

NATION - BUILDING IN MODERN ARMENIA:
A STORY OF A *POST*- NATION

by

Anna Khachatryan

Presented to the
Department of English & Communications
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

American University of Armenia
Yerevan, Armenia

May 5, 2017

Introduction

Attention, Moscow is speaking. Decades have passed when a charismatic voice behind the radio microphone would announce and denounce wars and spread the word of commanders in chief of the great USSR. The Soviet information bureau was delivering its most important messages by radio over decades reaching millions of squares of kilometers to millions of people of different ethnicity, culture, social and political background. The simple, attention-getting message coming through the radio speakers across the vast territory of the former USSR would hold the entire Soviet space in a complete silence so that the word from “the Center” could be spread and understood properly. Radio, being the most widespread mass medium of the day, served the Soviet Government as a propagandistic tool to ensure its statehood and make Moscow the ultimate center in all aspects. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, started a new phase in the Soviet space. The states that had been part of the union for almost 70 years declared their independence and engaged in state building. The streets, squares and other state buildings were renamed, statues of political figures were removed or replaced and most importantly, the states changed their names. The state known as *Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic* for decades became the *Republic of Armenia* proclaiming its sovereignty and launching a history of an independent country after over 150 years of subjugation under the Tsar and later Soviet Union rule. The era of Russian domination seemed to be over. In spite of the economic crisis and blockade by the neighboring countries, nation-building along with state building was considered to be of paramount importance. National rhetoric, in particular, was in the air since the start of the Nagorno-Karabakh war in the late 1988. During and after the war the rhetoric of a victorious nation continued to persist in the Armenian society of the day. However, despite the so-called awakening of the national spirit and rise of patriotic discourse in the young state, the soviet

legacy continued to prevail in the country.

Today, after over 25 years of independence and sovereignty the modern Armenia has close political and economic ties if not dependency from “the Center”. The Russian Federation, being one of the greatest powers in the world, is still the dominant force in the region. Russian-Armenian relationships, which are more a representation of ruler-subject than an alliance, were once again prolonged by Armenia’s accession into the Eurasian Economic Union in 2014. The member states, which were all Post-Soviet, claimed the union to be purely economic rather than a political one. However, not surprisingly, many considered it to be the result of Russia’s imperialist ambitions and a comeback of the Soviet Union in a more subtle, albeit worrying form.

Russian domination in Armenia has perpetuated itself repeatedly throughout the history taking different forms. As a result, today, the republic remains to be more a *post-space* with imperial and Soviet past rather than a separate political unit with its ambitions and vision for the future. Indeed, the state does hold the kind of past which has had a great influence on its present. Nevertheless, the 21st century post-modern world has posed many challenges on the young state. Armenia, with its declining economy, around 50% poverty and increasing rates of emigration of unprecedented scale and pace, may not survive the upcoming decades. These challenges though economic and political in their nature are rather a consequence of more important but often ignored phenomena. The reasons should be traced back in the cultural realm of the nation’s recent past. The country’s Soviet cultural past represents a rather *constructed and hegemonized* cultural tradition. Despite the attempts to reconstruct the national identity, however, the nation-building has failed in the independent Armenia. The reasons behind this failure can be tracked by rethinking and redefining the past. Thus, only through the means of *self-reflexivity* on its past can the Armenian nation construct its present and take the path of the revival.

This research project is an academic inquiry to situate modern Armenia in the post-modern world. Choosing the right theoretical “lens” can help unveil the very essence of Armenia’s social, political, cultural legacy and its modern reality. In recent years, colonial and postcolonial studies have received a large amount of attention in the academia. The states that are now known as Post-Soviet are rarely referred or discussed as post-colonial in spite of the Russian “imperial” legacy that these countries share. As it will be discussed, this legacy, rather deeply rooted, has silenced any further discussions about possibilities of uncovering and unveiling the problems that it has brought about. Although, there have already been several attempts of post-colonial discussions in the Post-Soviet sphere, the Post-Soviet academia of the day is very reluctant to strike up such conversations. Post-Soviet states, nevertheless, seem to avoid the classification of the “once subjugated under a single rule” which is by no means a matter of coincidence and should be properly discussed. I believe that the theoretical lens of the colonial studies can help address the issues that the Post-Soviet Armenia is undergoing now.

The post-colonial studies, in particular, are of great importance for a newly shaped discourse in the Armenian intellectual circles. The recent political demonstrations in the country sounded like calls of decolonization from the Russian Federation. Along with other cultural and social theories, colonial studies tend to explain “the workings” of the world from certain perspectives. Thus, application and the extent of applicability of the post-colonial theories to Post-Soviet Armenian reality should be, at least, a matter of discussion in various social, political and most importantly in academic platforms. This research paper is an exploratory work, which seeks to explore and describe rather than give definite answers and classifications. It is an intellectual attempt to redefine perceptions about the past and modern reality of the Armenian nation from the perspective of colonial/postcolonial studies.

Research Questions

This research project seeks to address two related questions: in what ways are the postcolonial theories applicable to the Post-Soviet Armenia? What would we possibly gain by applying the methods of postcolonial studies to Armenian reality? These research questions, obviously, cannot be answered in terms of “yes/no” as general questions are usually addressed. There are many questions which directly derive from these questions and should be properly discussed in the research project. The first question which will discuss the applicability of the theories will be addressed first. Since it is mainly concerned with the extent of applicability of the studies to Post-Soviet Armenia, it is important to address a set of related questions, which will discuss the issue from a number of perspectives. These questions will follow from the general to specific. The proper discussion of the first question will help assess the possibilities that the application of these theories would bring about.

Methodology

Since this research is an exploratory rather than an argumentative piece it is mainly concerned about discussing the theoretical aspects of the subject. Through the content analysis of the sources, the research employs the deductive method of reasoning going from general points to the specific ones. Along with the detailed analysis of the sources, the research also aims at providing the reader with additional discussions about the historical, political and cultural contexts. The sources mostly represent texts with multidisciplinary approach and are rich in terms, definitions and a specific vocabulary. The research seeks to employ this vocabulary while making it accessible and an easy read. After the theoretical discussions, the research turns to the current Armenian and Russian media. Accordingly, the

representations of the colony-colonizer, most apparent in popular culture, is discussed. The TV series called “The last of the Mohikyans”, a Russian production, serves as a case study for the project.

It is important to note that this research does not provide ready or simple answers to the questions discussed throughout the piece. Nevertheless, it is based on a number of arguments and detailed discussions that shall allow the reader to have a thorough understanding and shape an opinion about the subject.

Imperial Past of Armenia

The history of Armenia is that of an old nation originated and thrived almost 3000 years ago in the geography widely known as Armenian plateau. To an outsider or non-Armenian the Armenian history books might seem to feature a series of fiction stories with heroic kings versus villains, non-settling fights for the preservation of statehood, the rise and collapse of new dynasties and the like. The reader, however, will encounter a “plot twist” when after those ups and downs of the history, the statehood is lost and there is no independent political unit inhabited with Armenians as such. Starting from the 11th century the Armenian history begins to represent a history of a nation, which is doomed to survive under the rule of various conquering powers throughout the centuries. Thus, the following centuries were simply about survival: failed attempts of reestablishing the statehood usually followed by bloodsheds, harsh political and economic conditions robbing the livelihood of ordinary people and constant struggle to preserve the national identity- language, religion and culture. Nevertheless, providing the reader with the detailed and chronologically accurate historical background about the early “colonial” past of Armenia would do little justice to the subject that is going to be discussed. Thus, let us leave a historical gap and proceed to the relatively recent past of the nation - 19th century Armenian reality.

After the Russo-Persian war (1826-1828), the Eastern Armenia, which approximately covered the territory of the modern Armenia, was incorporated into the territory of the Russian Empire. After the century-long Iranian rule, Eastern Armenia became a part of the empire along with the provinces of Transcaucasia. Although, much preferred from the Persian rule, the Russian domination did not bring about any changes in the political status of the territory. Playing an important strategic role Armenian territory initially served as a military zone between Russia and rival Ottomans and Persia. After 1840, the Russian

Armenian territory was merged into the Transcaucasia. The latter became a single geographical and political unit. Moreover, the Transcaucasia started to exist as a separate “cultural” geography, despite the fact that it was inhabited with people of different ethnicity, culture and religion. After that, when Russian Armenia was no longer a separate administrative unit its political importance seemed to decrease. Armenians, on the other hand, seemed to take advantage of the situation and spread into the major cities of Transcaucasia. A solid Armenian middle class started to emerge consisting of merchants and artisans soon replacing the peasant class. Accordingly, for Armenians the Russian rule was the best alternative to the former Persian and Ottoman powers. (Ternon, 1990)

Despite the autocratic regime and expansionist ambitions, the Russian Empire sought to play “the west” in the region as rival Ottomans and Persians were less westernized and subsequently “civilized”. Thus, ironically enough, the empire’s expansionism seemed to be justified by its *Mission Civilisatrice* - civilizing mission. The east, in this case, Transcaucasia and the Caucasus in general was to become a part of Great Russian Empire and take the path of enlightenment. It is important to mention, that Russian Elite - *Intelligentsia* of the day strongly believed in the empire’s civilizing mission as such. (Bayadyan, 2010) The importance of bringing civilization to the Caucasus, in particular, was thought of as empire’s noble mission in those circles. While different parts of the Caucasus demonstrated varying extents and sometimes no eagerness to get “civilized” and be integrated into the “west”, Russian rule was perceived as salvation and liberation among the vast majority of the Armenians. (Bayadyan, 2010) The former was considered as the lesser evil since it would serve as a westernizing and modernizing force as compared to Persian and Ottoman powers, which would rather hold their subjects in the complete darkness of illiteracy and ignorance. This was the main reason why many prominent Armenians of the time such as writers Hovhannes Tumanian and Khachatur Abovian considered the empire as the great savior of

the nation.

Abovian, who happens to be the father of modern Armenian literature, seems to express his political beliefs in his “The Wounds of Armenia: Lamentation of a Patriot”. While starting a new tradition of the genre of novel in the Armenian literature with his work, Abovian explicitly speaks of Russian rule as a guarantee to the survival of Armenians. Written in 1841, the plot of the novel is set during the Russo-Persian war and was meant to evoke feelings of patriotism and nationalism. Abovian establishes and maintains the heroic tone of the piece with courageous and patriot protagonists who are fighting for freedom and liberation of their nation. On the other hand, he represents Russians as the saviors and the noble nation making his characters seem patriotic but, at the same time, considerate of the “bigger brother’s” power too. One of his characters glorifies the domination of the great nation, which as opposed to “Europeans who destroyed America, saved Armenia and spread humanity among the savage Asians.” (Abovian, 1975) The comparison that the author provides here is of great importance. By comparing Russian expansionism to European colonization of the Americas (by America the author presumably meant the continent) Abovian makes a crucial statement. Thus, as it follows Europeans and Russians had the same mission of civilizing their new settlements- the first failed “destroying America”, the second succeeded in its attempts. Abovian most likely was aware of the comparison that he is making even in the scope of fictional world of his novel. Retelling the historical events of a period of time when he was actually alive and framing them in his novel with such political statements is not a mere matter of coincidence. Abovian was indirectly referring to the Russian empire as a colonial power and his nation as the savage Asians who were to be “civilized”. Whether Abovian was fully conscious of the underlying message of his comparison or not is a matter of speculation rather than an argument. Nevertheless, these, whether conscious or unconscious, conversations pinpoint to an existing phenomenon, which

Edward Said would later classify as a representation of a colonial discourse.

Russian Empire and 19th century Imperialism/Colonialism

Certainly, the Russian expansion of the 19th century did change the geopolitics of the conquered regions and had a great impact on the future of the Caucasus in particular. In spite of the fact that the empire is often described as one of the greatest imperial powers of the century, the term of imperialism, however, is historically rich and complex. According to Ashcroft et al, “in its most general sense, imperialism refers to the formation of an empire in which one nation has extended its domination over one or several neighboring nation.” (Bill Ashcroft, 2007) The authors then discuss the historical processes in which the term is undergoing changes. In the mid-19th century, the term was used to describe Napoleon Bonaparte’s autocratic regime and expansionism by the other European states. Ironically, from the 1880s, the same states started to advocate and justify their expansionist ambitions in terms of civilizing the “barbaric nations”. According to the authors, those powers were representatives of “classical imperialism” who openly exercised their aggressive expansionist policies as part of their great civilizing mission. Here, the Russian empire seems to fit in the description of so-called classical imperialism. However, the authors emphasize that those imperial powers were the first modernized and industrialized societies such as Britain and France. Certainly, in this sense of the term Russian imperialism was not a classical one. Though relatively modern in the region, Tsarist Russia was still an agrarian nation. Perhaps this was one of the reasons that, despite its expansionism, the Russian Empire did not settle in distant territories while the “classical imperials” started to harness the political, strategic and most importantly economic goods of their distant settlements or colonies that they had acquired. Thus, the classical empires of the late 19th century were not only the great

industrial but also the colonial powers.

19th century Imperialism had also other distinctive features. Ashcroft et al continue the discussion of imperial powers in terms of cultural phenomena that were taking place in the empires. Apart from economic, political and military dominance, the great empires were exercising their imperialism most importantly through the *imperial hegemony*. Taken outside the context the term of hegemony means “the dominance of one state within a confederation.”(p.106) Supposedly, by imperial hegemony authors refer to the *Europeanizing* of the colonies or, as in the case of Russian Empire, *Russification*. Here, the dominance is exercised in more subtle, yet, powerful ways. The military and economic dominance led to the cultural dominance of the imperial nations as well. Mostly spread and propagated through the education and publishing, European ideas and knowledge started to change the local cultures. As the authors mention the *imperial later colonial discourse*, started to take its shape. Russian Empire shared this characteristic along with other imperial powers.

Starting from the mid-19th century the process of *Russification* started to become more evident in the Russian Empire. Public schools where Russian language was given the priority were opened throughout the empire. (Ternon, 1990) Russian being the language of the learned and powerful spread through the empire and left an enormous cultural impact. A new phenomenon among subjects seemed to take place - the advent of highly *Russophile* local elites. (p. 93) These elites sought ways to seem more Russian, thus, aiming to get acceptance in the metropolis of the empire. However, non-Russian elements were often ignored in the higher circles as the tsarist regime was appointing its mainly Russian governors to different administrative units to ensure that the supremacy of the Great Russian nation is established. The empire’s patriotic rhetoric resulted in the rise of Russian chauvinism where non-Russians started to be treated in oriental and more often racist terms. 19th century Russian literature being the mass medium of the day has many instances of imperial rhetoric. Stories about

adventures of Russian generals in the wilderness of the Caucasus usually represent controversial plots where a Russian patriot is on a military mission where he encounters barbarians living in the mountains. The literary works such as “The prisoner of the Caucasus” by A. Pushkin (1822), “A Hero of Our Time” by M. Lermontov (1840) and “The Cossacks” by Leo Tolstoy (1863) are telling stories where the Caucasus is depicted as a mysterious and wild place inhabited with people of oriental identity. (Nazaryan, 2013) Despite the fact that these stories represent Caucasians other than Armenians such as Chechens, Circassians and Ossetians the Caucasian becomes a stereotypical figure in the Russian literature. The image of the Caucasus and Caucasians were central to the imperial discourse since it started to define things in terms of what is Russian and non-Russian. As a result, Russian writers defined and “invented” the Caucasia for the Russians as well as for the Caucasians themselves. (Bayadyan, 2010)

Russian Empire and *Culture and Imperialism*

Edward Said’s “Culture and Imperialism” (1993) is a collection of essays where the author tries to unveil universal patterns of relationship between culture and imperialism. By analyzing the impact of mainstream cultures on great empires of 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, Said illustrates how the processes of imperialism, colonialism and later decolonization change a particular empire’s literature. The author turns to the cultures of the great empires in order to understand how empires work. Thus, mainly analyzing works of literature such as Jane Austin’s “Mansfield Park” (1814) and Joseph Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness” (1899), Said offers a cultural critique of the empire. Mainly reflecting on the cultures of the British and French Empires Said, nevertheless, makes a note about other empires too. The reason behind not analyzing the ties between culture and imperialism in the Russian, Ottoman or

other empires is not that these empires were not imperial powers or were less imperialist. Said explains that Britain having a long and unparalleled imperial history is the most appealing subject for his study. In addition to that, the British along with the French have a long tradition of narratives, which are great sources for, as Said describes it, the imperial quest. Nevertheless, Said's work denotes universal similarities between the relationship of culture and imperialism and holds true for other empires too. (Said, 1994)

The works of Russian literature mentioned in the previous section are great sources for discussing the relationship between Russian culture and imperialism. Said states "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them."(p.xii) The Russian poets had the right "to narrate" about the Caucasus despite the fact that in the Caucasus, particularly in Armenia, the genre of the novel was already in use. The local literatures of the time seem to grant the right of writing about their geography to the Russian writers who in their turn mostly offer exoticized accounts of the Caucasus. Blocking narratives from forming, as Said describes, also took place in the empire as the writers who would have anti-imperial contents would be imprisoned or exiled. In fact, Pushkin was in exile when he wrote his "The Prisoner of the Caucasus".

Interestingly enough, the works that Said is analyzing are written in the form of the novel. The genre of novel, in a sense was the very appropriate medium in which the imperial discourse manifested itself since it originated and thrived with the rise of imperial powers. Thus, the genre having purely European origins was borrowed by the Russians from other imperial traditions, as it could be adjusted to the new imperial reality allowing the writers to construct longer narratives with literary descriptions of geographies, scenic landscapes and most importantly native peoples who usually become the subjects of writer's imagination in those narratives. In fact, Russian elite, notorious for its obsession with French language and

culture, was desperate to Europeanize its culture and have an imperial culture. Presumably, narratives telling stories about heroes or anti-heroes were highly admired and borrowed by the Russian Intelligentsia.

The Soviet Armenia

In 1917, after the Bolshevik revolutions Tsarist autocracy was overthrown. Revolutionists fighting against imperial power abolished the regime, which eventually led to the rise Soviet Union. In 1920, the Soviets took over the short-lived First Republic of Armenia and the state changed its name to *Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia*. Following the year of 1922, Armenia was officially admitted to the USSR and was part of the Transcaucasian SFSR (*Socialist Federative Soviet Republic*) along with Georgian SSR and Azerbaijani SSR.

The Soviet rule changed the course of the history of Armenia. In a short period of time, the state became modernized replacing its agrarian economy with industrial one. State building, however was not a smooth process. After the rise of Joseph Stalin, the Soviet rule started to function as a totalitarian regime. The mass persecutions of the Churchmen, political figures and intellectuals took place depriving the Armenian nation of these prominent individuals. The 1930s, in particular, were decisive for ethnic minorities. Stalin's ambition of constructing a soviet identity led to the repression of national identities and cultures of the subject nations. Nationalism was suppressed, as any kind of act of patriotism would be classified as a crime against the government. Stalinist rule started to represent a totalitarian regime which was an equal to the Tsarist imperial regime.

In his "History, Memory and Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space" Taras Kuzio, who happens to be of Ukrainian origin, offers an interesting discussion about

the Soviet Union. Kuzio argues that the Soviet was an imperial power rather than a union of republics. The author argues that the Soviet Union fits the definition of an empire with a defined core and peripheries. The core, being Moscow and Russian SFSR and peripheries representing non-Russian republics, functioned in the same manner as they did in other empires. The core consisting of mainly Russian Elites was to rule the entire union. Peripheries, in their turn, would be ruled by the local elites appointed and approved by the core. Kuzio then argues that though proclaimed as a socialist union with Marxism-Leninism ideology, the Soviet Union employed the ideology of imperialism. Describing the Soviet's policies as *imperial*, the author states that those policies were no different from the colonial policies exercised by the great empires in the colonies of Africa and Asia. Thus, the Soviet Empire was functioning in the core-periphery principle with imperial policies in the same way as other colonial powers did. Interestingly, by imperial policies Kuzio is mainly referring to the policies which were targeted to shaping an imperial culture. If Said was looking into the works of literature of the imperial nations, Kuzio sees the ties between the empire and its culture in the historiography of the Soviet Union. According to the author, the Soviet Republics were granted with histories written and revised by the state historians. These histories biased and rather constructed deprived the member nations of having their own historiographies. Kuzio argues that these kind of policies have damaged the collective memory of the subject nations. Throughout the history colonizers attempted to erase the historical memory of the pre-colonial past of the colonized. By damaging collective memory, the colonial powers damaged the collective identity of the colonized. Aiming at shaping cultural hegemony in the Union, the Soviets were no different, in fact, more ambitious in this regard. Russians as the leading nation and Russian as the language of modernity changed the cultural face of the entire Soviet space. The Soviet identity was identical to the Russian one. Thus, the state historiography granted the subject nations with traditions and histories.

(Kuzio, 2002)

The situation, however, changed when the World War II broke out. The Soviet government started to allow publication of nationalist literature and cinema in order to gain public's support in the war. This was a fresh breath of air for Armenians. The historical novel of D. Demirchian's "Vardanank" (1943), high in patriotism and national rhetoric was read in the frontlines of the war encouraging the Armenian soldiers to fight against the common enemy. The plot of "Vardanank" set during the 5th century was describing Armenian- Persian war (449-451years). The depictions of courageous protagonists and their selfless love for the homeland would leave the readers in a highly emotional state of mind. Most importantly, the vivid imagery with which the author is describing the *Battle of Avarayr* would evoke feelings of anger and agony toward the enemy. Supposedly, this kind of narrative would serve the interests of Moscow since it would go hand in hand with the wartime national rhetoric. However, it is worth noting that, though describing historical events and patriotic in nature, the novel offered a romantic representation of "hero vs villain" rather than an "ode to liberty" type of narrative. By constructing his narrative in the distant past of the nation, the author sought to create politically impotent text, which would not contradict or interfere with the Soviet rhetoric. Perhaps, this was the main reason that despite its patriotism and nationalism, the novel survived the harsh censorship of the Stalinists and was published.

The Stalinist era greatly traumatized the entire Soviet space. The mass deportations, persecutions of religious and cultural figures significantly damaged the cultural tradition and especially national identity of the subject nations. Despite the victory of the Soviet Union in the WWII, Armenia suffered great losses of human lives. With their tremendous contribution to the war, approximately 300,000-500,000 Armenians served in the war, half of whom lost their lives either in battlefields or in German captivity.

The Contradictory 1960s and Armenian Soviet Identity

The Soviet space had undergone great changes after the death of the great dictator Joseph Stalin. After him, Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964) was to become the leader of the USSR. Under his leadership, a cultural “thaw” took place. The arts, literature and other cultural representations started to be censored in a fairly relaxed manner. Khrushchev’s policies represented a kind of rehabilitation plan for the traumatized soviet society after the Stalinist era. In his “The Contradictory 60s: Empire and Cultural Resistance” cultural critic Hrach Bayadyan discusses the years of the “thaw” with respect to Armenian and Soviet identity. Bayadyan mentions that in the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s cultural policy of the USSR started to grant “comparative” cultural freedoms to its subjects. It was also a time when soviet republics experienced cultural awakening. The rise of the national rhetoric and consciousness helped the nations to revive their cultural traditions. However, Bayadyan emphasizes the contradictory nature of this cultural awakening - “It was a process paradoxically accompanied by unprecedented efforts aimed at the Russification of nations and the shaping of united Soviet people.”(p.2) Bayadyan argues that the cultural “thaw” did not make drastic changes in the Soviet’s cultural policy. The author mentions that the Soviet propaganda continued the legacy of Russian empire’s imperial cultural policies. The Russian culture and the Russian language were still superior to the cultures and languages of other nations. During and after war, the superiority of the Russian people was established, as Bayadyan describes it, in the “big brother –little brothers” context. The author then argues that the rise of nationalism in the 60s was not a rebirth of pre-Soviet national rhetoric but represented a new nationalism – a certain hybrid of national and Soviet nationalism.

Going back to the analysis of Kuzio’s piece, we encounter noticeable differences of defining and conceptualizing Soviet space between Bayadyan and him. Kuzio views the

Soviet Union as a colonial space no different from the colonies of Great Britain such as Ireland and India. Drawing parallels between his native Ukraine and Ireland, the author argues that both nations were treated in the same colonial manner and were part of imperial cultural hegemony. Both nations experienced what Kuzio describes as “colonial injustice”. Bayadyan, on the other hand, talks about the very differences of Soviet’s cultural hegemony as opposed to that of colonial powers. Despite the ethnic and cultural superiority of Russians, equal opportunities for economic and social growth were granted to the Soviet nations. The other difference was that “there didn’t exist insurmountable line of demarcation that in Western empires separated the colonizer from the colonized”.(p.2) Thus, as opposed to colonial systems, the nations did not experienced “colonial injustice” as real opportunities for advancement were given to all Soviet republics.

Kuzio, however, takes his further discussion of the colonial space to another direction. He argues that the Soviet Union can be classified as a colonial power in respect that nation and state building policies of post-Soviet states are similar to those of post-colonial states. Both post-Soviet and post-colonial spaces share the desire of reviving their nations through the nation-building by recreating their historiography, culture and most importantly national identity aiming to consolidate their nation-states. Another similarity is the legacy of the post-colonial elites which are proud of their ethnicity but also tend to emphasize their connection to the superior culture of the colonizer in order to exercise their power. The examples of this phenomenon are again Ukraine and Ireland. Kuzio argues that after the decolonization processes the elite of Ukraine was using national rhetoric of proud Ukrainians at the same time being Russophones and highly Russophile.

Is the Post- in the Postcolonial the Post- in the Post-Soviet?

In this section of the study, let us consider the matter from a different perspective. The thorough and detailed discussions about the different “pasts” of Armenia were not of self-serving nature. The discussions about the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union both as imperial and colonial powers shall now allow us to proceed to the discussions of the applicability of colonial/postcolonial studies to modern Armenia.

With the advent of postcolonial theorists in the 20th century, a new discourse started to take its shape. A number of cultural scholars took up the mission to unveil the very essence of colony-colonizer relationship by looking at the cultural representations of the colonial power. By analyzing the works of literature that were written by either colonizers or the colonized, these critics look at so-called *metanarratives* of certain texts. Mostly concerned about what is *beyond* those narratives the authors have purposed a new perspective in which the colonial past of the modern world can be seen and understood. Discussing and revealing mostly cultural implications of colonial power, the studies also provide political, social and economic analyses of the given space. Fairly new, yet, rich tradition of the Postcolonial studies has greatly enriched the scholarship of the critical theories with powerful analysis of cultures and certain texts. With their work, these authors have energized the realm of critical cultural studies. In consequence, Postcolonial studies have reached different geographies representing a new discourse, which strives to analyze and explain the cultural legacy of a particular post-colonial space.

In his, “Is the Post- in the Postcolonial the Post- in the Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique” David Chioni Moore offers a new discussion about colonial/postcolonial studies. As the title of the piece might suggest, the author addresses a set of related questions: was the Soviet Union a colonial power? Are the postcolonial studies

applicable to the post-Soviet nations? And supposedly- in what ways are the post-Soviet nations similar and/or different from those of post-colonial states?

Moore starts his discussion stating that the Postcolonial studies were initially a critique of Western power. As he describes postcolonial studies deal with “Third World, non-western, world, emergent or minority literatures.” (Moore, 2001) According to him, Postcolonialism defined in more general terms also describes the political, social and cultural phenomena in the states which were once colonized. The term of *postcolonial* does not literally mean coming after a colonial rule but represents a descriptive term for the studies of colonial legacy. As Moore mentions, the new language of the theories allowed the authors of Postcolonial studies to draw parallels between geographies that were once non-comparable such as Senegal and India. According to him, once decolonized these cultures start to undergo certain processes, which are identical regardless of their geography. Moore describes these processes as “tensions between desire for autonomy and a history of dependence, between the desire for autochthony and the fact of hybrid, part-colonial origin, between resistance and complicity, and between imitation (or mimicry) and originality.”(p.112) Thus, post-colonial nations share the desperate desire to escape their colonial past, alas, cannot simply get rid of it. Moore states: “After reviewing what counts as postcolonial, I turn to the post-Soviet sphere: the Baltics, Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.”(p.113) The author starts a discussion of the post-Soviet space in the context of postcolonial studies suggesting that these states can be viewed as post-colonial since they seem to undergo the very processes specific to the post-colonial states. Considering what counts as postcolonial, the postcoloniality of the post-Soviet space becomes apparent. “To suggest a richer understanding of what I mean by post-Soviet postcoloniality, I will describe an area whose postcoloniality is clear - sub-Saharan Africa.”(p.114) Moore turns to this region which as he describes represents a colonial space the postcoloniality of which, at least among postcolonial

critiques, is unquestionable. He starts describing the colonial past and post-colonial reality of the states of sub-Saharan Africa which are to be compared with those of post-Soviet states.

After the arrival of European colonialism, the region of sub-Saharan Africa underwent drastic changes. The local elites were replaced by “puppet” governments, economy functioned in accord with the interests of metropolis rather than served the needs of indigenous people, local currencies, if such, were to be converted to that of the metropolis, no trade was carried out between economies external to the colonizer’s network, and agriculture was mass monoculture leading to environmental degradation. Equally, the cultural “degradation” took place as well. African education system was replaced- the language of the colonizer was prioritized, indigenous religious traditions were repressed replaced with alternative religious or non-religious ideologies and most importantly, “histories and curricula were rewritten from the imperium’s perspective.”(p.114) Then, when the independence came, these states underwent the “tensions” already mentioned above. Those African states tried to overthrow the remnants of the colonial governments seeking to make alliances with the opponents of former imperial power. Though “the desire of autonomy” was obvious but the history of dependence from a stronger power made sub-Saharan Africa seek new “imperial” powers to lean on. As Moore describes, “a continuation of a colonial– era ways took hold”- corruption, lawlessness, human drain and “dictators emerged, often drawing on their training in the colonial regime.”(p.115) After the independence when “initial euphoria” started to settle and was turned into disappointment “neither the collapsed imperium, nor the outside alternative, nor the local elite were to have the answers.”(p.116) After these long descriptions, Moore asks a rhetorical question: does not the description of postcoloniality offered by him equally fit to the post-Soviet space? Mentioning the names of all of the post-Soviet 27 nations Moore seems to virtually draw the vast map of post-Soviet space which is hardly ever discussed in the context of postcoloniality and is “left out” from

the world map. Critiquing both postcolonial and post-Soviet studies Moore tries to understand why there have never been discussion about the postcoloniality of the post-Soviet space. Despite the fact that the postcolonial theorists themselves reflect on the newly shaped discourse of the Postcolonial studies repeatedly questioning its vocabulary - terms, their definitions, historical mutations of certain concepts and likewise, the applicability of this discourse to certain geographies, the reluctance to discuss the post-Soviet space is striking. Postcolonial studies, though highly *auto-critical* in their nature, seem to lack the desire to examine those geographies. Moore argues that the silence on the subject of postcoloniality of the post-Soviet sphere is twofold. There are two silences: first is the silence of postcolonial studies on the subject of post-Soviet space, second- the silence of the scholars from the post-Soviet nations. Nevertheless, Moore emphasizes that his intellectual ambition is not to make the postcolonial theorists or scholars from post-Soviet republics find out whether they are postcolonial or not. Instead, those scholars should employ the hermeneutics or discourse of postcolonial studies as they can enrich the studies of their respective cultures and literatures. Thus, Moore sums up his work stating, “colonial relation at the turn of the millennium becomes as fundamental to world identities as other “universal” categories such as race and class, and caste, and age, and gender.”(p.124)

Moore’s analysis of the postcoloniality of post-Soviet nations is of great importance. Although Moore does not examine the post-Soviet states separately, he makes an important point about those states. As he describes one of the difficulties that a scholar like him is likely to encounter while trying to apply the postcolonial theories to the post-Soviet republics is that those 27 nations were highly diverse. Indeed, one might find drastic differences between Chechnya and the Baltics or the Caucasus and Ukraine. Notably, the diversity of the nations living in the Caucasus alone would not let the theorists find ready-made answers for the entire post-Soviet space. Nevertheless, what should be emphasized here is the way that the

post-Soviet space is being looked at today. Moore states that western media treats the Caucasus in Third World terms. This means that despite the political, cultural or religious differences the region is viewed as a single cultural unit. This is not coincidental as of today Armenia is being constantly represented as a Caucasian culture Orientalized in the same manner as were the Cossacks or Chechens in the literary works of Pushkin, Tolstoy and other imperial authors.

Orientalism: Defining the West and the East

Edward Said's "Orientalism" (1978) has changed the course of the critical theories and postcolonial theories in particular. With "Orientalism", the colonial studies start to represent a separate and exhaustive discourse with a rich arsenal of terms, concepts and various means of analyses. Along with the Postcolonial studies, Orientalism now can be equally described as a *theory of everything* type of discourse since it aims at explaining the workings of the modern world in the "strong versus weak" context. Simply interpreted Said purposes the following idea: the West has been continuously representing and defining the East in oriental terms. The West and the East are no longer the markers of geographical cardinal directions but bear a politically and culturally charged context of the interaction between colonizer Occident and the colonized Orient. The term of Orient becomes a metaphor for describing excessively exoticized eastern cultures: "such ... geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West." (Said, *Orientalism*, 1979) According to Said, as the colonialism rises and the European imperial powers reach to new geographies the Orient starts to play a crucial role in ways the West starts to function as the *center* of the

world. The European imperialism starts talking about the East by employing cultural representations of art and literature predominantly. The rhetoric of the civilizing mission of the imperial powers presents the east as the place of the savage and their wild ways of survival which have to be replaced with those of western lifestyle and values. "So far as the West was concerned during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an assumption had been made that the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West." (p.149) The "corrective study" Said describes here is the West's tendency to "correct" everything wrong with the East- its politics, culture and most importantly the human realm. Since the Western civilization acts as the perfect model for human advancement, the westerner depicted in British or French literary works becomes an idol not only in the home culture but in the colony as well. The world of narratives deals with the western perspective of the world defining the rest as non-western or Oriental. One's *Englishness* or *Frenchness* is no longer only defined on the basis of his/her ethnicity but rather on the constructed western identity that those narratives and cultural representations offered bluntly drawing a border line between the westerners and easterners. In this manner, the westerners use the easterners to define themselves too. The biased image of the orient is contrasted with the opposite character of the civilized westerner to denote the "obvious" differences leaving no room for further discussions about the orient's character.

Orientalism takes its definite shape in the empires of the 19th and 20th century and is specific to colonialism. As already discussed, the 19th century Russian Empire seemingly represents an imperial power with its metropolis and peripheries sharing the major features of those of the empires mentioned by Said. However, in the discussions about Orientalism of imperial powers the reader does not encounter the analysis of the Russian Empire and its Orientalism. The answer to this can be found in Said's later work "Culture and Imperialism" (1993) where he explains why he does not consider the Russian Empire as a colonial power

and supposedly is not referring to its Orientalism, if there is any. Said does not consider the Tsarist Russia as a colonial power because of one major difference between classic colonizers and the Russian Empire. While discussing imperial powers other than Britain and France, Said mentions, "Russia, however, acquired its imperial territories almost exclusively by adjacence. Unlike Britain or France, which jumped thousands of miles beyond their own borders to other continents, Russia moved to swallow whatever land or peoples stood next to its borders, which in the process kept moving farther and farther east and south."(p.10)

Moore, in his turn, is quoting Said on this matter when discussing colonial past of the USSR adding two other factors that differentiate the Russian Empire from the western colonial powers, "the lack of ocean between Russia and what it colonized, and in the way that Russia has long been typed (and has typed itself) as neither East nor West."(p.118) Thus, due to these factors the orientalism in Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union does not become a subject of contemplation. Neither Said himself nor the rest of the postcolonial academia of the time turn to the post-Soviet space to see whether there is a cultural phenomenon of the representation of Orientalized subjects by the Tsarist or Soviet Russians. Despite the fact that Said is not concerned with applicability of the concept of Orientalism to certain geographies such as the Russian Empire/Soviet Union, nevertheless, there are markers of the phenomenon that allow us to consider Russian Orientalism.

Hrach Bayadyan in his another writing "Hierarchy" talks about Soviet Imperial Orientalism. The author states that during the SU all of the subject nations were treated in terms of *the other*. According to him, "The Soviet imperial attitude showed a marked reluctance to notice and denote differences between its subjects." (Bayadyan, Hierarchy, 2010) As the colonial powers of Britain and France did not try to differentiate among their subjects simply referring them as *the other*, in the same manner the Soviet Russia, the "metropolis" of the Union did not mark any differences between its peripheries. Bayadyan

continues his discussion of the representations of the Soviet Orientalism mentioning the stereotypical attitude of the center towards its subjects. The Soviet Armenia, stereotypically labeled as “Sunny Armenia” by the Soviet media, represented a non-Russian space where the mystical mountains of the old country and the hybrid, half- Soviet and half-oriental identity of the locals would attract tourists from the center. Moreover, the Caucasus was defined as an oriental geography where a Caucasian still is to be civilized to the point where he/she has an identity identical to the Soviet-Russian one. Although, as Moore mentions, in the imperial history of Russian Empire the nation is not defined either the West or the East, it becomes obvious that the Soviet Union defined itself and played the West in the region. Taking up its *mission civilisatrice* in the Caucasus the Russian Empire later the USSR served as the modernizing powers in the region simultaneously, defining the subject Caucasians in non-Russian, oriental terms.

Modern Russian Orientalism: *The Last of the Mohikans*

The widespread argument that the past lives in the present retrospectively holds true for the colonial/Postcolonial studies and especially for the phenomena described by Said. Orientalism is persistent in the modern world as the ways in which the Western media is defining the East is no different from the Orientalism of the 19th or 20th century. Today’s Orientalism, however, is being channeled through visually and aurally more sophisticated media. As opposed to literature, which was the main medium where the Orientalism was first enacted, nowadays, films, TV series and documentaries act as great platforms for telling narratives rich in many layers of political and/or cultural context. There have been many studies about the western Orientalism depicting the east particularly the Middle Eastern countries under an umbrella term of “Arab World”. One could even argue that the executive

order that Donald J. Trump signed on 1 February 2017, which blocks people from six predominantly Muslim countries from entering the States for a certain period of time is a vivid example of complex relations between the West and the East. The order, notoriously famous as a “Muslim ban” aims at preventing terrorist elements from entering the US. Treating those diverse populations of peoples as representatives of a single cultural and religious unit the West represents them in stereotypical and oriental terms. Ridiculously, the ethnicity of those people is out of consideration since being “Muslim” is the key element. No doubt, that, though classified as Muslim by religious traditions, none of these 6 nations, and their peoples represent populations similar each other in every cultural or even religious aspects. Those populations become, as Said describes it, dehumanized all well fitting in a single stereotypical figure of a barbarian savage Muslim ready to terrorize the westerners.

In 2013 the Russian network STS released a TV series called “the Last of the Mohikans”. The sitcom tells a story of an Armenian man married to a Russian woman with three daughters living in Moscow. The title of the sitcom indicates the nature of the story that the audience is about to encounter. Alluding to James Fenimore Cooper’s novel “the Last of the *Mohicans*”, “the Last of the *Mohikans*” represents a protagonist with the Mohikyan surname. While in the novel Mohicans are a dying Native American tribe whose last members carry out noble fights for the survival of their tribe, the last of the Mohikans is an Armenian who does not have a son to whom he can pass on his “legacy”. Taken from the novel the word Mohican in the Armenian language is used as a metaphor to denote the last representative of something. Mohican turns into Mohikyan where the suffix *-yan* is added to indicate the Armenian nationality of the last representative.

Aired during 2013-2014, 5 seasons with 80 episodes released, “the Last of the Mohikans” celebrated a big success in Russia and later in Armenia. Considering the big market of the Russian TV networks and diversity of the contents they offer the sitcom earned

a relatively vast audience. Though rated fairly low in IMDb.com – 3,8/10, in popular Russian web-pages featuring online movies and TV series, the sitcom has earned considerably high ratings - in Kinopoisk.ru 6,8/10 and Megogo.ru 9,5/10. Considering the fact that there is no video content and descriptions posted in IMDb.com it can be concluded that the sitcom's audience does not use the site to stream the episodes and the ratings are likely to lack credibility. In Armenia the sitcom was broadcast during 2015- 2016 on H1 (Armenian First Public Channel) enjoying great popularity among Armenians. The state-owned public television of Armenia, in fact, has a viewership of 80% of the Armenian households watching it daily. (Pearce, 2011) Aired on H1 "The Last of the Mohikans" has reached the vast majority of Armenians as the statistics indicate that the content provided by the H1 is almost always likely to be consumed by at least a third of the Armenian population.

"The Last of the Mohikans" is a family comedy. The slogan of the TV series which is "Comedy with an accent" is very descriptive of the plot of the series. The story revolves around an Armenian man Karen Mohikyan living in Moscow. Karen has formed an international family with a Russian woman and has three daughters. He owns a car service and is financially stable. At the same time, Karen is a loving husband and a caring father. However, the relationships between him and his family members are not going very well. He is constantly quarreling with his daughters over their lifestyle. He does not want his daughters to be addicted to modern gadgets, arrive home late and most importantly date boys. His daughters are accustomed to the conservative looks of their father but are not willing to hold back. Mohikyan is especially furious when he learns that his elder daughter Marine has a Russian boyfriend. Egor is an attractive, good mannered man who runs a successful business and is ready to form a family. Karen, however is not happy about him and wants to end the relationship. Egor, in his turn, is aware that his future father-in-law is very likely to interrupt his plans by any means. Nevertheless, he loves Marine and is not going to give up. The

conflict between Karen and Egor is one of the central themes of the series. They are on the opposite sides. While Karen is a conservative hot-blooded Caucasian, Egor is tolerant and emotionally stable young man. Egor is the “gentleman” admired by all the female characters in the program. Despite Karen’s great love for his wife, Egor represents the ideal partner for Karen’s wife.

Another central theme of the series which is constantly repeating is “the call” of Karen’s kin. Karen is troubled by the fact that he does not have a son. The legacy of Mohikyans is to vanish. In his dreams, Karen is visited by his ancestors who remind him of his mission in life – passing on the legacy of the Mohikyan “tribe”. His relatives are concerned about the issue as well. Karen’s mother who lives in Armenia is also bothered by the fact that her son does not have a male child. Karen is failing to accomplish what every Armenian man is supposed to. What is noteworthy here is that the use of allusion to “the Last of the Mohicans” in the title of film has many layers of meanings. Mohikyan does not only represent the last representative of his family but as in the novel is a remnant of a dying “species”. Interestingly, the word “tribe” in Armenian does not only denote an ethnic group or race but equally stands for one’s family and relatives as well. Thus, as the protagonists of “the Last of the Mohicans” Karen represents a dying family tradition or “tribe”. The allusion made to the novel is not coincidental since it works in many levels. Karen Mohikyan represents the vanishing type of Armenians in general. He needs to assimilate in order to establish peace in his family. The conflicts that he has with the surrounding world are because of his Armenian identity. He is a stranger to the Russian tradition and is treated as *the other*. The comedy that series are incorporating basically plays on the oriental identity of the main character. Moreover, his “Armeniannes” does not become a matter of consideration since it is his *Caucasian* ways of living that are represented as alien to Russians. Thus, “The Last of the Mohikyans” points at the ways in which the Russian Orientalism is manifesting

itself.

Edward Said's analysis of *the other* and *oriental identity* was mainly drawn in the context of relations between western empires and their colonies. Once the west and east are capitalized they start to note the clashes between the two civilizations. However, we do not see the Russian Empire in the midst of these clashes since as already discussed, Russia was not a "classic" colonizer and does not seem fully to fit in either the West or the East. Nevertheless, the way it acts and represents itself in the region is mimicking the western metropolis-peripheries model. We now encounter a cultural representation, which directly points at the Russian Orientalism of the past two centuries present in our times. "The Last of the Mohikans" which at first sight represents nothing else but a family comedy is implicitly citing the imperial/colonial and Soviet pasts of Armenia. Starting from the 19th century if not earlier, the imperial Russia has defined the Caucasus as its orient. The Soviet Union was no different in this account. Today, the Caucasus still remains a place of *the other*. Karen Mohikyan represents the collective figure of not only Armenian nation and identity but also that of all Caucasians. Russia is mimicking the way the West sees the East. The Caucasus is the antithesis of Western, in this case, Russian progress since Mohikyan keeps old-fashioned to black and white mobile phones, detests modern gadgets and does not know what e-mail or Skype are. He is depicted as the embodiment of savage, highly emotional and primitive orient since he sees things differently. Said's descriptions of the ways in which the orient is being viewed fit Mohikyan's experience in the Russian world. As Said describes, "the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'." (p.40) In the same manner, Mohikyan is contrasted to his Russian future son-in-law. Egor is the rational, virtuous, mature and normal man while Mohikyan is a remnant of dying "species" who is alien to the modern and "western" world. Ironically, the younger Russian man is represented more "mature" than his older Armenian counterpart.

As already discussed “the Last of the Mohikyans” had a great success in Armenia as well. It seems that the Armenian society has embraced the series’ representation of the Armenian identity since there has not been any criticism towards the production so far. Rather, the Armenian audience applauded to the center’s desire to depict such a peripheral figure as an Armenian is. Here we encounter one of the phenomenon specific to the Orientalized subjects. In the web-page of the TV channel H1 which was broadcasting the series in Armenia we find the following description, “The TV series is about the strength, loyalty and hospitability of Armenian families. The main hero is Karen Mohikyan, who has no fears and does not like changes. He is a true Armenian, for who traditions are above everything else. Karen has dreamed to have a son all his life, but he has 3 daughters. Because of his daughters’ progressive ideas the father is constantly in conflicts with them. Nevertheless, he is ready to do everything for his daughters.” (Public TV Company of Armenia, 2016) This description, however, greatly differs from the ones provided in the Russian web pages. The descriptions in Russian usually stress the clashes between the international family and put an emphasis on Mohikyan’s Caucasian identity. One of the descriptions states, “Karen Mohikyan is a loving father and a husband. Like a typical Caucasian man he is highly emotional and is quick-tempered which results in constant conflicts between him and his family members.” (Megogo, 2013)

Interestingly, Armenians consider these series’ portrayal of the Armenian identity to be fairly accurate. The description in the web page of H1 states that Mohikyan is “a true Armenian” meaning that Russian portrayal represents the real character of Armenians in general. As it appears, the West, in this case, Russia defines what is Armenian and what is not depriving the nation from forming its own discourse of defining itself. Said’s descriptions about *silent/silenced Orient* represent the peripheral Armenia’s inability to define itself. The Russian oriental discourse has silenced the Armenian nation starting from the imperial times.

Thus, lacking the ability to speak about itself the nation now defines itself in the manner as it was and is defined by the Center. This holds true for all of the Orientalized subjects.

Ironically enough, the directors of “the last of the Mohikyans” are Georgian. Even though Georgians are equally Orientalized and identified with the Caucasus, the directors of the series see a Caucasian in the same ways as the metropolitans do.

Nation-Building in a *Silenced Nation*

This research paper’s academic ambition to recall the different pasts of Armenia was an attempt of *self-reflexivity* to have a better understanding of the cultural legacy of my home country. I turned to the critical academia to situate modern Armenia in the post-modern world by examining its past through the lens of colonial/postcolonial studies. Being born in the already-independent Republic of Armenia, the generation of which I am representative of is desperate for finding the answers for the present and the future paths of Armenia. The recent years full of political uprisings and protests have shaped a new political environment where the opinions are usually being classified as pro-European or pro-Russian. After Armenia’s integration into the Eurasian Economic Union, the opposition elements started anti-Russian discussions. In those opposition circles the current Armenian government is repeatedly referred as a “puppet” government which serves the needs of the Federation. Despite the fact that there have rarely been discussions about Armenia as a post-colonial country, the calls of decolonization from the Russian Federation have been in the air. I believe that this is not a mere matter of coincidence. In fact, the phenomenon which I refer to as *self-reflexivity* of a

nation starts by individuals who take the challenge of redefining the present by examining and rethinking the past. The absence of the Armenian civil society during the Soviet Union was part of the nation *silencing* strategy of the state. No wonder that today the independent Armenia lacks civic activism. Though still in its infancy, the Armenian civil society has made a great deal of changes. The protests mentioned above were triggered and organized by individuals who wanted to make their voices heard. These individuals are key in the process of so-called *decolonization* and supposedly nation-building.

Discussions about Armenia as a post-colonial rather than post-Soviet nation pinpoint something important. Whether the Russian domination represented a classical colonial power or not becomes less important when we think about the colonization of a particular nation in terms of cultural colonization. Armenian culture now represents that of “once colonized” and *Orientalized* which lacks the vocabulary to talk about and define itself in the modern world. I believe that nation-building of the young state is doomed to failure as long as the past is not visited and *reconceptualized*. The silenced nation has to shape its own discourse about its history, culture and most importantly identity. The path of the Armenian nation’s liberation and advancement could be taken only through the means of perceptual changes about who we were and where are we heading to.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

The ambitious choice of this research paper’s topic was intentional. Taking into account the complexity of the subject I tried to provide a holistic approach to the matter touching upon the most important points of the matter. However, due to the multidisciplinary nature of the colonial/postcolonial studies while preparing the research I limited myself to the

discussions of specific issues only. In fact, one can go far with discussing only the imperial cultural policies of the Soviet Union or let us say the representation of Armenians in the modern Russian media. Having taken the critical approach I tried to draw a sort of cultural and political chronology of the Armenian nation starting from the 19th century to modern days. Supposedly, the research paper only attempts to skim the surface of the many issues it addresses. Nevertheless, I believe that my work can start a good tradition in the academia about Armenia in the context of colonial/postcolonial studies making the reader question and rethink his/her cultural tradition.

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