Armenological Issues
2024, VOL. 1, NO. 2 (28), 13-29
https://doi.org/10.46991/ai.2024.2.28.001

RUSSIAN AND SOVIET IMPERIAL LEGACY IN POSTCOLONIAL EURASIA: AN OVERVIEW OF THE REVIVED DEBATE

Alexander Agadjanian*
Yerevan State University

Abstract
The year 2022, with Russia's full-scale invasion in Ukraine, has been a milestone that brought the events, in a way, widely expected and predicted, resulting in the obvious long-term trends, and yet, stunning by their dramatic acceleration. That year has also affected both academic and public discourses related to a number of issues, including, most of all, the changing perception of the huge historical, cultural, and geopolitical region - the space of Russian and then Soviet imperial domination, both current and former, both real and imagined, both directly or indirectly subject to Russian economic involvement and political dependency. After 2022, this vast, territorially pulsating region, sometimes called Northern Eurasia, acquired both new existential vulnerability and conceptual fragility.
This review paper will suggest some observations concerning the intense discussions about the cultural-historical meaning, both retrospectively and prospectively, of this Russia-affected regional space - the discussions that broke out after the start of the Ukraine war. I draw upon both published generalized opinions and regular scholarly publications related to the outlined themes. My goal here is to identify major trends in these discussions and share some comments.
A storm of debates has been trying to interpret the aggressive internal and external mobilization of Putin's regime in several explanatory logics. It could be, first, the logic of post-Soviet developments (the evolution of the elites, the features of available resources, the misbalances of state-society relationships, etc.); or the logic of the *longue-durée* patterns of the Russian social and cultural history (dominant political culture, deeply-imbedded cultural mythologies, etc.); or, finally, placing the problem within a wider logic of contestation ("clashes") between the evolving global centers of power. In all these cases, one factor should be stated as crucial and definitive: the huge continental space of Northern Eurasia, a unique geographical-spatial system that largely defined the logic of integration and disintegration, solidarities and rivalries, violence and resistance, cultural imagination, entangled identity formation, and the very nature of the state rule.
The empire that twice emerged on this geographical space – as the Romanov Empire first and then the Soviet Union (with additional claims of influence beyond the official borders, in both cases) – is now under the most passionate scrutiny because of the dominant postcolonial and decolonial agenda and the assumption that Putin's aggression in Ukraine indicates imperial revenge. Hence the growing interest in the nature of this imperial system throughout its history.

* Alexander Sergey Agadjanian, Leading researcher, Institute for Armenian Studies, Yerevan State University (YSU)

Received 11.07.2023
Revised 20.08.2023
Accepted 22.08.2023

Keywords - Romanov Empire, Pax Rossica, Russian imperial duality, Soviet Union, "Island Russia", Armenia, Georgia, South Caucasus, Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), Central Asia, Northern Eurasia, Rose Revolution, "near-abroad", "fraternal rivalry", "paleoconservatism", "subaltern peripheries", "Russkii mir".

Romanov and Soviet empires: typical, special, ambivalent

We will start with the perception of the Romanov Empire and will later move to its Soviet incarnation. The Romanov Empire was usually placed in the row of the modern continental empires along with the Habsburg, Ottoman, and sometimes Hohenzollern, all of them dismantled after the Great War (World War I), and these polities are sometimes opposed to the classic maritime empires, such as British or French.[1] This opposition involves debates about the differences between these two types. We know that the now dominant postcolonial research agenda has been overwhelmingly shaped by the material from the maritime empires, where the "metropolis" and "colony" were clearly separated in terms of resources, administration, and cultural subjectivity, and this initial distance defined the strategies of institutional and human communication. The now classical tropes of orientalism, hybridity, or mimicry, developed in postcolonial theory, began to be applied to the Russian imperial history relatively recently.

A number of recent research of the Russian imperial expansion have shown, for example, the similar mechanism of "orientalization" as Edward Said described in his classic study.[2] Scholars refer to the Russian academic oriental studies, such as Caucasian studies and the studies of Russian Turkestan, as developing, in collaboration with colonial administration and in parallel with travelogues and visual arts, a typically orientalist pattern of the annexed cultures.[3]

At the same time, in a new turn, the scholars show that the Russian orientalists and intellectuals in many cases initiated a sympathetic collaboration with the local elites whose subjectivities were preserved within the emerging, apparently "hybrid," communicative models.[4] Other studies suggested that the Romanov Empire "colonized" the ethnically Russian provinces in the same way as it did with its non-Russian peripheries, and even that some of these "central" provinces have been

---

[1] See Miller: Alexey Miller, The Romanov Empire and Nationalism. Essay on the Methodology of Historical Research. (Moscow): NLO, 2006), 32-42. The third type that might be designated as (post)modern empire, the "global empire" of the United States, is a separate issue.

[2] Said E., Orientalism, (Pantheon Books, 1978).

[3] Melentyev D. Ethnography and Eroticism in Russian Turkestan, State, Religion, Church in Russia and Abroad. 2020. No. 38(2). pp. 308–344. On the role of Caucasian studies as "scientific appropriation" along with the imperial expansion, see: Mirja Lekke, "Russian-Georgian Literary Ties and the Science of Them in the Social Context", in: Mirja Lecke, Elena Chkhaidze, eds. Russia and Georgia after the Empire, *Moscow: NLO, 2018, 22.*

[4] See Vera Tolz, Russia's Own Orient, The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods, (Oxford University Press, 2011), where the author claims that Russian academic orientalists have developed the postcolonial scholarly agenda many decades before it was created by its later classics; see also Sergei Abashin, "Another history of "Russian Turkestan"?– Am Imperio, 3 (2018), 410-415.

economically inferior to some peripheries.[5] The incorporation of the local political and learned elites, as well as the "internal colonization" of central provinces, however, would not downplay the conclusion that the Romanov Empire was a typical empire in the sense that the norms created in the center were imposed and applied in the peripheries.[6]

We can also say that the Romanov Empire, similar to all other modern empires, embodied an ambivalence of being simultaneously a conservative, repressive system, and yet, on the other hand, of creating a *modernizing* political and cultural environment that promoted economic growth, elements of rational bureaucratic management, acting as a public *Kulturträger* that reached its diverse population, and finally, if unwillingly, shaping the ethnic and national communities within its space. It seems that the current scholarship does not contrapose any more the empires to nation-states as standard agents of Modernity.[7]

However, there is another, and particularly important, ambivalence in the Romanov Empire that was inherited in the Soviet period and is clearly relevant to the ideologies of the post-Soviet imperial *revanche*. I mean Russia's dual nature of being both colonizer (of Eurasian spaces) and quasi-colonized (by Europe); of both belonging to Europe (since the early 1700s) and constantly generating anti-Western resentment expressed in cultural agendas such as Slavophilism, "native soil" embeddedness (*pochvennichestvo)*, and various forms of Eurasianism. Interesting that all these forms of anti-western reaction were partly inspired by, and synthesized from, some alternative and marginal western-European ideological currents (such as the German *Sonderweg* discourse or the mystical anti-Atlantic traditionalism) and mostly formulated within a Eurocentric hegemonic discourse - another prove of the said ambivalence. To conceptualize this paradox of Russian imperial duality, a few scholars proposed, drawing upon the postcolonial analytical vocabulary, the term "subaltern empire."[8] Hence Russia's obvious and sometimes radical oscillations, throughout its historical course, between the periods of "catching up" (with European modernity) and conservative backlashes.[9] The radical break of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a catastrophic expression of this duality.

---

[5] For the thesis of "internal colonization," see Alexander Etkind, Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011); and the volume that elaborates this thesis on a number of cultural examples: A. Etkind, D. Uffelman, I. Kukulin. (eds.). There, Inside. Practices of Internal Colonization and Cultural History of Russia. (Moscow: NLO press, 2012).

[6] See, inter alia, Russian Empire: Nationalized and Nationalizing, 2020. №. 3. c. 9–113.

[7] Miller, Op. Cit., 44. Miller adds that it is also unfair to identify the imperial rule with constant backlash repressions against the colonies' resistance– for the imperial state this would be simply impossible in pragmatic terms.

[8] See Madina Tlostanova, A Janus-Faced Empire. Notes on the Russian Empire in Modernity, Written from the Border, (Moscow, 2003); Idem, 'The Janus-Faced Empire Distorting Orientalist Discourses: Gender, Race and Religion in the Russian/(post)Soviet Constructions of the "Orient,"' Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise 2(2): 1–11; and most substantially, Viatcheslav Morozov, Russia's Postcolonial Identity. A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[9] See an earlier definition of the Russian Empire as being an "intermediary" system that implied historical cycles based upon oscillations between the periods of reforms and counter-reforms, Alexander Akhiezer, Russia: Critique of Historical Experience (Sociocultural Dynamics of Russia), (Novosibirsk: Siberian Chronograph, 1998); this resonates with Yuri Lotman's reflections about the "dual models" in Russia's cultural dynamic first formulated in: Yuri Lotman, Boris Uspensky, "The Role of Dual Models in the

Let us now turn to the Soviet incarnation of the *Pax Rossica*. Debates about the nature of Soviet legacy are predictably more passionate now, as this legacy has been strongly felt after the breakdown of the Soviet Union and continues to be an important factor these days. The Bolshevik revolutionary drive was apparently anti-imperialist; however, imperialism was rejected not for the sake of the nation-states (as it happened in the realms of other dismantled empires of the twentieth century) but in anticipation of a new polity and a Utopian new community to emerge *("новая социальная общность людей"*, according to the Soviet ideological parlance). The initial politics of redesigning the space of the former Romanov Empire (minus some lost western territories such as Poland and Baltic states, until the latter were re-occupied in 1940) led to welcoming national and ethnic identitarian claims in the 1920s-early 1930s (the so-called politics of *коренизация*, promoting, re-integrating, and actually sometimes inventing/constructing local ethnic cultures, intellectuals, and bureaucrats). This apparent anti-imperialism might lead to viewing the Soviet Union as a special political phenomenon.[10]

Gradually, however, the Union evolved into a typical empire, although not conservatively modernizing, like Romanov's, but radically modernity-driven – with an ideological, constructivist, and totalitarian edition of modernity. The political center (the ruling communist party) provided undisputed general norms, and "the peoples" were supposed to follow *substantial* socialist core with a permission to maintain *formal* national-cultural variations doomed to imminent extinction (*национальные по форме, социалистические по содержанию)*. The official policy of the "friendship of the people" quickly became a discourse of domination.[11] There was no question that the ruling imperial institutions were overwhelmingly run by ethnic Russians; the Russian language was an imperial *lingua franca* in the same way as in Romanov Empire;[12] the celebration of national minority cultures usually came down to "orientalist" admiration and folklorization.[13]

The ambivalence of the initial design and "affirmative" ethnonational policies, however, manifested itself after World War II in the late, post-Stalinist Soviet Union. The proto-nation-states, created within the imperial system (in the same way as proto-nations were constructed by other colonial powers), gradually acquired larger rights and significance; the ethnonational elites strengthened (partly thanks to successful

---

Dynamics of Russian Culture (until the End of the 18th Century)," Scientific Notes of Tartu State University, Issue. 414, Tartu, 1977, 3–36.

[10] Most famously, see Terry Martyn, The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939, (Cornell University Press, 2001).

[11] On the early Soviet ethno-emancipatory and constructivist zeal, related to thriving ethnography and promotion of local resources, and the simultaneous strengthening of the totalitarian control from the center, see Francine Kirsch, Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union, (Cornell University Press, 2005).

[12] The communist (socialist Yuri Lotman, Boris Uspensky, "The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (until the End of the 18th Century)," Scientific Notes of Tartu State University, Issue.) national intermediaries have mostly been Russians, according to Charles Shaw and Konstantin Iordachi, "Intermediaries as Change Agents: Translating, Interpreting, and Expanding Socialism," Russian Review, 82 (2023), 387–400.

[13] Vadim Mikhaylin, "Locus amusos: "a special path" of colonial and postcolonial discourse in domestic cinema," New Literary Review, 166 (6/2020).

incorporation into the imperial centers); cultural entrepreneurs managed to create modern national cultures while the overarching, dominant (communist) discourse gradually lost vigor, substance, and credibility. With today's growing decolonial sensitivity in late Soviet studies, some free spaces have been identified in spheres where political control and censorship were relatively weak, and sometimes more often in imperial peripheries: many studies show how, for example, the literary translation industry produced a half-hidden decolonizing effect; how the literary process on minority-languages allowed more freedom; and how national republics became centers of artistic innovation.[14] Overall, "the Soviet Union became an incubator of the new nations," where the imperial state itself endowed the subalterns with the language of agency and resistance.[15] Recent studies have specifically focused on the formation of such national agency within "Soviet-Georgian" or "Soviet-Armenian" cultures.[16] The shaping of these semi-hidden national agencies finally led to the empire's explosion in 1989-1991.

At the same time, the late Soviet Russian empire, in its dominant discourse, inherited the aforementioned duality of combining colonial hegemony with defensive, isolationist anti-Western resentment in a weird combination with global messianic rhetoric. Predictably, urban dissenters who explored the "free spaces" both in the center and in the peripheries often looked to Western alternative patterns over the loosening Iron Curtain. On the other hand, within the "internally colonized" space of Russia proper, the rise of Russian ethnic nationalism (in literature, visual arts but also within the bureaucratic apparatus) developed in parallel with the rise of national feelings in the peripheries and contained a conservative, nativist protest against both Soviet and Western modernities (seen, in fact, as the two forms of colonization).

---

[14] On translation activities and literary studies as producing real elements of dissent behind the ritualized "peoples' friendship" discursive core, see Mirja Lekke using Georgian examples (Mirja Lecke, Elena Chkhaidze, Op. cit., p. 26). See also excellent studies on Chabua Amirejibi's epic and Grant Matevossyan's prose as containing semi-hidden protests against Soviet modernity (Bela Tsipuria, "Hybridity and the Double Sociocode in Chabua Amirejibi's Novel "Data Tutashkhia"," in Mirja Lekke, Elena Chkhaidze, Op. cit., 94-104; Hrach Bayadyan, "Becoming Post-Soviet," 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts, #59, 4-12, http://bettinafuncke.com/100Notes/059_Bayadyan.pdf. Evgenii Dobrenko discussed the "non-imperial and anti-imperial spaces in Soviet literature" in 2023 (the conference "XXIX Bathhouse Readings," New Literary Review). On creating counter-narratives in the literature of the Russian North, see Klavdiya Smola, "Little America: (Post)Socialist Realism of the Indigenous North." – New Literary Review 166 (2020). On the phenomenon of late Soviet Armenian modernism in fine arts, architecture, and cinema, see: Vardan Azatyan. "National modernism," in Georg Schollhammer, Ruben Arevshatyan, eds., Sweet Sixties: Specters and spirits of a parallel avant-garde. (Sternberg Press, 2013), 107-120; Ruben Arevshatyan, "Blank zones in collective memory, or the transformation of Yerevan's urban space in the 1960s," Ibidem, 299-319; Vigen Galstyan. "Desperately searching for aesthetics: Armenian cinema of the 1960s and late modernity," Ibidem, 354-364.

[15] Ronald Suny, Making of the Georgian Nation, (Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 292ff; also, Idem, "Dialectics of Empire: Russia and the Soviet Union," in: Ilya Gerasimov et al., eds., New Imperial History of the Post-Soviet Space, (Kazan, 2004), c.173.

[16] On the Georgian case, see Claire P. Keizer, Georgian and Soviet. Entitled Nationhood and the Specter of Stalin in the Caucasus, (Cornell University Press, 2022); on the Armenian case, see Yulia Antonyan, ed., Armenian Culture: Concepts, Perceptions and Manifestations, (Yerevan, Yerevan State University, 2023) (in Armenian).

Russia after the Soviet Union: decolonization versus the hanging shadow of empire

In 1991, the Soviet empire collapsed, and its entire territory transformed into the space of ethnic and national projects, claims, and conflicts. However, the idea of empire and the imperial spatial-communicative structure survived, first within the Russian Federation (with stronger claims of ethnic constituencies), and second, as a *shadow* of the former imperial rule over the so-called "near-abroad" (*ближнее зарубежье*), a euphemism for the zone of special claims, the newly independent states.

Post-Soviet Russia's complex political and economic history was accompanied by a polyphonic ideological evolution towards a new master narrative of the country's regional and global identity. As the Marxist discourse disappeared overnight - including its scholastic internationalism, fully disproved by the ethno-nationalist breakdown - in the course of the three decades, 1990s-2010s, controversial ideological debates exploded.

One initial trend was Russia's post-Iron-Curtain global integration related to liberal economy and cultural openness - the trend shaped as a teleological, Westocentric concept of "transition." However, the anti-global and anti-western reactions came up immediately. The old ideological patterns were revived, with discursive "parties" that reminded the old Westernizers, Slavophiles and Eurasianists, each expressing a particular vision of geopolitical and geocultural identity. The "westernizing vector" was poorly elaborated ideologically; the ethnonationalist and imperial parties, initially clashed with each other, have gradually inundated the public space and penetrated the increasingly authoritarian official rhetoric. The mainstream ethnonationalist and imperial (Eurasianist) camps would reject the westernized nation-state perspective; they would also reject more eccentric attempts to imagine an "Island Russia" based on a seventeenth-century (pre-imperial) "heartland ethno-civilizational platform" equally distanced from the Western European and "Eurasian" identities.[17] Ethnonationalist versus imperial (Eurasianist) controversy seemed to define the debates in the early post-Soviet years, but later Putin's hardening regime borrowed ideas from both to finally create a pragmatic synthetic ideological amalgam to support the authoritarian agenda.[18]

The enthonationalist-imperial combination eventually produced a number of fundamental elements of a new hegemonic discourse. This ideological toolkit included: the key concept of the Russian world/*Russkii mir*; the strongly promoted idea of historical continuity of the current polity with the Romanov and Soviet empires based upon the strong continuous statehood (with an interruption of the 1917 Revolution seen as unfortunate and tragic and the 1990s liberal reforms as a collective trauma of late Soviet generation) – the statehood that constitutes the indisputable core of an distinctive, indigenous "Russian civilization"; the conservative ideology of "traditional values" with its strong anti-liberal and authoritarian biases coupled with a pseudo-

[17] On the last point, see an early piece of geopolitical imagination by Vadim Tsymbursky, "Island Russia" (prospects of Russian geopolitics), - Polis, №5, 1993, c. 6-23.

[18] Igor Torbakov, After Empire: National Imagination and Symbolic Politics in Russia and Eurasia in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries, Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, Chapter 5 (p. 95ff).

missionary idea of promoting and protecting this value agenda on a global scale.[19] This master-narrative also includes a militant patriotic flavor orchestrating the millennial Russian historical narrative epitomized in the celebration of the World War II victory in its nationalized version. It also includes the references to the Russian Orthodox tradition that are used in most of the elements listed above – from the "Russian world" concept (correlated with the ecclesiastic "canonical territory"), to the perennial statehood and to the "traditional values" rhetoric.[20] This entire ideological master-narrative was finally shaped as a series of official state documents.[21]

This entire ideological construction served pragmatically to consolidate the increasingly authoritarian power of Putin's ruling group and to justify the more self-asserting foreign policies; however, it would be simplistic to reduce this set of ideas to a false, cynical, and eclectic camouflage of the *Realpolitik*.

In depth, the official Putinite identity politics reflected the *longue-durée* ambivalence of the "subaltern empire" and was determined by Russia's "simultaneous belonging to and exclusion from Europe."[22] On the one hand, the nationalism-driven, quasi-postcolonial energy of isolationist resentment; an anti-universalist claim of closure, uniqueness, and authenticity; a bitter experience of a humiliating defeat (as the collapse of the Soviet Union was perceived).[23] On the other hand, the compensatory celebration of the past and present might and the paroxysms of inherited imperial claims were presented as a special mission in the entire Northern Eurasia, including the space both within and outside the Russian Federation.

---

[19] See Torbakov, Op. cit; On the historical narrative of "total continuity," see also Olga Malinova, "Constructing the Useable Past: The Evolution of the Official Historical Narrative in Post-Soviet Russia." Niklas Bernsand and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, eds. Cultural and Political Imaginaries in Putin's Russia. (Brill, 2019), 85-104. On constructing the collective trauma of liberal reforms, as a foundation of a conservative turn, see: Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, The Red Mirror: Putin's Leadership and Russia's Insecure Identity, (Oxford University Press, 2020), Chapter 5 (p. 105ff). V. Morozov calls the Putinite ideology "paleoconservatism" emphasizing its consonance with western conservative currents (V. Morozov, Op. cit., Chapter 4, p.103ff).

[20] On the uses of war victory as the core memorial tool, see: Mikhail Gabovich, ed. Monument and holiday. Ethnography of Victory Day. (Moscow, Nestor-history, 2020). The millenial myth of the strong state is widely promoted in public sphere, such as in the large-scale exhibition "Russia-My History" opened in twenty-four Russian cities: see Ekaterina Klimenko, "Building the Nation, Legitimizing the State: Russia—My History and Memory of the Russian Revolutions in Contemporary Russia," Nationalities Papers 49 (1), 2021, 72-88. On the place of the Russian Orthodox agenda, see Tobias Koellner, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Russia, Routledge, 2021, Chapter 6 (p. 113ff); Kathy Rousselet, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russkii mir," in: Thomas Bremer, Alfons Brüning, Nadeszda Kizenko, eds. Orthodoxy in Two Manifestations? The Conflict in Ukraine as an Expression of the Fault Line in World Orthodoxy. (Erfurt, 2022), 121-144.

[21] See the documents and publications presenting this entire set of ideas: a highly confrontational and isolationist document "Strategy of national security of the Russian Federation" (2021; http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/47046); the militantly anti-liberal document "The Foundations of the state policy in conservation and reinforcement of the traditional Russian spiritual and moral values" (2022; http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502); the isolationist and authoritarian revisions of the 2014 "The Foundations of the State cultural politics" (2023; http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48855/page/1); "The Concept of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation (2023; http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/news/70811). Check also the mandatory course "The Foundations of the Russian statehood" introduced in all Russian higher education institutions since September 2023.

[22] Morozov, Op. cit., 41.

[23] Nikolai Plotnikov, "Preface," in N. Plotnikov, ed., Facing Disaster, (Berlin: LIT Verlag), 5-9.

Decolonization across Northern Eurasia: the empire's legacy and national agency

Decolonization of Northern Eurasia has been occasionally discussed in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it has become the overwhelming topic since the 2022 geopolitical crisis. The new imperial ambitions of Putin's Russia and various forms of either dependency or threat felt in former Soviet lands instigated the explosive academic interest to the *longue-durée* imperial patterns in this entire area. "Decolonization" meant not only new processes guaranteeing further and real independence from Russia but also, in academic historiography or anthropology, the intellectual emancipation from centralized, uniform perception of empire with neglected or underrated peripheries/colonies.

This trend in Eurasian studies looks like a belated entry into the classic twentieth-century historical narrative of the nation-state "triumph" as an implied, mainstream political form as famously proclaimed by Ernst Gellner.[24] The deep reasons of the nation-focused conceptual revisions in the North Eurasian context - as it often happens with the academic paradigm-changes - are related to current political concerns: the peripheral, local subjective agendas found and emphasized in the Russian and Soviet imperial past are supporting the claims of final decolonization and counteracting the Putinite imperial revanchism. The years 1990s-2020s have been a romantic period of nation-building in post-Soviet states, with a strong decolonial agenda, a more or less clear distancing from the Russian and Soviet domination. This nation-focused agenda has been distinct from the start in the Baltics, then radicalized with "colored revolution" in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and it was palpable everywhere else across the spaces of the old Russian imperial presence - including those within the Russian Federation itself and in Eastern Europe. The Russian war in Ukraine, especially after its full-scale stage since 2022, led to a boom of decolonial nation-focused feelings and revisions in cultural practices and human studies, including the Russian and Slavic studies as such.

The Russian studies, as some scholars stated, continued to be overall "Westo-centric, Moscow-centric, and Putino-centric" and were practically aloof from the decolonial approaches.[25] As an example, the dominant place of the Russian language and Russian literature as central and hegemonic have been put under question: it would be more accurate to speak of the multi-language "Russophone" literature (and culture in general) as a transnational phenomenon, similar to (post)colonial Anglophone or Francophone ones.[26] In the same vein, the Russo-centric and capitals-centric research needs to be "refocused" to discovering a "pluralism of intellectual centers" (such as Odessa, Warsaw, Vilnius, etc. in the Romanov times[27]); such a refocusing could be imagined for the Soviet period as well (see examples I referred to above); the historical

[24] Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, (Cornell University Press, 1983).

[25] Marlene Laruelle, Russian Studies' Moment of Self-Reflection, Russian Analytical Digest, 293, 2-3. https:// doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000600973; also see Kevin Platt in: " Humanities after February 24: UFO questionnaire", New Literary Review,#6 (2022), c. 56-57.

[26] Yuliia Illchuk, From Russian literature to Russian-language literature of the empire, Ab Imperio, #2 (2022), 85-88.

[27] Nikolai Plotnikov's comment in "Humanities after February 24. UFO questionnaire,"Op. cit., p. 53.

storytelling should be decentralized and the historical narratives of ethnic minorities reclaimed (in the past and in today's Russian federation), etc.

The imperialistic deconstruction of the Russian culture has been common in the western general public and academia since the 1990s, first in the context of Eastern Europe,[28] then spread over the studies of post-Soviet Eurasia, and became mainstream. However, some scholars warn about the simplified nationalistic resentment that is emotionally opposed to the Russian expansionist resentment. They advise that imperialist deconstruction of the Russian culture should not be the end in itself or a form of a new etiquette or of a derogatory campaign.[29]

The analysts warn about the pitfalls of the postcolonial and post-dependency reactions, both in the public sphere and in academia. The postcolonial emancipation contains a danger of "programmatic and methodological nationalism."[30] This may lead to a post-dependency syndrome that may include a few elements. First, it is a simplified, polarized opposition of (former) colonizers and the (former) colonized and thus ignoring (post)imperial complexities. Secondly, another feature of this post-dependency syndrome is excessive self-victimization, a sort of romantization of victimhood of (formerly) colonized and/or dependent - a position that can become official and thus hegemonic in collective memory and tends to view a newly independent nation morally and historically unaccountable.[31] Thirdly, the emancipatory nationalist program usually includes the exaltation or even a construction of the glorious past, to compensate with it the sense of "orphanhood" of yesterday's colonial victims.[32]

Russia, especially after the open war in Ukraine, became the direct object of anti-imperial anxiety and criticism, although, ironically, as we have seen, all the patterns of the post-dependency syndrome could be found within Russia itself. In any case, after 2022, the anti-Russian sentiments, infused with post-dependency reactions, intensified in the region (in the most radical form, predictably, in Ukraine).This trend was criticized as simplistic and non-productive: the critics, such as the editors of the *Ab Imperio* journal, warned that associating the anti-Putinist agenda with the "canceling of Russian culture" (in education or memory landscape) was a "typical nationalist policy of suppressing minorities" led by "hegemonic nationalists" and is in fact "symmetrical to the hegemonic Russian nationalism in [Putinite] Russia;" therefore, accusing

---

[28] The approach was classically presented in the work of Polish-American Slavist Ewa Thompson in her book, Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism, (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood 2000).

[29] See Mark Lipovetsky's and Evgenii Dobrenko's contributions to the discussion in: "Humanities after February 24,"Op. cit., 57, 61-62.

[30] Dirk Uffelmann, Postcolonial Theory as Postcolonial Nationalism," New Literary Review, № 161 (1), 2020.

[31] On the "romantization of victimhood," and the "heroization of defeats" as a defensive postcolonial mechanism, in Polish case, see Uffelmann, Op. cit. On the danger of "hegemonic victimhood" that becomes an official standard of collective memory in a newly independent nation, see Ilia Kalinin, "Historical Politics", in: Andrei Zavadsky and Vera Dubina, eds. Everything is in the past. Theory and practice of public history, Moscow: Novoe izdatel'stvo, 2021, p. 357-358.

[32] See excellent study of the Kyrgyz case of "producing history" and overcoming "orphanhood' - Sergey Ouchakine, "The Colonial Omelette and Its Consequences. On Public Histories of Postcolonial Socialism", Ibidem, c. 412-425.

Russian as an ethnic group in past and present (imperial) injustice had no analytical consistency and drew upon racial profiling.[33]

Instead of emotional rejection of imperial legacy as totally unsustainable, these scholars propose a sober revision of the former research and declare the need for a "new imperial history" of the region to be on the order; this "new imperial history" is supposed to address the entire variety of historical narratives within the empire, the plurality of imperial subjectivities, and the hierarchy of various forms of sovereignty. It would therefore lead to a revising of the mainstream and supposedly simplistic narrative of the empires' imminent replacement by the modern nation-states – a paradigm built upon the European experience.[34]

When the ghost of the old empire seems to be revived and claims territories it earlier possessed, as it happens with Russia's revanchist policy since 2000s and especially since the full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022, it is really hard to continue a dispassionate, cold-blood "defence" of the empire as a historical type of polity. It is hard to measure what was "good" and what was "bad" in the imperial legacy; what were alleged positive developments in the colonial peripheries in terms of economic, cultural changes or in terms of overall stability and security under the imperial canopy. The current political agenda sees the awakening empire as a dangerous monster, or, at best, a political space of injustice and oppression - what was certainly also the historical truth - and therefore the current academic tastes dictate to explore the forms of injustice and oppression of the Russian and Soviet Leviathan and to reveal the hidden and open scripts of emancipation of the colonized peoples. This biased presentist agenda is absolutely predictable and explainable within the current state of emotions, and we have to acknowledge this sort of "economy of emotions" as an important factor in the knowledge production both within and outside academia. It is true, however, that this emotional disposition can lead, as some scholars warn, to a danger of an uncontested (that is, in a way, dogmatic) narrative of the particular, isolated national history, emphasizing the trauma of dependence and disregarding the real historical complexity of multilevel entanglement in the past centuries and now.[35]

Complexity and variety of decolonial trajectories: comparing particular cases across Eurasia

There are plenty of examples of the recent studies of the post-Russian and post-Soviet imperial space reflecting the new postcolonial attitudes and sensibilities. Ukraine has definitely been at the center of controversies over the common past that started in the 1990s and grew exponentially throughout the 2000s-2010s as within the politics of history from both sides, reflecting the overall Russo-Ukrainian relations once aptly called the "fraternal rivalry."[36] Ukraine is hardly perceived by the Russian elites as a

[33] From the Editor. "Russian Lefiathan. Does History Matter?" Ab Imperio, #2 (2022), c. 33-34.
[34] Alexander Semenov, in NLO's questionnaire, "Humanities after February 24," New Literary Review, #6 (2022), p. 32. Aleksey Miller similarly criticized the "ethnonational narratives" of the imperial past, which were seen as outdated in the current academic historiography (Miller, Op. cit., p.21).
[35] От Редакции, Op. cit., p. 37-39.
[36] Anatol Lieven, Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry. (Washington: United State Institute of Peace, 1999).

legitimate Other, and the continuous postcolonial distancing from Russia and the common imperial past, with a growing pro-western trend, within the Ukrainian public discourse, has produced a cognitive dissonance and irritation in Russia - and even the idea of the unnatural deficiency of the Ukrainian statehood.[37] This last thesis has ultimately laid the foundation of the Russian invasions in 2014 and 2022. The perception of cultural unity, within the Russian elites, goes back to the nineteenth century, as a study of the perception of Malorossia ("Little Russia") in the classic Russian literature shows.[38] Even a specific Russian Ukrainophilia, within the imperial sway, tended to come down to an "orientalized" search of authentic, folkloric, and imagined "Slavicism" while the Russian cultural canon heavily dominated all public spheres in Ukraine.[39] On the other side, the Ukrainian and other postcolonial scholars, intellectuals and politicians are promoting their own narrative of the de-Russified Ukrainian history and culture - a "standard national ethnocentric master-narrative"- with the re-coding of tough issues of the "common past," such as the national significance of the medieval Kievan Rus'; the suppression of the Ukrainian Republic by the Bolsheviks in the 1917-1921; the controversial figures such as the seventeenth-century hetman Ivan Mazepa and the twentieth-century nationalist Stepan Bandera; and the history of the Holodomor of the 1932-1933, often interpreted (and legally recognized by a few states) as the Ukrainian genocide.[40]

The cultural historians of Ukraine are also inclined to emphasize alternate subjects and narratives that opposed and resisted the "Russkii mir" hegemonic vision of imperial continuity. As for today's Ukraine, the country seems to be a nationally-emancipated, de-Russified, and Europe-oriented community. Of course, this image requires qualifications. The same authors of *Ab Imperio*, cautious of preserving a balanced view of the imperial legacy, remind that Ukraine and Russia stand most close to each other on the World Values Survey's cultural map of world values.[41] However, no matter how natural the initial cultural proximity might be between the two deeply entangled post-Soviet populaces, a relatively recent decisive change in political culture, the clear pro-European orientation of the elites, and the very fact of an intense emotional distancing from Putinite Russia (especially in the war-torn Ukraine) need to be taken as powerful factors of de-colonial "othering."

The decolonization of other post-Soviet societies does not face such a dramatic riddle of "fraternal rivalry." Yet, there are a few major defining factors that set the parameters of the process. For example, the actual use of the Russian language in

---

[37] Georgy Kasyanov. Ukraine and its Neighbors: Historical Politics, 1987-2018. Moscow, NLO, 2019, 239-240.

[38] Olga Mayorova, "Ukraine in Russian Literature," Ab Imperio 2 (2022), 70-76.

[39] Taras Koznarsky, "Ukrainian-Russian Encounter in the Romantic Era," Ab Imperio, 2 (2022), 77-84. On exotization of Ukraine in the Russian cultural imagination, coupled with the lack of sovereignty, see A. Etkind, D. Uffelman, I. Kukulin, "Internal Colonization of Russia: Between Practice and Imagination," A. Etkind, D. Uffelman, I. Kukulin, Op. cit., 26; see chapters by Mykola Riabchuk, Vitalyi Kisilev and Tatiana Vasilieva in the same volume.

[40] See the cited expression and the description in Kasianov, Op. cit., p. 241-243 and ff.

[41] From the Editor, Op. Cit., 37. The authors refer to the Ronald Inglehart's WVS "cultural map" of 2022; the same closeness of values of the two countries' populations is on the most recent map of 2023: https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/images/Map2023NEW.png.

Moldova, the South Caucasus or Central Asia continues to be a crucial, background factor of the cultural (in)dependence, no less crucial than the extent to which the supply of the Russian raw resources measures these countries' economic (in)dependence. Apart from language, there are a number of other parameters: the structure of memorial symbolism (monuments, glorified figures and events, commemorative practices, etc.); the canons of artistic expression; the built-in patterns of the education system; the forms of political culture; etc. Beyond these structural, "objective" factors, the subjective agency is just as important: what is crucial is the total balance of the subjective decolonial agendas within a given society - the total capacity and thrust to be consciously tuned towards getting rid of dependency.

To take a comparison of Georgian and Armenian cases, we can see that subjective decolonial agency was stronger felt in the former, with a "Soviet occupation" discourse clearly expressed by the nationalist and pro-Western elites (after the trigger of April 9, 1989), while "Soviet" lexeme in this formula has gradually merged with "Russian" and radicalized in the context of the 2003 Rose Revolution and Russia's 2008 aggression against Georgia. The anti-Russian discourse intensified in the post-Soviet Georgian literature, and the Russian language was considerably pushed back by both Georgian and English.[42] The overall agency of the decolonial reforms and European orientation in Georgia have been quite strong in the 2000s and 2010s. Again, we understand that reducing the Soviet period to mere "occupation" is far from the complex historical truth,[43] but the very fact of a decolonial agency is highly important by itself.

The Armenian case is different: the initial break with the common, imperial collective memory was strong in the early 1990s, right after the dissolution of the Union, but then the formation of the decolonial agency slowed down because of the Russian geopolitical protectionism and economic influence; the links between the political elites; and deep entanglements of the multi-level interests with the numerous Armenian diasporas in the Russian Federation. Although the cultural and educational infrastructure have been deeply nationalized, similar to Georgia, the Russian linguistic and cultural presence was not disputed as being a legacy of the colonial dependence.

In both countries, decolonization meant the disembodiment of the partly outdated but powerful industrial, bureaucratic, and cultural infrastructure that was only meaningful within a centralized, authoritarian imperial context.[44] This was a slow process, however, that could not quickly dissolve the thick web of human and professional relationships developed over a few generations of cross-national entanglement within the empire. However, this web was weakening while new globalized networks tended to (at least partially) replace the old imperial networks.

Another thing that unites the Georgian and Armenian cases and reminds similar trends in other places of the North Eurasian imperial space, was a post-dependency syndrome with its typical patterns that we mentioned above: the compensatory

[42] Mirya Lekke, Elena Chkhaidze. "Russia - Georgia after the Empire", Idem., Russia and Georgia after the Empire, Op. cit., 7-18.
[43] See discussion in: Keizer, Op. cit, 205-208.
[44] For the Armenian case of the cultural practices of post-Soviet economic disintegration, see interesting research by Lori Khatchadourian, "Life extempore: Trials of Ruination in the Twilight Zone of Soviet Industry," Cultural Anthropology 37(2), 2022, p. 317-348.

glorification of the precolonial past and the emphasis upon the recent traumatic experience, related to the colonial status - the two pillars of the revived, sovereign national identity. As for the first of these patterns, the glorification of the ancient national roots has been an obvious, although ideologically hidden, trend ever since the late Soviet times and became the open mainstream of cultural policy after independence. Speaking of the second pattern: for Armenians, the trauma and the victimhood was strongly linked to the genocide in the Ottoman Empire, what reduced the significance of the Soviet-time traumas within the cultural memory.[45] The Armenian sense of victimhood was temporarily softened by the success of the first Karabakh war in 1992-1994 but then dramatically magnified after the defeats in 2020 and then 2023, followed by the total exodus of the Armenian population from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh); these last events also sharply aggravated the anti-Russian feelings as the Russian state failed to keep its protective functions in the last military conflict. In the Georgian case, the anti-Russian imperial trauma developed with the dissolution of the Empire and the tragic wars that led to the loss of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where Russia was unfriendly involved. At the same time, the ruling elites of both countries continued, with different trajectories, an inevitable maneuvering to cope with the former imperial power, while trying to diversify their external allegiances.

Conclusion: the dialectics of imperial legacy

The colonial legacy of the former *Pax Rossica* has become the central issue in the studies of the historical and cultural development across Northern Eurasia; the prominence of these studies, as we have tried to show, was triggered by the growing revanchist policies of Putin's regime and the assertive nationalist reactions from the former imperial peripheries. The long common history of the vast region acquired an unusually topical, affective significance, as the past became directly linked to current politics and served to justify it. The research on current post-colonial developments became inseparable from the perception of the past.

Both the past and the present of cultural encounters were engaged in the heated public and political debate between the opposite agendas. It is too obvious and yet necessary to mention that the principles of neutrality and objectivity of academic research have been under strong pressure, even though these principles' alleged infallibility were theoretically questioned or at least sophisticated decades ago; the very methodology of postcolonial studies, now appropriated by the scholars of Northern Eurasia, provided the strongest impulse to such questioning.

However, the changing, politically-driven research quests stimulated interest in those aspects of cultural developments that were more or less ignored before. These new aspects, or objects of study, fall into two trends.

The first trend can be called straightforwardly decolonial. The central thrust of inquiry here would be a special interest in "hidden transcripts" - to use James Scott's analytic vocabulary - that shaped the spaces of freedom and resistance within the

[45] See Gayane Shagoyan, "Cultural vs. Collective Trauma: Memorialization of Soviet Repressions in Post-Soviet Armenia Based on the Genocide Memory Model," Siberian Historical Studies, No. 2 (2001), 73-98.

structures of domination[46]; it would also reveal the formation of (proto)-nation-states under the imperial administrative and ideological canopy, as well as the affective, emotional, subjectivity-driven cultural agenda of post-imperial decolonization.

The second trend looks at the potential of imperial resources. It reveals the complexity of relationships between the center the peripheries, the dialectics of dependency, showing how the colonial (Russian) center both repressed the (non-Russian and Russian) peripheries and, at the same time, provided them with political and cultural resources of agency; secured, within its regime of domination, the inter-ethnic and transnational communicative exchange; and created hybrid subjectivities not only in "subaltern peripheries" but also within itself (at the center) because of its own "subaltern" dependency (from Europe).

These two trends in approaching the imperial legacy in the light of current decolonial processes are, as I said above, inevitably emotionally charged, and there is a danger that they be reduced to emotionally engaged, simplified patterns - either rejecting *the imperial* for the sake of the national (and nationalist), autarchic, isolated historical narratives (in the former colonies); or glorifying imperial continuity (by the Russian neo-imperial regime). While avoiding confrontational reductionism, the two trends complement each other and focus on the same thing - a complex, dialectical entanglement within the region's cultural memory and today's continuing interdependence.

References

1. Antonyan, Yulia, ed. *Armenian Culture: Concepts, Perceptions and Manifestations*. (Yerevan: Yerevan State University, 2023).

2. Arevshatyan, Ruben. "Blank Zones in Collective Memory, or the Transformation of Yerevan's Urban Space in the 1960s." In *Sweet Sixties: Specters and Spirits of a Parallel Avant-Garde*, eds. Georg Schollhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan, (Sternberg Press, 2013): 299–319.

3. Azatyan, Vardan. "National Modernism." In *Sweet Sixties: Specters and Spirits of a Parallel Avant-Garde,* eds. Georg Schöllhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan (Sternberg Press, 2013): 107–120.

4. Bayadyan, Hrach. "Becoming Post-Soviet." *100 Notes – 100 Thoughts* 59 (2012): 4–12. http://bettinafuncke.com/100Notes/059_Bayadyan.pdf.

5. Etkind, Alexander. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

6. Galstyan, Vigen. "Desperately Searching for Aesthetics: Armenian Cinema of the 1960s and Late Modernity." In *Sweet Sixties: Specters and Spirits of a Parallel Avant-Garde,* eds. Georg Schöllhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan, (Sternberg Press, 2013): 354–364.

7. Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.

8. Illchuk, Yuliia. "From Russian Literature to Russian-Language Literature of the Empire." *Ab Imperio* 2 (2022): 85–88.

[46] James Scott, Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts, (Yale University Press, 1992).

9. Keizer, Claire P. *Georgian and Soviet: Entitled Nationhood and the Specter of Stalin in the Caucasus*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022).

10. Khatchadourian, Lori. "Life Extempore: Trials of Ruination in the Twilight Zone of Soviet Industry." *Cultural Anthropology* 37, no. 2 (2022): 317–348.

11. Kirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

12. Klimenko, Ekaterina. "Building the Nation, Legitimizing the State: Russia—My History and Memory of the Russian Revolutions in Contemporary Russia." *Nationalities Papers* 49, no. 1 (2021): 72–88.

13. Koellner, Tobias. *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Russia*. (London: Routledge, 2021).

14. Koznarsky, Taras. "Ukrainian-Russian Encounter in the Romantic Era." *Ab Imperio* 2 (2022): 77–84.

15. Laruelle, Marlene. "Russian Studies' Moment of Self-Reflection." *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 293 (2022): 3. https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000600973.

16. Lieven, Anatol. *Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry*. (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1999).

17. Malinova, Olga. "Constructing the Usable Past: The Evolution of the Official Historical Narrative in Post-Soviet Russia." In *Cultural and Political Imaginaries in Putin's Russia*, eds. Niklas Bernsand and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 85–104.

18. Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

19. Mayorova, Olga. "Ukraine in Russian Literature." *Ab Imperio* 2 (2022): 70–76.

20. Morozov, Viatcheslav. *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

21. Rousselet, Kathy. "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Russkii mir." In *Orthodoxy in Two Manifestations? The Conflict in Ukraine as an Expression of the Fault Line in World Orthodoxy*, eds. Thomas Bremer, Alfons Brüning, and Nadeszda Kizenko, (Erfurt, 2022. 121-144).

22. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

23. Scott, James. *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. (Yale University Press, 1992).

24. Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz. *The Red Mirror: Putin's Leadership and Russia's Insecure Identity*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

25. Shaw, Charles, and Konstantin Iordachi. "Intermediaries as Change Agents: Translating, Interpreting, and Expanding Socialism." *Russian Review* 82 (2023): 387–400.

26. *Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation*. 2021. http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/47046.

27. Suny, Ronald. *The Making of the Georgian Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

28. *The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*. 2023. http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/news/70811.

29. *The Foundations of the State Policy in Conservation and Reinforcement of the Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values*. 2022. http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502.

30. Thompson, Ewa. *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism*. (Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood, 2000).

31. Tlostanova, Madina. "The Janus-Faced Empire Distorting Orientalist Discourses: Gender, Race and Religion in the Russian/(Post)Soviet Constructions of the 'Orient.'" *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* 2, no. 2 (2012): 1–11.

32. Tlostanova, Madina. *A Janus-Faced Empire: Notes on the Russian Empire in Modernity, Written from the Border*. (Moscow: Blok, 2003).

33. Tolz, Vera. *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

34. Torbakov, Igor. *After Empire: National Imagination and Symbolic Politics in Russia and Eurasia in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*. (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2011).

35. Abashin, Sergey. "Another History: "Russian Turkestan"?" *Ab Imperio* 3 (2018): 410–415.

36. Akhiezer, Alexander. Russia: Critique of Historical Experience (Sociocultural Dynamics of Russia). (Novosibirsk: Siberian Chronograph, 1998).

37. Gabovich, Mikhail, ed. Monument and holiday: ethnography of Victory Day. (Moscow: Nestor-History, 2020).

38. Kalinin, Ilya. "Historical Policy." In Everything in the Past: Theory and Practice of Public History, edited by Andrei Zavadsky and Vera Dubina, 355–377. (Moscow: New Publishing House, 2021).

39. Kasyanov, Georgy. Ukraine and its Neighbors: Historical Politics, 1987–2018. (Moscow: NLO, 2019).

40. Lekke, Mirja. "Russian-Georgian Literary Relations and the Science of Them in Social Context." In Russia–Georgia after Empire: A Collection of Articles, ed. Mirja Lekke and E. Chkhaidze, (Moscow: NLO, 2018): 31-55.

41. Lotman, Yuri, and Boris Uspensky. "The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (until the End of the 18th Century)." Scientific Notes of Tartu State University, issue 414, Tartu, 1977, 3–36.

42. Melentyev, D. "Ethnography and eroticism in Russian Turkestan." State, religion, church in Russia and abroad 38, no. 2 (2020).

43. Miller, Alexey. The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: An Essay on the Methodology of Historical Research. (Moscow: NLO, 2006).

44. Mikhailin, Vadim. "Locus Amusos: "A Special Path" of Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse in Domestic Cinema." New Literary Review 6 (2020).

45. Platt, Kevin. "Postsocialist Postcolonies and the Ruins of Global History." In The Humanities After February 24: The UFO Questionnaire, New Literary Review 6 (2022).

46. Plotnikov, Nikolai. "Preface." In Facing the Catastrophe, ed. N. Plotnikov, 5–9. (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2020).

47. “The Russian Empire: Nationalized and Nationalizing.” *Ab Imperio* 3 (2020): 9–113.

48. Semenov, Alexander. “Humanities after February 24.” New Literary Review 6 (2022).

49. Smola, Klavdia. “Little America: (Post)Socialist Realism of the Native North.” New Literary Review 166, no. 6 (2020).

50. Suni, Ronald. “The Dialectics of Empire: Russia and the Soviet Union.” In The New Imperial History of the Post-Soviet Space, ed. Gerasimov, I. V., et al., (Kazan, 2004): 163–196.

51. Uffelmann, Dirk. “Postcolonial Theory as Postcolonial Nationalism.” New Literary Review 161, no. 1 (2020).

52. Ushakin, Sergei. “The Colonial Omelette and Its Consequences: On Public Histories of Socialist Postcolonies.” In Everything in the Past: Theory and Practice of Public History, ed. by Andrei Zavadsky and Vera Dubina, 395–425. (Москва: Новое Издательство, 2021).

53. Tsipuria, Bela. “Hybridity and Double Sociocode in Chabua Amirejibi’s Novel ‘Data Tutashkhia.’” In Russia–Georgia after the Empire: A Collection of Articles, edited by M. Lekke and E. Chkhaidze, 94–104. (Moscow: NLO, 2018).

54. Tsymbursky, Vadim. “Island Russia: Prospects of Russian Geopolitics.” Polis 5 (1993): 6–23.

55. Shagoyan, Gayane. “Cultural vs. Collective Trauma: Memorialization of Soviet Repressions in Post-Soviet Armenia Based on the Genocide Memory Model.” Siberian Historical Research 2 (2001): 73–98.

56. Etkind, A., D. Uffelman, and I. Kukulin, eds. There, Inside: Practices of Internal Colonization and Cultural History of Russia. (Moscow: NLO, 2012).

57. Etkind, A., D. Uffelman, and I. Kukulin. “The Internal Colonization of Russia: Between Practice and Imagination.” In There, Inside: Practices of Internal Colonization and the Cultural History of Russia, 6–50. (Moscow: NLO, 2012).