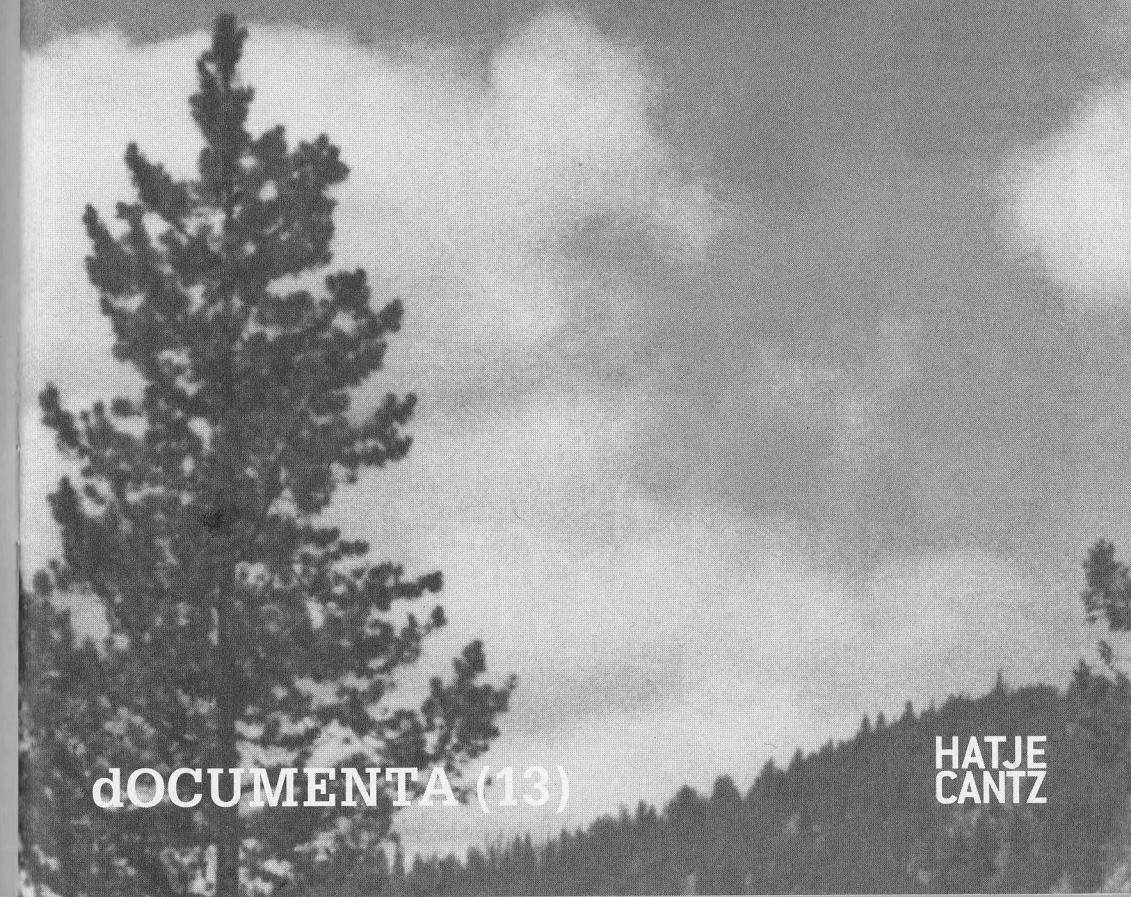


Hrach Bayadyan  
*Becoming Post-Soviet /  
Postsowjetisch werden*



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# Hrach Bayadyan

## Becoming Post-Soviet / Postsowjetisch werden

Reprinted with the author's permission from "The Post-Soviet City: Architecture and Urbanism in the Post-Soviet Space," edited by Michael A. Sherry, published by the University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

View of the Northern Avenue, Yerevan, Armenia, one of the most striking examples of the massive reconstruction works that took place in the city center during the 2000s.

Ansicht der Northern Avenue, Jerewan, Armenien, eines der auffälligsten Beispiele für die massiven Umstrukturierungen des Stadtzentrums in den 2000er Jahren.



The most visible effect of the post-Soviet transformation of Yerevan is the new urban landscape. In the last decade or so, the city has undergone a massive reconstruction of its central areas. The most prominent feature of this transformation is the replacement of Soviet-style architecture with postmodern structures. This includes the construction of numerous new buildings, often featuring curved facades and decorative elements. Another significant aspect of the post-Soviet urban landscape is the presence of many new commercial and residential developments. These include large shopping malls, office buildings, and residential complexes. The city's infrastructure has also been improved, with the construction of new roads, bridges, and public transportation systems. Overall, the post-Soviet transformation of Yerevan has resulted in a more modern and dynamic urban environment.

# Hrach Bayadyan *Becoming Post-Soviet*

It has often been noted that the collapse of the socialist system did not result in research activities that could be compared to postcolonial studies. As Ewa Thompson has observed, “Unlike Western colonies, which have increasingly talked back to their former masters, Russia’s colonies have by and large remained mute.”<sup>1</sup> Instead, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, opinions have been expressed from within different research fields regarding the appropriateness of thinking of post-Soviet societies in terms of postcolonial studies.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, asserting that postsocialism continues to remain a useful category for researchers, Caroline Humphrey notes the existence of a growing gap between Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic countries on the one hand, and Russia, Middle Asia, and the Caucasian countries on the other.<sup>3</sup>

In this text, the term “post-Soviet” will be used mainly in connection with the former Soviet Union (SU) republics (as distinct from the Central and Eastern European countries), although there were regional and individual distinctions among them, in particular regarding the duration and forms of pre-Soviet Russian rule. Passing over the issue of whether the term “post-Soviet” is outdated or not, I would like to talk instead about the fact that the post-Soviet situation has not been properly conceptualized. There is a lack of new notions that allow us to articulate, and thus to convey, a credible existence to post-Soviet experiences, and neither have the tools developed by other fields (e.g., postcolonial studies) been used for this purpose in a consistent and productive manner. This essay is an attempt to discuss these and other related issues, but through the narrower focus of a distinct country—Armenia.

1 | Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 23.

2 | See David Chioni Moore, “Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique,” *PMLA* 116 (2001), p. 111–28; Katherine Verdery, “Whither Postsocialism?,” in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, ed. C. M. Hann (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 15–21.

3 | Caroline Humphrey, “Does the Category ‘Postsocialist’ Still Make Sense?,” in Hann, *Postsocialism* (see note 2), pp. 12–15.

## Ex-Soviet/Post-Soviet

Published in the second half of the 1990s, Manuel Castells’ three-volume work *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* was widely accepted as the best attempt to describe the economic and social aspects of the information age. One chapter of the last volume is dedicated to an examination of the reasons for the collapse of the SU. The main conclusion drawn is that the Soviet system was unable to assimilate and make use of the principles of informationalism embodied in new information technologies (ITs) that would have ensured the transition to the information age.

Criticism has been addressed to Castells regarding the technological determinism that was presumably inherent in his approach. However, while clarifying the destiny of ITs in the SU, Castells, to use the wording by Jennifer Daryl Slack and J. Macgregor Wise, examines technology “in terms of articulations among the physical arrangements of matter, typically labeled technologies, and a range of contingently related practices, representations, experiences, and affects.”<sup>4</sup> Thus he reveals that in Soviet society the meaning of IT was defined through, among other factors, ideological pressure and information control. These were decisive obstacles in the path of technological innovation and the diffusion of new technologies, while “the very notion of ‘personal computer’ was objectively subversive to the Soviet bureaucracy, including science bureaucracy.”<sup>5</sup>

Castells’ theory of information society was also useful for understanding the processes taking place in post-Soviet societies, where issues concerning information and communication technologies and information society were being actively discussed during those years. At this time in Armenia, IT was rediscovered, particularly on an official level, as an undeservedly forgotten source of national wealth. By force of circumstances, IT became a place where a set of factors were brought together. First was the tendency to transform the potential of the resources built up during the Soviet period, but taken out of the Soviet context, into a national strategic resource. Armenia was one of the main centers producing computer technologies for the Soviet military-industrial complex, accounting for almost 30 percent of production. Along with other scientific achievements, this allowed post-Soviet Armenia to speak of its “great scientific and technological potential” and to expect success in, especially, the global software market or, as it has often been put, “to become the new India.” Another factor was the prospect of cooperation between Armenia and its diaspora: a number of entrepreneurs of Armenian origin, mostly U.S. citizens, who ran successful IT businesses had already established branches

4 | Jennifer Daryl Slack and J. Macgregor Wise, *Culture and Technology: A Primer* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 128.

5 | Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, vol. 3, *End of Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 36.

of American companies in Armenia and were promising even more. At the same time, the IT industry was represented as an important resource for the regional economic competitiveness of Armenia and a means for overcoming its dependency on Russia and for getting closer to the European Union. Thereby ITs were assigned a symbolic and political meaning. This indicated the inability of Armenians, as well as the elite diaspora, to avoid being entrapped in the universalistic discourse of “information and communication technologies and development” on the one hand, and to critically interpret the Soviet legacy and to reevaluate technologies in the new historical context on the other.

Castells concludes his analysis of the SU with the observation that after its collapse, former Soviet people were lacking any collective project beyond the fact of being “ex.” Today, Armenian society has still not moved sufficiently far from its “ex”<sup>6</sup> state to make it possible to call it post-Soviet in terms of adopting the necessary distance from and a critical attitude toward the Soviet past.

## Russian Orientation and Modernity

After the dissolution of the SU, consideration of the trends that Soviet history had in common with the age of modernity allowed the retelling of this history by drawing parallels between Soviet socialism and European developments at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The concept of an alternative (multiple, hybrid, etc.) modernity was relevant for this purpose.<sup>7</sup> However, there was the other aspect of the matter: to look for multiplicity within the Soviet project of modernity and to describe its inner diversity, starting from the pre-Soviet era, hoping that the differentiated articulation and the critical analysis of the experiences of the Soviet nations would be useful for the study of post-Soviet societies.

As early as the beginning of the eighteenth century, the liberation of Eastern Armenians from Persian domination, the defense against the Turkish threat, and the possibility of coming into contact with the processes of modernization were associated with a so-called Russian orientation. Russia was considered to be more progressive than Turkey or Iran (or at least the lesser evil), and being part of Russia seemed to be a precondition for the further recovery of Armenian statehood. That is, Eastern Armenian modernity was from the very beginning imagined in the context of a Russian orientation on one side, and Russian expansionism with its “civilizing mission” on the other.

6 | Ibid., p. 68.

7 | David L. Hoffman and Yanni Kotsonis, eds., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (Hounds Mills: Macmillan Press, 2000).

In 1828, this ambition became reality after more than a century, following the Russian victory in the Russo-Persian War. Russia tried to create for itself an image of a modernizing state in the European sense, and during the Caucasian campaign, Turkey was represented as Russia’s Oriental other. The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin’s travelogue *Journey to Arzrum* (1836) refers to this period of war and, in part, to the war itself. Russian critics Yury Tynyanov and Viktor Shklovsky stress the objectivity of Pushkin’s narrative and its precise depiction of nature. For Shklovsky, the Caucasus was an arena of a literary struggle for a new depiction of the Caucasus as opposed to the traditional romantic one.<sup>8</sup> According to Katya Hokanson, Pushkin’s narrative proved the universalism of Russian literature and its ability to represent the other: Pushkin was a universal genius whose works consolidated the whole imperial diversity (nations, territories, cultures, etc.) into the Russian imagination. This was the literary context of colonization, where all the nations were appropriated for Russian literary representation.<sup>9</sup>

On the other side, in Khachatur Abovyan’s novel *Wounds of Armenia* (1841), which initiated modern Eastern Armenian literature, the liberation of Eastern Armenians from Persian rule, and their subjection to Russian domination, are considered to be a salvation, and the very moment when the Russian foot stepped on the Armenian land is literally blessed. Here, the theme of the Armenian renaissance is developed with great power, and the ideas of the European Enlightenment, along with the Russian liberating mission, are seen as the main stimuli behind this renaissance. Gradually, however, it became apparent that the expectations regarding Russian rule were highly exaggerated.

At the same time, interest in the cultures of the empire’s peoples increased in Russia. For instance, excavations in the medieval Armenian capital of Ani (currently in Turkey) began at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1916, a book named *Poetry of Armenia* was published under the editorship of Valery Bryosov, also involving a group of Armenian intellectuals (some of them as authors) and a number of prominent Russian poets as translators. In the introduction, Bryosov praises Armenian medieval poetry as an “exceptionally rich literature that constitutes Armenia’s valuable contribution to the treasure trove of humanity,” putting it alongside the literary works of the peoples of Japan, India, ancient Greece, Rome, and Europe.<sup>10</sup> Thus a new attitude had developed that in a certain way was close to the Orientalism defined by Edward Said. Armenia or, more precisely, the Armenians were a fallen civilization with an ancient culture, having been constantly dominated over a period of many centuries. Russia guaranteed their survival, while at the same time appreciating and representing their culture. This pointed to the change taking place in the nature of Russian hegemony.

8 | Viktor Shklovsky, *Izbrannoe*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1983), pp. 246–55.

9 | Katya Hokanson, “Literary Imperialism, *Narodnost'* and Pushkin’s Invention of the Caucasus,” *Russian Review* 53, no. 3 (July 1994), pp. 336–52.

10 | Valery Bryosov, ed., *Poezia Armenii's drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dney* (Yerevan: Sovetakan grgoh, 1987 [orig. 1916]), p. 9.

The representation of a dominated culture opened up space for the mediated self-representation of that culture, which in turn reinforced the hegemonic relationship within a more complex structure.

## Modernity and Tradition: New Identity

The 1930s in the SU could be characterized by the return of tradition into modernity. Historicism was widely incorporated into the discourse about the Soviet nations. Providing them with a history would make it possible to anticipate the future, which would supposedly have to do with overcoming their national identities. Stories about different nations, borrowed from their traditions, were published.<sup>11</sup> Cultural *dekady* (ten-day-long art festivals) and exhibitions were organized in Moscow. Traditions were reasserted and legitimized literally under the gaze of the center: the members of the Politburo, and Stalin himself, attended the events. However, they were not authentic recovered traditions but were invented by the state with the enthusiastic participation of the national elites and inevitably embedded in socialist modernity. The highly clichéd, essentializing rhetoric of national culture and identity, and the Orientalist practices exoticizing it, originated during those years.<sup>12</sup> This allowed modern forms of collectivity to be articulated through the reconstruction and invention of traditions while yielding to the resistance and maneuvering of hegemonic control. Here, the nation was legitimized as a carrier of a national narrative, which in turn was part of the socialism-building meta-narrative. A good example of a tradition that emerged inside a certain discursive formation of these years is the so-called folk-instrument ensembles performing folk and bard songs. Created to resemble a symphonic orchestra and in accordance with Soviet middlebrow culture, and still existing today, these groups and their music embody what is ubiquitously accepted as folk.

During this period, the most significant cultural event for Soviet Armenians was the three-volume publication of the national epic *Daredevils of Sassoun*, and the celebration of its thousandth anniversary on an SU scale. The poem, which had originated in Western Armenia and had been orally passed on from one generation to another for centuries, was first written down in 1873. However, only now was it enlisted in the nation-building process.

In the second half of the 1950s and during the 1960s, national cultures in the SU were granted an unprecedented freedom for development, which was paradoxically accompanied by extensive efforts

11 | Juliette Cadiot,  
*Le laboratoire impérial:  
Russie—URSS, 1860–1940*  
(Paris: CNRS Editions,  
2007); in Russian:  
*Laboratoria Imperii,  
Rossia/SSSR, 1860–1940*  
(Moscow: Novoe  
Literaturnoe Obozrenie,  
2010), p. 227.

12 | Terry Martin,  
“Modernization or Neo-  
traditionalism? Ascribed  
Nationalism and Soviet  
Primordialism,” in Hoffman  
and Kotsonis, *Russian  
Modernity* (see note 7),  
pp. 161–82.

toward the Russification of the Soviet nationalities. The education system, media, and especially television, which had become a significant social factor, served this purpose. It is clear, however, that during those years, the nationalism developed by the Soviet Armenian elite (mainly through fictional literature) relied to a great extent on the invented national tradition mentioned above and was supported, and at the same time constrained, by Soviet institutional and discursive practices.

The republication and re-evaluation of Armenian authors banned during the Stalinist era, and their introduction into school and university programs through the rhetoric of “a Russian orientation,” “the centuries-old friendship between Russian and Armenian peoples,” and “the great Russian nation (culture, literature, etc.),” only reinforced the Russian hegemony. Some of the central figures of Eastern Armenian literature such as Khachatur Abovian and Hovhannes Tumanyan, who were among the agitators for a Russian orientation, while at the same time being not uncritical toward Russian domination (Tumanyan spoke about it as “the lesser evil”), became eternally nailed down into the crystallized pattern of an unreserved Russian orientation. Today, praising them as “our great ancestors” (one of the clichés of the nationalist rhetoric) is, in a way, an everyday ritual of subjection to Russia.

However, for the purpose of this essay, the most interesting dimension of Soviet Armenian identity is related to the (possibly forced) appropriation of the Western Armenian legacy by Eastern Armenians after the genocide of the Western Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Twenty years after the thousandth anniversary of the epic, in 1959, a monument to its hero David of Sassoun (sculpted by Yervand Kochar) was raised in Yerevan. This monument, along with the monument to the victims of the genocide erected in 1965 (permission for which was gained with great difficulty), played a principal role in the symbolic construction of Soviet (Eastern) Armenian identity, connoting the nation’s tragedy and rebirth, as well as its longevity and struggle against foreign rule.

A number of Yerevan districts and settlements in Armenia were named after the regions of Western Armenia, works by Western Armenian writers were included in educational programs, and so on. During those years, historical maps of Armenia, with their ability to structure the collective imagination, enjoyed wide popularity. This points to the efforts directed toward the geographic, historical, and cultural appropriation of Western Armenia, and its incorporation into the national imagination.

Therefore the dire consequences of the repatriation in 1946–47 of a large number of survivors and their families (around 90,000 people) into Soviet Armenia may seem surprising. The attitude they faced was generally unfavorable and discriminatory—there is plenty of unarguable evidence showing this. The two branches of the Armenian people clashed with each other: the gap between the two distinct languages of

Eastern Armenian (Russian Armenian) and Western Armenian (Turkish Armenian), as well as the different cultural experiences of Soviet and diaspora Armenians, turned out to be impassable. The difference between the two languages and cultures was tangible to the extent of one side often not being comprehensible to the other. There were very few mixed marriages between the repatriates and the locals. During the ensuing years, a large number of repatriates migrated from Armenia.

In the above-cited quote, Ewa Thompson states the inability of the Russian colonies to talk back to their former master. I accept her claim, although I am not quite in agreement with the rationale behind it for reasons that I am not able to go into here. There is an Armenian saying, however, that goes, “A teller needs a listener,” and while it is true that nobody has talked back, there has been, and still is, nobody who would have listened either, and this, first of all, applies to Russian intellectuals. But I am trying to tell the story on behalf of the colonized. As Arjun Appadurai puts it, “decolonization is a dialogue with the colonial past.”<sup>13</sup> That is, decolonization is to talk back, to express one’s own opinion, or, perhaps, to maintain a dialogue. However, as we know, dialogue implies difference between the participants. It is the construction of the Soviet past and/or Russia as the other that remains beyond the powers of Armenian intellectuals, and so far, my aim has been to show the historical difficulty of this issue. The politics of post-Soviet Armenian identity has never set itself the problem of constructing this kind of difference. Now we are approaching what is probably the most complex element of the issue: on the one side, in Soviet-Armenian identity the Soviet and the Armenian were inseparably linked in such a way that the Armenian was not available in any pure form, and, on the other, as described above, Western Armenianness was appropriated in all possible ways, so that the differences between Eastern Armenian and Western Armenian, and Soviet-Armenian and diaspora Armenian, were fully exhausted. Soviet-Armenian nationalism was able to see neither the Soviet in itself nor Western Armenian/diaspora Armenian apart from itself—neither the same in the other nor the other in the same. Thus, I would argue that the construction of the Soviet and/or the Russian as the other is possible only with the simultaneous construction of the Western Armenian/diaspora Armenian as the other. This problem is still unresolvable today, when at the core of nationalist populism is the longing for an all-Armenian unity expressed, for instance, in the slogan “One nation, one culture” and in calls to reject all the linguistic reforms carried out in Soviet Armenia and to return to the “traditional orthography” held in common with the diaspora.

In her book *Other Asias*, Gayatri Spivak discusses the question “Why is there no Armenian postcolonialism?” and the possible answers to it with enviable consistency. Her conclusion proves the complexity of the

13 | Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 89.

Armenian situation and the inappropriateness of the existing theories for it.<sup>14</sup> I hope that by stressing the inevitability of dealing with the differences between the Western Armenian and the Eastern Armenian, as well as the Soviet Armenian and the diaspora Armenian, I have complicated the situation even more, since this difference, for obvious reasons, has been neglected by Spivak. However, my assertion should not be perceived as an argument against the relevance of postcolonial studies for the Soviet and post-Soviet experiences.

14 | Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 97–131.

15 | Hrach Bayadyan, “The Contradictory 1960s: Empire and Cultural Resistance,” *Red Thread*, no. 2, “Sweet 60s” (2010), [www.red-thread.org](http://www.red-thread.org) (accessed January 2012).

## Words Spoken from the Margin

I once had the opportunity to write about the emergence of intellectual communities in the SU that transcended ethnic boundaries and were marked, in the most explicit way, by the ambivalence of the relationship between the Soviet (socialist) and the national. These communities were meant to signify the consolidation of the Soviet people, but could also turn into a force resisting imperial strategies. The liminal subjects of these communities, who found themselves in the process of transition from the “national” to the “Soviet,” could extend to an ambiguous point. In any case, this was not a transition with a guaranteed destination.

The comparative analysis of two texts written in the second half of the 1960s by two writers of the same generation—Hrant Matevosyan and Andrei Bitov—shows how Bitov in his *Lessons of Armenia* arrives at conclusions unprecedented for Russian literature about the Caucasus and the Soviet-Russian Orientalism inherent in it. He reports the principle difficulties in depicting the country (Armenia), the local cultural difference, and, indirectly, the culture’s ability for self-representation. Matevosyan, in turn, in his *Hangover* novelette, although implying the interpenetration of the center and the periphery, commits an unacceptable act by looking back at the center and questioning its forms of self-representation, the modes of representation allowed or recommended by it, as well as the dominant forms of cultural expression.<sup>15</sup>

Here, I would like at least to touch on another aspect of Matevosyan’s work. It seems that for a writer who had been strictly censored, especially in his earlier period, the absence of a coherent plot and the fragmentary nature of the narrative, as well as the consistent violation of the rules and boundaries of the genre, clearly indicates, along with other possible motivations, the intention of resisting the repetition of the socialist meta-narrative and of escaping the well-known genres that had been compromised in continuous complicity with the ideology. This strategy is completely in line with Said’s claim that “narrative itself is the representation of power. . . . To tell a simple national

story therefore is to repeat, extend, and also to engender new forms of imperialism.”<sup>16</sup>

The main subject of his writings is the disappearing village, the rural community, which Matevosyan considers it his duty to rescue in his writings. For this purpose, he creates a settlement named Tsmakut. The new stage of industrialization that had started in the 1950s, following the collectivization of the 1930s, appeared to be destructive for the Armenian village. The rural community that according to the author had been the only form of existence for the Armenian people, who had remained under foreign rule for many centuries, became critically endangered. Therefore the disappearance of these communities would undermine the very ability of Armenians to survive. Thus the village provides the writer with a viewpoint that allows him to speak not about the national rebirth and/or the building of the socialist society, but, for instance, about the ruinous consequences that the processes of industrialization had brought about. However, escaping socialist as well as nationalist rhetoric did not mean giving way to a rural pastoral or to an abstract criticism of modernity. A view from the previously neglected place gave rise to an unusual ability to transform dominant meanings, to cross the boundaries established by institutions and discourses to confine experiences.

The writer’s intention was more than simply depicting the village. He wanted to write not about the village, which had been done many times before, but from inside the village. Therefore, another ambition of his, which he describes in one of his essays, comes as no surprise. Quoting from a poem by Yeghishe Charents about a “mute” villager unable to express himself, Matevosyan continues: “I want to see if he is really humble, if his soul is indeed mute. Does he have his own content and thoughts, or has the word that he borrows from us about what he must do in the face of necessity become his content?”<sup>17</sup> Something similar could be asked about the people who have been dominated for centuries: “Can they have their own thoughts and content, or are they waiting for the dominators to represent them?,” a question that echoes Thompson’s words. The act of writing about the village from inside, the commitment to speak for the mute villager, as well as a number of questions that Matevosyan’s writing raises—for example, the difficulties of “literary resistance,” the relationships between resistance and complicity, the strategies of representation, local means of self-definition, and the essentialization of the medieval past and the “subaltern”—bring us close to the area of colonial discourse and postcolonial studies, which can be seen as an intelligent and experienced guide on the way to becoming post-Soviet.

Cultural critic Hrach Bayadyan (b. 1957) lives and works in Yerevan, Armenia; he teaches Media and Cultural Studies at the Yerevan State University.

16 | Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994 [orig. 1993]), p. 273.

17 | Hrant Matevosyan, *Vipakner* (Yerevan: Nairi, 1990), p. 15.

# Hrach Bayadyan Postsowjetisch werden

Es wurde mehrfach bemerkt, dass der Zusammenbruch des sozialistischen Systems keine Forschungsarbeit nach sich gezogen hat, die mit postkolonialen Studien vergleichbar wäre. Wie Ewa Thompson es formuliert hat: »Im Unterschied zu den westlichen Kolonien, die ihren früheren Herren in zunehmendem Maße widersprochen haben, blieben die Kolonien Russlands im Großen und Ganzen stumm.«<sup>1</sup> Dagegen wurden Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts Stimmen aus unterschiedlichen Forschungsbereichen laut, die es für angebracht hielten, die postsowjetischen Gesellschaften in der Sprache postkolonialer Studien zu denken.<sup>2</sup> Dennoch beobachtet Caroline Humphrey, überzeugt davon, dass der Postsozialismus für die Forscher auch weiterhin eine nützliche Kategorie bleibt, eine zunehmende Kluft zwischen den ost- und zentraleuropäischen sowie baltischen Ländern einerseits und Russland und den Ländern Mittelasiens und des Kaukasus andererseits.<sup>3</sup>

Hier werde ich den Terminus »postsowjetisch« hauptsächlich in Bezug auf die früheren Unionsrepubliken der Sowjetunion (im Unterschied zu den Ländern Ost- und Zentraleuropas) gebrauchen, obwohl es auch zwischen ihnen regionale und individuelle Unterschiede gab, insbesondere im Zusammenhang mit der Dauer und den Formen der vorsowjetischen russischen Herrschaft. Die Frage, ob der Begriff des »Postsovjetischen« überholt ist oder nicht, lasse ich dabei außer Acht. Stattdessen möchte ich lieber darüber sprechen, dass das »Postsowjetische« noch nicht gebührend konzeptualisiert wurde. Weder gibt es neue Begriffe, die es erlauben würden, die postsowjetischen Erfahrungen zu formulieren und glaubhaft zu vermitteln, noch kamen die durch andere Bereiche (etwa postkoloniale Studien) entwickelten Instrumente zu diesem Zweck konsequent und effizient zur Anwendung. Dieser Essay ist ein Versuch, einige Fragen

1 | Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press 2000, S. 23.

2 | Siehe David Chioni Moore, »Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique», in: *PMLA*, 116 (2001), S. 111–128; Katherine Verdery, »Whither postsocialism?», in: *Post-socialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, hrsg. v. C. M. Hann, New York: Routledge 2002, S. 15–21.

3 | Caroline Humphrey, »Does the Category ‚Post-socialist‘ Still Make Sense?», in: *Postsocialism (wie Anm. 2)*, S. 12–15.