходство, так и отличие двух литературных героинь, которое без сомнения, обусловлено глубокой культурной разницей среды их обитания. Оба писателя с глубоким сочувствием отметили женскую преданность и безграничное терпение своих героинь. Если Лоти, осознавая гибель мужа-рыбака в морской пучине, тем не менее продолжает ждать его, потому что любит и не желает принять очевидное, то «вдова» Зограба уверена, что брошена мужем. При этом она «странным» образом продолжает ждать, по сути, превратившись в «большую ожиданием». По неписаным законам армянской семьи армянка приносит в жертву личную жизнь обществу, а точнее – становится его жертвой ради благосостояния родителей мужа.

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