Russia, Empire, and the Case of the North Caucasus, 1820s – 2013

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the possibilities and challenges of situating Edward Said's influential yet controversial theory of Orientalism within the context of Russia with a special focus on the insurgent region of the North Caucasus as a particular case of Russia's own Orient. I explore how Russia's Other has been established, focusing mainly on the representation of the Caucasian people in contemporary (late 20th century - 21st century) mass media, fiction, and cinema and analyzing the texts by Russian and Caucasian authors. The unsuccessful or incomplete colonization of the Caucasian land, the Caucasians' ways of cultural resistance to Russian imperialism, and the discourse of "terror" – all these issues extend the idea that Said's concept of Orientalism should be applied to the Russian case with caution. Synecdochical Orientalism is a conceptual variant of Said's theory of Orientalism that might be productively applied to other regions in the world to explain the exclusion and underrepresentation of peoples and cultures. Russia's discourse on the North Caucasus falls into the trap of synecdochical Orientalism while Chechnya itself is subject to several layers of misrepresentation. Cultural texts by Caucasian authors and film directors recognize the subaltern position of the people in the North Caucasus and lack of representation of the region's history. They express the need for Caucasian people to reclaim their past. My thesis recognizes the existence of Caucasian cultural texts and assembles an archive of them which serves as a tool of recording and retaining stories told by Caucasian authors and film directors.

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Introduction

1. Overview of the Thesis

The idea for this dissertation first began to take shape in Taiwan, R.O.C., when I came there to pursue a Master's Degree in Literature at National Taiwan University. In my class, I found myself as perhaps the only one who had never heard anything about Postcolonial Studies understood as such as an academic field. I took an introductory class in Postcolonial Studies and immediately decided to write a term paper about the Chechen Republic as Russia's "Other," without expecting this topic would become my future academic project. The event that triggered me to look at the North Caucasus from a different perspective took place on 24 January 2011. I was at Domodedovo International Airport in Moscow. I was back home to Russia for winter vacations. I arrived in the morning, met my parents, and safely went home. Five hours later, a suicide bombing was carried out at the terminal entrance killing 37 people and injuring some 173 victims. It did not take long for the Russian government to determine the terrorist attack had been staged by the Caucasus Emirate[1] organization from the North Caucasus region. I wondered: What do I know about the North Caucasus? Why does Chechnya come to my mind the minute I hear "the North Caucasus"? Why is this region associated in my mind only with terrorism and suicide bombing? Is it only a region of frequent hot conflicts? Is it only a place of political and economic interest? The event and questions arising in my head gave me an impetus to start conducting research on the possibility of Orientalism in the context of Russia, Chechnya, and the North Caucasus.

[1] The Caucasus Emirate was a militant Jihadist organization whose goal was to establish an independent Islamic emirate in the North Caucasus and liberate itself from the Russian Federation.

I assured myself of the significance of my research once again when I took a flight from Russian to Taiwan in May, 2012. A fellow passenger, Russian by nationality, was eager to know what my Master's thesis was about and asked me to tell more about it. This simple conversation about Russia's Caucasus and their culture revealed the way knowledge or, perhaps, lack of appropriate knowledge of a colonized land became the instrument of mind control in the hands of Russian government. When I started talking about Chechen indigenous culture, my fellow passenger exclaimed: "Chechens were born to fight! They lack culture, literature, history, and traditions. The only thing they are capable of is fighting!" Because of the imposed stereotypical or even mythical knowledge, the passenger was not aware of the fact that Chechen people originated from Nakh peoples first mentioned in the 4th century BCE; they created layers of folklore and started to use the Georgian alphabet as early as the 8th century AD. The passenger was surprised to know that despite the ongoing military conflict between Russian and Chechnya, the 21st century witnessed the appearance of distinguished Chechen writers and poets, including Mussa Beksultanov, Apti Bisultanov, Mussa Ahmadov, Umar Yariche, Kanta Ibragimov, Hermann Sadulaev, and Sultan Yashurkaev. Finally, when ignoring the Chechen culture, the passenger also ignored numerous customs and traditions including well-known Caucasian hospitality, Chechen wedding ceremony, respect for elders, family honor, and adat.[2] This conversation made me realize that the region of the North Caucasus was represented as Russia's Orient in many ways. Of course, for a host of economic and geopolitical reasons, Russia has for centuries manifested imperial behavior towards the North Caucasus by attempting to occupy and colonize the peoples and the land. Accordingly, from the Russo-imperial perspective, there is a need for the Caucasus to be rehabilitated, reinscribed, and reconsidered. This project begins with

[2] A customary law of Muslim peoples.

the claim that the *style* and *forms* of this epistemologico-cultural project can productively be examined using the insights from postcolonial theory and, in particular, through Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Looking over the history of European colonialism in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, Edward Said made an argument in *Orientalism* (1978) that representation—broadly understood—is a key component in the extension, sustenance, and self-justification of imperial power. Orientalism, according to Said, refers to a style of thought based on a fundamental division between a colonial metropolis and its (desired) colonial possessions, a style that divides the world into Occident and Orient, and where the Occident (the West) presumes control and authority over the Orient (the East). Said claims that the discourse of Orientalism can help understand how "European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" (*Orientalism* 3). In my dissertation, I will investigate the possibilities and challenges of situating Edward Said's influential yet controversial theory of Orientalism within the context of Russia with a special focus on the insurgent region of the North Caucasus as a particular case of Russia's own Orient.

The colonizing pattern characterizing the relationship of Russia (as nation/empire) to the North Caucasus region will be the primary focus of investigation. Before anything, it is important to note that the term "the Caucasus region" is itself a legacy of an Orientalist style of imperial dominion, as it collapses many complex cultures into one overarching term and overlooks the fact that in this small region, one finds a mosaic of ethnic categories, different languages and cultures, and religious diversity. Politically, the Caucasus region is separated between northern and southern parts (see Appendix A). The South Caucasus consists of independent sovereign states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), whereas the North Caucasus

region (including the republics of Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and the Republic of Dagestan) remains formally under the sovereignty of the Russian federation. My project will focus on the North, where the ongoing Russian hegemony complicates the whole process of decolonization and self-determination. The North Caucasus is not only a place of historical and ongoing political and economic interest for the Russian metropole, a region of frequent burning issues, but it is also the locus of local histories and hidden stories about colonial pasts and present.

Although the North Caucasus is first mentioned in Russian classic literary texts, beginning in the second half of the tenth century, Caucasian Studies as a field in the humanities was established only in the nineteenth century, a period coincident with both Russia's rise to geopolitical significance in the European age of Empire and coterminous with the development of what Edward Said famously called Orientalist discourse. The idea that the Caucasian region and peoples who inhabit it are marginal and oriental in relation to the center of Russia is evident from the very beginning of the Caucasian Studies. This dissertation explores how this Russia's Other has been established, focusing mainly on the representation of the Caucasian people in contemporary (late 20th century - 21st century) mass media, fiction, and cinema and analyzing the texts by Russian and Caucasian authors. The historical complexity of that relationship will be studied from three distinct perspectives. The first perspective includes the application of the theory of what I call traditional Orientalism to the case of the North Caucasus. It reads the Caucasus as "Russia's Orient," examining the ways in which Russian literature and cinematography contribute to marginalization and stereotyping of the Muslim peoples in the region. The second perspective explores the Russo-Caucasian relationships and Caucasian subaltern position. To do this work, I have assembled an archive of literary texts and films that

record the Caucasian experience of Russian imperialism and that give an opportunity for the colonized voices to speak and be heard. The work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is especially important in understanding the question of the subaltern and the domination of the Other in the context of the North Caucasus. The gender issue, the excessively patriarchal representations, and the double marginalization of women will also be highlighted in the analysis of cultural and media texts. The third perspective "globalizes" the Russo-Caucasian relationship by examining Russia's neo-Imperialism and the situation of the Russo-Caucasian relationship within the so-called "Global War on Terror." My dissertation examines how the historically-deep and racialized imaginary of the Islamic terrorist within Russian imperial discourse has been grafted onto larger geopolitical theories, including Samuel Huntington's model of clashing civilizations, to authorize and legitimate modern armed interventions. The scope of this dissertation, within a Russian-Caucasian context, explores the boundaries and the limits of postcolonial criticism, extends Said's model of Orientalism, and challenges the ongoing representation of imperial spaces by paying special attention to the interplay between colonial discourse theory and old imperial history. With these three important perspectives in mind, I develop an understanding of the cultures that emerge out of the complex historical, sociopolitical, economic, and cultural relationship between Russia and the Caucasus.

The timing of my project is significant for two reasons. First, though postcolonial studies is well-established in other parts of the academy, Orientalism is a relatively new discourse in the Russian academic field. Second, mainstream postcolonial studies (as it is practiced in Anglo-American universities) has been slow to consider the topic of Russian Orientalism or Russian postcolonialism. While it is true that, in the case of the Caucasus, many books have been written about the ongoing conflict between Russia and the regions that seek self-determination, for the

most part the scope of these studies is limited to explaining the historical roots of the war, facts and figures, names and events. Little is revealed about the Caucasian *experience*, including but not limited to their subaltern position, trauma, and loss of home and identity. There are significant gaps in understanding the question of the colonizer and the colonized in Russian orientalist and imperialist discourses. My thesis aims to fill in some of these gaps and answer the following questions: Why is Russia's North Caucasus still absent in much postcolonial discourse? How – if at all – can Anglo-American theories of postcolonialism, especially Said's theory of Orientalism, be applied to the Russian and Caucasian context? How is the North Caucasus represented and misrepresented in different forms of cultural production? This set of questions goes in line with the theoretical questions posed by the Slavic studies scholar Vitaly Chernetsky, who challenges the definition of postcoloniality and draws an important distinction between colonial discourse analysis and the focus on postcolonialism (834).[3] Chernetsky traces the history of Russian engagement with postcolonial theory and comes to the conclusion that there is still a need for Russian scholars to rethink the imperial history and legacy of Russia and bring colonial discourse into correlation with postcolonialism.

My dissertation has the potential to be important in several ways: (1) it will help develop a better understanding of the various cultures emerging out of the colonial contact in this part of the world; (2) by understanding the specificities of Russian Orientalism, it can help determine in

[3] Chernetsky's set of questions include: "How does one assert postcoloniality? Is it sufficient merely to claim it, as I just did? Should a legitimation of this claim proceed by way of argumentation, or does it require a sanction from some external disciplinary authority? Is a representative of an imperial culture postcolonial too? Is postcolonialism indeed a category with global applicability, as David Chioni Moore argued in *PMLA* in 2001? Is postcolonialism an appropriate designation for empirical sociopolitical reality – the broad spectrum of cultural production – or only for academic discourse? Why is it that when representatives of academic communities studying non-Russian cultures in the region asserted the need to look at the ex-Soviet world through a postcolonial lens as early as 1992, they were ignored or ridiculed by the overwhelming majority of Russian intellectuals and Western-trained specialists on Russian culture? Why, a dozen years later, did many of the same intellectuals and specialists, in Russia and the West, suddenly have a change of heart?" (834).

which ways it may or may not differ from various European discourses and so refine our understanding of how translating this model across certain contexts might be problematic and limiting; (3) it can provide a model for future scholars to examine 19th- and 20th-century Russian history and culture outside the existing (nationally-chauvinist) attitude in Russian studies.

The literature pertinent to this research will be drawn from three primary areas. The most important methodological resource is Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), a careful reading of which is necessary since the main goal of this thesis is to reconsider its claims and offer a different perspective on the issues of the Orient and the Occident as they pertain to the Russian Empire. Secondly, I will analyze the texts which reveal when and how Russia's Orient emerged and why it still exists. Cultural texts (late 20th century - 21st century) by Russian writers and film directors will be investigated in order to show how the North Caucasus has been (mis)represented, racialized, interpreted, discussed, and studied. The analysis of representation of the North Caucasus in mass media and cultural texts will also help conceptualize the discourse of the war on terror. Thirdly, it is vital to analyze cultural texts by Caucasian authors since such texts are critical sites to scrutinize the problem of self-representation and identity of the Caucasian people. To sum it up, the dissertation's method is a blend of close and surface reading that provides an opportunity for a comprehensive study of cultural representations of the North Caucasus. The assembly of bibliography and the surface reading help highlight the existence of underrepresented cultural texts, draw important parallels between them, and disrupt the dominant discourses. Close reading helps find deeper, hidden meanings in both Russian and Caucasian cultural texts and understand the question of the colonizer and colonized in these complex relationships and cultures.

With regard to the question of language, the restriction to this study is my lack of proficiency in North Caucasian languages which amount to some 34 to 38. This restriction has required me to work with the authors that either write in the Russian language or have had their books translated from Caucasic into Russian. Working with literatures in translation places many matters beyond my competence. The whole process becomes even more complex when I later translate texts from Russian into English for the dissertation and English-speaking scholarship. This process of single or double translation into the languages of dominant discourses (in relation to the North Caucasus) is another form of representation. My project attempts at using the languages of dominant discourses not to reinforce, but to subvert the relationships of power and knowledge. Translation is a necessary step in my study because it helps open up theoretical issues and relationships and allows theories and ideas to travel from one context to another.

Translation becomes an important part of my dissertation as most of the cultural texts discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two are not written in the English language. All translations of the Russian language materials including poems, novels, and films are mine unless otherwise indicated. I have used GOST 7.79 System B (2002) as a standard for the transliteration of Cyrillic characters into Latin Characters. This standard is an adoption of ISO 9:1995 and is now the official standard of both Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). With regard to the question of language, the restriction to this study is my lack of proficiency in North Caucasian languages which amount to some 34 to 38. This restriction has required me to work with the authors that either write in the Russian language or have had their books translated from Caucasic into Russian. Working with literatures in translation places many matters beyond my competence. The whole process becomes even more complex when I later translate texts from Russian into English for the dissertation and English-speaking scholarship.

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Writing a project that challenges the dominant cultural representations of the North Caucasus through the translation of Russian and Caucasian literary and cinematographic texts, I also aware of "the constructivist aspects of translations, the role of representation, and the transculturation of cultural forms and values" (Tymoczko 445). Even though I attempt at providing a literal translation of the texts, the questions of ethics, politics, and ideology of translation should be acknowledged. My project recognizes the problem of translation as a dangerous practice of homogenization of the English language and eradication of alternative worlds and languages, distinctions and differences. However, by highlighting the existence of underrepresented texts and authors, I hope to open up the question of the possibilities for creative resistance in Russia and the North Caucasus. According to Harriet Hulme, "Translation reveals the possibility of approaching otherness in the spirit of recognition rather than appropriation. And translation allows us to confront the impulse to synthesize the complexity of the past into a uniform narrative in the present" (238). My dissertation hopes to include as many voices as possible to provide distinct perspectives of various authors on the conflict between Russia and the North Caucasus. Maria Tymoczko claims that Postcolonial contexts show that "translation has a fundamental epistemological dimension: it does not merely reflect existing knowledge, it can also precede knowledge. It can be a mode of discovery used to create or amass knowledge, and in this role it can have marked political and ideological dimensions, becoming a mode of

spying or intelligence gathering used for the purposes of domination, or, by contrast, a mode of counterespionage, resistance, and rebellion" (455). The goal of my project is to use translation as a mode of resistance against Russia's dominant discourses and to participate in ideological struggles. Thus, the function of translation is as important as the text being translated: forming resistance to oppression.

Always conscious of these limits, this kind of project demands a basis in the field of postcolonial studies. It views the Russian-Caucasian relationship to be a colonial/imperial relationship, and claims that the tools developed in the area of postcolonial studies over the past 40 years (from Said onwards) are useful in describing that relationship. However, my study does not assume a parallel between Anglo-European imperialism and Russian imperialism. Throughout, my analysis will attend to the political, economic and social specificity in the case of the Caucasus. In this project, I seek to avoid all possible processes of abstraction which the field of postcolonial studies is sometimes subject to, including the ongoing paradigms "center-periphery," "East-West," etc. As Jon Kyst argues, "When supporting such metaphorical discourse, scholars run the risk of losing touch with the political and economic context of the texts they scrutinize" (29). Neil Lazarus also criticizes these massive and geographically non-specific terms used by many scholars, including Edward Said, "relatively unselfconsciously" (55). According to Lazarus, "The concept of 'the West' as it is used in postcolonial theory … has no coherent or credible referent. It is an ideological category masquerading as a geographic one …. For 'the West' references neither a polity nor a state (nor even a confederation of states), but a 'civilization,' something altogether more amorphous and indeterminate" (44). My project takes up Kyst' and Lazarus' recommendations in order to embrace both "the abstract discourse of literary academia" and the "concrete analysis provided by history, economics, and the social

sciences" (Kyst 30). This approach will help demonstrate how the same epistemology can be used with different politics and language. The concrete case of the North Caucasus and Russia complicates the paradigms of Orientalist narrative due to a distinct geographical position, historical and social realities, but the analysis of the relationship between Russia and the North Caucasus is not possible without the examination of colonial discourses and thought patterns, hierarchical modes of representation, racism and oppression - all of which are best analysed using the tools of postcolonial studies.

Even though many cultural texts analyzed in this dissertation represent the clear-cut distinctions between "us" and the "other," it is vital to recognize the complicated politics and political history of the Caucasus region both against and within Russian state formation. The question of strict opposition becomes especially problematic when we analyze Russia's colonization of the North Caucasus through local ethnic elites: Russian government began the process of acculturation of Indigenous elites and turned them into colonial agents to exercise the necessary control over local commoners. The so-called pro-Russian elites and intelligentsia, being an important part of Russia's imperial and neo-imperial policy, are in strong opposition to the commoners, which leads to even more tension and hostilities in the North Caucasus. As in any colonial situation, in the case of Russia and the North Caucasus, there is no strict division between "us" and "them." Some of the cultural texts studied later in the dissertation (Nikolai Ivanov's *The Chechen Boomerang*, Zakhar Prilepin's *The Pathologies*, etc.) acknowledge and highlight this fluid, subtle, and imperial politics.

This project is not possible without the consideration of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism in detail which can help analyze the unique form of Russian empire-building in the North Caucasus and recognize the subaltern position of the peoples in this region. The next

section will introduce Said's theory and the problems connected with Orientalism and its application to different contexts. This will open up the conversation about the limitations of Said's theory when applied to the case of Russia and the North Caucasus.

2. Introducing Edward Said and the Problem of Orientalism (cases of Said's Theory Application)

In 1978, Edward Said published *Orientalism*, which continues to be discussed, quoted, and translated all over the world; to date, it has appeared in thirty-six languages (xv). The book has had a revolutionary influence on the humanities and social sciences, and particularly literary theory, provoking much research on post-colonialism, colonial politics, cultural representations, Orientalism, and imperialism. According to Stephen Sheehi, the achievement of Said's *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), and *Covering Islam* (1981), the three texts that engage how Orientalist discourses represent the world, can be viewed "not only in the academy but also in the mainstream public [which] catapulted Said to a level of prestige and visibility that few scholars ever reach" (393).

Said summarizes the concept of Orientalism in the following way: "My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness. . .. As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgement, will-to-truth, and knowledge" (*Orientalism* 204). For Said, the central subject of *Orientalism* is Europe's representation of non-European, and particularly Middle-Eastern countries and societies. The attempts of the (so-called) West to form knowledge about the East, Said argues, are based not on facts and reality but rather, emerge out of ideological biases, imagined perspectives, and assumptions, according

to which Eastern countries, being fundamentally opposed to the Western World (by which Said means especially France, Britain, and the United States), demonstrate obvious similarities between each other and thus can be represented and analyzed in the same way. Orientalism stands for three things: 1) it is what Said calls a "distribution of geopolitical awareness" that creates a fundamental distinction between "the Occident" and "the Orient," between the West and "the Other"; 2) it is an institution or tool for managing the East; and, most importantly, 3) it is an academic institution (that is active, self-propagating, and self-legitimizing) (*Orientalism* 12). Like ethnocentrism, Said sees Orientalism privileging a particular ethnic or cultural group (in this case, the "West"), leaving other groups to be measured in comparative subordination. The members of the leading group assess other values through the prism of their own traditions and views, thus strictly separating "we" from "they," "self" from "other." "The Other" or the colonized subject is represented by the West through the discourses of primitivism, cannibalism, dependence, and submission in order to compound that subject's inferiority. Said's critique of a set of beliefs about the Orient provides an important basis for the development of postcolonial studies because he questioned individual, institutional, academic, and political mechanisms of knowledge production and exposed the dangers of Orientalism as an instrument of power and control in the hands of the colonizers.

From the start, Oriental Studies in Europe represented an all-encompassing field that included social, cultural, archeological, literary, and historical aspects of any Asian and North African civilization. Scholars were mostly interested in the classical period of the culture or language, and it is only at the end of the 19th century when the political ambitions of France and England changed, did the focus of Orientalism shift from the ancient to the modern Orient (*Orientalism* 52). Said makes a powerful argument about the so-called imaginative geographies

which served and still do as a tool of colonial justification: “I use the word ‘arbitrary’ here because imaginative geography of the ‘our land-barbarian land’ variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for ‘us’ to set up these boundaries in our minds; ‘they’ become ‘they’ accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from ‘ours’” (*Orientalism* 54). Said stresses the arbitrary distinction of the space by European scholars with no ontological reason or empirical data to support it. The relationships between Christianity and Islam played one of the central roles in Orientalism. Remembering the attacks during the Middle Ages, Europeans regarded Islam as a threat: “Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (*Orientalism* 59). In the Chapter Two of my dissertation, I will address the way the image of alien and dangerous Islamic societies was created in Russian texts. In many ways, it was similar to Said’s argument about constructed image of the Muslim East in the European imagination.

Said concludes *Orientalism* with the analysis of the postwar period during which the center of Orientalism was moved to the USA. French and British colonialism was displaced by the American imperialism. During this time the American culture, media, and academia produced many cultural stereotypes about Arabs. There appeared multiple cartoons which depicted an “Arab sheik standing behind a gasoline pump turned up consistently” (*Orientalism* 285). An Arab man was regarded as the “disrupter of Israel’s and the West’s existence” (*Orientalism* 285). Said mentions the cultural images of Arab people: “In the films and television the Arab is associated either with lechery or bloodthirsty dishonesty. He appears as an oversexed degenerate, capable, it is true, if cleverly devious intrigues, but essentially sadistic, treacherous, low. Slave trader, camel driver, moneychanger, colorful scoundrel: these are some traditional

Arab roles in the cinema" (*Orientalism* 286-7). Finally, mass media portrayed the Arab as a menace to the whole world: "In newsreels or newsphotos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures" (*Orientalism* 287). Orientalists and Oriental studies in the US became an important tool in creating propaganda about Islamic East and politically managing the Orient. Said's analysis of European (English and French) and American (US) Orientalism will be used in my study to address the existence of Russian Orientalism and understand how Orientalists and Oriental Studies in Russia also became an important tool in creating knowledge about the North Caucasus and managing the Orient.

Said's *Orientalism* is a powerful book which opened the conversation about the relationship between power and knowledge and made it possible to question the authority of the colonial and imperial discourses. The contribution of Said's book remains fundamental up to the present day, yet critics of Said's theory claim that *Orientalism* contains a number of factual and conceptual mistakes. Said's selective approach to Orientalist writings, equal treatment of amateur travellers/journalists and professional scholars, misreadings of certain Orientalist scholarship, binary mode of thought, and disregard of Oriental voices are among a few things that have been under criticism of scholars (Zarnett). In his tellingly named essay "*Orientalism* and its Problems" originally published in *The Politics of Theory* in 1983, Dennis Porter provides a harsh criticism of Said's work. Porter begins by pointing out a contradiction, which is formed by Said himself and is never adequately resolved throughout his book. The contradiction concerns the notions of truth and ideology (Porter 151). According to Porter, Said contradicts himself when he first claims that truth cannot be obtained since all the knowledge we receive is

culturally, politically, and ideologically biased, while later he stresses the idea that it is quite possible to see the truth about the Orient by making a step beyond representations and hegemonic discourse. Porter claims that Said's contradiction is the result of the author's misreading of Foucault and Gramsci and their theories.

Said's failure to provide alternatives to Orientalism is explained by Porter as the author's failure to see hegemony as historically determined, as a process. Said does not comment on the discourse shift during two millennia, presuming that Western scholarship on the Orient bears a static, or at least already stable, character. Said consequently fails to notice important individual counter-hegemonic interventions which can be considered as alternatives to Orientalism. Porter claims that instead of looking for other Western discourses capable of overthrowing the hegemony of Orientalism, Said is methodologically trapped in it himself and ends up promoting Occidentalism as the only counter-discourse worthy of attention. Porter suggests three alternatives found with Western hegemonic discourse: literary works, counter-hegemonic works of the Western scholarship, and a textual dialogue between the East and the West. At the end of his critique, Porter stresses Said's failure to notice the internal ideological distanciation of literary texts which, in Porter's view, is an important tool to contest ideology, representation, and the mechanism of knowledge production (160).

Aijaz Ahmad's book chapter "*Orientalism* and After: Ambivalence and Metropolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said," published as part of his monograph *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* in 1994, provides a lengthy critique of Said's Orientalism and questions some aspects of his approach. Ahmad argues that Said's "deeply flawed book" (161) attempts to manoeuvre between Auerbach's Humanism and European representations from ancient Greece

and Foucault's Poststructuralism and European ideas of Orientalism in the 18th century. According to Ahmad,

> What is far more significant is that after Said has assembled the whole narrative of European Literature, from Aeschylus to Edward Lane, as a history of literature's complicity in inferiorization of the 'Orient,' and after he has identified the Enlightenment as a unified trajectory and master sign, of both Orientalism and colonialism, he is of course faced with the problem of identifying some sort of agency that might undo this centuries-old tie between narratives of High Humanism and the colonial project. (164)

Ahmad also stresses that, apart from the fact that Said's ideas in *Orientalism* are anti-Foucauldian, Said is divided between Auerbach and Nietzsche, Gramsci and Julien Benda, Croce and Matthew Arnold and often transgresses academic boundaries. Defining himself as "the Oriental subject," Said, according to Ahmad, falls into a trap being a biased participant of the discussion deploying "words like 'we' and 'us'" and referring to "Palestinians, Third World intellectuals, academics in general, humanists, Arabs, Arab-Americans, and the American citizenry at large" (171). Another weakness, argues Ahmad, is Said's failure to demonstrate how "Western textualities about the non-West" were accepted, refused, analyzed by the "intelligentsias of the colonized countries" (172). Western voices, which did not silence the Orient and criticized Western canonical imperial texts, are not present in *Orientalism*. Ahmad finally poses an important question about the relationship between Said's Orientalism and colonialism. Due to Said's uncertainty concerning the origins of Orientalist discourse in the post-Enlightenment period or "at the dawn of European civilization" (Ahmad 181), it is not clear if Orientalism is a product of colonialism, or if colonialism is, in fact, a product of Orientalism. Ahmad concludes his critique of *Orientalism* by arguing that Said's division of intellectuals into

the categories of colonial and post-colonial is superficial and highly disputable. According to Ahmad,

> It is so obviously contrary to what one knows about numerous intellectuals of the colonial period who never thought of themselves as ever standing *inside* the 'Western cultural tradition.' Nor is one quite sure how Said can later describe Ranajit Guha squarely as a 'poststructuralist' and at the same time designate him the exemplary 'post-colonial' intellectual standing *outside* the Western cultural tradition. (206)

Ahmad disagrees with Said on fundamental issues of history and theory and their understandings of the world" can be called "irreconcilable" (159).

Another critic, who provides a harsh critique of Said's theory of Orientalism is Mark F. Proudman in his essay, "Disraeli as an 'Orientalist': The Polemical Errors of Edward Said," published in 2005. Benjamin Disraeli, the author of the novel *Tancred, or the New Crusade*, is used by Said to demonstrate an archetype of a typical Orientalist. As Said argues, "The territorial imperative was extremely compelling, even for so unrestrained a writer as Disraeli, whose *Tancred* is not merely an Oriental lark but an exercise in the astute political management of actual forces on actual territories" (*Orientalism* 169). In his essay, Proudman demonstrates Said's misreading of this novel and obvious factual errors in his discourse of Orientalism. The problem evident throughout Said's *Orientalism* lies in the fact that Said attempts to interrelate politics and literature. Proudman argues that Disraeli was not occupied by the "Eastern question" (548). In fact, Disraeli was sympathetic to Islam, and he did not intend to use literary works as a means of political propaganda. Said's awkward use of Disraeli's novel and his random citations without the supporting context are noticed and criticized by Proudman. He also criticizes Said's

factual mistake, in which the 19th century British Empire allegedly occupied the territory from Egypt to India. Said remains oblivious to the fact that the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire also played an important role in 19th century politics (Proudman 560). Proudman concludes his critique with a paradox created by Said himself: trying very hard to overcome stereotypes and prejudices created by the Western Orientalism, Said ends up absorbed by his own orthodoxies (566). Proudman is only one of the many scholars who have found problems with Said's book. Since 1978, *Orientalism* has been studied and criticized extensively. The book has been criticized for its failure to see many forms of Orientalism, to notice contributions to the study of Eastern societies by German and many other European scholars, and to explain why Palestine and Egypt were the main objects of European practices of domination when the British Raj in India and Russia's Asian conquests were far more noticeable and long-lasting. After the first publication of *Orientalism*, Said attempted to respond to the debates surrounding his book and clarified some inconsistencies and inaccuracies raised by his critics. Some of those thoughts are articulated in his article "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1985), his "Afterword" to the 1994 edition of *Orientalism*, and his 2003 "Preface to the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition" of *Orientalism.*

In his article "Orientalism Reconsidered," which appeared in the inaugural issue of *Cultural Critique* in 1985, Said once again addresses the problems of representation, the relationships between knowledge and power, the relationships between text and history, and several other methodological questions. In his article, Said attempts to address some criticism which, according to him, might be useful in stressing certain arguments about his concept of Orientalism, but he refuses to take into account the comments that seem pointless for his research, including, for instance, criticism of his exclusion of German Orientalism ("Orientalism

Reconsidered" 89-90). Said insists that from the very beginning the Oriental world was investigated not out of pure curiosity and neutral cognitive need but intentionally for certain urgent political, religious, or economic reasons. The Oriental text, despite the changing historical moments, was constructed "outside the flux" ("Orientalism Reconsidered" 92) and lacked an important interaction with contemporary scholarship, analyses, judgments, and critiques. According to Said, "This privilege [interaction with critical responses at different historical moments] was rarely allowed to the Orient, the Arabs, or Islam, which separately or together were supposed by mainstream academic thought to be confined to the fixed status of an object frozen once and for all in time by the gaze of Western percipients" ("Orientalism Reconsidered" 92). Said's main argument is the idea that the creation and representation of the Orient was mainly warfare-conditioned and "overdetermined by history, religion, and politics" ("Orientalism Reconsidered" 93). Said later claims that his concept of Orientalism was criticized by nativists, nationalists, fundamentalists, Zionists, and Islamic extremists from their own points of view. Said harshly criticizes Bernard Lewis and Daniel Pipes for their ideas concerning the inability of the East to represent themselves and the Western "quest for knowledge"[4] out of pure curiosity. Said also addresses the biases of the media, noting that "the production of knowledge, or information, of media images, is unevenly distributed" ("Orientalism Reconsidered" 100). In the end, Said calls for a change which includes "greater crossing of boundaries," "greater interventionism," "a concentrated awareness of the situation," "a clarified political and methodological commitment to the dismantling of systems of domination," and "a much

[4] In his memoir *Notes on a Century: Reflections of a Middle East Historian*, Bernard Lewis claims that the West has always had a unique "quest for knowledge," curiosity, interest, and open-mindedness - skills that Muslim people lacked. In his article "The Roots of Muslim Rage," Lewis has coined the term "clash of civilizations" which refers to cultural and religious conflicts between Islam and the West.

sharpened sense of the intellectual's role both in the defining of a context and in changing it" ("Orientalism Reconsidered" 107).

In his "Afterword" to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, Said attempts to demonstrate the absence of "the book's alleged anti-Westernism" by stressing his idea that "the Orient" and "the Occident" are not reality-based terms ("Afterword" 330). They are more the product of human imagination, and, thus, they cannot be defined as markers of reality or taken as a natural fact. Said contends that there should not be antagonism between cultures and histories. His method lies in the attempt to connect them and to show their interdependence when the existence of one culture requires the existence of another. According to Said, "The construction of identity – for identity, whether of Orient or Occident, France or Britain, while obviously a repository of distinct collective experiences, is finally a construction in my opinion – involves the construction of opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from 'us'" ("Afterword" 332). Said asserts that the reason that *Orientalism* was received so harshly is the inability or unwillingness to accept the fact that "human reality is constantly being made and unmade" ("Afterword" 333). The second reason for criticism is Said's political and ideological affiliations which Said denies, claiming that during the process of writing *Orientalism*, he could not envisage the Palestinian movement as well as the resistance of Arabs in the United States ("Afterword" 334). Said writes, "In all my works I remained fundamentally critical of a gloating and uncritical nationalism. The picture of Islam that I represented was not one of assertive discourse and dogmatic orthodoxy, but was based instead on the idea that communities of interpretation exist within and outside the Islamic world, communicating with each other in a dialog of equals" ("Afterword" 337-8). Said, having responded to several critics of *Orientalism,* adheres to the idea that the Orient has been

continuously written about and discussed in cultural, ideological, religious, political, and institutional contexts ("Afterword" 345) and that the main purpose of *Orientalism* was to attempt to find "a new way of conceiving the separations and conflicts that had stimulated generations of hostility, war, and imperial control" ("Afterword" 350). Said also addresses critical remarks about his "residual" humanism, theoretical inconsistencies, and the book's "insufficient, perhaps even sentimental, treatment of agency" ("Afterword" 340). Said does not deny these objections; on the contrary, he believes them to be a part of any individual writing process and original project. He calls his work a "partisan book, not a theoretical machine" ("Afterword" 340). He attributes the criticized inconsistencies in his book to the combination of consistency and inconsistency within Orientalism itself, which naturally evokes feelings of anger, surprise, and delight from his readers. For Said, this is the only way to understand the "humanistic traps laid by systems such as Orientalism" ("Afterword" 341). At the end, Said turns to the recent developments in post-colonial studies and notes with satisfaction that there is a focus on rethinking historical experience and going beyond the master-slave binary dialectic. In conclusion, Said revisits the aim of his project and claims that his focus was not to eliminate the existing differences between cultures and nations but to criticize the hostility, opposition, and "adversarial knowledge" ("Afterword" 352) that seem to be born out of these distinctions. Said encourages the readers to look at these "separations and conflicts" ("Afterword" 352) in a new way.

In his "Preface to the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition" published in 2003, Said insists on humanism as the foregrounding principle of his theory and the only instrument to overcome imperialism and Orientalism. He advocates the idea that through a humanistic approach it is possible and feasible to eliminate injustice in the world of political unrest and imperial invasions

by Britain and the US; to move from authority to human individuality; to make diverse cultures overlap with each other instead of resorting to clashes, subjugation, and the exercise of power; and to reconsider the notions of "America," "The East," "The West," and "Islam." In the light of the 21st century's ongoing military conflicts (namely, the Iraq War, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) and Said's own near-death feelings, his Preface demonstrates a shift in Said's political focus – from his discontent with the Western cultural representation of the Orient to his growing dissatisfaction with the political situation in the Islamic world: "There has been so massive and calculatedly aggressive attack on the contemporary societies of the Arab and Muslim for their backwardness, lack of democracy, and abrogation of women's rights that we simply forget that such notions as modernity, enlightenment and democracy are by no means simple and agreed-upon concepts…. The breathtaking insouciance of jejune publicists who speak in the name of foreign policy and who have no live notion (or any knowledge at all) of the language of what real people actually speak has fabricated an arid landscape ready for American power to construct there an **ersatz** model of free market 'democracy'…" (xiv). Instead of playing a role of a theorist or an academician, Said unequivocally sounds like a political activist or even a propagandist advocating the rights of the oppressed using a politically charged vocabulary, espousing concepts such as human freedom, human rights, anti-imperialism, inhuman injustice, emancipation, terror, anti-Semitism, self-determination, anti-colonial nationalism, etc. Through the sixteen pages of his Preface, Said does not name any critic of his book *Orientalism* and does not devote any paragraph to allay existing concerns.

Despite the harsh criticism of the book, many scholars and researchers started applying Said's theory to different parts of the world, finding similarities in the history of the invention of the Orient. Japan was one of the first countries to translate the famous book and apply the theory

to its own history of colonizing Korea, Taiwan, Micronesia, Manchuria, and vast areas of mainland China and Southeast Asia. Japan occupies a peculiar position in the Orient/Occident framework: geographically, it is situated in what is known as the Orient but politically Japanese imperialism makes it occupy the space similar to the one reserved for the Western imperialism. As Daisuke Nishihara claims, "When it was necessary for the nation to insist on the uniqueness of Japan, stress was put on the spirit of the Orient. When it came to the matter of civilization, Japan behaved like a fully Westernized state. Japan adopted a we-are-Asian policy when the nation needed cooperation from other Asian countries. However, it practiced Western-style imperialism when it ruled its neighboring colonies" (245). The recurring images of Japan as an Oriental country include Samurai warriors, harakiri suicides, kamikaze attacks, geisha girls, etc. They all characterize Japan as cruel, barbaric, and highly sensual and sexual. Nishihara notes that very often Japanese themselves emphasized the Orientalized stereotypes and images of their culture. The scholar illustrates this point by analyzing the works of the famous Japanese novelist Jun'ichiro Tanizaki: "Tanizaki orientalizes Japan itself when he expressed the charm and beauty of the country from the perspective of a Westerner (Self-Orientalism, Japan as the object). But when it comes to representing China, the Japanese writer confidently adopts the colonizer's viewpoint (Japan as the subject)" (Nishihara 246). The case of Japan highlights the difficulty of applying Said's theory *tout court* and emphasizes the problem of "changeability between subject and object" (249). Said's concept of Orientalism needs certain reconsideration when applied to the East Asian context: "The Self/Other, subject/object, and colonizer/colonized formulae are not necessarily fixed" (Nishihara 250).

In the first year of the publication of *Orientalism*, Chinese scholars did not pay much attention to the discourse since they assumed it did not include China and, thus, was irrelevant to

Chinese scholarship. There has been growing attention to the Saidian concepts in the recent years but still only a few academic fields have investigated the relationships between China and Orientalism. Analyzing Chinese history and the concept of Orientalism, Arif Dirlik argues that both Europeans and Asians participated in the construction of the Orient, and it is vital to look at the problem in Asian modernities as well. According to Dirlik, "Rather than view orientalism as an autochthonous product of a European modernity, [. . .] it makes some sense to view it as a product of those 'contact zones' in which Europeans encountered non-Europeans, where a European modernity produced and was also challenged by alternative modernities as the Others in their turn entered the discourse on modernity" (112). Dirlik claims that the "contact zone also implies a distance, a distance from the society of the Self, as well as of the Other. The orientalist, I suggested above, is 'orientalized' himself or herself in the very process of entering the 'orient' intellectually and sentimentally" (113). He suggests that Orientalism has different meanings in different contexts. The Confucian revival in East Asian societies challenged eurocentrism, but at the same time it emphasized national uniqueness of Chinese culture, essentialization and homogenization and, thus, consolidated the already existing forms of power.[5] In his book *China and Orientalism: Western Knowledge Production and the P.R.C.* (2011), Daniel F. Vukovich discusses the emergence of a new form of Orientalism in the era of globalization – a new Sinological form of Orientalism. According to Vukovich, the concept of Orientalism appropriated the logic of capitalism, shifting from essential difference to equivalence: "'China' is now in a halting but inevitable process of *becoming-the-same* as the USA and the West…. This shift reflects our era of increasing globalization; the migration of orientalism to area studies and

[5] According to Dirlik, "Self-essentialization may serve the cause of mobilization against 'Western' domination; but in the very process it also consolidates 'Western' ideological hegemony by internalizing the historical assumptions of orientalism. At the same time, it contributes to internal hegemony by suppressing differences within the nation" (114).

the pax Americana; the liberal triumph at the 'end' of history and the demonization of Maoism; an ever closer Sino-West relationship; and the overlapping of anti-communist and colonial discourses" (*China and Orientalism*). Other scholars, including Ming Dong Gu, claim that Sinologism has always been an alternative to Orientalism and postcolonialism. Even though Sinologism might share some characteristics with the Western concepts, the main difference has always been in the academic orientation and direction of Sinologism. This view might be problematic as politics and ideology often play a major role in academic practices. As research shows, the relationship between Orientalism and China has always been complex, ambiguous, and very interconnected.

One of the contemporary revisions of Said's theory of Orientalism is the so-called Hispanic Orientalism, which describes the development of the identity of the colonizer in Spain and Latin America. Michael Stevens claims that "In the Spanish case, the glorious past was the age of the Islamic Moors who had ruled parts of the Iberian Peninsula from 700 until 1492, while the current Christian rulers were the backwards and religiously intolerant impediments to progress. Thus the case of Spanish Orientalism employs an argument structurally identical to Said's Orientalism, with the role of the Christians and Muslims reversed." In his dissertation, Stevens writes about the political direction of Spanish Orientalism, Spain's Islamic legacy, European romantic views of premodern Spain, the US confrontation with the Barbary pirates, the formation and dissolution of the Spanish American Empire, the rise of capitalism, and Spanish decolonization. He comes to conclusion that "By 1800, the story of the Spanish Moors fit neatly into the outlines of Edward Said's Orientalist paradigm, with the religious affiliation of the principle parties reversed. The technological sophistication, tolerance, and cultured atmosphere of Moorish Spain was used to highlight the intolerance, backwardness and generally degraded

state of Spain's current Christian rulers. This argument was then used to demonstrate the inadequacies of the Spanish government and expanded to justify schemes aimed at despoiling Spain of her highly desirable colonial possessions" (Stevens). Another dissertation, written by Svetlana Tyutina, analyzes both positive and negative aspects of Hispanic Orientalism, traces the continuity of Orientalist tradition, addresses the dynamic nature of Hispanic Orientalism, and argues that the history of Spain and Latin America shows that there were multiple forms of interaction with the Other and Said's Orientalism cannot represent the multifaceted and changing nature of Hispanic Orientalism. Tyutina writes about four stages in the development of Hispanic Orientalism: the first encounter with the Moors and Jews and the subsequent process of reinvention; the early Colonial period and the process of "reinterpretation for the purpose of appropriation"; the late Colonial and early Independence period and the processes of self-Orientalization and the revalorization of the Other; and modern stage of Hispanic Orientalism characterized by the reconciliation and the revalorization of the Spanish heritage in the South and North Americas (*Hispanic Orientalism*). Tyutina concludes her work by saying that Said's Orientalism is limiting when applied to the case of Spanish history as it describes only the initial stage of the development of the discourse. Tyutina points to the dynamic character of Hispanic Orientalism, which surpasses the static nature of Saidian Anglo-French Orientalism: "Born in Iberia, Hispanic Orientalism came a long way not only geographically but also structurally. It changed along with the discourse of power. Appropriation through reinvention and reinterpretation gave way to a more open-minded and open-ended, but nevertheless Orientalizing, mechanism: differentiation through self-Orientalization and revalorization of the Other(s), its history and culture" (*Hispanic Orientalism*). Other works that explore similar problematics of Hispanic Orientalism include Julia Kushigian's work *Orientalism in the*

Hispanic Tradition: In Dialogue with Borges, Paz, and Sarduy and Araceli Tinajero's *Orientalisms of the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World*. They also explore the distinct character of Hispanic Orientalism, the complicated relationships between the East, Spain, Portugal, and Latin America, peripheral discourses of Orientalism, the principle of diversity, and blending of cultures.

Larry Wolff explores the relationships between Eastern Europe and Said' theory of Orientalism. In the introduction to his book *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Wolff points to the ambiguity in the construction of Eastern Europe which contained "a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe but not Europe. Eastern Europe defined Western Europe by contrast, as the Orient defined the Occident, but was also made to mediate between Europe and the Orient. One might describe the invention of Eastern Europe as an intellectual project of demi-Orientalization" (7). Wolff claims that the study of Eastern Europe, much like Orientalism, pursued a political agenda of domination and subordination (8). Eastern Europe was regarded as a periphery entity located at the intersection of different economy systems (market capitalism and communism), backwardness and development, civilization and barbarism, inclusion and exclusion (Wolff 9). The idea of Eastern Europe was created due to economic and political reasons during the military control of the Soviet Union, but, similar to Orientalism, it continues to exist in the minds of people despite the end of the Cold War. As Wolff says, "Eastern Europe, however, remains an extremely powerful idea, deeply imbedded in the history of two centuries, so influential in its political consequences that its intellectual origins are barely recognized, hidden in historical camouflage" (15). In 1992, Milica Bakić-Hayden developed the concept of "nesting Orientalisms." This concept explains how every region views its Eastern or Southern parts as more primitive, barbaric,

underdeveloped, and less forward-thinking. Thus, a part of the region that Orientalizes the area to its South or East can be the subject of Orientalization of another group. This system creates a hierarchy of orientalisms existing within one region. As Milica Bakić-Hayden argues, "The gradation of 'Orients' that I call 'nesting orientalisms' is a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised. In this pattern, Asia is more 'East' or 'other' than eastern Europe; within Eastern Europe itself this gradation is reproduced with the Balkans perceived as more 'eastern'; within the Balkans there are similarly constructed hierarchies" (918). Later, in 1997, Bulgarian historian, Maria Todorova introduces another concept similar to Said's Orientalism that she describes as Balkanism or "nesting Balkanism." Her famous book *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) traces the relationship between reality and invention where the Balkans are seen as semi-oriental, semi-civilized, semi-developed. She claims that "Unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity…. This in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitionary character, could have made them simply an incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other but as incomplete self" (18). She comes to conclusion that "while orientalism is dealing with a difference between (imputed) types, balkanism treats the differences within one type" (19). More and more concepts and models are emerging at various parts of the world in response to Said's theory of Orientalism. Even though they appear and develop in response to inconsistencies or problems existing in the theory, Said's Orientalism provides the necessary framework and trajectories from which to begin a dialogue or a conversation, and it remains a starting point in colonial and imperial discourses. Said's theory does not provide all the answers, but it poses important questions for the scholars who examine Orientalist discourses. Similarly, I will use Said's theory of Orientalism as a reference point to analyze the problem of Russian Orientalism,

its ambiguities, the process of creation of the Other, and the position of Russia between Europe and Asia and in the imagined geography of ideological constructs East-West.

3. Overview of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter One underlines the difficulties connected with applying Said's theory of Orientalism to the Russian case. This chapter investigates the ways in which Russian Orientalism may be different from Said's model and how – if at all – Russia can be understood in Said's Occident/Orient frame. The problems of Oriental Studies in Russia as well as Russia's location in the Orient/Occident divided world have appeared as main points to open a discussion on the topic of Russian Orientalism and the specific role of the North Caucasus.

. Chapter Two turns to the representation of the North Caucasus in Russian literature, cinema, and mass media. I begin this chapter with an analysis of the representation of the Orient in Russian literature and cinema and focus on the images of the self and other in travel writing, classical texts, local folklore, Soviet and post-Soviet literature and films. The chapter then turns to Frantz Fanon's social theory that offers a powerful perspective from which to understand the racialization of the Caucasian man in Russia. I also draw upon Susan Layton's elaboration of the problem of romantic writing in Russia and compare images of the Caucasus created by classic writers with images of the military Orient created by contemporary Russian poets including Dmitrii Mordasov, Akinfova Eugeniya, Valery Kachurin, and Eugene Mishin. The chapter then analyzes several contemporary Russian novels and films which represent synecdochical Orientalism, the complicated vision of "Other," and the inability of the Caucasian subaltern to speak and be heard. Nikita Mikhalkov's film 12 will be analyzed in more detail to show the complex character of Russian-Caucasian relationships. I conclude this chapter with elaboration

on the discourses of "terror" and "terrorism" and the "black widow" media discourse and show how Chechen suicide bombers are represented in Marina Akhmedova's novel *Khadijah, Notes of a Death Girl.*

Chapter Three addresses the issue of Caucasian resistance to colonization and subjugation. I analyze the failure of Russian settler colonialism in parts of the North Caucasus and Caucasian resistance to linguistic, religious, and cultural colonization. I then discuss Caucasian subaltern position as it is represented in recent and recognized literary texts and films. The loss of identity and themes of silence and trauma will be explored in Kanta Ibragimov's novel *Children's World* and several other texts. Alisa Ganieva's novel *The Mountain and the Wall* will be analyzed in terms of the present-day realities of Dagestan, diversity of Caucasian culture, and the co-existence of seemingly contradictory and incongruous elements of the society.

Chapter Four concludes this thesis by analyzing Russia's complicated, multilayered character of colonization and the limits of applying Edward Said's theory of Orientalism to the Russian case. I summarize the ways Russian "Other" has been established through media, literary, and cinematographic representation of the North Caucasus and address alternative views of cultural production both in Russian and Caucasian texts. This all will help develop a better understanding of the cultures that emerge out of complex relationships between Russia and the North Caucasus and to create space for unrevealed local histories and hidden stories about colonial pasts and presents.

At the end of the dissertation, I include an original and extensive bibliography of primary Russian and Caucasian texts which represent the region of the North Caucasus. Currently—and partly for reasons that are connected to the ongoing Russian hegemony in this region—there are

few such resources for scholars seeking to examine the cultural history of the Russian-Caucasian relationship. With this massive gap in the critical archive and critical imaginary, cataloguing itself is both a politically significant and extremely valuable scholarly practice. The archive helps create space for the texts that become obscured from the mainstream discourse and retains records of experience to preserve memory. To redress these occlusions, and because there is little scholarship on most of the texts in the archive, I include the analysis of several of them in Chapters Two and Three. Though these analyses are brief, it is part of the political commitment of this project to bring as many as is feasible into the light. I provide a more substantial analysis of a small subset of these texts, to develop a pointed argument about the materials under analysis. Not simply an exercise in enumeration, however, the bibliography also opens the possibilities to find connections and disjunctions between texts, to identify patterns and punctures. Through it, for example, readers can identify key dates, important publishers, and the like; in short providing the foundation for future scholars to conduct the kinds of "surface reading" being advocated in other areas of humanities research. My bibliography is by no means exhaustive, but it is comprehensive in a way that provides a starting point for the subsequent addition of newly discovered texts by future scholars.

Chapter One: Orientalism in the Russian Empire

1. Problems of Russian Orientalism

As noted above, *Orientalism* has been widely criticized for historical inaccuracies, factual errors, methodological and conceptual mistakes. The previous section has also shown the application of Said's theory to multiple contexts and the need to broaden or adjust it to account for different geographies. It is important to examine the way Said's model of Orientalism can be applied to Russia and the Russian Empire (1721 - 1917). Said's notion of Orientalism as Western representation of the East seems to be confusing in terms of Russia's history and geography. As a result of endless territorial expansion Russia has covered immense parts of two continents – Europe and Asia. This peculiar position raises the question whether Russia is more European or Asian or whether or not it can be defined in either way. Occupying a vacillating position between Europe and Asia and simultaneously occupying the position of colonizer and colonized, Russia complicates Said's theory and, presumably, may help to explain why Said was not noticeably interested in Russia's history and why Russian historians and orientalists remained silent even after the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978. Russian departments themselves, being more traditionalist than English departments, failed to take up postcolonial ideas and apply these concepts to Russia. Said himself downplays the long tradition of Orientalism in Russia and other countries: "Unlike the Americans, the French and the British – less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss – have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" (*Orientalism* 1). Even though Said mentions contributions to Orientalism of Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, and Portugal, he nevertheless believes that "Britain and France were the pioneer nations in the Orient" and "major steps in Oriental

scholarship were first taken in either Britain [or] France" (*Orientalism* 17-18). The problem with Said's project also lies in its narrow application scope, limiting its diction to the cases of overt colonialism in the Middle East, Africa, and India. Russia's Orient, in particular, fails to fit -- in a straightforward manner -- with the trajectories set out by Said not only because of its complex geographical position but also due to the political, social, and historical peculiarities of the Russian context. Similar to British and French Empires, Russian Empire did have presence in the Middle East too. They were there too. The Russian Empire made many attempts to establish a presence in the Middle East for religious, ideological, and later geopolitical goals. The complex relationships between Russia and the Middle East from the 15th century till the present day complicate Said's Orientalism and and present some gaps in his theory.

In 2000, the journal *Slavic Review* published one of the first essays devoted to the topic of Russia and Said's concept of Orientalism: "Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?" by Nathaniel Knight. Later in 2000, the journal *Kritika* published two other essays which addressed the applicability and utility of the orientalism paradigm in the Russian imperial context: "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism" by Adeeb Khalid and "On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid" by Knight. This trio of essays appears to be the first significant scholarly attempt to apply Said's concept of Orientalism to the Russian empire and determine which side Russia takes in the ideological map of East and West.

Adeeb Khalid argues that Said's theory is spatially organized, and since the patterns of nineteenth century Russian imperialism (expanding to colonize geographically adjacent territory) differed from the Anglo-European trend (colonizing geographically distant territory), the Russian case was largely excluded from Orientalism. According to Khalid, Orientalism was practiced in

the Russian empire as well, but it had its own peculiarities. Citing Russia's "investment in organic concepts of nationality" (695) over and against the binary logic of European racial essentialism, he puts forward a "triptych" model for understanding Orientalism within the Russian context, wherein Russian Orientalists found themselves looking one way toward Europe for whom they were the Oriental subjects, and the other way at Asia, for whom they could be the Occidental masters. The complex relationships between Russia and Asia can be explained by the fact that Russia and other Asian countries (like Mongolia) exercised political control over each other in different historical periods. In Russian history, there was a moment when countries further east, in fact, dominated Russia and exercised their power over the Russian territory, most notably, the long-term Mongol invasion of 'Rus' throughout the 13th century. The experience of tyranny and violence under Mongol rule created associations in the minds of the Russians. Asia became synonymous with evil, strength, intelligence, uncontrollability, and otherness. As Chumachenko argues, "Cultural memory reflected in folk tales, legends, folk songs, and proverbs portrays Tatars as an ultimate evil responsible for Russia's sufferings, humiliation, economic decline, and cultural backwardness" (*Literary Dimensions of National Identity*). In response to these ideas, Russia turned to Europe. With the reforms of Peter the First (1696-1725), Russia came to associate itself with Europe more than with Asia; however, the relationships between Europe and Russia were awkward and unrequited. Thus, if for Britain, France and, subsequently, the US, Orientalism was an attempt to manipulate and control the Orient, for Russia it was a matter of self-affirmation. Unable to become another ethnocentric power in the world, Russia turned against the Orient and towards the Occident in its attempts to be associated with Europe. Khalid concludes that Russian historiography needs to re-examine the concepts of Orientalism, Orientalization, and the phenomenon of what he calls "self-

orientalization," which are largely absent both in Russian studies as well as in Said's model of knowledge production (698-9).

Nathaniel Knight likewise agrees with Khalid with the opinion that Said's Orientalism cannot be regarded as a universal model. Knight's goal is not to demonstrate the applicability of Orientalism in the Russian context, but rather to investigate how such data does not fit Said's model. Russian discourse can be perceived as one of the alternatives to European hegemonic discourse. Knight uses the example of the St. Petersburg Orientalist Grigor'ev (1816-1881) and his experience of living in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan) to demonstrate the particularities of Russian Orientalism. Grigor'ev stressed the necessity to investigate Asia not to control the Other but rather to understand Russia itself. The affinity with Asia is repeatedly stressed throughout Russian academic and literary works.[6] It is highly doubtful that Russian Orientalists were overwhelmed with a desire to embark on imperial domination and civilizing missions in Asia. Grigor'ev enjoyed some power over the Kazakhs; however, local governors had little respect for him and often ignored him if the problems concerned political matters. Knight stresses that in Grigor'ev's case knowledge and power were not equal. Knight concludes that Russian Orientalism cannot be viewed as a universal or united model of an academic institution, an ideological conception, and an instrument of power ("Grigor'ev in Orenburg" 99-100). However, I contend that this generalization is questionable and refutable through an examination of the Russian case.

The polemical exchange between Khalid and Knight questions the problem of the uniqueness of Russian history and the applicability of Saidian concept to the Russian context. At

[6] This idea is stressed by several Russian writers and scholars, including Nikolai Berdiaev, Vladimir Titov, Nikolay Karamzin, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Vladimir Stasov, Konstantin Leont'ev, George Vernadsky, etc,

stake for each of them is the answer to the question: how, if at all, might Said's model be applied to the Russian context? Khalid rejects the idea of the uniqueness of Russian imperial history and insists on engaging the debates and "approaches that dilute Russia's historical specificity" (695). Khalid's problem with Knight's article about Grigor'ev is that Knight uses the example of Girgor'ev to "caution against all use of Said" (695). In other words, he accuses Knight of finding only one counter-example, from which he discounts the entire theory of Orientalism as useless. In response, Knight defends his approach, stressing the idea of Russia's "distinctiveness" ("On Russian Orientalism" 37) with an in-between approach between uniqueness and universalism. Taking these opposing views into consideration, my project does not intend to provide another critique of Said's concept of Orientalism; instead, it describes power relations in a concrete colonial/imperial context and understands Russia in its relationship to the outside world and its own inside world of empire. Said's theory of Orientalism and its problematic application to Russia have helped me analyze the relationships between Russia and the North Caucasus and identify a distinct form of Orientalism – synecdochical one.

My project attempts to read the case of the North Caucasus as synecdochical Orientalism. According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, synecdoche refers to "a figure of speech in which a more inclusive term is used for a less inclusive one or vice versa, as a whole for a part or a part for a whole." Russian Orientalism, in many ways, represents this model of what I call synecdochical Orientalism. The North Caucasus, although very diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, is largely represented in Russian cultural and political texts by the Chechen Republic alone. Similar to Said's idea of invisibility and the silencing of the countries that are construed as the Orient, the same problems exist for the people and cultures of the North Caucasus. They are underrepresented and conflated with the image of Chechnya; consequently, they are often

associated with the ongoing military campaigns, the discourse of terrorism, and radical Islam. Chechnya, in this case, becomes a synecdoche for the North Caucasus. The region of the North Caucasus, thus, falls into the trap of double or multiple misrepresentations. First, it is represented as a homogenous, uniform region, associated mostly with Chechnya; secondly, the Chechen Republic itself is misrepresented as a terrorist region in Russian media, literature, and films of the late 20th and 21st centuries. This problem will be later explored in detail in Chapter Two with examples that demonstrate this synecdochical type of Orientalism.

Russian Orientalist travelogues demonstrate certain features that set them apart from British and French travelogues and pilgrimages described by Edward Said. Elena Andreeva's book *Russian and Iran in the Great Game: Travelogues and Orientalism* examines the development of Russia's distinct form of Orientalism by analyzing travelogues written by Russian explorers and officials visiting Iran in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Like previous scholars who point to the unique and distinct position of Russia in the discourse of Orientalism, Andreeva emphasizes the distinct character of Russian Orientalism: "In sum, although the Russian variant of Orientalism shares many features with Western European Orientalism, it has its peculiar aspects that allow it to be viewed as an exaggerated or grotesque version of Western European Orientalism" (12). Andreeva describes Russia's history as both European and Asian and she analyzes the attempts of the Russian administration to simultaneously diminish Russia's Asian cultural heritage and to establish Russia as a purely European Empire. Andreeva argues that Russian Orientalism was a tool, which employed typical images and stereotypes of the Orient (in this case, Iran) as primitive, barbaric, and inferior, in order to redeem itself in the eyes of Europe and to entrench the distance between Russia and Asia. Russian travellers experienced a certain split in national identity, unsure whether they themselves were true Europeans,

surrogate Europeans or half-Oriental Eurasians. Even though Andreeva convincingly demonstrates the Russian version of Orientalism, she encourages scholars to remember that each concept (whether Russian or Western Orientalism) cannot be regarded invariable and fixed or reflect all the aspects of reality (200).

Another scholar who writes about the complexity of Russian Orientalism and gives it a distinct name is Alexander Etkind. In a 2007 article, he calls the Russian case "Orientalism Reversed." By this, he means the Russian Other is represented not by distant, alien peoples but by Russia's own people, peasants in particular. According to Etkind, "Beginning in the 1840s and extending through the nineteenth century and beyond, Russian authors were constructing their internal Other, the People. Intellectuals and bureaucrats ceaselessly talked about the commoners without letting them speak for themselves. Exotic and alien, but firmly situated on national territory, the peasantry was the Russian equivalent of the noble savage" (627). Arguably, the same kinds of internal Orientalisms were taking place in France (cf. Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*) and England (cf. E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*) where a metropolitan elite began to valorize and/or romanticize peasants and yeomen. Elsewhere, Louisa Schein suggests this idea in her uses of the phrase, "internal Orientalism" to describe an internal othering in China, based on gender and ethnicity ("Gender and Internal Orientalism in China"). Similarly, Gabriel Piterberg analyzes domestic Orientalism in Israel ("Domestic Orientalism"), whereas Madeleine Eriksson expands on the spatial theorization of internal Orientalism in the context of Sweden (*(Re)producing a Periphery*). Although she does not use the term, "internal Orientalism," Jane Schneider discusses the role of southern Italy in the national imagination (*Italy's "Southern Question").* Etkind's later book *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (2011) further explores the idea of Russia colonizing its own

people. He calls it the "internal colonization of Russia [which] was more akin to the British colonization of America than that of India: non-Europeans were either assimilated or annihilated, leaving the Empire to embark on colonization of its own people, who gradually formed new identities for themselves" (251). If Etkind assumes that Russian Orientalism has been a self-imposed form and focused on its own people as an object of the knowledge-power relations then one can suggest that the term "Orientalism" could be more usefully replaced by the terms "the Other" or "alien." The Russian Other is not about "our self" and "their other." It is about "our other" within "our self." The question arises – does a Russian Orient exist and, if yes, how do the Russian Other, the Russian Orient, and the Russian Self coexist and develop within the knowledge-power mechanism? It seems the power dynamics between the Russian Self, Other, and Orient shift depending on the type of colonization pattern one is referring to. Russian common people might, for example, be considered as the colonized object for the Russian government while simultaneously exercising control over the North Caucasus. The boundaries between the Self, Other, and Orient may change or become blurred depending on the colonization pattern in question.

It is now important to turn to the academic institutions in Russia that have had a pivotal role in constructing the internal Orient. The ambiguity of Russian Orientalism in academic environment is stressed by Rachel Polonsky in her engaging review discussing "The Paradoxes of Russian Orientalism" (2011). According to Polonsky, "Russian Orientalism is structured around the lives of individuals like Kazem-Bek and Cantemir, whom [David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, one of the authors under review] calls 'representative' [of Russian paradoxical Orientalism]. In their diversity and eccentricity, and their often complicated ethnic and cultural origins, they reveal that until the emergence of academic orientology [Oriental Studies] in St

Petersburg at the turn of the twentieth century, there was no 'representative' Russian Orientalism, but rather an endlessly varied unfolding of scholarly and artistic engagements with a multitude of imagined 'easts', interwoven in often surprising ways with the changing interests of the imperial state." Polonsky agrees with Vera Tolz concerning the idea that a significant group of scholars, known as the Rozen School, greatly influenced governmental policies towards ethnic oriental minorities in Russia and could have even shaped Said's main concept of the relationships between knowledge and power in Orientalism. Indeed, the Rozen school highlights an existing relationship between Russian scholars and the scholars of the more classically-understood Orientalism. The Rozen school was named after Baron Viktor Romanovich Rozen, the Professor of Arabic at the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St Petersburg University, and it included such leading Orientalists as Vasilii Vladimirovich Bartol'd, Nikolai Iakovlevich Marr, Sergei Fedorovich Ol'denburg, and Fedor Ippolitovich Shcherbatskoi. Tolz argues that certain political events (the 1905 Russian Revolution, "a pan-European war, the disintegration of the Russian empire, and its recreation by the Bolsheviks") "encouraged these scholars to pose highly original questions about the relationship between political power and their own Orientological research" ("Introduction: Russian Orientology" 5). She proposes that "contemporary post-colonial scholarship should be viewed as a 'descendant' of the early twentieth-century Russian Orientology [Oriental Studies]" ("Introduction: Russian Orientology" 5). Tolz also concludes that in the Anglophone scholarship, the work of these scholars and the overall Russian scholarship of Oriental Studies remain unnoticed and unrecognized. What if Russian orientalists, frequently overlooked by postcolonial scholars, were among the pioneers of Orientalist discourse? What if instead of applying Said's model of Orientalism to the Russian case we turn to Russia as a prototype for postcolonial pattern? Russia is one of the few countries in which the

Orient and the Occident have managed to coexist and to create not an in-between but what might be called an in/within space.

It is not possible to examine Russian Orientalism in academia without mentioning Vasilii Barthold (1869-1930) who was a Russian historian that specialized in the history of Islam and examined Western images of the imagined Eastern world even earlier than Edward Said. Barthold generally affirms Edward Said's ideas of Orientalism, but Russian Orientalism, in his opinion, demonstrated certain peculiarities different from the Anglo-French model. Barthold favoured the ideas of Eurasians and believed that there was no direct confrontation between the Russian Orient and Occident; they coexisted as one organic part, which determined the history of Russia (Evans 41). Unlike Europe, Russia did not occupy a higher cultural, political, and economic level than Asia. Barthold claims that Mongol invasion of Russia in the 13th century established "not only the foundation for the political rebirth of Russia, but also for future Russian cultural successes" (*The History of Oriental Studies* 364). The nature of relationships between the Russian Orient and Occident was different from the very beginning. Barthold is a harsh critic of the development of Oriental Studies in Russia, which did not collect source materials about the Orient (despite being in close proximity to it), and enjoyed success only because of extensive borrowing of the ideas from foreign scholars; indeed, it focused more on the study of Europe than Asia (*The History of Oriental Studies* 412-15). According to Evans, "Even though Barthold was very much a member of an 'imperialist' society, his work did not resemble the cultural constructions of an 'Orientalized' East that Said found among certain nineteenth-century Western intellectuals" (44). Barthold was an outlier and one of the few Russian scholars who stressed the benefits of the Mongol invasion of Russia, distanced himself from the discourse of Western superior civilization, and employed a multidisciplinary approach to history (Marranci

xi-xii). In his works, Barthold criticized the widely accepted stereotypes and assumptions of the Orient and blamed the decline of the Muslim Empire not on "the lack of modern and new techniques or the slow process to acquire them" (as European scholarship suggests) but on "the loss of cultural hegemony; the power to create connections and ideas and then spread them" (Marranci xix). In his introduction to *Mussulman Culture*, Gabriele Marranci praises Barthold's impartial stance towards the Muslim world, rejection of the idea of Russia's enemy, and criticism of cultural and religious chauvinism (xx).

In his article "'Applied Orientalism' in British India and Tsarist Turkestan," Alexander Morrison explores the phenomenon which received little attention in the scholarship: "the direct employment of Orientalists and the knowledge they produce by colonial states, together with the actual impact of 'Orientalist' attitudes on colonial governance and law – what I call 'applied Orientalism [as applied to the case of Turkestan]'" (622). He compares the work of British and Russian Orientalists and explores the intersections of the study of the Orient and the exercise of Russian imperial power. Morrison argues that Russia's idea to build a bridge between Europe and Asia was nothing less than an attempt to justify colonial rule over the Orient. Even though Russian Orientalists often challenged "Orientalist" stereotypes and assumptions made by Anglo-French imperialism, they worked to produce specialized knowledge of the Orient later to be used by the central administration to work out the strategy of control. As Morrison claims, "Regarding connections between the colonial state and Orientalist scholars, Russia's distinctiveness may lie in the fact that there we find a much greater interpenetration of the worlds of scholarship and colonial rule than in the British Empire" (644). Morrison concludes his article with the argument that Orientalism cannot be applied to the Russian case (to Turkestan, in particular) simply because the colonial rule and the scholarly tradition were not standing and stable in most of the

borderlands of the Russian Empire; Russia did not make good use of Orientalists in service, and ethnographic knowledge collected by Russian Orientalists did not lead to "grandiose classificatory and codification projects" associated with British colonial rule (646). Morrison makes the final conclusion about the failure of Russian Applied Orientalism by saying that the Tsarist State lacked a unified system of law and a well-laid out project of modernization, and thus it was unable to govern its borderlands the way the British, for example, exercised control over India (646-7). While Morrison might be right in his idea about the lack of a well-organized institution of managing the Orient in Tsarist Russia, Soviet Orientalism, on the other hand, worked within a rigid and deliberate political framework.

Many scholars have posed the question whether there exists a concept like Soviet Orientalism. One of those scholars, Greg Castillo, explores the architectural projects of the Soviet Union that were oriented on a compositional method "national in form and socialist in content" (33). Stalinist architecture was aimed at incorporating regional folk traditions into more modernized (and thus more superior) building types, which resulted in the process of "nativization" and loss of individuality: "The architecture of high Stalinism is portrayed as monotonous and undifferentiated, its personalities as unworthy of individual assessment, and its history as static – verdicts that in themselves rehearse colonial appraisals of cultural inferiority" (Castillo 34). Castillo believes that the Soviet Empire differs from Western Empires in the way class division was treated as a problem. Western Empires thrived on the tensions caused by class division in societies, while the Soviet Empire followed the formula for "rectifying class stratification" (34). As Castillo argues, "Soviet architecture, devised to serve that goal, documents the confluence of anti-colonialism, socialism, nationalism, and imperialism: the seemingly incompatible cultural strategies which intermingled in the Socialist Realist

deployment of Orientalism" (34). This reflected in the use of native traditions as "fodder for local expressions of a Stalinist cultural master plan" (Castillo 34), "unmasking" of outdated cultural practices, dealing with both the Russian peasant Other and the Muslim traditionalist of Central Asia, "demolition as a technique of social reform" (35), reorganization of agriculture on a collective basis and creation of rural proletariat, "conversions of cathedrals into museums of atheism, churches into Soviet worker's clubs, and monasteries into prisons" (35), colonial segregation into Muslim districts and zones of new avenues and blocks of Russian provenance, resettlement of semi-nomadic agrarians of Soviet Central Asia into permanent villages, "stylistic arrogation of indigenous form" (37), establishment of vernacular building types with the aim to domesticate the exotic, "a hybrid of the extremely familiar and the extremely exotic" (40), ethnic segregations, and the "emergence of a 'New Man,' multinational in form and socialist in content" (43). Soviet architecture during Stalin reign bore characteristics of "Oriental despotism," nationalism, and post-colonial enterprise.

Similar to Castillo, Alfrid K. Bustanov argues that there is a need to explore the history of Soviet Orientalism because all the previous studies (including works by Adeeb Khalid, Nathaniel Knight, Maria Todorova, Vera Tolz, etc.) focus on Russian Orientalism in the pre-Soviet period and show that there is no one uniform image of the Russian Orientalist. In his view, some scholars were agents of empire and actively participated in the study and the control of Oriental subjects, while others distanced themselves from politics and government. Bustanov suggests looking at the uses of Orientalism in the Soviet period in order to determine whether there was connection between the academic discipline and the political apparatus. He comes to the conclusion that Soviet Oriental Studies were extremely politicized from the very beginning. Bustanov also compares the European Orient with the Soviet one: "Soviet scholars distinguished

between the Soviet Orient (which typically comprised Central Asia and the Caucasus, but partly also the Volga-Urals and Siberia) and the Foreign Orient. In Soviet propaganda, the peoples of the Soviet Orient (*narody sovetskogo Vostoka*) were used as a showcase of successful socialist development, and in the research structures of the institutes, Soviet and Foreign Oriental research were neatly separated" (xiii). Unlike European Orientalism, Soviet Orientalism was understood in two different ways: as a historical concept, in which the classical Orient and the distant past were studied on the basis of manuscripts and epigraphic inscriptions; and, as a contemporary one, which was practical and essential to the current policy of the Kremlin.[7] Bustanov's biggest contribution is his differentiation between Soviet Orientalism and Imperial Russian Orientalism, in terms of its nature, politicization, the establishment and work of Oriental Studies, and the nation-centered versus region-centered approaches in history writing.

My project draws on this body of work and its engagement with the issues detailed above as it looks at the North Caucasus, an insurgent region of the Russian Federation, through the lens of Orientalism. Here, my project is attentive to the various concerns and historical developments in this region, including: the unsuccessful or incomplete colonization of the Caucasian land; the cultural resistance to Russian imperialism; the uniqueness of the establishment and development of Oriental Studies in Russia; the triptych structure of power relations including Russia, the North Caucasus (Orient of Russia), and Europe/USA; the political, rather than cultural or literary, character of Orientalism in Russia; and the discourse of "terror"; all of these extend

[7] Soviet Oriental Studies contributed to the Soviet policy of nation building which assimilated peoples into nations and then integrated them into the common family of Soviet peoples. Soviet Orientalists also participated in the modernization of republican nations that were considered economically and culturally "backward" (Bustanov, Introduction to *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations*).

Knight's and Khalid's idea that Said's concept of Orientalism should be applied to the Russian case with care and caution.

2. Oriental Studies in Russia

In the previous sections, I discussed the ambiguity of Russian Orientalism in terms of the unclear position of Russia in the Orient-Occident imaginary map, the simultaneity of Russia as the subjugated Other, the powerful empire, the master-slave Eurasian state which is neither completely Asian nor European. Any discussion of Russian Orientalism, thus, must begin with an analysis of the formation of Russian Studies since the history of this field can shed light on the politics of exclusion and inclusion of the Other. The main difficulties connected with the discipline of Russian Studies include the ambivalence in the naming of the discipline; the different backgrounds and various purposes for which it was established inside Russia and beyond the boundary of the Russian territory; and its different objects of research.

Russian Studies, in a broad sense, is a part of Philology Studies in which the main objects of research are the Russian language, Russian literature, and literary folklore. In a narrow sense, Russian Studies means the study of the Russian language, its history, development, and the present state. M. V. Lomonosov (1711-1765) is thought to be a founder of Russian Language Studies and is credited as being the first scholar to provide a full description of the language structure, establish the main literary styles of the Russian language, and form a theoretical framework for language standardization ("M.V. Lomonosov and Russian Language"). The discipline of Russian Studies was not formed as a political instrument or as an answer to the contemporary political or social situation. The process had a strictly academic character and a scholarly purpose to investigate the language we speak and write.

The establishment of Russian Studies outside of Russia (i.e., in other countries) had radically different goals and priorities. During World War II and, subsequently, the Cold War period Russian Studies was established as an interdisciplinary field, embracing history, politics, and language studies. Rather than following a literary direction and, mainly, focusing on linguistic investigation, Russian Studies in the European and US academy included extended research on history, political science, cultural studies, social studies, geography, languages, and literature. It was labeled as area studies and had a political and military character. The political context was also evident in the fact that Russian Studies was often replaced by Soviet or Communist Studies. By the end of the 1950s, thirteen major American universities, operated centers, institutes, committees, and programs or boards with a focus on Russia, Slavic Studies, the Soviet Union, Soviet Policy, and in some cases, Eastern Europe as well.[8] Despite having various titles, all of them focused primarily on Russia and were dominated by Russianists. The multi-ethnic composition of the Soviet Union was noted but seldom studied in depth.[9] According to Victoria Bonnell and George Breslauer, "since the collapse of the Soviet Union, significant changes have taken place in the disciplinary distribution of area specialists generally and within particular disciplines. For the first time since the 1940s and 1950s, sociologists and anthropologists – at both the faculty and graduate student levels – have embarked on research in

[8] University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, Fordham University, Harvard University, Indiana University, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Notre Dame, Syracuse University, University of Washington, Wayne State University, University of Wisconsin, Yale University.

[9] A 1991 report by the Review Committee on Soviet Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council noted: "Traditional Soviet studies in the West has failed to capture the regional and ethnic wealth of the country. Reasons included the focus of political scientists on where the power is, i.e., at the center" and the obstacles to field research. "Beyond Soviet Studies," The Review Committee on Soviet Studies [Blair Ruble, Carol Avins, Nina Garsoian, Abbott Gleason, Robert Huber, David Szanton, and Myron Weiner], November 1991, p. 5.

the field of Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet studies." Post-Soviet Studies is a new term for Russian Studies and the new dynamics of the discipline.

There has been no unity in the academic field of Russian Studies, which makes it more difficult to include postcolonial scholarship in this field. According to Gaurav Desai, institutional accommodation is "an essentially ambivalent signifier" (524). In the case of Russian Studies, the ambivalence of institutional accommodation arguably takes its roots in the naming of the discipline. For Soviet Studies any literary text of the Soviet Union or other Communist state can become a means of accommodation to reflect both Soviet consciousness and the anti-imperialist, national claims of former Republics of the Soviet Union. In case of Communist Studies, the emphasis is put on the rereadings of canonical communist texts. Kremlinology Studies focuses its curriculum on the texts and the mechanism of the working of the Russian/Soviet central government. Slavic Studies accommodates the Russian language to a broader field of area studies in which a literary text under analysis can be written in the Russian language or a dialect. Finally, Eurasian Studies accommodates Russian Studies to a more interdisciplinary and interregional area of studies, claiming that its literary text is non-centric and ideologically free. In contrast with the US academy, which adopted a technique of inclusive accommodation when the MLA gradually reorganized the format and included African literature, Canadian literature, Australian literature, etc., literature in the Post-Soviet era used a technique of exclusive accommodation by renaming and dividing all Soviet literature into literatures of Post-Soviet republics, thus giving a chance for the emergence of Ukrainian literature, Armenian literature, Moldovan literature and others without bearing the label "Soviet." The diversification in the naming of Russian Studies is directly connected with the problem of "who accommodates to whom and by recourse to what" (Desai 524). A specialist in Russian Postcolonial Studies finds it

challenging to understand which forms of institutional accommodation can unveil a postcolonial critique of the Russian Empire.

Outside of Russia, Russian Studies was formed as a discipline to understand and control Russia: a concept very similar to the one suggested by Edward Said. Said argues that "The Orient was viewed as if framed by the classroom, the criminal court, the prison, the illustrated manual. Orientalism, then, is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison, or manual for scrutiny, study, judgement, discipline, or governing" (*Orientalism* 41). In an article on Russian Studies in Australia, J. I. Zajda discusses the period of mid-sixties and early seventies in Australia during which "there was a strong demand for 'new' and 'exotic' languages like Indonesian, Japanese and, strangely enough, Russian" (198). Black and Thompson argue that the main goals of Russian Studies in the postwar period American universities were "immediate and practical ones: to provide verified knowledge concerning the Soviet Union and to train a number of Americans in this field for careers in the government, in journalism, and in academic life" (247). Ivar Spector claims that the foundation of Russian Studies (with a focus on Asiatic Russia, the Far East part of Russia) was laid at the University of Washington in 1931 and the first course in Russian literature was offered in the English Department of the university. Later on, though, as Spector says, "The course in Russian literature paved the way, two years later, for the introduction of Russian language and history – all three courses being offered by the Department of Oriental Studies" (61). This department also offered programs in Chinese and Japanese studies. It should be noted that up to the present day, Russian studies remain part of the Department of Oriental Studies (known since 1942 as the Far Eastern Department). Henry L. Roberts explores the establishment of Russian and Eastern European studies in American higher education in his article "Area Studies: Russia and Eastern Europe." He analyzes the peripheral

position of Russia and Eastern Europe and says that "because Russia and its western neighbors have been both a part of Europe and yet on its margins, the study of their societies and institutions has presented, for the Western European and American scholar, a challenging mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar" (95). Similar to Said's idea that, to a Western person, the Orient was always like some aspect of the West (*Orientalism* 67), to Western Europe and the USA, Russia and Eastern Europe were both foreign and a little bit European at the same time. It becomes clear that the establishment of Russian Studies outside of Russia was very similar to the process of establishment of Oriental Studies in Europe and the USA. Nowadays the situation is slowly changing and the departments begin to reconsider the goals, directions, and paradigms of Russian Studies, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Julie Buckler, "Russian studies today offer a field of decentering, unraveling, plural projects. We have a sense of many overlapping topics in the layering of premodern, imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet cultural spaces. We examine contradictory trajectories of renaming and reclaiming, looting and restoration" (260). Buckler suggests discarding the term "Pan-Slavic" and replacing it with "Trans-Slavic" to emphasize the equal role of all the Slavs in reconsidering cultural and historical realities from different angles and in multiple contexts.

The formation of Oriental Studies within Russia was of dissimilar nature since Russian Studies did not include the analysis of occupied territories and their peoples even though they were the official part of the country. This means that Oriental Studies in Russia represented an all-encompassing field covering not only the so-called Oriental countries (Orientalist term) (China, Japan, Afghanistan, Ottoman Empire, etc.) but also the Southern and Eastern parts of Russia annexed to the Russian territory and, thus, considered Oriental, different, and subject to investigation, analysis, and control. The development of Oriental Studies (*vostokodedeniye*) was

first of all caused by the foreign policy of the country and Russia's location at the intersection of Asia and Europe. The practical part of Oriental Studies began with trade relationships between the principalities of ancient Rus and adjacent Eastern territories. Later on, with the adoption of Christianity in 988, Russian pilgrims and clergy travelled to Asia and spread accumulated knowledge about the countries of the Middle East and Southern Asia in Rus. In the 13th century, Rus made contact with the countries of Central Asia while in the 15th century, Russian merchants first travelled to India. The earliest description of Asian countries in Old Russian language was *A Journey Beyond the Three Seas*, a literary monument in the form of travel notes written by a merchant from Tver Afanasii Nikitin in 1466-1472 (Kim and Shastitko 4). Nikitin travelled around India in the course of three years and wrote about India, its political structure, economy, trade, customs and traditions. Nikitin made this remarkable journey to India before European, particularly Portuguese, exploration of Far East Asia. Morris stresses the importance of Nikitin's writing as "one of the first non-religious manuscripts in Russian literature," as a work that "promoted no commercial or political expansion," as "contribution to the historical geography of India and the age-old caravan routes linking it with Europe," and, finally, as a "testimonial to the continued existence of the trade link between Russia and India throughout the period of the Mongol dominance of Russia and Central Asia" (507). Later on, another merchant, Fedot Kotov, was sent from Moscow to Persia with goods from the state treasury. During his journey, he wrote a diary in which he described trade, economic matters, ethnography, customs, and religion of Persian people (Andreeva). In the 15th century, under Ivan III, the Grand Duchy of Moscow was established as the successor state of the Roman Empire and the predecessor state of the early modern Tsardom of Russia. The Grand Duchy of Moscow established relations with the Ottoman Empire, India, and Mongolia. Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) was the first to start active aggressive

and expansionist policy in south-eastern parts of Russia. The Russian army occupied the Khanate of Kazan, the Khanate of Astrakhan, and united most of the peoples of the Volga region to begin trade relations with Central Asia, Iran, the Caucasus, and even some European lands. In 1549, Ivan IV issued an ambassadorial order under which there was established the first government department dealing with Asian countries. The expansion of Russian territory in the 16th century and the development of relations with foreign countries led to the creation of a professional diplomatic service and establishment of translation practice (Kim and Shastitko 5). Ivan IV continued his expansionist policy and led the Russian army to Siberia and the Far East of Russia, making it possible to have direct contact with China and Mongolia. Even though Russian travelers made enormous contribution to the study of Asia, their investigation was mostly geographical and ethnographic. Oriental Studies was not formed as an academic field of studies yet.

The 18th century marks the beginning of the formation of Oriental Studies in Russia as an academic field of studies started by Peter the Great. The reforms of Peter I were aimed at the fields of science and education. According to Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, "In radically turning his subjects' gaze to the West, Peter also suggested how they might consider the East. Motivated by his commercial and political ambitions in Asia, as well as a genuine desire to learn about the world around him, the Czar laid the foundations for the systematic and scientific study of the Orient." Peter the Great was inspired by the ideas of the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz who "saw Russia as the ideal intellectual intermediary between East and West" ("The Imperial Roots of Soviet Orientology"). In 1713, Peter I established the Kunstkamera ("Chamber of Curiosities"), the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg, which offered collections "augmented

significantly by the academic expeditions of the eighteenth century that studied the nature and peoples of Russia and different parts of the world" and covered "all the principal oriental areas: India and Sri Lanka, the Arab countries, Japan, China, Siberia, and so forth" (Kulikov). Within this museum, Peter I also founded a library with collections of rare books, manuscripts, block prints and lithographs written in various foreign languages, including Eastern languages. Following the advice of Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, Peter the Great founded the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg in 1724 and merged the Kunstkamera's library with that of the Russian Academy. The academy recruited many foreign scholars, including the Prussian schoolmaster Gottlieb-Siegfried Bayer, who became the academy's first Orientologist, interested in Russia's history and Russia's Asian origins. Also, at the Academy of Sciences, Georg-Jacob Kehr, whom some regard as the first Orientologist in Russia, translated numerous manuscripts in the academy's holdings, including "Persian astronomical tables as well as an important Central Asia history, *The Family Tree of the Turks* by the seventeenth-century Khan of Khiva, Abu l-Ghazi Bahadur" ("The Imperial Roots of Soviet Orientology"). Peter the Great also made an effort to introduce the study of Oriental languages in Russian schools. In 1705, there opened the first school specializing in the Japanese language in St. Petersburg. From the very beginning, Russian Oriental Studies had three main sources of formation: 1) practical Oriental Studies, which served the needs of Russian foreign policy and trade; 2) traditional schools of Oriental peoples, which were included in the territory of the Russian Empire. Those schools also included feudal-religious educational institutions and focused on the culture and history of their own and foreign lands; 3) European Oriental Studies, which combined the invitation of European Orientalists to work in Russia and the translation of texts devoted to Oriental Studies from European languages into Russian. Russian Oriental Studies had three main centers: Moscow, St.

Petersburg, and Kazan (Kim and Shastitko 7). St. Petersburg and Kazan universities preferred to hire European Orientalists to teach courses in Oriental letters while Moscow University became the first one to hire a native Russian Orientalist, Aleksei Boldyrev, in 1811. Even though Boldyrev was the first native Russian Orientalist, he received his education in Paris and Göttingen and he was highly influenced by the ideas of Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy ("The Imperial Roots of Soviet Orientology"). Edward Said devotes a major part of Chapter Two of *Orientalism* to talk about Sacy's work: "The Orient is overlaid with the Orientalist's rationality; its principles become his. From being distant, it becomes available; from being unsustainable on its own, it becomes pedagogically useful; from being lost, it is found, even if its missing parts have been made to drop away from it in the process. Sacy's anthologies not only supplement the Orient; they supply it as Oriental presence to the West. Sacy's work canonizes the Orient; it begets a canon of textual objects passed on from one generation of students to the next" (*Orientalism* 129). Boldyrev implemented the same strategies of fragmentation, transformation, and interpretation to teach and explain Arabic grammar and Persian and Arab anthologies. Interestingly, Boldyrev used the same methods of fragmentation and deciphering to teach Russian literature and language along with the teaching of Arabic and Persian. Boldyrev played a major role in the development of Arabic Studies in Moscow University.

During Nikolas I's reign, Kazan University hired a Persian-born scholar, Mirza Aleksandr Kasimovich Kazem-Bek, to teach Tatar. He became a Russian Orientologist with an international reputation and a prolific author whose works included *Views on the History and Vocabulary of the Arabic Language*, *Grammar of the Turco-Tatar language*, *Grammar of the Turkish language (Ottoman dialect)*, *The Explanation of the Russian Words Similar to Those in Oriental Languages*, *Concordance of the Koran*, *Muridism and Shamil*, *History of Islam*, *A Brief*

Memoir of the Life and Conversion of Mahomed Ali Bey, a Learned Persian of Derbent, The Seven Planets Comprising the History of the Crimean Khans, and many other books. During the reign of Nikolas I, Kazan University became the center of Russian Oriental Studies. It was the first university in Europe "to name a professor for Mongolian, followed by chairs for Chinese in 1837, and two more in Armenian and Sanskrit in 1842" ("The Imperial Roots of Soviet Orientology"). The field of Oriental Studies at Kazan University was a part of the department of philosophy. Since Kazan University hired the most distinguished scholars, including Kazem-Bek, Frähn, Erdman, Kovalevsky, Popov, Vasiliev, Berezin, Dittel and others, there were produced and translated many texts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchu, Chinese, Kalmyck, and other languages. As a result, the department of Oriental Studies at Kazan University was considered one of the best in Europe in the 19th century (Sinenko). However, in 1854 the success of the development of Oriental Studies in Kazan came to an abrupt end when under the order of Nikolai I, all the faculty and library were transferred to the University of St. Petersburg which would become the center of Oriental languages teaching ("The Imperial Roots of Soviet Orientology"). Kazan University could not stand against the monopoly on Asian studies in Russian Universities.

The University of St. Petersburg inherited the same practice of hiring foreign scholars as Kazan University did and what it interesting to note is that most of these scholars were of Asian origin. In the early 19th century, it was prestigious for Russian universities to have scholars of Oriental Studies directly from the East. The 1854 decree of Nikolas I to transfer the center of Oriental Studies from Kazan to St. Petersburg could be also explained by the continuous expansionist policy of Czarism. Thus, Oriental Studies at St. Petersburg University was developed with political and military goals in mind. From the very beginning, both the teaching

and learning at the department of Oriental Studies at St. Petersburg University were influenced by Russian colonial expansion, the demands of the Foreign Ministry, Czarist wars, diplomatic messages, political confirmation of power in the East, and imperial ambitions of Russia. Very often, though, the university professors favoured strictly academic goals and focused more on scholarship rather than practical training ("The Imperial Roots of Soviet Orientology"). St. Petersburg became the center of Oriental Studies in the 19th century. The 19th century marked the first success in the establishment and development of Oriental Studies in Russia. Universities introduced courses in Eastern languages and established the first textbooks and methods of teaching Oriental Studies. One can say that Russia's national school of Oriental Studies was formed in the 19th century and it established contacts with international centers of Oriental Studies. Because of the close proximity to several Oriental counties, Russia was able to take the lead in the studies of Central Asia, Mongolia, Eastern Turkestan and the Caucasus.

At the end of the 19th century, a new school of Oriental Studies is believed to emerge in Russia. Many scholars connect this event with the arabist Baron Viktor Romanovich Rozen, who became the dean of the department of Oriental Studies at St. Petersburg university. Rozen encouraged the faculty to complete their training in Europe and respect European scholarship in Oriental Studies but at the same time he promoted Russian as a scholarly language and loyally served the imperial needs of the country. Vera Tolz examines the role of nationalism and nation-building since the 19th century, which was reflected in the activities of academic Orientalists, including Viktor Rozen and early Soviet Orientologists that he trained. Rozen insisted that the focus of Russian scholarship should be, first of all, Russia's own Orient: Central Asia, the Caucasus, non-European peoples of Siberia and the middle-Volga region. Rozen's goal was to unite specialists in Oriental Studies and Slavists (specialist in Slavic Studies) to concentrate all

the efforts on studying their common motherland ("Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity" 135). Tolz argues that Russian scholars of late 19th and early 20th centuries "identified unity and fusion as Russia's 'goals in the East'" and this process of "unity and fusion was one that was fully compatible with the preservation of ethnic, linguistic, and religious pluralism" ("Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity" 136). Vasilii Bartold, another professor at St. Petersburg University and a specialist in the history of Islam and the Turkic peoples, anticipated

> the day when all the peoples of Russia, including 'the Tungus, who is wild today, and the Kalmyk, the friend of the steppe', will be united in paying tribute to the great representative of Russian culture [Pushkin], and will recognize his [genius] above all because 'during his cruel times he hailed freedom and called for mercy to the fallen', i.e. because of his service to pan-human ideals. ("The Speech" 610)

In her article "Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia," Tolz continues discussing the new Orientalist approach in Russia, according to which "there was no conflict between a strong local identity and an overarching pan-Russian one" (137). Thus, emerging nationalism of minority groups in Russia did not pose as much threat as it did to British and French empires. Tolz singles out the main directions of the new school of Oriental Studies: the idea of "native homeland," resistance to cultural Russification, the technique of on-site preservation of archeological discoveries, Orientalists' criticism of the government, the creation of local museums, and development of national consciousness. It is believed that the ideas of this new school of Oriental Studies became the basis for "*korenizatsiia*, the policy of promoting indigenous cultures and elites, pursued by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s" ("Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity" 147). Later on, Russian Orientalists became the main advisers for the Bolshevik government.

In his article "Orientalists in Petrograd/Leningrad, 1918-1956," Mikhail Rodionov draws a chronology of the Soviet pressure put on Russian Orientologists from 1918 to 1956. Rodionov points out the main characteristics of that period: expropriation of material and cultural capital, bans on research, journals and scientific institutions, imprisonment and exile of certain scholars, introduction of Marxist methods into the humanities, reorganization of the Academy of Sciences, and the establishment of Communist agendas ("Orientalists in Petrograd/Leningrad"). Rodionov investigates the fate of several Russian Orientalists who became subject to repressions, arrests, and "Red terror" in the years following the revolution (1918-1922).[10] They were repressed, arrested or exiled for mocking the Bolsheviks' slogans, being alleged spies, supporting arrested colleagues, expressing hostile attitude towards the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, participating in the anti-Soviet activities, conspiring to restore the Czarist regime, being devout Orthodox Christian, publishing articles abroad, contacting foreign scholars, being Zionists or German. As seen from Rodionov's article, many Russian Orientologists found themselves in a rather dramatic situation under the "ruthless ideological system of the Bolsheviks" ("Orientalists in Petrograd/Leningrad"). Many scholars were repressed for their religious affiliations. The Soviet regime declared complete separation of state and school from church and maintained general hostility towards religion. Also, compared to the late imperial times with St. Petersburg as the cradle of Oriental Studies, after the October revolution, Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union, became the chief orientalist center, establishing new active orientological organizations.

[10] These include the specialist in Islamic studies Vasilii Bartold, the expert in Arabic studies Ignatii Krachkovskii, the interpreter of Arabic and Iranian poetry Vasilii Eberman, and the historian of the medieval Caucasus and Middle East Ilia Petrushevskii, the specialist in in Hebrew and Arabic Mikhail Sokolov, the specialist in the traditional culture of India, Central Asia, and the Far East Sergei Oldenburg, one of the founders of the Central Asian State University in Tashkent Aleksandr Schmidt, the specialist in Iranian philology Kseniia Ilina, the specialist in ancient Syria Nina Pigulevskaia, the Arabist and ethnographer Andrei Kovalevskii, the Iranist and Turkologist Evgenii Bertel, the specialist in modern Arabic and modern Arab literature Klavdia Ode-Vasilieva, etc.

The Bolsheviks established an Oriental Studies Teaching Institute and an Oriental Studies Association in Moscow in order to promote Marxist Oriental Studies. As Michael Kemper says, "rather than studying texts and history, Bolshevik Orientalists saw their task in providing the Soviet government with the necessary political and socio-economic knowledge to support the liberation of the contemporary East from colonialism and imperialism" (435). Bolshevik Orientalism and Marxist Oriental Studies emerged as reactions against the so-called bourgeois St. Petersburg school of Oriental Studies. Bolshevik Russia supported the liberation of the Orient in order to join together in the fight against European and American imperialism and the capitalist system. In some way, the Orient became an instrument of Soviet Russia – the trap of Orientalism which the Soviet Union declared to avoid (Kemper 447, 449). Similar to Western views about the East as highlighted by Said, the Soviet Union also viewed the Orient as an amorphous entity of territories from Morocco to China that needed the Soviet example or model to be able to overcome European domination. Without the Soviet power, they could not enter the world stage and fight against European and American imperialism. In order to achieve that, Russians and peoples of the East needed education that combined knowledge of the Orient's past and present as well as studies in political system of Russia. Traditional specialists in Oriental Studies were not needed as the course of Oriental Studies drastically changed in the 20th century. Universities hired Communist lectures who did not have any formal education in Oriental Studies. One of such lecturers, Mikhail Pavlovich, became a self-made Marxist Orientalist and played a major role in Soviet oriental teaching (Kemper 454). Pavlovich later became the director of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, transformed from the Lazarev Institute founded in Czarist times. Classical Oriental disciplines were replaced with political economy, international law, historical materialism, and colonial questions. Courses on Marxism replaced a

number of Oriental languages taught at the Institute. Only six Oriental languages were taught: Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Hindi/Urdu (Kemper 461). The learning of Oriental languages was supplemented with the study of English or French, the languages of European empires. Kemper argues that "Moscow Orientalists often reprimanded their Leningrad colleagues for teaching not enough social subjects, or for studying contemporary affairs unprofessionally" (462-3). The Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, though enjoying a high level of specialized Oriental studies education, was still behind the Petrograd/Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies, which had a more philological orientation.

Vladimir Bobrovnikov's article "The Contribution of Oriental Scholarship to the Soviet Anti-Islamic Discourse" is devoted to the problem of the contribution of Oriental scholarship to the Soviet anti-Islamic discourse from the late 1920s to the mid-1980s. In his article, Bobrovnikov discusses two associations in the Soviet Union that unleashed propaganda campaigns against religion at the grassroots level: the League of the Militant Godless (Soiuz Voinstvuiushchikh Bezbozhnikov, or SVB) and the Knowledge Society (Obshchestvo Znanie). Both organizations enjoyed much popularity among grassroots with only few trained Orientalists. As Bobrovnikov argues, "Most of scholars of Islam who had started their academic and university career in the Czarist period never collaborated with the SVB [the League of the Militant Godless], and the militant atheists, for their part, did not seek assistance from Orientalists of the pre-Soviet academic school" ("The Contribution of Oriental Scholarship"). Instead, militant atheists hired young scholars and professors born in the 1890s and 1900s. They graduated from schools and institutes established in the early Soviet period: the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, the Institute of the Red Professorship, the Communist University of Toilers of the Orient, the Oriental Pedagogical Institute, etc. Scholars who worked for SVB enjoyed

many privileges, including significant career advantages, scholarly degrees without the need to defend dissertations or careers without any degrees at all. Classical Orientalism was replaced by a more sociological approach to Islamic societies. Later on, militant atheism was also replaced by a professional scientific atheism which led to the introduction of a new discipline in the curriculum, establishment of a new field of study, departments, and institutes (Bobrovnikov). All this was aimed at studying the modern manners and customs of Muslim people and later conducting propaganda against religious traditions of Islam. In many ways, Soviet atheists resembled orthodox missionaries of the 19th century "aiming not at observation but at denunciation (*oblichenie*) and unmasking (*razoblachenie*) of Islam" (Bobrovnikov). Militant atheists did not have scholars with traditional knowledge of the Orient. They had to borrow ideas and facts from the texts of Orthodox missionaries, Czarist or foreign Orientalists. For the most part, militant atheists were ignorant and afraid of Islam.

Soviet Oriental Studies, in general, had many common features with European and American Orientalism: establishment of institutions, vocabulary, doctrines with the aim to know the Orient, form national histories and identities, and have certain control over it. However, Stephan Conermann points out the specific aspects of Soviet Oriental Studies which make it a distinct case: "the declared emancipating agenda of Soviet scholarship (the Soviet support for the 'liberation' of the East from colonialism and exploitation), the strong integration of 'Orientals' (here: persons from the nominally Muslim communities of the USSR) into the Soviet research and teaching institutions, and the huge political pressures that Orientalists worked under, including physical threat and annihilation (especially during the formative years of Marxist Oriental Studies)" (Conermann). These features set Soviet Oriental Studies apart from Oriental Studies in Europe. It is remarkable how European pro-colonial tools and practices were used by

Soviet Oriental Studies for seemingly anti-colonial goals. The same epistemology was used for different political goals. This peculiar contradiction can be further demonstrated by the analysis of the establishment of Caucasian Studies in Russia and outside of it. It is, thus, important to go back to the 18th century which marks the beginning of the formation of Caucasian Studies in Russia.

The formation of Caucasian Studies started in the 18th century with the reforms of Peter the Great and academic expeditions to the Caucasus which provided first geographic descriptions, information about administrative and political situation of the peoples, different ethnographic and statistics reports. The biggest contribution to the initial exploration of Caucasian history and culture was made by naturalists-encyclopedists Zuev, Gmelin, Gyuldenschdedt, Marshal fon Bibershtein, doctors Shober and Lerh, commanders Gerber, Butkov, Yazykov, Burnashev, historian Baier and many others. In the 19th century, there were many voluntary reporters eager to analyze and publish notes and articles on the peoples of the Caucasus. The appearance of Russian periodical press in the Caucasus played a major role in the development of Caucasian Studies. The representatives of Caucasian ethnic groups also contributed to the study of the Caucasus from within. The most famous Caucasian explorers include the Lezgin[11] explorer Aigoni, the Tushenian[12] researchers V. and I. Cziskarovy, the Kumyk[13] scholar D.M. Shihaliev, the Circassian[14] Sultan Khan-Girei, and the Kabardian[15] educator Shora Nogmov. Some of the Caucasian scholars that were educated in St. Petersburg or Moscow became sympathetic with the ideas of Russian intelligentsia and saw their role in the

[11] Lezgins are a Caucasian ethnic group native to Southern Dagestan and northeastern Azerbaijan.
[12] Tushenians are a subgroup of Georgians who live in Tusheti (northeast Georgia).
[13] Kumyks are a Turkic people living in northern Dagestan.
[14] Circassians (or Adyghe) are a northwest Caucasian nation native to Circassia.
[15] Kabardians are largest of the twelve Adyghe tribes.

Caucasus as enlighteners and educators of Caucasian peoples. Nogmov, for example, supported the idea of annexation of Kabardino-Balkaria (republic in southwestern Russia) to Russia (Kim and Shastitko 197). The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences drew its attention to the exploration of the Caucasus in the mid-19th century and sponsored field trips of academics Klaprot and Shyogren. The interest of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IOM) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) in Caucasian Studies could be explained by two factors: first, the proximity of the Caucasus to the Middle East and, second, the political goals of the Russian government in regards to the different peoples inhabiting the country.[16] In the 1830s, Caucasian Studies became part of Oriental Studies at IOM (Orbeli 470).

In the 1830s, the Russian Academy of Sciences hired Marie-Félicité Brosset, a French Orientalist specializing in Georgian and Armenian Studies. The first task for Brosset was to collect all the available manuscripts on Caucasian Studies and restock the holdings of the library. During 15 years, Brosset, together with Russian and Caucasian scholars, worked on building a mass collection of ancient manuscripts and literary texts written by Caucasian writers: Brosset worked closely with the Georgian royal prince and the author of the first critical history in Georgian, Teimuraz Bagrationi, consulted Armenian linguist and professor of Armenian studies at the St. Petersburg University, Kerovbe Patkanian, and used the work of Boris Andreevich Dorn, a German Orientalist specializing in the history and languages of Iran, Russia, Afghanistan, and the work of Joseph Gotvald, an Orientalist specializing in Arabic and Persian

[16] In the 19th century, the goal of the Russian Empire was to conquer several lands between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the North Caucasus were eventually brought under Russian control. In the 20th century, the goal of the Soviet government was to divide the peoples of the Caucasus into nationality categories and assimilate them into one big category of the Soviet society. In the 21st century, the objective remains the establishment of the spheres of influence in the South and North Caucasus, the potential creation of the Eurasian Union, maximization of Russian domination in the post-Soviet space, and the "external control and the appearance of loyalty to Moscow" (Sergei Markedonov, "The North and South Caucasus and Russia under Putin: Problems and Challenges").

languages. Boris Dorn journeyed to the Caucasus to write an all-encompassing report on the region and peoples. He was first to point to the necessity of using Oriental sources to study Caucasian peoples and regions. From the 1830s to the 1880s, Caucasian Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences focused more on the traditional methods of studying and analyzing history of the Caucasus, and this history of the Caucasus consisted mainly of the history of two regions: Georgia and Armenia. These two regions and peoples were the focus of attention since they both had a long tradition of the written language. Other peoples of the Caucasus without well-developed written language remained largely unnoticed and unstudied (Orbeli 479-81). The second period (about 40 years) of Caucasian Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences was the time of standstill. At this time, the center of Caucasian Studies became the Department of Oriental Studies at the St. Petersburg University. Nicholas Marr, a Georgian-born historian and linguist, took the lead in the development of Caucasian Studies. After the October Revolution (1917), Marr became the Soviet scholar and addressed the problems of Caucasian Studies with a more practical approach. He took part in the investigation of the tribal structure of the Caucasus, organization of cultural centers in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and in the establishment of first national research institutes and regional natural history museums in the republics of the USSR (Orbeli 483). In the 1930s, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IOM) of the Russian Academy of Sciences attempted to hire scholars to work not only on Georgia and Armenia but also on the regions of the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia.[17] The problem of the study of the North Caucasus and Dagestan lay in the fact that only one person, Anatolii Genko, was in charge of the whole project. Genko was a wide range specialist in Caucasian Studies. His notes on the North Caucasus were fragmentary and incomplete. Moreover, he addressed the study of North

[17] Modern Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Caucasian languages by focusing on the philological research on written languages of Georgia and Armenia (Orbeli 486). Genko was also interested in the use of Arabic materials for the study of the Caucasus, in particular Dagestan. As Amri R. Shikhsaidov says, "For Genko, the most important tasks were to establish the territorial and chronological boundaries of the Southern Dagestani 'Caucasian-Arabic' cultural center, as well as to define the cultural and historical situation in Northern Dagestan in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in order to discover which factors determined the 'renaissance' of medieval Arabic culture in Dagestan" ("Arabic Historical Studies in Twentieth-Century Dagestan"). Shikhsaidov analyses the work of another member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences who specialized in the study of the North Caucasus – the Leningrad Arabist Ignatsii Iu. Krachkovskii. He advocated the study and publication of the literary heritage of the peoples of the North Caucasus. During the Soviet times, Arabic studies were discouraged but Krachkovskii was one of the few who supported the study of Dagestan's Arabic literature. Krachkovskii's disciple Barabanov published the Russian translation of the historical work of Muhammad-Tahir al-Qarakhi, *The Flash of the Dagestani Sabres in Shamil's Jihad Battles*, one of the most important texts about the liberation movement under Imam Shamil (Shikhsaidov). Leningrad scholars played a major role in the development of Oriental studies in Dagestan.

Caucasian Studies (with a focus on the North Caucasus) suffered a major setback during World War I and World War II since parts of the North Caucasus were occupied and a number of Balkar, Karachay, Ingush, and Chechen peoples were deported from their homeland. There was a complete suspension in the research and study of the languages and cultures of the North Caucasus. In the second half of the 1950s, the situation changed for the better: the repressed peoples were rehabilitated; their self-governments were re-established; research infrastructure

was restored. In 1957, the first classical universities were established in the republics of the North Caucasus: Dagestan State University and Kabardino-Balkaria State University. By the 70s, all the autonomous republics of the North Caucasus had a twofold system in humanities: a local traditional pedagogical university and a research institute of history, linguistics, and culture of its "own" peoples. In all the regions of the North Caucasus, there were established scientific schools that were, however, territorially and ethnically secluded. Few connections existed between them. In general, Moscow and St. Petersburg universities took the leading role and coordinated and dictated what course of studies should be followed in regional institutes. The biggest achievement of Caucasian Studies during the Soviet times became a four-volume *History of the North Caucasian peoples* (1988) from ancient time till the present written and edited by two hundred scholars from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don, the Dagestani affiliated institution of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and all the universities and research centers in the North Caucasus. *History of the North Caucasian Peoples* was the crowning achievement of Soviet Caucasian Studies. Unfortunately, only the first two volumes were published. With the breakup of the USSR in 1991, the two remaining volumes were left as manuscripts in the archives, never published. For exactly the same reason, other major projects were also left unrealized; these include *Collection of Historical and Cultural Monuments*, *Collection of Folk Literature*, *History of Literatures of the North Caucasus*, *Comparative Anthropology of the North Caucasus*, etc. In the 1990s, there was complete disruption in the collaboration between Moscow, St. Petersburg and regional universities of the North Caucasus. There were few advances in Caucasian Studies, and most of the research had a narrow and regional direction. Scholars were politically divided into "ours" and "not ours." North Caucasian universities and research centers were not sufficiently funded. Departments of Caucasian Studies were later

transformed into departments of area studies as the North Caucasus, the Southern part of Russia, was a region of problems, conflicts, and political and economic interest. From the collapse of the Soviet Union till the present day, Russia has been dealing with unacknowledged but de facto independent criminal Ichkeria, the ongoing Ossetian-Ingush conflict, the aggression of international terrorism, deep compound crisis, poverty, and absence of consistent and clear federal policy in the North Caucasus (Chernous).

Aleksandr Krylov summarizes the most important problems that Caucasian Studies as a field faces after the collapse of the Soviet Union. First, he addresses the problem of the definition of Caucasian Studies. At various points, Caucasian Studies is believed to be part of world history, part of European history, part of Russian history, and part of Oriental Studies. It can be a part of each field, which complicates our understanding of the role and place of Caucasian civilization in history and on the geopolitical map. Second, there is a problem of outlining the geographical borders of the Caucasian region. It consists of areas and regions with relatively conventional and approximate borderlines. It also concerns the boundaries between the South and the North Caucasus. There still exist no definite criteria that can draw the official borders. Third, Krylov stresses the problem of dissemination of Caucasian Studies. Up to the present day, Russia has not had one unified scientific center of Caucasian Studies that could coordinate all the on-going research and make it available for everyone interested in this topic. Publication of research is still problematic and difficult to access even for the scholars of Caucasian Studies in Russia. Texts are printed in a run of 100-200 copies and they are rarely used outside of individual institutes. The fourth issue of the development of Caucasian Studies is the difficulty of establishing connections and relations between specialists in Caucasian Studies from different countries. Russian scholars of Caucasian Studies have little or episodic contact with foreign

specialists. The fifth problem concerns the political and ideological character of Caucasian Studies in Russia when most of the research is published as journalistic writing with little scientific implications. The next problem is related to wide-scale publication of literature about the Caucasus on a commercial basis. Two issues result from that: high price and questionable scientific value of the content. Very often, qualified scholars from various fields are hired to write commercial-based literary texts about the Caucasus. These scholars, not specializing in this area of studies, do not have enough time to go deep into the topic and, thus, produce poorly-researched texts of a very low quality. The last problem that Krylov points out is the insufficient level of popularization of authentic scientific knowledge about the Caucasus. In the age of new technologies, the internet becomes the main tool in spreading knowledge about the history of the Caucasus. Nowadays there exist a number of websites and sources that introduce conflicting information about national history and contradictory representations of the important events in the Caucasus. Krylov sums up his article by encouraging the further development of scientific organization of specialists in Caucasian studies ("Caucasian Studies").

In his introduction to *Model-Minority Imperialism* (2006), Victor Bascara argues, "Considering the history of relations between East and West, the postcolonial and the Asian American are for obvious reasons quite resonant concepts. Yet at the same time, obvious historical reasons have kept them apart, namely the chronic resistance of American culture to casting the United States as imperial" (xvi). In the case of Russia, due to the absence of much postcolonial discourse, the concepts "colonial" and "postcolonial" have been replaced by Soviet and Post-Soviet studies, which focus on the examination of the language, politics, economy, history, literature of Russia and of former Soviet Republics as well as the rapid changes reshaping this major world region. While postcolonial studies in the US might stand for Post-

Soviet studies in Russia, the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies may be viewed as productively analogous to Caucasian Studies in the Russian academic field. Caucasian Studies, directly engaging with the "Orient," "Oriental," and the "Other," however, is not associated with Post-Soviet studies, which makes it easier for Russia to resist being labeled as imperial, neo-colonial, and neo-Soviet.

According to Bascara, "Multiculturalism and globalization have become the two guiding ideologies of the contemporary period that seek to explain the value of difference" (xvi). Both concepts bear resemblance to the practices of imperialism and hegemony (xvii). Although the Soviet Union and Russia did not employ this institutionalization of difference as a means of legitimizing the practices and ideologies of capitalism, Soviet Communism and proclaimed forms of Russian multiculturalism can both be viewed as manifestations of totalitarianism. It is worth mentioning that Russian multiculturalism is often called "ethnic diversity management," meaning managing or controlling the difference within the framework of the empire instead of the initial meaning of multicultural policy, which implies the presumably equal existence of diverse cultures and their cooperation without center-frontier structural dynamics.

The meaning of diversification within one territory is the meeting point of two concepts: Post-Soviet studies and Caucasian Studies. It is the difference between the Russians and the Chechens, the Central Asia and the North Caucasus, the Soviet practices and the Post-Soviet era, Russia and the Orient. It is this confrontation with difference, the fear of the unknown and the unlike that contributed to the establishment of different smaller centers of Caucasian Studies. The main aim of the establishment of Caucasian Studies in Russia has thereby been to build a strategy to manage the Northern Caucasus – an idea very much similar to the newest forms of imperialism, dictatorship, and colonialism.

Although the Caucasus was first mentioned in the Russian classic literary texts in the second half of the 10th century, Caucasian Studies as a field in the humanities was established only in the 19th century. From the very beginning Russia admitted the diversity and manifoldness of the Caucasus and established scholarship in various subfields, including specialists in Azerbaijan, Georgian, Armenian, Dagestani, Ossetian, Chechen, Ingushetian, Abkhazian Studies, etc. The investigation of the Caucasian region was carried out by the representatives of the Russian Academy of Scientists, local scientists and amateurs as well as by members of official political circles. There were two main reasons why the interest in the Caucasus was suddenly boosted. First, K.D. Fren, the Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in Saint Petersburg, came to the conclusion that the regions of the Northern and Southern Caucasus required necessary and deep investigation. Second, it was in the political interests of the Russian government to study the history and culture of peoples who had been annexed to the territory of the Russian Empire (1477-1991) (Orbeli 470). Caucasian Studies was perceived as a part of Oriental Studies from the very beginning. What kind of logic and principles were used to sort out the Caucasian region with the Orient when, geographically, it is located in the South-Western part of Russia? Why did Russia, claiming it had never been an imperial power, apply the same ideological formation and division of the world into the East and the West as England and France did? The idea that the Caucasian region and the peoples who inhabit it are marginal and oriental when viewed from the centre of Russia was evident from the very beginning of the establishment of Caucasian Studies. The political message was self-evident. Since the Caucasus is occupied not only by Russia, but also by Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, part of Iran and Turkey and since it is the natural border between Europe and Asia, it plays a vital geopolitical role for Russia and other powers. As Brenda Shaffer also points out, the Caucasus is an “important air corridor from the

United States and Europe to destinations in the Middle East and Asia, including Afghanistan" (131). It means that this region has political and economic significance for Russia, Europe, Asia, and the United States. The analysis of Caucasian Studies outside of Russia can shed light on the way the region and its peoples are viewed at international level and understand whether orientalist, imperial, and colonial discourses are addressed. The academic institutions under analysis include Malm*ö* University in Sweden, Institute for Central Asian and Caucasian Studies in Sweden, the German University in Jena, and The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program at Johns Hopkins University in the US.

Malm*ö* University in Sweden defines Caucasian Studies as an important area and offers a PhD program to conduct research in this field. Their mode of institutional accommodation is different from the framework developed by the Russian academy. Caucasian Studies is not a part of Oriental Studies or Postcolonial Studies. In this Swedish university it falls into the category of Global Political Studies which substantially changes the dynamics of the program's direction. The importance of research in this field is explained in the following way: "Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the Caucasus region has gained a new strategic significance. Regional great powers again compete for political influence in the region and for control over its strategically important energy resources. New external actors, notably the US and the EU, also seek to obtain influence in the region" (Vamling). Instead of having two oppositional forces – Russia and the Caucasus – the Swedish program extends the framework of relationships by addressing the role of the US and the EU in the Caucasian arena. The Caucasus is not viewed as the insurgent Orient or Other; it rather has a role of a site of struggle amongst various actors not necessarily burdened by discourses of orientalism or colonialism.

Another Institute for Central Asian and Caucasian Studies, in the Swedish city of Lulee, is strictly orientalist, which can be seen in the list of purposes and objectives it pursues:

- to study and review the social and political situation in Central Asia and the Caucasus;
- to support intellectually the political and economic reforms in these countries, forming a positive perception of western liberal democratic values in Central Asia and the Caucasus;
- to encourage the formation of a civil society in the region;
- to create a database and distribute information ("Central Asia and the Caucasus").

In contrast, the German University in Jena puts the main focus on linguistic investigation: "The main focus of the Master of Arts in Caucasology / Caucasus Studies is the typological contemplation of the languages indigenous to the Caucasus, both from a diachronic and a synchronic point of view. The history and current situation of the ethnic groups living in the region will also be examined" ("Caucasian Studies"). The program also focuses on "regionally-oriented research knowledge" about the Caucasus. It offers basic courses in history, politics, religion, and languages of the Caucasian region. Even though the program briefly mentions the tensions existing in some of the regions of the Caucasus, it does not see this region as a part of post-colonial discourse. It explicitly states, it is a "regional study program," and its course looks very similar to the idea of area studies. The program website does not go into detail about the goals of the study. It states that the study will help "gain an insight on the complex areas of transnational, transcultural, and trans-denominational processes" ("Caucasian Studies"). The linguistic and regional focus of this program suggests that there might be a deeper intellectual agenda, an agenda that is politically tainted. Similar to the goals of the area studies during the

Cold War era, the possible objective of this program is the study of the Caucasus as a potential external threat that needs to be countered and managed.

The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program at Johns Hopkins University in the US might, arguably, be the only one that explicitly foregrounds the issue of orientalist and colonial discourses within which the Caucasus is being investigated. It formulates its main goal as the following: "The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program were designed, in 1996 and 2002 respectively, to respond to the increasing need for information, research and analysis on these regions with the identical ambition: to help bring these regions out of the shadows of the American and European consciousness to which fate had consigned them. By encouraging Americans and Europeans to enter into an active and multi-faceted engagement with the region, and by promoting serious and well-informed policies towards it, the founders hoped the new institutes could help a neglected world area to reclaim its legitimate and appropriate place in the world order" ("Central Asia-Caucasus Institute"). This may be one of the few institutions openly pointing to the problems of the subaltern position of the Caucasian people, the influence of American and European ideological formations, and the opportunity for the Caucasian people to be reinscribed into the world map. The work at Johns Hopkins University illuminates the need for my own research to contribute to this very small focus and approach the Caucasus as a politically marginalized area of study. The subsequent chapters will help show how the North Caucasus has been existing in the shadows of Russian consciousness and how literary and cinematographic texts attempt at subverting the dominant discourses and ideology.

Chapter Two: Russia's Orient

1. Orientalism in Russian Literature and Cinema

Edward Said made little mention of Russia in his book *Orientalism* and focused mostly on England, France, and the United States as the main empires responsible for the cliched, patronizing images of the Oriental world. The beginning of this chapter explores the first encounters of Russia with the East, the creation of early images of the Self and Other, and Russia's "strong orientological tradition" ("The Curious Fate of Edward Said in Russia") largely ignored by Said. The first encounters of Russia with the East would later influence the perception of the Caucasus and the ambivalent relationships between Russia and Asia.

Travel literature was the first genre used by Old Russian[18] writers to describe their journeys and voyages to the East and to record their experiences in detail. In 1984, the Soviet literary historian Nikolai Prokofiev made an attempt to summarize all the known facts about Old Russian travel writing in his foreword to the anthology *Travel Book: Notes of Russian Travellers in XI-XV Centuries*. From the 11th to 15th century, travel writing was one of the most popular genres in Old Russia. The archives of Russian State Library and National Library of Russia still preserve around 70 original texts of travel writers of that time. Prokofiev distinguishes different periods in the development of the genre of travel literature. The first period (10-14 centuries) was characterized by pilgrimage journeys, during which the author, also a pilgrim, travelled to the places of the Middle East to visit Christian landmarks there. In the second period (14-15 centuries), the role of the author changed and it was now not the pilgrim traveling to the East but an ambassador or foreign merchant who visited foreign countries to record information about

[18] Old East Slavic refers to the language used by East Slavs in Kievan Rus' during the 10th-15th centuries.

Western Europe, the Muslim East, and distant India. The third period (16-18 centuries) united all the travellers and pathfinders of lower class descent who made account of their travels and wrote essays, notes, and short stories. Thus, there existed several types of travel literature: religious, secular, pilgrim, commercial, diplomatic, exploratory ("Pilgrimages in Old Russian Literature"). The Eastern theme was also reflected in Old Russian novels and tales. The most famous ones are *Aleksandria* (13 cent.), *Deeds of Digenis* (12-13 cent.), and *The Story of the Wise Ahikar* (12 cent.). Under the reign of the Rurik dynasty (AD 862-1610), Kievan Rus was formed, a federation of East Slavic tribes in Europe from the late 9th to the mid-13th century. During this time, the East became an object of interest not only for literary and aesthetic reasons; the volatile relationships with foreign neighbors and struggle with nomad tribes – the Khazars, the Pechenegs, the Magyars, the Polovtzy, Ugric and Turkic peoples from Central Asia – led to the creation of patriotic texts in which the East was represented as a hostile place, an unknown land inhabited with peoples who brought destruction to the Rus land. In fact, the people who inhabited the steppes and the forests created the first images of Russia's Orient or Other. These ideas were reflected in the two most famous monuments of Old Russian literature – *The Tale of Past Years* or *Primary Chronicle* (1113) and *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* (1185) (Karimian).

The first images of the Self and Other were structured by the adoption of Christianity from Byzantium in 988 and the subsequent division of people into believers and non-believers. As Dominik Gutmeyr argues, "As a result of Grand Prince Vladimir's baptism and the subsequent anti-Muslim influence of the Byzantine Empire on Kievan chroniclers, the notions defining the Self and Other were not restricted to differentiating between forest and steppe anymore, but led to the first denominational othering, even though the Russians' Other factually had not yet adopted Islam" (66). Following the Byzantine chronicles, which portrayed Islam as an enemy,

Russia started to equate non-Christian people with Islam, even though a lot of people still practiced pagan customs and traditions and Islam was not introduced in most parts of Russia. Applying the same view on Islam as Byzantium did, Russia symbolically created the Other even before Islam spread throughout the country. The image of the East as an alien land was further emphasized in the tales of the 13th-14th centuries, the age of Tatar rule: *Legend of the Rout of Mamai*, *Orison on the Downfall of Russia*, *Zadonshchina*, and *The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan*. The hostile attitude towards the Tatar Other emerged later in the Russian mind, long after the end of the Mongol rule. As Charles Halperin claims, in the 13th-14th centuries, there existed the so-called "ideology of silence" (13) when bookmen of that period ignored the adversaries and refused to admit that Russia had been conquered and subject to Mongol-Tatar rule. The image of the hostile and alien Other appeared much later when Russia was able to regain control over its land and overthrow the Mongol-Tatar yoke. *The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan,* the earliest copy of which dates back to the 16th century (a century after the Tatar rule), describes the Mongols with the vocabulary of Byzantium's faith (campaign against Muslims): "godless," "infidel," "children of Hagar," and "evil." Another example of the first encounter with the distant Muslim Other was made by Afanasii Nikitin and reflected in the famous literary monument *A Journey Beyond the Three Seas.* Nikitin travelled around India in the course of three years and wrote about India, its political structure, economy, trade, customs and traditions. This Russian merchant made his remarkable journey to India before European, particularly Portuguese, exploration of Far East Asia. In his account *A Journey Beyond the Three Seas*, Nikitin describes naked people around him, the Muslim court, the appearance of sultan and his entourage, the caste system, the Hindu beliefs, promiscuous women, etc. Even though there were elements of the romantic image of the distant Orient, scholars have noted that Nikitin's tale was

far more objective than most of European tales about the East. As David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye argues, "Even more striking is Nikitin's growing Islamicization during his years away from home. If he began his journey as a devout Christian, over time the *Journey*'s author increasingly adopted Muslim religious habits. As he lost track of the Orthodox calendar, Nikitin began to observe Islamic practices, including the month-long Ramadan fast" (*Russian Orientalism* 25). Nikitin's *A Journey Beyond the Three Seas* remains one of the most popular works of medieval Russian literature. These famous literary monuments resemble, in form and content, classic European representations of the Middle and Far East driven by trade, exploration, and interest in different cultures. The opposition between East and West was widely explored, for example, in the mercantile romance narrative written by Marco Polo.

In the 18th century, Russian writers and poets gradually lost interest in travel writing and classical literature and turned to the local folklore, foreign literature and cultures. At this time, especially popular became the genre of the oriental tales, "pseudoethnographies, sexual fantasies, and political utopias [that] speculated about a largely imaginary East. This imagination was experimental, prospective, and antifoundationalist" (Aravamudan 4). In these tales, Alessandra Tossi says, "exotic stories and Eastern settings provide the narrative frame for the presentation of abstract topics (the transitoriness of life, the vanity of human wishes) and ethical issues, in particular those linked to the definition of moral and civic duties" (1055). In Russian literature of the 18th century, there existed three main types of oriental tales: 1) ethical and moral tales with a religious connotation; 2) escapist and adventure tales; 3) educational and philosophical tales, often satiric, with moral lessons. In the 1770s, there appeared Russian translations of *One Thousand and One Nights* (*The Arabian Nights*), *Persian Letters* by Charles de Secondat, baron

de Montesquieu, satirical and philosophical tales of Voltaire.[19] Among oriental tales by Russian authors, the most distinguished include *Golden Rod* by Kheraskov, *Nadir* and *Three Sons Aubovy* by anonymous writers*, Kaib, The Oriental Tale* by Krylov, *The Triumph of Virtue* by Zinoviev, and *Selim and Roksana* by Glinka. The genre of the oriental tale became popular in 18th century Russian literature for its symbiosis of entertainment and moral lessons. According to Nicole Horejsi, "The Eastern settings—stereotypically renowned for their wealth and luxury—allowed writers to warn against the evils of temptation, while contemporary fears about Eastern despotism resulted in meditations on tyrannical sultans and unruly subjects." In the early 19th century, there was a short revival of the oriental tale popularized by writers like Alexander Izmailov, Nikolai Brusilov, and Alexander Benitskii. Nevertheless, the genre lost the component of adventure, and its fictional pattern was gradually replaced with the style and structure of the philosophic-didactic essay. As for the Eastern settings, "the pseudo-oriental ambience was abandoned in favour of contemporary Russian settings and the one-dimensional, static characters of eighteenth-century derivation, epitomizing a philosophical or moral belief, gave way to 'real', substantive figures embodying the contradictions inherent in their human condition and ideals" (Tosi 1064). Even before creating the romantic image of the near or distant Orient in the 19th century, Russian texts of the late 18th century portrayed Russian peasants (*narod*)[20] as the country's main Orientals or Other. One such work, *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* by Aleksander Radishchev, is a story of an imaginary journey that the main character takes between Russia's two principal cities; during this trip, Radishchev observes the problem of Russian society: serfdom, freedom, the powers of nobility, and other issues in the government. The exotic

[19] It is important to note that these were Russian translations of English and French mediations of Oriental literature. In effect, this double translation perfectly highlights Russia's ambiguous Oriental/non-Oriental position in the seemingly triptych structure.

[20] *Narod* means nation, general public, peoplehood, mass.

Orient in this case is not some distant Muslim Other but a native Russian peasant. During his journey, Radishchev questions Russia's claim to Europeanism and well-established binaries East/West, explores Russia as a hybrid identity that incorporated internal otherness, undermines the image of the ideal enlightened self, sees the dream that reveals the oriental despotism of Western monarchs, and experiences Otherness in order to understand his true Self. Orientalism, in this case, becomes a tool for Russia to reclaim Otherness in order to challenge the boundaries between the Self and the Other and understand its own identity (Sobol 264).

Early 19th century Russian poets and writers were influenced by Romanticism, which rejected rationality, reason, order, decorum, and restrictions. Emotions, feelings, spontaneity, intuition, and the mystical replaced the rational values of the Greco-Roman past. Romantic writers turned to the East in search of new wisdom, and the wild, unknown, exotic and sensual Orient appealed to Western and Russian authors alike. While in the 18th century, oriental tales used Eastern topography and onomastics for creating exotic decorations and teaching moral lessons, in the early 19th century, Russian authors started using Oriental themes and motifs in literature which led to the creation of the so-called *oriental style*. Russian writers – Zhukovsky, Glinka, Shishkov, Batyushkov, Pushkin, Lermontov – used metaphorical images of the Orient but followed the Russian norms of the poetic form and structure. The most popular Oriental themes and motifs in Russian literature included tropes like the harem, the desert, the Quran, the prophet, the prayer tower, the Eastern sky, the moon and the stars, mosque, etc. Also popular were imitations of the Eastern texts, themes, and ideas in Russian cycles: *Imitations of the Koran* by Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Yakov Polonsky; *Imitations of Arabic* by Pushkin, Polonsky, Aleksey Apuhtin; *Imitations of Ancient/ Oriental Versemakers* by Konstantin Batyushkov, Afanasy Fet, and so on. This Russian tradition of imitating the sacred text of Islam

continued to be popular in 20th century Russian literature. As Hanna Chuchvaha says, "In the early twentieth century 'Quranic' imitations were visible in Ivan Bunin (1870-1953), Balmont and Ellis's poetry, in Gumilev's poems from 1910, and in the 1920s they appeared in Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922) and Sergei Esenin's (1895-1925) poetic works" (250). Even though Russian writers and poets of the 19th century were inspired by the motifs and themes from the near and distant East, there were other sources of inspiration much closer to home. In the 19th century, the Caucasus became the place of political, economic, and cultural interest. It consequently was a source of inspiration for great writers like Pushkin, Lermontov, Bestuzhev, and Leo Tolstoy. Many writers travelled to the Caucasus to serve there and obtain first hand experience and knowledge of Russia's own Orient. Pushkin was one of the first poets to popularize Oriental themes and show Russia's special affinity with Asia.[21] Pushkin's "southern poems"[22] – "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" (1821), "The Robber Brothers" (1821-22), "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" (1821-23), "The Gypsies" (1823-34) – resembled Byron's *Turkish Tales* and imitated his motifs of the hero's captivity and his subsequent escape, his love for an Oriental woman, the harem settings, and robbery. They were the first lyric poems to explore Russian identity in a foreign environment and within a different cultural context. In "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," Pushkin initially criticizes the savage way of life of Circassians,[23] but the more time the lyric hero spends in captivity, the more sympathetic he is towards Caucasian culture. Finally, he comes to the full understanding, appreciation, and even admiration of his

[21] Alexander Pushkin was inspired by his own African heritage and his African great-grandfather, General Abraham Petrovitch Gannibal, who became close to Tsar Peter the Great and stayed in Russia after his captivity in Constantinople. While adopting a Russian lifestyle, he nevertheless always remembered his African origins, culture, and heritage.

[22] The narrative poems Pushkin wrote during his exile to the South Russia. They include "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai," and "The Gypsies."

[23] The Circassians (or Adyghe) are a Northwest Caucasian nation. Many of them were displaced during the Russian conquest of the Caucasus in the 19th century.

captors and their highlander way of life. And yet, as Schimmelpenninck van der Oye contends, Pushkin was not opposed to Eastern conquest, the tsarist efforts to subjugate the Caucasus, and the extension of Russia's dominions in Asia (*Russian Orientalism* 68). It was this peculiar mixture of affinity and the desire to control that characterized Russian Orientalism in all the subsequent years. As Alexander Nazaryan observes, "It may be ironic that writers, like Pushkin, who badly wanted Mother Russia to catch up to her Western European neighbors could at the same time celebrate the unabashedly pre-modern ways of the mountains. There is Orientalism at work here, sure, but also something else—an anxiety about progress, a suspicion that the Caucasian way of life, with its horses, mountains, and wine, is somehow more true to the human condition." Lermontov, a successor and ardent admirer of Pushkin, blamed the Russian government for the conspiracy in the death of the great poet, and, as a result, Nicholas I banished Lermontov to the Caucasus. The result of that exile was Lermontov's greatest work, *A Hero of Our Time* (1840), a masterpiece of Russian romantic prose. In the 18th and 19th centuries, there existed two main trends in the way the East was conceptualized. For the first one, Russian writers and poets looked at the Orient through the prism of Western literary texts and ideas. Many European texts about the East were translated by Russian writers and used as the standard to evaluate and judge the Eastern world. The second trend was a purely Russian concept of the Orient formed as a result of the country's internal geographical and cultural complexities. The constant conflict and synthesis of the two viewpoints characterized the unique concept of the Orient in Russian literature.

The Pushkin Golden Age was followed by Russia's Silver Age, an exceptionally creative period of Russian poetry in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Orient became one of the most favourite themes of that period. One of the most prolific poets of that period, Konstantin

Balmont, looked at Asia as a source of wisdom and condemned European bourgeois materialism. Balmont, together with Valery Briusov, another representative of the Silver Age, found inspiration in Asian exotic beauty and spiritual dimension of life (*Russian Orientalism* 213). The authors of the Silver Age looked at the distant East as a symbol for something threatening and devoted their works to the idea of the Western struggle to resist the destructive force of the East. They analyzed the bicontinental identity of Russia, praised the nomad's free spirit, and proclaimed Russia's distinct Eurasian character. The poets of the Silver Age emphasized the exotic part of Russia's identity. Ivan Bunin, a poet widely considered one of the representatives of the Silver Age, was interested in the East as the locus of ancient wisdom, heavenly truth, and the secrets of the universe. For Bunin, the East represented both the past of the mankind and the future of the universe. These ideas were reflected in Bunin's most famous works, including his anthology *Bird's Shadow* and his poems "Temple of the Sun," "The Sodom Country," "Istanbul," "Black Stone of Kaaba," "Safia's Tomb," and "Hagia Sophia." Bunin explored the reasons for the crash of ancient civilizations and the loss of the inner faith in people. Bunin made an effort not only to study the customs and traditions of the East. He also spent a lot of time reading and analysing texts written by Oriental writers. He distinguished three types of the East: Arab/Muslim East, Buddhist East, and the East of the Old Testament. Separate collections of poems were devoted to the different types of Bunin's East. Unlike the other poets of the Silver Age, Bunin tried to understand the psychology of Oriental subjects and addressed the real everyday world without creating imaginary scenarios, settings, and characters as many other Russian poets and writers did (Morozova). With the end of the Silver Age and the creation of the Soviet Union (1922), literature became a tool of state propaganda and took a different position on the East.

The Soviet regime wished to create a multinational literature for the reasons of uniting diverse peoples and cultures. The Soviet multinational literature was a product of ideological pastiche, and it was based on the principles of proletarian internationalism and friendship between socialist nations. In the 1930s, due to Soviet annexation and control of southern and eastern territories (South Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, etc.), Oriental styles were appropriated and reconstructed as a part of the Soviet culture. The Orientalisation of culture was a process and concerted effort of cultural producers. Stalinist poetry addressed the literatures of the Middle East and borrowed the style and images of the conservative and patriarchal East because it best aligned with the Soviet politics of praising the leader (Lenin, Stalin), as well as the sacredness of supreme power, and the importance of tradition and patriotism. Oriental folklore which expressed love for the leader was especially popular (Dobrenko). Suleyman Stalsky, a Lezgin poet from Dagestan, was famous for his praise of the leader of the proletarian revolution in his poems, which were written in the form of Persian quatrains. Kazakh poet Jambyl Jabayev was another author who played a central role in the orientalization of Soviet culture in the 1930s. His patriotic, pro-Stalin poems, and songs were widely circulated in the Soviet Union. Oriental texts were appropriated, translated, and recreated to fit not the culture to which they originally belonged, but to the culture formed by the needs and political goals of the USSR. By rejecting enlightenment and modernization of Europe, USSR turned to conservative and patriarchal folklore of the East and South (Dobrenko).

During the Soviet period, the Russian film industry was widely developed, encompassing the films of the Armenian SSR, Georgian SSR, Ukrainian SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Moldavian SSR, and Belorussian SSR. Russian cinematography became a critical tool of Soviet Orientalism. The cinemas of the different Soviet republics reflected the same ideology and

collective images of the characters. Films that offered alternative representations in the republics were largely unpopular and unknown. Soviet Orientalism was successfully developed in Soviet musical-comedy films (Novikova). One such film was *They Met in Moscow* (1941), directed by Ivan Pyryev. The film tells a story of a swine-herd, Glasha, and a stableman, Kuzma, and their ensuing trip to an agricultural exhibition in Moscow. At the exhibition, Glasha meets a Dagestani shepherd, Musaib from an aul.[24] They fall in love and agree to write letters to each other once they part ways. Musaib writes letters to Glasha, but no one can read and understand them. Kuzma offers his help and translates the messages to Glasha, telling her that Musaib is a married man. Kuzma invents this false message to persuade Glasha to marry him. Glasha, utterly upset and unhappy, agrees to marry Kuzma. On the day of their wedding, Musaib arrives at the village and explains everything to Glasha. At the end, Kuzma is banished from the village. In this film, the masculine image of a Caucasian man is created through the character of Musaib, who is depicted as noble, well brought-up, tender, polite, sexually attractive, and at the same time quick-tempered and self-respecting. Among the images of Caucasian men, Russian film directors favoured Armenian and Georgian characters since they were regarded as Russia's religious brothers (both Armenia and Georgia have Orthodox Christianity as their dominant religion). The Soviet film, *Father of a Soldier* (1964) tells the story of an old Georgian peasant who leaves his village and goes to the front in order to find his wounded son. The son gets better in the hospital and returns to the front. The father has nothing left to do than join the Soviet army and fight against the Germans. The image of the Caucasian father – fair, strong, and loving – will recur in many other Soviet films. It is the image of the ideal and patriotic father ready to sacrifice his life for his family as well as for the motherland. The film, *Only Old Men Are Going to Battle* (1974),

[24] A Caucasian mountain or village.

glorified the friendship between fraternal and diverse peoples united by the deaths of their sons during the Second World War. The love story that it depicts, between the Russian aviatress and the Kazakh destroyer, is tragic and impossible under the circumstances. In general, Soviet films rarely represented love stories between people of different races and ethnicities.

In the Soviet Union, there was a tradition of popular adventure films in which the deserts of Central Asia were the principal settings. Stalin's favourite film was *Thirteen* (1936) in which the soldiers of the Red Army fight with the Basmachi in the desert of Soviet Central Asia (the Basmachi were Muslim peoples of Central Asia who revolted against Russian Imperial and Soviet rule). It was one of the first adventure films to crystallize the image of the enemy in the mind of a Soviet person. The deserts of Soviet Central Asia represented unpredictability, danger, fluidity, and trickery. The image of the Basmachi was later used in the films *Officers* (1971) and *White Sun of the Desert* (1970). The director of *White Sun of the Desert*, Vladimir Motyl, revived the theme of harem and the image of uncivilized Islamic societies. The image of the pastoral "home" is set against the image of the "harem;" yet the beauty of Oriental women cannot surpass the attractiveness of native women from Russian villages. The images of the harem and the hijab were associated with despotic rulers. Taking off the hijab symbolized the civilization process of the former colonies. As Vivian Lee argues, "In relation to the Soviet context, the Bolsheviks attempted to transform gender relations, which was so central to their civilizing mission because they believed that this was the path of modernity." She says that "The policy aimed to emancipate them, thereby signifying collectiveness across the female population in the Soviet Union. As a result, women represent the idea of indigenous entity (korenizatsiia) for legitimizing Soviet power" (Lee). *White Sun of the Desert* became one of the most popular classic "Eastern" or Ostern films of the Soviet Union. Soviet films, in general, explored the questions of what it

meant to be Soviet, Russian, “svoi” (its own), and Other. They sought to define who was “ours” and who was “theirs”; who was the “enemy” and who had to be excluded. As Stephen M. Norris claims, “While the task of defining ‘us’ and ‘them’ has remained a central role in Russian cinematographic history, defining Sovietness and Russianness has involved sifting through ideas of foreigners, outsiders and insiders, a blend of orientalist and occidentalist ideas, and historical memories of past binary constructions” (xv). Even though the Soviet project was one of unification, the literature and films from that period still evoked forms of Orientalism. The Soviet ideology incorporated the idea of the Orient and Orientalism in several distinctive ways: 1) the Soviet government deliberately selected and published only those literary and cinematographic texts of the East that praised patriotism, tradition, and supreme power; 2) the people from the eastern and southern parts of Russia were represented as a collective group with similar traits, habits, and lifestyle that reflected the supposedly common characteristics of a particular ethnicity, region, or republic; 3) since the Soviet Union tried to eliminate religion and propagate atheism, Islam was one of its target religions as it was believed that it could cultivate a pan-Islamic movement. Therefore, the image of barbaric, alien, and dangerous Islamic societies was reinforced in Soviet literature and cinema. Greg Castillo’s view of Soviet architecture helps comprehend the complexity of the USSR through its mix of strategies and cultures. He argues that “Soviet architecture, devised to serve that goal, documents the confluence of anti-colonialism, socialism, nationalism, and imperialism: the seemingly incompatible cultural strategies which intermingled in the Socialist Realist deployment of Orientalism” (34). Soviet multinational literature and cinematography represent a similar hybrid of Orientalism, imperialism, anti-colonialism, and socialism.

Post-Soviet films continued with the tradition of defining the Russian Self from the Oriental Other in the genre of war films, which became especially popular after the polarizing Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), the First (1994-1996) and Second (1999-2009) Chechen Wars, and the Russo-Georgian War (2008). In these films, there is a distinct binary between "us" and "them" and a cautious warning that an enemy can be both external and internal. Some of the post-Soviet films that explore this problem of the outsider-insider include: *The Mussulman* (1995) by Vladimir Khotinenko; *Brother* (1997), *The War* (2002), and *House of Fools* (2002) by Aleksei Balabanov; *The 9th Company* (2005) by Fedor Bondarchuk; *The Turkish Gambit* (2005) by Dzhanik Faiziev; *Mongol* (2007) by Sergei Bodrov; *Alexandra* (2007) by Alexander Sokurov; *Captive* (2008) by Alexei Uchitel; *Olympus Inferno* (2008) by Igor Voloshin; and *Returning to the 'A'* (2011) by Egor Konchalovsky. These films revisit Russian history in their attempts to define national culture and Russian identity, representing the Russian self alongside the excluded Other.

2. Discourses of the North Caucasus

a. The Racialization of the Caucasus

I would like to start the conversation about the discourses of the North Caucasus by exploring the problem of the racialization of the Caucasus in Russia. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, racialization refers to the "act or process of imbuing a person with a consciousness of race distinctions or of giving a racial character to something or making it serve racist ends." In Russian discourses, people from the North Caucasus are often defined in racialized terms. They are given a specific racial character, and certain human biological characteristics are ascribed to the whole group of people without any differentiation. This

process of defining the Other in racial terms is another form of representation that serves the goals of colonial justification and political control.

According to a 12-year survey taken in 1992 to 2004, 67.2% of Russians believed that the only language Chechen people understand is "the language of power," while 68% were sure that the next generation of Chechens would be even more hostile towards Russia. Still more Russians, 78%, were scared of the possibility of being the next victim of terror tactics by Chechen militants (Pain). Frantz Fanon famously argued that the "myth of the Negro" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 96) constructs the frame of representation of black people as savages, animals, illiterate creatures, cannibals, and no more than "a toy in the hands of the white man" (119). Similarly, there exists a myth about the Caucasian subject, where the Caucasus is viewed as "a land of ignorant braggadocio populated by wild, unthinking gun nuts" (Higgins). As with Fanon's pathologizing of the black subject, as seen through white supremacy, the Chechen is born to eventually become a terrorist, a slave owner, a suicide bomber, a religious fanatic, a bandit, and a rapist. This frame of representation is intimately linked to the history of Russian imperialism and the role of public discourses, many of which function as a Russian propaganda machine. Newspapers, journals, novels and academic articles are rich with images and photos of Chechen "boyeviks," a Russian word which stands for the English words "combatant," "militant," "guerrilla fighter," or "insurgent."

In Fanon's account, black people are locked in their blackness and their personalities are predetermined on the epidermic level: "I had rationalized the world, and the world had rejected me in the name of color prejudice" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 102). In discourses produced on the Caucasus, there is a shift from exclusion on the grounds of "race" to exclusion on the basis of "location." The racialization of men in Russia greatly depends not on the epidermis, one's outer

appearance, but rather, on the place that one comes from, the land one was born on and the location of one's family origins. In other words, in this discursive frame, a subject can be black though his or her skin is not black. One is black because one is from the Caucasus. Whereas Fanon's racialization is external, the racialization of the Caucasian man is localized. This idea also echoes Said's concept of imaginative geographies which connects power, knowledge, and geography. The North Caucasus is an imagined space which is associated in the Russian mind with blackness (in terms of race), brutality, religious fanaticism, backwardness, and terrorism.

The people from the North Caucasus ostensibly belong to the sub-race of the larger Caucasian race.[25] The locals are typically dark-haired; however, there are also people with blonde or red hair. Eye color ranges from blue to brown and skin tone is typically rather pale and light. The description of their physical appearance is very different from the one of black people, but in the course of the ongoing Russo-Caucasian conflict Caucasian people have been labeled as "chernye," which is translated as "black" or "dark." Unlike the United States where "Caucasian" means "white," in Russia "Caucasian" refers to people from the Caucasus, mountains between Russia and the Middle East (Svirina). A similar observation can be made in terms of Jewish people in Russia. There is a strict distinction between Russian and Mountain Jews, white Jews and black Jews, respectively. Like other inhabitants of the Caucasus, mountain Jews are considered to be a wild, barbarous people. The following statements about mountain Jews are widespread in Russia: "They are all chernye and will cheat you on prices"; "They are chernye, [so] we don't associate with them"; "They are a *temnyi narod*" (a "dark" and "stupid" people); "They are *khitrye*" ("cunning"); they have "that certain Eastern mentality, cheating and dealing with goods, because that's the way they live"; "Their women are oppressed like in Asia"; and

[25] A term proposed by Carleton S. Coon in *The Races of Europe* (1939).

"They are from the Stone Age" (Goluboff 123). In this discourse, skin color is again less important than the location of a certain people. The term "black" consequently stands for an arguably more complicated notion than the one suggested by Fanon. In Sascha Goluboff's succinct phrase, "Black is thus synonymous with the exotic 'other,' and 'white' with the civilized self" (123). "Black" in the Russian mind represents the Orient, the Other, the terrorist, the Muslim, and the insurgent.

Fanon's black man and the Caucasian man share another similarity – the potential of being a rapist, especially if the case involves a white woman. As Fanon claims, "whoever says rape says black man" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 143). In Russian discourse, whoever says rape says Caucasian man. In 2011, for example, there was alarming news about a young girl who left a university at 6 p.m. and vanished without returning calls or returning home. Although there was no real evidence and no witnesses, the Russian media speculated that the girl was kidnapped by Caucasian nationals, raped by them and sold for sex slavery (*Newsru*). When a white girl in Russia goes missing, Caucasian people are first to be blamed. The Caucasian male is believed to be especially aggressive in sex. The Caucasian man is believed to wish to rape a white girl in order to take revenge against oppression the Russian empire has been guilty of for centuries. In Fanon's account of how the black man is perceived by white men, extreme sexuality is again connected with the skin color responsible for his sexual instinct and genital power. According to Rene Etiemble, who Fanon also cites in this work, "racial jealousy is an incitement to crimes of racism: for many white men, the black man is precisely that magic sword which, once it has transfixed their wives, leaves them forever transfigured" (1505). As for the Caucasian man, racial aggressiveness towards those who come from the Caucasian region is the main factor in stereotyping. Again, location plays a vital role since the discourse of kidnapping of Russian girls

by Caucasian people states that the girls are, first, kidnapped and then transported to the North Caucasus where their future fate is determined (Rotar).

According to John Russell, "The ambiguity of the Russians' perception of the Chechens [or any other people of the North Caucasus] is perhaps best summed up by the evolution of the word *abrek*" (103). In the past, the term *abrek* was used by the peoples of the North Caucasus to denote a prince or a nobleman who committed some crime or sin and was, thus, expelled from society and forced to lead a vagabond's or robber's life. In the Caucasus, this term also referred to a person who made a vow to avoid any life pleasures and to be fearless in any conflict and always fight to the very end. *Abrek* signified the breaking of all connections with family in order to have nothing to lose in a fight. In a sense, the term had some positive connotations, stressing good characteristics of *abreks*, such as nobility, bravery, fearlessness, the spirit of freedom, and the ability to have an ascetic lifestyle ("Abreks and the Nation"). In the 16th to 18th centuries, *abreks* were also called emigrants, fugitives, and outlaws who were forced to leave the native land, often for the reasons of blood feud. During the Caucasian war in the 19th century (1817–1864), the word *abrek* became a synonym for "a non-peaceful mountaineer" while in the twentieth century *abrek* stood for "a noble robber" who fought against arbitrary rule. This final designation was created during the Soviet period and proved to last till the present day. During the Soviet times, the term *abrek* was ideologized and used to refer to a participant of "anticolonial/antigovernmental movement against Russia/USSR" ("Abreks and the Nation"). *Abreks* were called enemies of the state for their resistance to the collectivization of agriculture, the Bolshevik Revolution, and their alleged alliance with the Nazis. Some Caucasians were named *abreks* to signal their treason, resistance to state policy or lack of patriotism.

It was convenient for the Russians to use the term *abreks* as synonymous with mountain bandits, ruthless barbarians, rapists, and murderers in order to justify the Russian civilizing mission of resettling the Caucasus with Cossacks and replacing the Caucasian clan-based society with a form of culture and state structure established by the Russian Empire. Vladimir Bobrovnikov contends that the representation of the Caucasians as professional robbers and raiders was proved to be false after certain Soviet historians and ethnographers provided evidence, according to which the diversified agricultural and stock-raising household was the major form of their economy and existence, while raids, which did occasionally occur, had a sporadic character and were not accepted as a norm of a lifestyle. *Abrechestvo* became more than a term. It became a political power with its own treasury, army, court, and political organizations. In terms of its initial meaning, the term *abrechestvo* lost its original connection with Caucasian nobility, bravery, and spirit. It started to represent coalitions made up of local government and bandit groups calling themselves an Islamic and national opposition against Russian oppression.[26]Although there is no such term as "Russian abrechestvo," starting from 1999, Russian federal forces have been increasingly resorting to *abrek* methods of struggle, copying the actions of "boyeviks" and destroying cities and villages, taking hostages, and bombing markets in Dagestan. It becomes difficult to determine whether the term *abrek* should refer to Chechen freedom fighters and bandits, Russian FSB workers, or to the corrupt heads of North Caucasian republics that support Moscow ("Abreks and the Nation").

The term abrek works in a similar way to the construction of the Orient, as understood by Said. According to Said, "The Orientalist provides his own society with representations of the

[26] Leaders of such coalitions include Shamil Basayev, Movladi Udugov, Nadyr Khachilaev, Magomed Khachilaev, Gadzhi Makhachev ("Abreks and the Nation").

Orient (*a*) that bear his distinctive imprint, (*b*) that illustrate his conception of what the Orient can or ought to be, (*c*) that consciously contest someone else's view of the Orient, (*d*) that provide Orientalist discourse with what, at that moment, it seems most in need of, and (*e*) that respond to certain cultural, professional, national, political, and economic requirements of the epoch" (*Orientalism* 272). The shift in the usage of the term *abrek* can be explained by the requirements of the governmental order in the Russian-Caucasian policy. Both romanticized images of wild mountaineers and noble criminals and later politicized constructions of abreks stress the idea that Caucasians came to be viewed as the Russian and later Soviet Other or, in Saidian terms, as the *Soviet Orient*. This can be seen early on in Soviet history when a Caucasian Robin Hood was skillfully transformed into the Soviet "vrag naroda" or the enemy of the people, a term first used by Vladimir Lenin after coming to power in 1917. In Russian culture and media, *abreks* were rarely seen as people or individuals with their own characteristics and peculiarities. They were rather analyzed as "problems to be solved or confined or – as the colonial powers [including the Russian Empire] openly coveted their territory – taken over" ("Abreks and the Nation"). This idea of the Caucasus as a problem is, in fact, hinted at in the term "Chechnya" itself, which was used in Russian sources as early as the 17th century when the Nokhchii (as the Chechens call themselves) defeated the Russian army at Chechen-Aul on the Argun (Jaimoukha 13). The Russians did not borrow the name "Chechnya" from the Chechen language. Instead, the name was given in honor of a distinct military conflict, which again points to a militant character and origins of the Chechen people.

Apart from being called *abreks*, people from the North Caucasus have been labeled with several other negative terms reflecting Russian propaganda and the work of Russian and western media in popularizing the negative image of the North Caucasus. Perhaps the most common

animal with which Caucasian people are associated is the wolf. The wolf is the national symbol and is featured on the Chechen flag as well as mentioned in the first line of their national anthem. According to Amjad Jaimoukha:

> The wolf (*borz*) is a potent national symbol, and its character traits are considered paragons to be emulated. Chechen men would be proud to be compared to wolves. 'He was nursed by the She-Wolf,' is a compliment implying adroitness and courage. Legend has it that it was the wolf that redeemed the world by standing heroically in face of the fury unleashed on doomsday. According to the Chechen ethos, the wolf is the only animal that would enter into an unequal match, making up for any disadvantage by its agility, wit, courage and tenacity. If it loses the battle, it lies down facing the foe in full acceptance of its fate — Chechen poise equivalent to the famed British 'stiff upper lip'. This wolfish analogy is a depiction of how the Chechens have dealt with outside invaders for millennia. (Jaimoukha 147)

For Russians, the image of a wolf is not so noble and dignified; rather, it is rather associated with characteristics, such as wildness, a destructive nature, cunning behavior, and unavoidable social isolation. In addition to the image of a wolf, Russian people used several other words and images to define people from the North Caucasus. In military jargon, the Chechens have been subjected to all kinds of negative associations. For example, they are often called *dukhi* (spooks) because Chechen fighters are known for their ability to appear from nowhere and vanish in the same way. Chechens have also been called *obezyany*, the Russian word for monkeys, as well as *oborotni* (werewolves) to suggest they are inhuman and sinister creatures (Russell 106-7).

The Russian media portrayed the Second Chechen War (1999-2009) as an anti-terrorist operation and the Chechens as Islamic terrorists who posed a dangerous threat for Russian and international communities alike. As Anna Brodsky says, "The idea that Russians are victims of Chechen aggression has come to pervade contemporary Russian culture" (304). The Russian government refuses to identify the opposition as the Chechen fight for national self-determination, which automatically reverses the victim-perpetrator binary. In the Russian official press, namely *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* (Russian Newspaper), the image of "the threat" was skillfully constructed and crystallized under Vladimir Putin's rule (2000-2008, 2012-present). In 2006, Putin said in his Annual Address to the Federal Assembly:

> The terrorist threat remains very real. Local conflicts remain a fertile breeding ground for terrorists, a source of their arms and a field upon which they can test their strength in practice. These conflicts often arise on ethnic grounds, often with inter-religious conflict thrown in, which is artificially fomented and manipulated by extremists of all shades. I know that there are those out there who would like to see Russia become so mired in these problems that it will not be able to resolve its own problems and achieve full development. ("Annual Address to the Federal Assembly")

According to Aglaya Snetkov, Putin's portrayal of Chechnya as a dangerous terrorist threat underwent a certain transformation from a localized conflict in Chechnya to encompassing the whole region of the North Caucasus, which is now seen as producing international Islamic terrorists. Chechnya and the North Caucasus were presented as a whole, posing a homogeneous threat to the Russia and the rest of a presumably anti-Islamist world. Synecdochical Orientalism (when diverse and multifaceted North Caucasus is represented by Chechnya alone) is at work here again. Snetkov claims that "whilst in 2002 the terrorist 'threat' was still largely presented in

the official press as a discreet and manageable problem, largely connected with developments within Chechnya, by 2004 this was had been blown up into a much greater 'threat', possibly 'threatening the very existence of Russia, or even the 'civilised' world" (Snetkov). After 9/11, Putin's administration was quick to draw parallels between the Chechens and Osama bin Laden. Putin's failure to distinguish between real terrorists and Chechen freedom fighters was regularly stressed by journalist and writer, the late Anna Politkovskaya. Conflict between Russia and Chechnya was portrayed in the media as a classic "good versus evil" story (Crane).

In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, people from the North Caucasus became the main target of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination. The two Chechen wars added to the emergence of Caucasophobia. In Moscow and St. Petersburg, the spread of Caucasophobia was connected with the dissatisfaction of local, ethnically white Russian people with the behaviour of newcomers from the North Caucasus and their methods of achieving economic prosperity. As Dmitri Trenin and Alexey Malashenko argue in their 2004 study, "The average Russian envies prosperous Azeri and Dagestani market vendors and are annoyed with their emotional behavior in daily life, which contrasts sharply with quieter Russian ways" (61). Russian people criticize the negative attitude of Caucasian people towards Russian women and blame Caucasian militants for disrupting Russia. Caucasophobia was most widely-spread in Moscow and St. Petersburg since most of Caucasian people moved to these cities to pursue economic opportunities. Russian people expressed their discontent and resentment towards the people from the Caucasus in general without singling out a distinct Caucasian people they mostly disliked. Trenin and Malashenko stress the inability of Russian people to distinguish between Georgians, Armenians, Dagestani, Avars, Chechens, Ossetians: "first because Caucasians cannot be distinguished by physical appearance, and second because conventional Russian attitude is

that Caucasians are all of the same stripe and that there's not much difference between them" (61). Only after the Second Chechen War, Chechens became the biggest target group of Russian ethnic xenophobia. One of the peculiar features of Russian xenophobia was the fact that ethnic identity was always more important than the religious one. Russia has long been a multiethnic and multireligious country. The attitude towards Muslim people was determined not on the basis of their religion but on the basis of what part of Russia they came from and what ethnicity they belonged to. For example, ethnically white Russian people favoured Muslim Tatars and the Bashkir people located between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains over Orthodox Georgians and Christian Armenians living in the Caucasus. Even Muslim people in Russia expressed hostility towards Muslim Chechens, Dagestani, and other peoples of the South and North Caucasus (Shnirelman).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there began a process of massive migration of peoples from less economically developed and less stable regions to the central parts of Russia in search of a better life and economic prosperity. Because of the frequent military conflicts in the Caucasus, many Caucasian peoples moved to quieter nearby regions to escape inter-ethnic clashes. If, at first, experts saw the positive side of migration, very soon immigrants were accused of disorderly behavior and the attempts to take all employment, thus increasing unemployment among Russian people. They were further blamed for tax evasion and for the illegal use of Russian social benefits and pensions, as well as for criminal behavior including fraud, drug trafficking, murder, and terrorism (Shnirelman). Russians were anxious that the migration of Caucasians might "wash out" the ethnic and demographic portrait of Russia. Former Deputy Chair of State Duma on CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) A. Saveliev labelled the migrating populations as a "migration flood," an "army of barbarians,"

"ethnic enclaves," and emphasized the latent violence of this group, in suggesting the "aggressive potential," and the "aggression of foreign South" (North Caucasus is in the Southern part of Russia), as part of the Caucasian "aggression towards a white man." Saveliev went as far as to claim that soon there would be the need to save white civilization from the invasion of the Other. Saveliev and other politicians openly practised racism and viewed immigrants from the Caucasus as a threat to Russian conservative values, individualism, and economic prosperity (Saveliev). The Russian government did not provide suitable means to ensure effective adaptation and integration of immigrants into their new environment. Xenophobic attitudes led to the representation of all immigrants from the Caucasus as potential criminals.

Caucasophobia is closely connected with Islamophobia in Russia. Interestingly, the attitude of Russian people towards Islam is not the same as the attitude to Muslim people in general. Islam is perceived as something dangerous, something connected with terrorism and, subsequently, with the North Caucasus only. Not all Muslim people are associated with Islam and terrorism in Russia but only those Muslims who come from the North Caucasus (mainly Chechnya and Dagestan). As Trenin and Malashenko argue, "The negative attitude toward Islam in Russia was strengthened by the use of Islam for political ends; the spillover into the Russian Federation of radical fundamentalist ideas from the Middle East; and the activities of Islamic radicals inside Russia" (62). Indeed, the religious life of Muslim people in the North Caucasus is evaluated and judged by Russians through the prism of terrorism and radicalism. As Kolossov and Toal claim, recent surveys show that the majority of Russians associate the region of the North Caucasus with the images of terrorism, war, corruption, and violence (205). They claim that the real problems that the North Caucasus is facing now are not terrorism and separatism but low economic development and political corruption. The separation of the North Caucasus from

Russia would create a precedent and cause further disintegration of the Russian state - a scenario that is very undesirable for the Russian government. But instead of uniting people across the region and providing equal opportunities and resources for both Russian-majority areas and "ethnic" republics, the Russian government does not do much to eliminate the social-economic polarization across the region or to address the problem of the cultural Otherness of Caucasian peoples (Kolossov and Toal 222). As a result of mass migration and the frequent military conflicts in Chechnya, the Russian government officials as well as journalists clearly linked North Caucasian ethnic minorities with the notion of criminality. The so-called ethnic criminal groups consisting mainly of Caucasian people were blamed for most of the crimes in big cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg. Hutchings and Tolz argue that

> The post-1991 period has witnessed a proliferation of publications claiming a deterministic link between ethnicity and/or migrant communities on the one hand and criminality on the other, often on the basis of tendentious statistical data. In the media, as in various official state documents and academic texts, even seemingly neutral references to 'ethnic criminality' in terms of the occasional stratification of criminal groups along ethnic lines are frequently marred by racial undertones. (102)

The discourse of a potential threat from the North Caucasus is skilfully amplified and used to promote racialization of others. In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss literary representations of the North Caucasus in romantic writing and Russian contemporary poetry, novels, and movies, paying special attention to the Caucasian subaltern position and their inability to have space in the Russian discourse.

b. Representing the Caucasus in Literature

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said claims that "The Orient is *watched,* since its almost (but never quite) offensive behavior issues out of a reservoir of infinite peculiarity; the European, whose sensibility tours the Orient, is a watcher, never involved, always detached, always ready for new examples of what the *Description de l'Égypte* called 'bizarre jouissance'" (*Orientalism* 103). The Russian Orient, understood as the Caucasus in particular, was indeed watched, created, and represented by classic Russian writers and poets including Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Leo Tolstoy, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Mikhail Bulgakov, and Aleksei Kosterin while the present Russia's Orient has been constructed and popularized by such contemporary writers and poets as Marina Akhmedova, Nikolai Ivanov, Valery Kachurin, Eugene Mishin, and Dmitrii Mordasov, Yulia Latunina, Viktor Pelevin, Zakhar Prilepin, etc. It is vital to ask whether the Russian Orient was romanticized and viewed in the same institutional way described by Edward Said or whether its unique characteristics might allow us to contemplate a different model of Orientalism.

One way to begin investigating this question is through the work of Susan Layton, who devotes her 1994 book, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*, to the problem of romantic writing in Russia and classic writers who created distorted images of the Caucasus and popularized the idea of "us" and "them." Layton attempts to prove that high literature played an important role in the imperial policy of the Russian government. In her introduction, Layton states,

> Where, after all, is the nation of readers who prefer scholarly monographs to pleasurable literature? But if hardly startling, the primary allegiance to literary pleasures was particularly pronounced in the evolution and consolidation of the cultural mythology of the Caucasian conquest. Certain Russian critics with a normative commitment to

> 'realism' have thrust this crucial factor into the background by insisting that all the pertinent major contributors, from young Pushkin onward, performed an educative function for readers by dispensing empirical knowledge about the Caucasus. Such views of triumphant factuality grossly exaggerate the amount of reliable information available in these writings. But more importantly, no matter how accurate the literature may have been, it exerted the biggest impact not by satisfying readers' intellectual curiosity but rather by supplying them with unverifiable affective meanings about their relation to untamed Asia. (12)

Layton bases her claims on a number of the best known classic texts, in which the authors reduced the Caucasian peoples to primitive and silent tribes and the objects of the Russian Empire. Her readings include the works of Pushkin's "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," Lermontov's *The Hero of Our Time*, Tolstoy's *The Cossacks*, and Bestuzhev-Marlinsky's "Ammalat-Bek." *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* is a poem by Alexander Pushkin first published in 1820-21 that depicts Circassian culture and its "savage" nature in contrast to Russian 19th century *beau monde* society and Europeanized "civilization." During his three-year exile to the South, Pushkin wrote this poem, which is believed to have been inspired by Byron's poems such as *The Giaour, Don Juan, and The Bride of Abydos.* Mirskii claims that Pushkin's plan to create a detailed description of the Caucasus and Crimea was successful, and it was similar to the stories created by travelers of the 18th century. The poem is devoted to the topic of a passionate love between a young Circassian maiden and a Russian captive who observes the life and habits of his Caucasian captors against a beautiful natural setting. The classical representation of the Caucasus by Pushkin followed the canons of Orientalist travel writing, influenced the imagination of the reading audience, and even became a required topic of discussions at literature classes as a part of the school colloquium program in Russia.

Other Russian writers were not so romantic in their writings and openly declared the necessity to subjugate the Caucasian people by claiming that Russians and Caucasians were equally colonized in the face of the main colonizer – the Russian Empire. Alexander Griboedov, a famous poet, diplomat and colonial administrator, provides an example of "a poet for the government needs." According to Alexander Etkind, "While serving in the Caucasus and Persia (where he was killed in 1829 in Tehran by a Muslim mob), Griboedov composed comedies about the Moscow gentry and wrote business plans for Russian commercial expansion into the colonies. Joining the tradition of Orientalist reversal, Griboedov composed a fascinating poem ("Predators on the Chegem," 1825) that subverted his own imperialist role in the East and equalized two colonial regimes: Russian rule in the Caucasus and Russian rule over its own people. In the poem, the narrator is a Chechen warrior who writes romantic verses about the Caucasus and then, quite suddenly, ends up by saying that, for Russians, captivity abroad is no worse than their chains at home" (626). Griboedov's poem demonstrates two colonial narratives that existed in Russia: internal colonialism at home and external colonialism abroad. This exchange played a significant role in the functioning of the Russian Empire.

The Caucasus as Russia's Orient represented by contemporary poets in the twenty-first century differs from its nineteenth century predecessors and their fixation with romantic images of brave mountaineers, noble primitive robbers, or proud warriors from the Caucasus. Edward Said contends that the "militant" Orient was synonymous with the Islamic Orient and existed before the idea of the Orient as "the Asiatic East as a whole" (*Orientalism* 74-5). In Said's account, the militant Orient was mostly associated with Islam, the Arabs, or the Ottomans and military conflicts during "the fall of Constantinople, the Crusades, and the conquest of Sicily and Spain" (*Orientalism* 75). In the twenty-first century, the North Caucasus (Chechnya, specifically)

has become Russia's military Orient,[27] being mostly defined in terms of fighting, military behavior, war images, hostility, religious conflicts, terrorism, and tragedy. The people from Chechnya have been portrayed either as aggressive attackers and Russia's hostile enemies, or as victims of a Russian-Chechen unresolved conflict and forced participants in a governmental scheme. Contemporary literary and cultural representations relegate Chechnya's distant, exotic, and mysterious nature to the background and replace it by a Chechen ability to fight, attack, defend, remember, recover, and survive. Contemporary representations of Caucasian people are also often masculinist. War poetry and military fiction construct images of men as soldiers and fighters. There is no space for the voices of women. The issue of gender and women's invisibility is evident in Russian cultural texts.

Nowadays, there exist a large number of websites where unknown Russian poets publish their poems about Chechnya and Chechen people. Even though these poems are not published as print collections or books, they still find a lot of response from online community that is curious to learn more about the North Caucasus. They are generic soldiers' poems that explore the process of war, the suffering, and recovery from it. Out of hundreds of poems devoted to Russian-Chechen conflicts on the website *Chechen War*, I chose Dmitrii Mordasov's poem "Hello, Vainakh" (2009) as a generic representative of the Russian genre of military poetry devoted to Chechen wars. Mordasov is ruthless and pitiless to the defeated Chechens in his poem "Hello, Vainakh":

[27] It should be mentioned that Russia created the military Orient in the face of Afghanistan first. Before the two Russian-Chechen wars, the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, waging the war that lasted over nine years (1979-1989). Afghanistan was defined in terms of Islamic and anti-communist threat and portrayed as a military Orient. Perhaps, the methods and tools, developed during the Soviet-Afghan War, were later used to create an image of the military Orient in the face of the North Caucasus. The war in the North Caucasus could be seen as continuation of Afghan military conflicts.

Well, hello, a proud Chechen son, Vainakh,
The eagle of unconquered blue mountains.
Why are you lying at my feet?
Why are the tears blearing your eyes?
Where is your bravado, mountain panther,
With which you together with other dogs
Cut with your dagger
Many helpless young boys?
Your crying won't touch me...
I do remember the light of Ryazan eyes
Belonging to a youngster whose throat
You cut laughing with your fellows.

But I won't soil my hands,
The law will determine your miserable fate.
You think your mother is a wolf,
Born by a woman, I am a human![28]

Mordasov calls the Chechens proud Vainakhs and "eagles of unconquered blue mountains" (1-2). Even though this imagery might seem positive, the tone of the speaker is ironic or even sarcastic as the next lines indicate the humiliation and defeat of a Chechen man: "Why are you lying at my feet? / Why are the tears blearing your eyes?" (3-4). The animal imagery continues and follows a downward species shift from "mountain panthers" (5) to wolves and dogs, and the speaker points to the negative traits of these animals, including their hostility, ruthlessness, unnecessary pridefulness, and heartlessness. The speaker starts off by calling them eagles and then grounds them as dogs - there is a shift in his description of them as once-upon a time predators par excellence to a much lowlier status as dog. Mordasov starts and ends his poem with

[28] Translations of the majority of Russian language materials, including poems, novels, and films, are mine unless otherwise indicated.

the idea that the people from the North Caucasus are not humans; they regard a wolf as their mother and obey the laws of animals. This opposition "human vs. animal" stresses the idea that the Chechens are more animal-like than man-like. This process of animalization of Chechen people echoes the afore-mentioned idea about the racialization of the North Caucasus. Russian imperialist fiction has followed the convention of representing the colonized Other within the discourse of bestiality (Shohat and Stam 137). Animalization is still one of the key tropes in Russia's colonial discourse. Animal-like characteristics of the Chechen Other (hostility, ruthlessness, herd instinct) are emphasized, and a Chechen lack of human-like behaviour is often explained by their territorial remoteness and mountaineering way of life. As the foreign journalist Oliver Bulloug observes, "You cannot understand the Chechens without understanding the mountains. The mountains created them as surely as the cold Atlantic created the Britons, or the frontier created the Americans." The ending of Mordasov's poem once again stresses the difference between a Russian soldier who is born by a woman and a Chechen fighter whose mother is a wolf. This emphasizes the binarisms: human/animal, Self/Other, chaos/order.

This type of negative image of Chechens contributes to the creation of nationalistic poems (during and after two Chechen wars) with glorification and eulogy dedicated to Russian soldiers who fight, die or survive in Chechnya. These odes to a Russian soldier do not provide any apparent space for a Chechen soldier and often leave the latter silenced, underrepresented, or simply invisible. One of such poems is called "I Was Killed in the Chechen War" and written by Akinfova Eugeniya, an elementary school teacher in Russia. I chose this poem because it was posted on the official website of the educational fund "September 1," which publishes online plans of the most distinguished and successful lessons taught by teachers throughout Russia. The demonstration lesson with Akinfova's poem is devoted to survived and dead Russian soldiers in

the Chechen wars. The official Russian educational fund, thus, promotes a one-sided view on the Chechen wars where the only victims are Russian soldiers. The poem by Akinfova is devoted to a young Russian soldier who was murdered in Chechnya at the age of twenty:

I saw a horrible war,
I had a gun in my hands,
So that nobody would hurt you,
So that nobody would kill you.

I should be playing soccer,
I should be dating a girl in spring,
But this spring I am not back home,
In Chechnya I am finally killed.

Mother suffers and grieves,
Over my grave she cries,
And the nightingale madly warbles,
Making a spring quaver for us.

Visit my mother's house,
Call on my dear one,
Let her know that someone,
Still remembers her son as the one.

Mourn over my grave,
Bring some flowers from the fields,
Let me smell my dear land,
On the foreign roads where I stand.

The bright romanticized image of a Russian soldier does not leave any apparent space for others to provide their visions of a conflicted history. Through this poem, it is difficult to see the

dynamics of the relationship between Russians and Chechens; the personal dedication of the poem to a Russian soldier prevents us from obtaining a two- or a three-participant picture (Russian soldiers-Chechen militants-the Russian government) to make further conclusions.

From the generic military poetry genre, Valery Kachurin and Eugene Mishin especially stand out as poets who wrote poems that could provide a more comparative type of analysis and a perhaps less overly biased imperialistic vision. These poets publish their works online pseudonymously and the readers do not know anything about these authors. Since the poets provide an alternative view on the wars in Chechnya, one can assume that publishing under a pseudonym might be a reasonable and safe choice for the authors. Kachurin's poem "Chechnya Starves, Russia Chews" (2009) appeals to the audience to reconsider their history and refrain from repeating the same mistakes: killing innocents, avenging their losses and sufferings on others, and searching for some unique way Russia, allegedly, should follow. Interestingly, Kachurin blames writers, poets, and philosophers for their inability to use the language to stop the war:

> I do accept we are ignorant and silly,
> But they, philosophers, our poets, and the writers,
> Blind they seem to be completely,
> Not having vision all those years.
> Cannot they find a word to say,
> Why do we praise them in this way,
> We have the language, not just the tongue,
> You, men, are not aware of this run.

Kachurin continues his discussion on the role of intellectuals in the military conflict and the failure to use their mind in a proper way in his next poem, "The People is Being Exterminated"

(2004). He blames Russian society as it is being transformed into a society of savages and fighters:

> With anger, with revenge,
> We look at those rebel hillmen,
> And our brightest minds,
> Like one become the fight men.

Kachurin comes to the conclusion that during the Russian-Chechen military conflicts the civilized and well-educated people of Russia lost their dominant imperialist position and stepped down the social ladder from being intellectually and culturally advanced to a primitive, wild, uncivilized, and war-oriented society. In this case, it is not clear whether the militant Orient applies to the Chechens or whether the term unites both Chechen and Russian combatants. In fact, Kachurin calls the Chechens "foreigners" in their land while being persecuted by Russian fighters. History, according to Kachurin, will not be written correctly as long as ordinary people do not consciously separate themselves from the press and the government that are responsible for the creation and popularization of misunderstandings and misrepresentations:

> The journalists, the people, the authorities,
> Merge all together in a single chorus,
> Stubbornly they force without fears,
> Their eyes and ears seem to be oblivious.
>
> History is what we write,
> History is what we rhyme,
> And our brightest minds,
> Are in a trap of their dogmas.
>
> My dear friends, we will not
> Build our country on the lies,

And our children, alas, cannot,
Escape the pay-off in their lives.

Some contemporary Russian poets attempt to refrain from Saidian clear-cut distinction between "us" and the "other" and include three participants of the military conflict: Chechens, Russians, and the Russian government or the Moscow Kremlin. The images of Moscow, the Kremlin, the Red Square, and the Russian government are described by Eugene Mishin[29] in his poem "Now Chechnya" (2004) as one united mechanism of anti-Chechen as well as anti-Russian policies and as a historical agent writing, re-writing, and often erasing the moments of history in Russia:

In Moscow, playing odd-even games,
Not contradicting the father of the peoples.
Otherwise there will be a deficit.
The orders are fulfilled by armies,
The police and special forces...
And for Chechnya – ranks, respect…

And our young brothers and sisters,
Run from their own happiness,
escaping the hands of the Kremlin.
Not caring for the peoples –
And getting married without feelings –
The ground crumbles under the feet…

In the name of Russia, under Nikolai
The Chechens fought the German spies:
The Chechen regiment, a famous tod.
Aren't there a few proud heroes,

[29] It is a pseudonym. The real name of the author is unknown.

Who gave their lives for mountaineers?
As a reward, took a revenge the Kremlin god…

And Moscow what? Moscow is chimera –
Half-world, half-measure.
But...
… on the snow puddles all of blood.
And redder is the Red square,
but no blushing.
God is with her and everywhere...
But God … from Cheque and on its guard…

Moscow is always playing chess,
It changes pieces, guns, controls for guess.
For disobedience it turns off the lights below.
Great Russians blessed by god
Leave Grozny darkies all in blood
And in a white-stone Moscow…

Same bosses take control of Russia,
Same demons, same feeble amnesia,
And poverty,
And poverty.
And everyone is guilty there:
The Jews, the Asians, the mountaineers
And everyone is counted,
And everyone is counted.

Mishin does not oppose Russians to Chechen people; he, instead, separates Moscow (the Kremlin) from the whole of Russia and puts the blame for the military conflicts on it. Moscow is even compared with a “chimera,” a mythological monstrous fire-breathing female creature, and it

also is associated with demons, the Kremlin god, a half-world full of blood, and subhumans. Mishin's poem thereby touches upon the imperialistic policy of the Kremlin in a sense that he openly declares that the main "bosses" sitting in the Kremlin and waging Chechen wars are the supporters of the concept of a Great Russia, according to which the land that formed the core of Muscovy was considered to be the main territory of "Russia proper." It was the territory to which the ethnic Russians were native and where the ethnogenesis of (Great) Russians took place (Carmack 161).

As shown above, most of the military poems are devoted to the Russian-Chechen conflict, leaving other parts of the North Caucasus out of the picture and discourse. This selective type of orientalism is also reflected in military fiction and war novels written by Russian writers. The so-called synecdochical orientalism misrepresents the whole region of the North Caucasus as an enlarged version of Chechnya and Chechnya (and sometimes Dagestan) – as a miniature symbol of Russia's Caucasus. This synecdochical Orientalism, similar to Said's idea of silent Other as represented in Western texts, makes the whole region of the Caucasus, with its diverse cultures, ethnicities, and languages, invisible, silent or even non-existing. Chechnya, which is represented in Russian texts as a dangerous, terrorist, Islamic, and barbaric place, becomes the collective portraiture of the whole region of the Caucasus. Individual portraits of peoples and regions inside the North Caucasus are largely missing in Russian literary and non-fiction texts. Russian cultural texts are mainly focused on the images of the male members of society. Women are largely underrepresented in Russian cultural texts. Their voices are not emphasized or heard. There is double marginalization at work: first, Caucasian women are marginalized as Russia's "Other"; and, second, they are victimized and silenced under patriarchal dominance. The archive of Russian literary texts about the North Caucasus compiled during my research reveals the

overwhelming majority of war novels devoted to Russian-Chechen military conflict. Out of fifty literary texts, thirty-five are war novels: *The Pathologies* (2005) by Zakhar Prilepin, *Sniper* (2007) by Pavel Yakovenko, *Chechen Roulette* (2008) by Maksim Shahov, *This War is Not Over Yet* (2007) by Boris Babkin, *Blockpost-47d* (2009) by Andrei Yephremov, *Translator* (2013) by Aleksei Sukonkin, and many others. The publisher's annotations to these war novels often include references to the memoirs of Russian soldiers and generals, the special operations of federal troops against Chechen bandit groups, the opposition between Russian soldiers and their enemies (Chechens), the courage of Russians and cruelty of Chechen warriors, blood revenge, the ability of Russian army groups in small quantity to achieve victory over powerful and numerous Chechen militants, terror attacks organized by Chechen militants and Islamist radicals, and constant comparisons of Russian soldiers to brave human beings and Chechen militants – to blood-thirsty animals. The illustrations on the front covers of these books often portray images of Slavic-looking Russian soldiers with guns in their hands and a confident look on their faces while Chechen people are either absent from the picture or portrayed in the background of the cover as bearded people in hats with an angry facial expression and a knife in their hand. The book covers also include images of the Russian national flag, Russian weaponry, military medals, and other military attributes (see Appendix B). Very few of these military novels show Russian-Chechen conflict more than just a two-participant model with a clear, black and white problem to which the war is the only solution. In her powerful book *Soft Weapons: Autobiography in Transit*, Gillian Whitlock uses Gerard Genette's study of paratexts and comes to conclusion that all the paratextual elements (front matter, cover, back matter) of the books one sees on the shelves in the stores automatically become parts of one's consciousness and points of recognition and absorption (57). When a Russian person sees countless books with the images of

brave Russian soldiers and hostile Chechen fighters, for instance, the process of absorption and identification happens automatically. The image of the Orient is constructed within seconds of a glance. The paratext can be regarded as another tool of emphasising the difference between "us" and "them" and portraying the North Caucasus as an exotic and dangerous Other.

The idea of a three- or even a four-participant model of the Russian-Chechen military discourse becomes the main concept in Nikolai Ivanov's war novel *The Chechen Boomerang*, published in 2011. *The Chechen Boomerang* is only one representative of a numerous amount of Russian military fiction on the Chechen wars which is mostly oriented for a male reading audience due to their war themes and plot, according to which the main characters are preoccupied with the preparations for, or recovery from, war. *The Chechen Boomerang* is a novel about a Russian special tactic assault group which receives a task to complete the operation named *Cobra*, to steal important papers from the Chechen militants and transfer them to the Russian officials. The soldiers of the tactical assault group are not destined to return. The papers, which supposedly contain the secret information about the essence of the Russian-Chechen wars, are to be lost, and the soldiers are to be destroyed as unnecessary witnesses. The novel stresses the idea that the Russian-Chechen conflict revolves around four main participants: Moscow (the Russian government), common Russian people, Chechen militants ("boyeviks"), and the Chechen civilian population. It is not a two-layer structure of "us" and "them." It is a quadrangle consisting of "them" within "us" and "us" within "them."

By means of his novel *The Chechen Boomerang*, Ivanov contends that in Russia morality and laws are two different things. People and authorities are not to be confused, and the war in Chechnya goes along the war inside Russia (Moscow) itself (55). The novel's narrator often resorts to philosophical reflections about the meaning of war, the relationships between Moscow

and Chechnya, the Chechen people and their history. One of such meditations concerns Moscow's role in the conflict:

> From the very beginning of the Chechen war, Moscow and authorities seem not to have heard its noise, wail, and scream. Moscow did not smell soot, pus, sweat, and warm blood. It did not see or did not want to see the chopped bodies of its soldiers and the black scarfs of Chechen mothers. Moscow was busy with the constitutional order while contravening the Constitution and human morality thousands of times… The power is very far from the Chechen war. And not only in a geographical sense. It does no care for the people's sufferings. It cares only about itself. (85)

The characters of *The Chechen Boomerang* explain the origins, the flow, the reasons, and the consequences of the Chechen wars in different ways. Zaremba, the commander of the operation *Cobra* and the novel's main character, attempts to take a neutral position in the Russian-Chechen discourse and protect the truth instead of the interests of one of the parties. The following conversation takes place between Zaremba and his soldier:

> "What kind of contract war is this?" Tumanov was surprised although there was no need to ask such questions after everything that had happened…
>
> "The contract war forced to fight those who did not want to do it. From both sides. It is the first war in which both parties do not want to fight."
>
> "The Chechens do not want to fight? The hostility is in their nature. They are worse than jaguars!"

> "There are thugs everywhere." The lieutenant-colonel responded calmly. "We have them as well. But if truth be told, people did not want a war. At least, the majority of them."
>
> "So, what was the urge?"
>
> "I think, when Russian tanks entered Grozny, even those who hated Dudaev took the gun. We did not have enough brains to foresee that. In other words, the Chechen dog could easily pass by unless someone in Russia took a stick and threw it at the dog. The dog showed its teeth and grinned. The Russians did not like it and next time used a weapon instead of a stick... One has to break the hands of the Russians and kick the dog-teeth of the Chechens. If you do not know how to use the human language – do not hold office. Do not lie to people about your alleged irreplaceability."
>
> "I am sorry but to defend the Chechens after everything that had happened...."
>
> "I am not willing to defend the Chechens. I am defending the truth." (122)

The truth that Zaremba is talking about refers to the betraying role of Moscow in the Chechen war when the authorities attempt to find a symbiosis of a wolf and a sheep among its military men; when there is no such a thing as war: there are dirty tricks from both sides; when the Russian-Chechen conflict could be better called a fratricidal war; when the Chechen people are not Russian enemies but are simply opponents in the war; when Chechnya, striving for freedom, still depends on money and the clannish order of society; when Moscow does not encourage but hinders the end of the war; and finally, when the bigger the war is – the more sustained it is – gradually including more and more structures and people into its circular flow. With this complex character of the Russian-Chechen war, the oppressed - both Russian and Chechen - find themselves lost in understanding who is "us" and who is "them." Failure to perceive the

multilayered character of the Russian-Chechen war raises the question of the visual and the inability of the subaltern (whether Chechen or Russian) to see freedom only as a formality that is, in fact, impossible to be actualized under Russia's imperial system. Perhaps, Said's model of Orientalism represents only one type of colonization patterns: Russia's imperial colonization of Other (in this case, Caucasian) people. *Chechen Boomerang* and other cultural texts reflect another type of colonization pattern: Russia's imperial colonization of its own people. The two colonization patterns seem to coexist within the territorial limits of the Russian Federation. The problem of the blurred boundary between "us" and "them" is further explored in another war novel - *The Pathologies* by Zakhar Prilepin.

Another military novel that gives its version of the Chechen war is *The Pathologies*, a 2005 novel by the Russian writer Zakhar Prilepin. The main character of the book is a Special Forces agent who is sent to Grozny to lead the group of young OMON agents.[30] During their time in Grozny, the soldiers participate in mopping-up operations, kill both Chechen militants and ordinary people, celebrate their successes, drink, joke, and try to survive. They are all different with different backgrounds, childhood stories and traumas, goals and opinions, but the one thing that unites all of them is the constant feeling of fear. It follows them everywhere and the only solution from it is drinking alcohol which dulls all the senses. At one of such nights when all the Russian soldiers are completely drunk, Chechen militants take over the school where Russians have been hiding and open fire on the sleeping men. One fourth of the novel is devoted to the description of this last battle during which most of the Russian soldiers are

[30] The author does not specify the year, but he, presumably, refers to either the First Chechen War (1994-1996) or the early years of the Second Chechen War (1999-2009).

murdered. The main character is miraculously saved by the soldier he never got along with, and both of them survive the attack.

Like many war novels devoted to Russian-Chechen conflict, Prilepin's book is full of military slang, vulgar language, nicknames, and descriptions of harsh reality without additional embellishment or sugar-coating. Grozny is described as the city torn between two oppositional forces: "'The city is in the hands of federal troops' – I hear someone talk – 'but there are many Chechen guerilla fighters too. They lie low. During the daytime, the city is ours, at night – it is theirs'" (Prilepin 20). This ambiguous position of Chechnya and Chechen people reflects the unfinished processes of colonization and decolonization. The soldiers, upon their arrival to the city of Grozny, are shocked by what they see: "Houses with chewed edges, piles of broken grey bricks … sagging roofs are swinging in the pupils of the soldiers sitting near the truck. The streets resemble dreadful old decorations" (Prilepin 22). Neither Russians nor Chechens know who the city belongs to at the moment. Both, Russian and Chechen fighters, lie low, wait for the moment to attack, go out on runs to estimate the number of the enemy troops, constantly hide, and play this hide-and-seek game with each other. The main character is often burdened by these reflections: "Who says that this city is in our control? We sleep in different corners of this city, utterly unwanted, run out of our shelters in the morning, kill everybody on our way, and lie low like animals again" (Prilepin 80). This comparison of Russian soldiers with animals will be repeated several times in the novel, making the reader contemplate the problem of the dehumanizing character of the Russian-Chechen war. In contrast to the above-mentioned animalization of Chechen fighters in Mordasov's poem "Hello, Vainakh," in Prilepin's novel, both the Russian soldiers and Chechen fighters demonstrate animal-like behaviour and feelings. The protagonist (a Russian soldier) often describes his feelings in comparison with animals:

"The houses are lined up with their backs to the road, lit by the headlights. The houses do not have internal organs as if their heart was plucked out and there was left a very thin, crumbling skeleton with black holes between broken ribs. I look at these houses, and my soul is filled with the same warmth and softness one can feel at the bottom of lady-dog's abdomen" (Prilepin 217). The constant reference to the animalistic feelings and behaviours of both Russian soldiers and Chechen fighters show the unprincipled, spiritless, and worthless side of the war. Russian soldiers are guilty in their own murder; every day they feel non-human, animal fear and alcohol is the only means to overcome this sense of alarm. They get drunk and behave like animals because remaining a human being is not possible in this senseless war. None of the soldiers have any principled or spiritual reason to be in this war; they do not want to fight and, most importantly, they do not know how to be at war. The moment Russian soldiers are drunk and completely unable to behave like sober-minded people, Chechens deal a crushing blow and destroy the enemy.

In her article "Without Compliments: Zakhar Prilepin's Work," Irina Repiova criticizes Prilepin's *The Pathologies* for its lack of idea and morality, shallow soul and mind: "What kind of truth did these immature Russian soldiers come to defend in the Caucasus with their animal 'anger,' their rude animal flesh, and sexual fantasies? What did they – with their narrow, herring-like heart and impoverished mind – bring to Chechnya? What kind of culture? What type of faith? And do not the very Chechens see their actions and read their minds?" For most of the time, Russian soldiers do not express feelings of sorrow or regret when killing Chechens. One of the few moments in the book during which the main character realizes that a Chechen is also a man, a human being, is when the latter swears in Russian:

> We do not look out the window not to be noticed but we hold breath and listen attentively. Chechens walk silently. I hear one Chechen man, wearing sneakers, slip on the mud and quietly curse in Russian with a slight accent. It is sickening to hear his voice. It may well be that his swearing and saying obscene names of genitals suddenly make me realize that he is a living human being. Soft, white, hairy, sweaty, living. (Prilepin 67)

This Chechen man becomes a human being for the Russian soldier only when the former uses obscene, rude, vulgar words that are usually the sign of human degradation, lack of culture and morality. The questions arise here: Who is a human being here? Are Russian soldiers able to feel pity for Chechens only when they are on the same level: inhumane? Is this war based on higher principles and ideas or low animal instincts and blind drives? According to Kristina Rylova,

> The awakening of *the savage* (animal) is directly connected with the imminent danger when the instinct is needed for survival. However, the zoological transformations of the characters in the Prilepin's novel are distinct for they foreground the idea of anthropological regress. A person loses his/her human self and qualities that make him differ from animals: pity, sympathy, compassion, and common sense. The savage-like behavior, then, becomes a habit and pattern and poses a danger of becoming a life principle. (186)

The savage-like behavior is attributed to both participants of the war: Russian soldiers and Chechen fighters. The binarism is shattered. Prilepin shows Russia's lost generation: disillusioned, traumatized, and damaged.

Prilepin's *The Pathologies* was intended to be a romance novel, a love story of a Russian soldier to a young girl, his overwhelming jealousy, deep childhood traumas, and eternal hope for

a brighter future. According to Ad Marginem Press, "While *The Pathologies* has been formally interpreted as a novel about Chechen war, literary mastery of its author situates it beyond the boundaries of the war prose genre. Prilepin is indeed the successor of the classical Russian literary tradition. He creates worlds, where utterly realistic pain, blood and death coexist with love, prophetic dreams and giddy glimpses of hope." The descriptions of a love story between young people are again filled with sexual fantasies, vulgar language, comparisons with animal-like desire and jealousy. The name of the novel – *The Pathologies* – reveals not only the pathology of the Russian-Chechen conflict but also the dysfunction, abnormalities, and crisis within a person: moral and ethical downfall. This idea is similar to Joseph Conrad's exploration of the psychological effects colonialism and imperialism have on white European colonists, rather than on the colonized, in *Heart of Darkness*. Both Conrad and Prilepin focus their works not on the pathologies of war but on the pathologies of the soul. As Rylova claims, "In the characters' mind, the war in Chechnya is far from their idea of high purpose. Their participation in the war is the forced escape from dead end circumstances of daily life: commanding officer Semionych is abandoned by his wife; Chechen soldier Khasan changed passport and took the Russian name after the war; soldier Plokhish has nobody to return to at home. The main character Egor Tashevskii tests himself for his involvement in the absurdity, harshly and painfully determining his place in the world" (183). These characters have nothing to defend and fight for the sake of nothing and nobody. The Russian-Chechen conflict has a similar character: everyone is fighting but no one knows what for anymore; the Chechen man fighting for the Russian army blurs the boundaries between "us" and "them"; Russian soldiers are indifferent to the higher purpose of the war and dull their feelings and emotions with alcohol; the war has no heroes and heroic acts as everyone spends most of the time hiding and escaping choosing rare

moments of attack and open battle action. This is the reason why at the end of the novel the main character does not feel like a hero being the one of the few survivors of the last Chechen attack. He neither wins nor loses. In the Russian-Chechen war, there have been no winners or losers up to this date. The surviving soldiers do look at each other; they do not feel the need to celebrate their personal victory. They cannot make sense of the whole purpose of this battle, and alcohol becomes the solution again. They find out that their commanding officer has earned a lot of money on their battered group of soldiers. The novel ends with the recurrent image of a human being and an animal:

> We sullenly boarded the plane, and some unkempt dog sheepishly followed us. The soldiers kicked her out, and she ran off but then darted again into the open board of the plane steering away from frightening stamping feet.
>
> - Where are you going? Hoot! – strenuously bawled out the soldiers, instantly cheering up.
> - Well, come here, lady-dog! – called her Vasia with an unusually tender voice. – Chechen lady-dog! Russia has so many male dogs! Hoo! Come here, dear…
>
> In the plane, Khasan, looking for something in the pocket of his camouflage jacket, pulled out a deck of cards – the very cards we played on our way to Chechnya. The cards were damp, bloated, and rubbed off. Phlegmatically, I thought there was some meaning in that: cards…we played them…cards…on our way here…What is the point here?
>
> I was looking at the ceiling of the plane and caressed the dog with my weak-willed hand. The dog was still afraid of us. The skinny and dirty sides of her body were trembling.
>
> "All the creatures jointly moan and suffer to this day" – the phrase, big like a cloud, bubbled to the surface.

> I thought I was crying and hugging the dog. I thought I was whispering: "My doggess, forgive me, doggess…let everyone forgive me…and you, my doggess….
>
> I thought I was crying but I was not. I was looking at the ceiling with dry eyes. I was asking anyone to forgive me for anything. (351-2)

These last lines of the novel refer to the human-animal relationships that can characterize the whole Russian-Chechen conflict. The main character makes an attempt to beg forgiveness from the lady-dog which represents Chechnya but his body does not respond to his mind. On the level of the mind, he attempts to listen to his common sense and have empathy and compassion, to remain a human being but his body lives on its own, satisfying the lower needs, holding guns and killing innocent people, responding well to alcohol and sexual fantasies, submitting only to the feeling of fear, survival, and self-preservation. This is the pathology of Prilepin's characters. This is also the pathology of the Russian-Chechen war.

The two above mentioned novels – Ivanov's *Chechen Boomerang* and Prilepin's *Pathologies* – are examples of the military fiction genre mostly represented by Russian male writers and their idea of the Russian-Chechen war. I now wish to turn to women authors and show how they see the war (devoid of only combat descriptions), how they portray the trauma of people not directly involved in war, and how their writing provides stories about people, not stories about war. I wish to consider how the question of the visual and its role in the harsh reality of the discourse of war is considered central in Marina Akhmedova's novel *House for the Blind.* Akhmedova's novel is about a group of blind people who find themselves in the middle of the war and who are forced to live in the basement of their house for a long time. It is a multinational and multiracial group of people, the majority of which are blind. We read about them arguing, listening to the radio, telling fictional stories about different planets, eating scones

every day, writing poetry, taking care of a dog, fearfully going outside for some water reserves, dreading the sniper who occupies the next house and who, similar to god, determines their destinies, and thinking that "it is better to have a horrible end than a horror without end" (227). Akhmedova's novel about blind people living in the capital city of Grozny and not seeing it makes us contemplate the idea of the invisibility of Chechnya as such. Chechnya, the image of which was formed by imperial, soviet, and contemporary Russia, can be seen through the eyes of those who were responsible for its creation. Akhmedova's blind characters do not see Chechnya with their eyes as the reality for them is not in the eyes but in the imagination of the beholder. One of the blind characters of Akhmedova's novel tells a utopian fictional story about a blind boy Enii who goes to another planet with an ideal life, healthy people without impaired vision, and no money or egoism. The people on this ideal planet explain the misfortunes of the planet Earth in the following way:

> Your sun began to fade fifty years ago when the Earth witnessed the bloodiest wars… People stopped noticing how they were losing sight and how they could not see at a distance… Now when the sun has completely gone out, people have no other choice but to become blind and it will soon happen. (33)

The physical blindness of Akhmedova's characters metaphorically reflects the subaltern position of Chechnya: its absence, non-recognition, and lack of representation in the dominant imperial discourse. The subaltern, being blind, are shown as unable to see Chechnya, their home and native land, and, thus, they are incapable of representing it. The agency of the subaltern is undermined. Since there are Russian people among the blind characters, the Chechen and Russian subalterns exist in shared yet non-identical forms of darkness, silence, and voicelessness. In Akhmedova's novel, Chechnya exists only in the discourse of war - the

discourse created by Russia's imperial policy. Akhmedova makes an attempt to emphasize the issue of the subaltern, but falls into the trap of representing them as incomplete, incapable, and dependent. Self-representation becomes impossible. The visual and vocal constraints of the Chechens have become a recurring plot theme in contemporary Russian cultural texts including films. They represent the Chechen subaltern position bound by the hegemonic constraints, which are created by the Russian imperial policy.

Another female writer who devoted the whole cycle of four books to the theme of the relationships between Russia and the North Caucasus is Yulia Latynina, the author of thrillers *Jahannam, or See You in Hell*, *Niyazbek*, *The Land of War*, and *No Time for Glory*. The difference between Akhmedova's writing and Latynina's novels can be seen and felt right from the first pages of a book. Latynina takes a strictly male perspective and tone in writing. Her books have the documentary style of presenting the plot devoid of detailed descriptions of personal experiences, feelings, emotions, traumas, and deep analysis. Every book of the Caucasus cycle is the dry statement of facts and events without any analysis of inner motives, desires, contemplation, and thoughts of the main characters. Each book of the Caucasus cycle is a political thriller about the flagrant corruption and negligence of the Russian power. Latynina creates imaginary cities and republics in different parts of Russia that serve as miniature prototypes of Russian and Caucasian societies. She does not divide Russian and Caucasian people into good or bad but, rather, shows the world in which there are no heroes or good characters. Everyone is somehow involved in corruption, money laundering, dishonest business, and other kinds of criminal behavior. Everyone is interconnected and yoked together: Chechen terrorists, Russian Federal Security Service, Dagestani businessmen, Russian riot police officers, Caucasian and Russian government officials. Latynina's books are dark, pessimistic, and

hopeless. They do not offer any conclusion or solution to the problem of Russian and Caucasian societies. The imaginary and fantastical scenarios and situations that Latynina creates in her Caucasian cycle can be easily paralleled to recognizable events, real individuals, and notable moments in the history of Russian-Caucasian conflict.

Another fantastical image of Russia is created by Viktor Pelevin in his early, mostly unknown short story "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers." Pelevin is a Russian postmodernist writer whose novels include elements of science fiction, pop culture, esoteric philosophies, satirical and absurdist styles, and political phantasmagoria. "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers" was written in 1996, and it deals primarily with the epoch of Boris Yeltsin; however, this largely unnoticed short story foresaw the Putin era and the consequences of the corrupted political regime in both Russia and the North Caucasus. "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers" tells about the change of roles in the relationships of Russia and its insurgent region of the North Caucasus. Pelevin offers an alternative story of the events in Russia: Shamil Basayev, a Chechen militant Islamist and leader of the Chechen movement, and his Chechen terrorists take over the Kremlin and stage a terror attack. As it turns out later, the whole operation is staged, absurd, and well-planned together with the Russian government. The grotesque and phantasmagoric image of the situation is shown in the first page:

> This time there were no KamAz [a Russian brand of trucks used by the Russian army] and camouflage – 200 people from the Basayev guerrilla battalion took 40 "Mercedes-600" cars confiscated from the people living in the mountainous region of Chechnya for the special purpose. The success of the operation was also due to the fact that most of the cars, as the mountain custom says, had the flasher lights. Each soldier of the battalion was clean-shaven and dressed in bright-crimson jacket (they were hastily sewn from the sacks dyed

> with beet juice), and on his neck, there was a thick toilet chain painted in golden color – these chains, as investigation revealed, were hastily made in one of Grozny bureaus of funeral services. (Pelevin 4)

These lines reveal the satire on Russia's "wild nineties" – the time of bandits, lawlessness, gangs of criminals, racketeering, poverty, bribery, and the New Russians, a newly rich business class of people in post-Soviet Russia. They achieved rapid wealth, very often due to the use of criminal methods. They were distinct from other people: they wore crimson jackets, drove luxury cars, had massive gold chains around their neck, rings and large watches, and used mobile phones, which were quite rare among ordinary Russian people. Pelevin draws parallels between Chechen terrorists and the Russian "nouveau riche" of the 1990s in order to show people behind power, the role of money and mafia in Russia, and the use of external political problems for hidden inner purposes. In this short story, terrorism, as a burning issue of Russia in the 1990s, becomes a convenient tool in the hands of the very Russian officials and businessmen to draw the public's attention and make as much money and profit as possible. The sponsor and ally of the terrorist Basayev turns out to be a Russian businessman, Kim Polkanov, who sells karakul wool. When Basayev takes over the Kremlin, his Chechen soldiers symbolically climb the Kremlin and cover the Kremlin towers with Chechen hats made of karakul wool. Polkanov controls one of the influential newspapers in Russia and orders the editor to write an article blaming Polkanov's business competitor for his participation in the terror attack. The competitor loses credibility and his caracul business gives way to that of Polkanov. Thus, Polkanov earns a lot of money on caracul and shares his profit with the terrorist Basayev. This part of the story hints not only at the lack of freedom in the press and presstitute media in Russia but also at the use of the terrorist attack scenario for completely different purposes. Pelevin also assumes that the president of

Russia has been informed of the terror attack in the making and is taken far from the country on a business trip to Greenland in case of open fire. Pelevin hints at the cooperation between Chechen terrorists and the Russian government in the attack on the Kremlin.

Pelevin, whose short story was ahead of its time predicting future terror attacks in Russia, openly criticizes the work of the Russian Federal Security Service in the critical situations of terror attacks. In the face of danger and terrorism, the Russian Federal Security Service has two options: either to hide information from the public and pretend like nothing serious is happening or, when it is already impossible to secretly handle Chechen terrorists, to use forces and military actions to take terrorists by storm without much regard for saving the lives of the hostage. In "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers," the Russian Federal Security Service explains to the public that a famous singer is giving a concert at Red Square and for that reason the Kremlin Towers are covered with sheepskin hats. The media quickly announces this news and invites people to purchase concert tickets that do not even exist. When the truth is finally revealed, the public is not shocked by the terrorist attack and the whole situation is still perceived with humour, excitement, and great interest. The whole idea of terrorism is diminished and devalued when Pelevin introduces the so-called volunteer hostage to the story:

> In the meantime, Basayev's prediction about volunteer hostage has been fulfilled. The Kremlin Borovitsky Gate was open for their entry. In the first two days, the number of volunteers was so big that the terrorists, guarding the entrance, had to organize something similar to face control station. They allowed only TV journalists and individuals who enjoyed popularity among general public – magicians, entertainers, Duma members, broadcasters – in other words, everybody who could contribute to the high profile of the event and draw even more attention to the figure of Shamil Basayev. (Pelevin 8)

The potentially dangerous and tragic situation soon becomes a farcical play, a spectacular show for people, another chance for Russian singers, artists, broadcaster, and officials to occupy the centre of attention and increase their own popularity: "The Kremlin looked like a huge movie set…. Many people brought their personal belongings, sandwiches, thermos and generously treated hungry militants so very soon everything happening on the territory of the Kremlin looked like a big touching picnic" (Pelevin 8). Pelevin does not use the real names of the famous people but through funny puns and slightly changed letters in words, it becomes clear to the reader who the author means and why this reference is made. Pelevin describes how Basayev's plan becomes successful and failing at the same time. The huge group of volunteer hostage, promising huge success to Basayev's operation, gradually turns everything into chaos in which the whole goal of the terrorist attack is lost and left unnoticed:

> Everything started very quickly. The situation did not fully spiral out of control but Basayev and his gunmen paled into insignificance and were relegated to the background. When Shamil tried to stop, as he himself said, debauch and lawlessness and ordered to end all the footage and lock all the hostage in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, something unexpected happened. He was taken to the side away from his militants and told in a civilized manner that it was not Budyonnovsk[31] here and that he had to carefully choose his words in future. (Pelevin 9)

Pelevin changes the roles of the victims and perpetrators and shows how the main terrorist of the country is the only one who is trying to stop lawlessness and chaos in this situation. Lawlessness does not concern Chechen terrorism alone; it is rather evident in everything that is connected

[31] The Budyonnovsk hospital hostage crisis took place from 14 June to 19 June 1995, when a group of 80 to 200 Chechen separatists led by Shamil Basayev attacked the southern Russian city of Budyonnovsk.

with Russian power, government, business, and media. In the story, soon it becomes clear that Basayev's plan to organize a terror attack on the Kremlin is turned into a reality show called "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers," which is very popular among the general public. One minute of advertising time during this TV program costs 250 thousand dollars. Basayev realizes that he cannot compete with this kind of money and starts planning the escape operation. He secretly contacts Russian Federal Security Service, demanding two KamAz cars and five million dollars. Another Chechen terrorist whose appearance resembles Basayev's agrees to play the role in front of cameras while the real Basayev plans his escape. The story ends with the success of the escape operation and Basayev's final words, which he pronounces with tears in his eyes: "Woe betide you, Babylon, strong city!" (Pelevin 11). Pelevin hints at the Jewish ancestry of Basayev several times during the story to completely confuse the reader and bring even more chaos to the situation. Pelevin begins and ends the story with his reflections on the concept or myth of military attack or storm. He believes that in the military attack it is always clear who is the intruder/assaulter and what they are attacking or taking over. For Pelevin, "it is unclear who the defenders are" (4). Every storm or attack in Russian history has not been crowned with complete success because there are no clear defenders, or, rather, the defenders often become random people who do not even know they are defending the fortress with their actions. Pelevin sharply notices that the problem in Russia is not as much connected with the invaders as it directly depends on the defenders who are either absent or accidental. Pelevin's short story provides a harsh criticism of the constructed discourse of terrorism used by Moscow's Kremlin to justify its military campaigns in the North Caucasus. Pelevin hints at the latent agenda which exists behind Russia's declared "War on Terror." It is not so much the question of protecting the country from terrorists and bandits as it is a way to make as much profit as possible under the

cover of military operations. Pelevin also suggests, there exists a hidden collaboration between Russian government and Chechen terrorists, where both sides mutually agree to stage terror attacks and pretend to be enemies. Pelevin undermines Russia's reasoning for military interventions into the North Caucasus as a way to put a stop to terrorism. In a way, Russia's government is portrayed as an instigator and perpetrator, rather than a victim of violence and terrorism in the Russian-Chechen conflict. Pelevin's short story "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers" turns Russia's discourse of terrorism upside down and makes one look at the terror attacks happened on the territory of Russia from a different perspective. I will come back to the question of terrorism later in this chapter when I will be discussing Marina Akhmedova's portrayal of a Chechen female suicide bomber in the novel *Khadijah, Notes of a Death Girl*. I now wish to turn to the cinematographic representations of Caucasian people to see whether the discourse of Orientalism is present there too.

c. Representing the Caucasus in Cinema

Among the most famous Russian films that provide descriptive and elaborate images of the Caucasus and Caucasian peoples, the Soviet film *Kidnapping, Caucasian Style* (1967) by Leonid Gaidai and the post-Soviet movie *Prisoner of the Mountains* (1996) by Sergei Bodrov especially stand out. Gaidai's film represents the Caucasus and its peoples in a conventional way that follows the paradigm of the discourse of Orientalism. *Kidnapping, Caucasian Style* takes place in one of the regions of the Caucasus but the narrator of the story does not specify which mountainous area it is so as not to offend, as he says, other places where the same story might have happened. This representation of the Caucasus as one homogenous mountainous area with no differences in peoples, languages, customs, and cultures between various parts of it align with the style of thought in the discourse of Orientalism. As Valeriya Nakshun also notes, "no specific

ethnic groups are named; the characters are instead meant to be caricatures of the many peoples of the Caucasus, whether they be Armenian, Arani, Tat, Chechen, or otherwise." In this romantic comedy, Caucasian people are shown as backward and far behind in progress, and their traditions of toasting, wine tasting, and bride kidnapping are extremely exaggerated and represented in an ironic way. The image of the Oriental girl, however, is transformed by Gaidai in this film. As Elizaveta Pyanzina argues, "Nina [a Caucasian woman who is to be kidnapped for marriage with a Caucasian man] is very assertive and confident in what she wants: she is referred to by other characters as 'sportsmenka, komsomolka, krasavitsa.' Although she is Muslim in her upbringing, she has a Russian name and speaks without any accent. Contrary to other Caucasians, she is very fashionable: wears nice urban clothes and a hairstyle that was very common in the Russia of 1960s-1970s. Thus, Nina has distinctive features that belong to both Russia and the Caucasus" (24). In the end, Nina asserts her independence and goes her own way neither marrying the Caucasian groom nor following the Russian male character who is madly in love with her from the beginning of the film; however, it is still implied by the movie plot that it is the Russian student who saves Nina from the confinement of traditional Caucasian marriage. Nakshun argues that "Russian culture, if not explicitly shown, is at least implied to be the liberator of indigenous women, a force able to tame the animalistic, emotional, and passionate 'Oriental' nature of the people it is foisted on." The movie establishes and confirms several stereotypes of Caucasian people: their barbaric and aggressive nature, hypermasculinity of men, their acknowledgment of the mountain rules, the constant need of Caucasian men to dance, the beauty and seductiveness of Caucasian women, and the practice of taking hostages. The other post-soviet film, *Prisoner of the Mountains* (1996) by Sergei Bodrov, conveys similar motives of the hostage, but it complicates the relationship between the self and other. In this film, the two Russian soldiers are

captured by a Chechen father whose son is, in turn, captured by the Russians. The father hopes to make an exchange of his hostages for the captured son. From the early scenes of the film, the representation of Chechens as bandits and criminals, as non-Russians, is evident. However, Bodrov manages to keep the balance in the representations of the "bad" Chechens directly involved in the military conflict with Russia and the so-called ordinary people of Chechnya who live their everyday lives, have cultures and traditions, their own language, and who, most importantly, have a voice in this colonial situation. As May Zhee Lim claims, "The colonizer is not a monolithic entity with total power over its colonial subjects; rather, the colonial subjects are just as central to the formation of the colonizer's identity, and the self cannot sustain itself without always referring or relating to the other." Bodrov's film reflects that duality by showing how the colonized uses the methods of the colonizer to achieve the goal. The Russian soldiers are taken hostage by a Chechen colonized because other methods, less violent and more civilized, are not effective in the colonial situation. According to Zhee Lim, "Despite the Russian attempt to paint the Chechens as violent and irrational, this movie asks the question of why the violence is there in the first place, and indeed it shows us that these are not spontaneous outbursts of violence but responses to a violent colonizer attempting to take over their way of life." It is perhaps one of the few Russian war films that does not differentiate completely between the Self and Other and that shows the roots of violence inherent in the colonial relationship. The film represents different colonial experiences: that of the poor father who resorts to the violent actions of the colonizers in order to save his son, that of the Russian colonizers captured and not freed on the land they are supposed to subjugate, that of a soft-hearted, feminine and submissive Russian soldier who does not conform to the Russian identity of a strong, masculine army soldier, that of the mother of the Russian soldier who comes to war and reaches out to Chechens to save her

child. As Harsha Ram claims, the Russian hero is depicted as "prisoner, rather than aggressor, a somewhat passive hostage to the spectacle of imperial violence played out between the Russian state and the colonized peoples of the south" (14). Bodrov's film is among the few which manages to escape the trap of Orientalism and to use these very Orientalist stereotypes to subvert the strict colonizer-colonized formation and show the discrepancies that break out of this subversion.

Vladimir Khotinenko's film *A Moslem (Musulmanin)* (1995) is probably one of the earliest movies to counterpose the traditional lifestyle of Russian village with the Muslim religion, traditions, and outlook on life. It is about the Russian soldier Nikolai Ivanov, who has spent the last seven years in captivity of mujahideen (Islamist Afghan warriors) and who is miraculously saved by one Afghan peasant. The peasant treats Nikolai like his own son, and in acknowledgement of this, the Russian soldier accepts Islam and takes the name of Abdullah. After several years, Nikolai returns to his homeland, to the village where his mother and brother still live. Nikolai has become a true Muslim, and he feels alien among Russian peasants who do not understand or accept him. Misunderstanding, hostility, rejection and overall contempt of fellow villagers result in a tragic end to the story.

Nikolai comes back to his village and finds out that his father committed suicide by hanging himself, his brother served a prison term and now drinks without stop, and his former fiancée has become a woman of low morals. From the very first scene of the film, the main character remains silent for the most part. He looks and feels alien and excluded even before society starts rejecting and hating him. Nikolai silently greets his fellow villagers and lets his brother and mother passionately hug him without saying a word. He quietly listens to his mother talking about all the past events and says nothing when his mother asks: "Kolya, son, why don't

you say a word to your mother? You keep silent, huh?" (06:42). He says nothing when the local boss compares the rich people with gods and money – with godlike power. Nikolai takes the position of the silent watcher of the Russian village lifestyle, which presents a mix of Soviet, post-soviet, Russian Orthodox, Western and post-imperial cultures and identities. He remains silent even when, during the celebration of his arrival, Nikolai's godfather remembers a story from his childhood that turns out to be prophetic. His godfather says: "Let's drink together. I am your godfather after all. I was holding you on these very hands when you were baptized. You were baptized by the priest Polikarp. You pissed on his robe and he said you would become infidel. But look at you now, our Russian soldier, let me kiss you" (07:20). Nikolai is also speechless during the toast of the local boss who sells their land for dollars to new-rich Russians. With his behaviour, Nikolai, dressed as a Muslim, shows how distant he is from all the drinking, lazy members of the community. When the local boss gives a toast to Nikolai, the latter stands up and leaves the celebration dinner. At first, the community, especially the immediate family, are neutral to the new habits of the newcomer. They even praise Nikolai for his ability to resist drinking and smoking and to work hard from dawn to sunset. He avoids conversations, gatherings, drinking parties, and the sexual advances of his former fiancée. The first conflict develops between Nikolai and his family when the former refuses to help his brother Fedya steal animal feed from the farm. Nikolai lives by his principles and neither mother's begging nor the poor situation with the hungry cattle can change his determination to remain a faithful Muslim. The next conflict arises when Nikolai refuses to drink on his father's grave, which is a Russian tradition followed for centuries. The following dialogue takes place in the cemetery:

> NIKOLAI'S MOTHER: You think, son, I don't understand anything. You think I am just a useless chatterbox. When we brought this danged animal feed home without your help that

> day, I was crying for the whole night. Not because of you. Not because of the offence. But because our life is danged and damned. Shame on us. Shame that all our life we have been stealing. Shame. But if we had not stolen, we would not have survived. When your father worked in the forestry section, he stole wood. We built the house. The bed on which you were born is also made of stolen wood.
>
> NIKOLAI: Mom…
>
> NIKOLAI'S MOTHER: What? Life is like that. And you say, son, they don't drink vodka in your Afghanistan. It is like a law or something. I respect that. But it is also a law for us to drink three shot glasses at the funeral feast. This is our law. You respect them and that is good. But show respect for us too. Drink, son.
>
> NIKOLAI: I cannot, mom.

The scene ends with the mother splashing vodka into the face of her son and him leaving the cemetery. Nikolai may seem rude towards his mother but it soon becomes clear that he is deeply devoted to his family even as he is also devoted to his God. Fedya, Nikolai's brother, on the other hand, picks a fight with Nikolai on every occasion and starts calling him "a Muslim." Fedya promises, if not to kill Nikolai, then to cripple him at least. Once, the priest comes to visit Nikolai at his place. Nikolai's mother sets the table and offers the priest a glass of vodka. The priest refuses which does not cause any negative reaction from Nikolai's mother like it did earlier with the son's refusal to drink on his father's grave. She starts complaining to the priest and judges her son for his conversion to Islam, but the priest says: "There are many ways to God" (01:03:40). He then starts criticizing Nikolai's brother instead for not going to church. The priest also asks the mother to take care of Nikolai. The priest is the only true Christian character

in the movie. He does not judge, reject, or condemn Nikolai for converting to Islam. The movie ends with Fedya's attempt to hang himself and the murder of Nikolai. He is killed by his army captain who comes to take a revenge because of the betrayal and walkout of the soldier Nikolai. Even though the captain finally forgives Nikolai, he accidently triggers a rifle and kills the main character. This murder symbolizes total rejection of Nikolai by the society and the unwillingness of people to change, develop, and improve. Even though this film does not directly depict the North Caucasus and its peoples, it shows the attitude of Russian orthodox people towards the Muslim religion and the so-called "infidels" and demonstrates a stereotypical image of a Muslim person. This hostile attitude, misunderstanding, and complete rejection is evident in the present situation as well and it is not so much the question of religion as it is about the mental and value-based crisis of post-Soviet society.

The line separating Orthodox Russians and Muslim Caucasians is also clearly seen in a number of war films devoted to the Russian-Chechen conflict. Similar to the war novels, Russian war films present a homogenous group of visual texts that separate the soldiers into "right" and "wrong" and declare the war and fighting in Chechnya as "just." Rogozhkin's film *Blockpost* shows naïve and innocent Russian soldiers who do not want to fight but who are simply following the orders of Russian authorities. The film does not provide any in-depth analysis of the Caucasian conflict, human behaviour or personal feelings. Stambula's *The Charge* is a film about a young Russian resident of a children's home who later manifests himself as a real man and hero in war and who does not change his principles even when his survival depends on doing so. It seems as if the film uses the propaganda of the Russian army to recruit young and naïve men who are eager to find their purpose in life. Nevzorov's *Chistilishche* (*Purgatory*) stresses the distinction between good, brave Russian patriots and cruel, hostile, and crazy peoples of the

North Caucasus. Veledinskiy's *Alive* shows a Russian soldier who is haunted by his two friends killed in the Russian-Chechen war. The soldier is tortured by the ghosts of his dead friends but feels nothing towards a number of Chechen people killed by them in the war. Malyukov's *Grozovye Vorota* (*The Storm Gate*) is another conventional war movie in which Russian soldiers fight against Chechen militants. Other Russian war movies include *Mertvoe Pole* (*Dead Field*) by Aravin, *Chest Imeyu!...* (*I Have the Honour!...*) by Buturlin, *Break-through* by Lukin, *Captive* by Uchitel, *A Simple Story* by Yegorov, *No Comment* by Temnikov, *Spetsnaz* by Malyukov, and *Caucasian Roulette* by Popov. The majority of these movies follow certain principles: the division of characters into "ours" and "others"; the antagonism between heroes and their enemies; simplified plot stories and lack of in-depth analysis of psychological state of characters; the use of stereotypes and clichés; conventional images and motives of blood, violence, horror, death, individual heroism, and betrayal. The films stress the natural hostility and savagery of Chechens, primordial warfare between Russians and Caucasians, ethnic differences, the necessity to bring peace, order, and stability to Chechen land, almost documental authenticity of the described events, aestheticization of war, and identification of Russian-Chechen conflict with the Russian war on terror.

Among the numerous war movies devoted to the Russian-Caucasian conflict, *House of Fools* by Andrei Konchalovsky stands out as one of the few films that attempts to show the life of ordinary (that is not directly involved in the military conflict) people in the midst of the First Chechen war. The film takes place in a psychiatric hospital in the Russian republic of Ingushetia on the border with Chechnya. The medical personnel leave the hospital and the patients in search of help while the Chechen rebels take over the building and live with the residents of the mental institutions side by side. Zhanna, the main character in the film, is a young woman who falls in

love with Ahmed, one of the Chechen militants, and willingly accepts his marriage proposal made by him as a joke to amuse his fellow rebels. Zhanna takes it seriously, and all the residents of the psychiatric hospital gather to help her with the preparation for the marriage ceremony. One of the residents exclaims: "You know, Zhanna, I did not expect such decisiveness from you. This is really an act of bravery. When the whole world is trying to ignore this tragedy, you are uniting yourself with the man who fights against the imperial policy of Russian government. Bravo! This action has an international significance. All the mass media should know about it. And I would even say that it is peoples' diplomacy in action" (00:52:20). This marriage between a Russian girl and a Chechen militant is an impossible thing to happen similar to the impossible idea of reconciliation between Russia and the Caucasus. According to Deborah Young, in this film, "Andrei Konchalovsky describes the war between Russia and Chechnya as a conflict between madmen, compared to whom the residents of a mental institution are sane human beings" (*Variety*). Indeed, this mental institution, totally forgotten in the midst of the war, remains the only safe and stable place where life runs smoothly and things never change. And even this place is occupied, vandalized, and finally destroyed by both Federal troops and Chechen militants. Dmitrii Bykov argues that "Konchalovsky's house of fools does not symbolize Russia. It is the female character Zhanna who is Russia, and she is only one of the residents of this mournful dwelling. The house of fools is multinational. It is not so the image of the world but more like quintessence of the world culture." Bykov thinks that the house of fools represents the world of artists: every resident of the mental institution is somehow connected with art. They sing, dance, write poetry, play musical instruments, beautify each other, and advocate for democracy. They are all ego-centred, helpless, sick, weak, silly, talented, and very compassionate. They accept the Chechen militant as a member of their group because he is the weakest and most ridiculous

fighter among his fellows. He does not know how to shoot and he has always wanted to be an artist. Bykov believes that Konchalovsky's film shows that everyone who is capable of having a talent, conscience, and compassion is doomed to be isolated from the rest of the society. This film is not about the insanity of mentally disabled people. On the contrary, it is about the insanity of the whole world and contemporary reality. It is a microcosm of Russian society and the image of the gloomy future that awaits the country if the military conflict between Russia and the Caucasus does not end.

Nikita Mikhalkov, a famous Russian director and actor, produced a crime film named *12* in 2007 and presented it at the 64th Venice International Film Festival, where he was awarded the Special Lion for Overall Work. The original idea for the film was borrowed from Reginald Rose's play *Twelve Angry Men* and Sidney Lumet's film *12 Angry Men*. Mikhalkov's film was also included in a five-film shortlist for the "Best Foreign Film" in the Oscar awards (*RIA Novosti*). The film centers on the process of a jury having a meeting in a high school gymnasium in an unspecified Russian city and attempting to make a decision whether a Chechen teenager is guilty of the murder of his stepfather, a Russian military officer. The jury consists of a racist taxi-driver, a suspicious Armenian surgeon, a vacillating TV producer, a Holocaust survivor, a flamboyant musician, a cemetery manager, a sentimental scientist, a pensioner, a democrat-human rights activist, an engineer, a university dean, and a silenced jury foreman who is an artist and a veteran of the military operations in the North Caucasus. According to Stephen Holden, "In the screenplay, written by the director with Vladimir Moiseenko and Alexander Novototsky-Vlasov, the effort expended by a fractious jury to reach an agreement could be taken as a hopeful metaphor for the country's struggle to achieve an elusive national unity." Notably, the female characters are present only in the background in the film. The jury consists of men only. This

again represents Russian society as highly patriarchal: women are excluded and marginalized. Their agency is undermined. The film presents an interesting twist as it moves from an almost completely unanimous decision of the jury on the Chechen teenager's absolute guiltiness to their reconsideration of the case, a vivid recreation of a murder scene, and their final verdict about the teenager's innocence.

Mikhalkov's film starts with an epigraph – "seek the truth not in mundane details of daily life, but in the essence of life itself" – and ends with an epilogue – "what's to be done when compassion is above the law." The epigraph and epilogue are presented by B. Tosia, a fictitious figure who, supposedly, presents the words of the film creator himself. The Russian jury attempts to go beyond their "mundane daily life" and find the truth in a hidden meaning for the sake of greater good. In the process of the case discussion, each jury member steps up and explains his decision (there are no female jury members) as it has been influenced by his life story and the mundane living conditions under which Russian people are forced to lead harsh, brutal ways of life. As a result, each jury member finally comes to the point when he understands the true humanism of his decision, when he realizes that law-abiding freedom has little to do with spiritual freedom and the possibility of the Chechen boy's salvation.

At the beginning of the film, the discourse of racial discrimination against Caucasian people becomes evident when the court enforcement officer and all the members of the jury find the Chechen teenager, Apti Magomaev, de facto guilty simply for the reason that he is from the North Caucasus. The court enforcement officer says, "No matter, your case is simple. You'll be done in 20 minutes" (*12*). The jury members apparently share the same opinion and express their doubts on the case difficulty in the following way:

TV PRODUCER: And this won't take very long, right?

JEWISH INTELLECTUAL: I doubt it. It's not that kind of case.

ARMENIAN SURGEON: I agree. We have a different kind of case.

FOREMAN: As you know, our decision must be, and will be, final.

UNIDENTIFIED JURY MEMBER: And not subject to appeal.

FOREMAN: And so... Attention, please. And so... our vote has got to be unanimous.

MUSICIAN: We know all that. Let's just do it fast. Make a unanimous decision... and leave. I'm going on tour.

FOREMAN: We can each make comments one by one. Then we'll vote.

UNIDENTIFIED JURY MEMBER: No, let's vote. It's obvious. Let's vote now. No comments.

FOREMAN: Then nobody objects if...

UNIDENTIFIED JURY MEMBER: No, no. . . .

FOREMAN: Eleven for guilty, one for not guilty. (*12*)

The jury opts for an open vote by means of raising hands to declare whether the defendant is guilty or not, and this kind of transparent voting shows the informality of the meeting and a somewhat indifferent and impatient attitude of the jury members towards the destiny of a Chechen teenager who, according to their views, would probably end up in some detention center or penal institution. In order to make sure that every jury member understands the voting

procedure, a racist taxi driver uses harshly discriminatory words concerning the defendant: “We voted on whether that stinking Chechen dog is guilty of the murder of his adoptive father, a Russian army officer”; “that Chechen monster killed his father”; “all the evidence of that scumbag’s guilt”; “you saw that monster sitting in court”; “let’s talk about how you think you can defend a pig who can’t possibly be justified”; “I couldn’t think of a single word in defense of that bastard”; “he’s a stupid, uneducated savage who just jumped out of the tree”; “those animals have tiny little bird brains” (*12*). The taxi driver becomes a classic perpetrator of Orientalist discrimination:

> TAXI DRIVER: Look around! It’s not our city anymore. They’ve taken over. Everything! The markets, casinos, hotels. It’s all theirs… This isn’t Moscow anymore. It’s Baku-shmaku, whatever. And me, a native Muscovite, I feel like an alien in my own city… Imagine a Russian kid. What would a Russian kid do? He might get angry, curse him [father] out, maybe run away. But he wouldn’t pick up a knife. But that savage, your boy, that animal… he’d hide his anger and then go back to cut his throat and stab him! (*12*)

One of the few jury members who dares to oppose the taxi driver and discuss the issue of biased attitudes and prejudices of ethnic Russian people towards people from the Caucasus is the Armenian surgeon who was born in the Caucasus and studied in Moscow:

> ARMENIAN SURGEON: Excuse me, but just who are you calling a savage? I’m also from the Caucasus, for example. So, the poet Rustaveli was a savage? The artist Pirosmani? Directors like Paradzhanov? Who’s a savage?
>
> TAXI DRIVER: I don’t mean them. I’m talking about the monster who killed his father.

ARMENIAN SURGEON: I'm talking about myself. I'm also from the Caucasus. I studied in Moscow. But I get called "monkey." I'm no monkey, I'm a surgeon. A physician. I have my own clinic. Understand?

TAXI DRIVER: I don't doubt it, OK, so you're not toiling away at county hospital. Then why do people come here from the Caucasus to buy a diploma?

ARMENIAN SURGEON: What? To buy what? I bought one?

TAXI DRIVER: I don't mean you.

ARMENIAN SURGEON: I never paid anyone to get where I am. How dare you? What gives you the right? I tried four times before I got into Moscow Medical School! And for all four years I worked as an orderly at city hospital! Yes! (*12*)

The Russian scientist-physician, a representative of a foreign company, is the first to overcome the necessity of the mundane life needs and leave the discussion room as soon as possible due to a tight schedule of daily life, and the first to show what B. Tosia calls "compassion above the law" in the epilogue. He explains his vote in the following way: "It was too fast, somehow. It was too fast, you see. It scared me. We just put up our hands and… that was it. It was too fast. But we're talking about a human being. And we just put up our hands… and that was it. I want… well, to talk, at least. To talk… Say you go to the market and buy a watermelon. I go to the market and buy a melon. The salesman assures me it's ripe and red, but… until I take it home… and cut it open, it's very hard to know for sure if it is. But this isn't a watermelon. A watermelon you can just throw away" (*12*). The remaining members of the jury are confident in the fact that, beyond reasonable doubt, Apti Magomaev killed his adoptive father. According to the jury, the crime was committed by a Chechen boy for a sum of money. Although the scientist-physician

does not completely succeed in getting his message across to the jury, he plants the seed of doubt, resulting in a second secret ballot, according to which another jury member votes against the guilt of the Chechen defendant.

The racism of a taxi driver does not only apply to the people from the North Caucasus; his racism and nationalism extend to everyone who is of another nationality, race, ethnicity, and origin. It becomes especially demonstrative in his hostile discussion with a Jewish intellectual about the latter's decision to vote not guilty:

> TAXI DRIVER: Excuse me, but I don't understand. This is some sort of Jewish logic.
>
> JEWISH INTELLECTUAL: Absolutely correct. I'm a Jew. 100 per cent Jewish. And like everyone, I have tons of faults. But I do have one virtue. And it's an innately Jewish one. Thoughtfulness. I treasure it… The boy is destitute; the lawyer's eyes were empty: the face of a drunk, he couldn't function.
>
> TAXI DRIVER: Is it because he's not Jewish?... I am worried. Because I see how you and your Jewish tricks are muddying an obvious case. You didn't like the lawyer, so you just changed your mind. That's a typical Jewish move… If a non-Jew says something stupid, it's OK, but if it's a Jew, it's not stupid. (*12*)

The racist taxi driver is interrupted and silenced by a monologue by the scientist-physician who narrates his life story trying to appeal for the people's compassion. The scientist had gone through long years of destitution, misery, alcoholism, hooliganism, loneliness, an inability to realize his scientific invention, and a separation from his wife and was on the verge of suicide until one day he met one person who expressed compassion. That woman later became his wife; the scientist sold the patent of his invention to a foreign company and became a prosperous man.

He thus appeals to the members of the jury to find their spiritual wealth to express compassion for a Chechen boy: "Maybe that kid should die in prison. Maybe that's his fate. Who knows? Me, I should have died in the gutter. But I didn't. Because one person, just one looked at me a little more closely than everyone else and didn't let me remain in my lonely wretchedness (*12*).

The jury proceedings are interrupted with the images of Apti Magomaev sitting in a prison, flashbacks of his childhood and family, pictures of Chechen nature and people, traditions and rituals. Even when there are screen shots of Chechen militants, they are mostly shown in a friendly, relaxed, and apparently blissful atmosphere while dancing a traditional song with a knife or singing Chechen songs. The image of the knife used as a weapon to murder a stepfather is thereby counter-posed to the image of a knife as an element of a Chechen traditional dance and a generous gift from the older soldiers to a younger generation. The scientist-physician later proves that the knife, supposedly used by the Chechen teenager to kill his Russian stepfather, was not a unique Chechen relic, as it was declared in court, but a cheap fake copy which could be purchased at any Moscow market. After that, the jury decides to make an experiment and recreate the murder scene as it has been described in detail in the protocol. It turns out that the events incorporated in the minutes have a theoretical base only and cannot be proven in an empirical way. When eleven members vote "not guilty," the jury foreman remains the only one against them, but he admits he has known of the boy's innocence from the very beginning:

> FOREMAN: It was clearly a set up. Arranged by people who really need the kid to go to prison. Right? We saw that. We proved that he's innocent. Right? But as soon as we reach that verdict, they'll let him go… I can say one thing for sure. He'll live longer in prison than he will on the street. If he gets out now, he won't go to a bar or home, or to relatives. He has nothing, nobody, understand? He'll look for the killers. Also, if we acquit him now,

> it will automatically trigger an investigation into the unsolved murder. The men who killed his father will be on guard, and they'll look for the kid. He'll look for them. And they'll look for him, but he doesn't know where they are. But they know where he is. So, our decision, instead of sending the kid to prison, will be his death warrant. And they'll kill him crudely, horribly. Like a dog, with a sharpened screwdriver… and nobody will look for him. (*12*)

The jury are evidently not persuaded by the foreman and cast a final ballot of "not guilty." In doing so, the jury members are not willing to follow the foreman's plan to hide the Chechen boy in prison, hire lawyers, go to the prosecutors, find the real killers, lock them up in the prison, and only after that let the Chechen teenager out. The foreman appeals to the jury members' humanism and compassion. He appeals to the jury to refrain from law-abiding principles and sacrifice their mundane daily needs. As one of the jury members says in the middle of the film, "A Russian man will never live by the law. The law bores him. The law is dead. There's nothing personal about it. And a Russian man without that personal touch is an empty shell" (*12*). The personal touch is achieved when the jury members tell their revealing life stories about a drug addicted brother, the possibility of the impossible during the Holocaust, the compassion of a policeman for a gambler uncle named Kolya, the only worthwhile smile of a dying grandmother, the unprivileged life of a communist, corruption in the cemetery business, the jealousy of a second wife, and a son's attempt to commit suicide. However, egoism, personal interests, indifference, and the needs of everyday life overcome the feeling of compassion towards a Chechen boy. The members of the jury acquit the defendant and leave the court never to return. The exception is the foreman, who approaches the acquitted Chechen teenager to offer him shelter.

The film *12* once again represents a situation in which the figure of a Chechen is silent. We do not hear Apti's speech in court as his words are rendered by his lawyer or via the official minutes. Apti has gone through trial without leaving a register of his voice in the film. Little room is provided for the utterances of the Chechen subaltern, one reason for which is his poor command of the Russian language, the language of the dominant. Apti is silent in the film because, first, he is a Chechen subaltern silenced by imperialist Russia, and, second, because he is, allegedly, a criminal and there is little opportunity for a defendant to speak and be heard. Despite this all, the Chechen boy is released and free to speak the truth but this formal freedom is in fact a continuation of the boy's constraint in face of the peril of being a victim of his father's killers (whether Russian or Chechen). I wish to suggest that this kind of symbolic act of granting a subaltern a form of freedom and not providing the necessary conditions under which this freedom can be actualized resembles, in a structural manner, the process and results of Russian colonialism in the North Caucasus. The North Caucasus was not proclaimed to be a Russian colony; it had freedom to have its own form of government and other administrative organs. However, Russia attempted to make it almost impossible for the Caucasus to function independently. Caucasian people, trapped in the never-ending colonial war of Russia and unable to speak for themselves, resorted to violent acts and Islamist guerillas. This problem will be the focus of the next section which explores how the discourse of terrorism became another tool for the construction of the Federal frame for the North Caucasus. Russia's declared "War on Terror" is another instrument in the hands of the government to construct the image of the evil Other.

d. War on Terror

In this section, I wish to elaborate more on the issue of Russia's "War on Terror" and the place of female suicide bombers in the discourse of Orientalism. I will look at the two major

terrorist attacks, which took place on the territory of Russia, and analyze the way they are portrayed in the media. I will then address the issue of female suicide bombers and show how the fictional portrayal of "Black Widows" abounds in stereotypes and common myths. According to Eric Hobsbawm, "The rise of violence in general is part of the process of barbarization that has gathered strength in the world since the First World War" (125). He claims that violence is present in every society but "violence has gradations and rules" (Hobsbawm 125). However, starting with the 20th century, there has been a certain breakdown of rules; violence has become illogical while conventions on "how one human being ought to treat another in times of war and peace [have been] rendered meaningless in the 'barbarization' of the 20th century which moved from an era of colonialism to that of globalization. . . . The poor have no other choice but to resort to violence in their fight for visibility" (Kona). Meanwhile, the US and Russian governments have justified the use of "barbaric" violence against the oppressed and labeled it as the "war on terror." Putin, speaking about Chechen extremists, on September 24, 1999, reportedly declared: "We'll follow terrorists everywhere. We will corner the bandits in the toilet and wipe them out" (*Youtube*). When a reporter asked Putin why his government did not negotiate with the leaders of Chechen separatists, Putin answered: "Russia doesn't negotiate with terrorists. Russia destroys them" (*Youtube*). When trying to understand the roots of terrorism, one has to bear in mind that it comes from actual or perceived powerlessness, a desire for physical and moral survival of the oppressed and their answer to the "barbaric" violence of colonialism and globalization. In this respect, terrorism should be read as a part of an anticolonial and antiglobalization text. For terrorists, violence is used as a means toward a certain end; for governments, violence becomes an end in itself. Among numerous terrorist attacks organized and performed by Chechen militants within Russian territory, two of them stand out and require

special attention and investigation: the Moscow theater hostage crisis (2002) and the Beslan school hostage crisis (2004). Both of these events demonstrate a similar pattern of a terrorist attack involving a high death toll.

The Moscow theater hostage crisis, also named the 2002 Nord-Ost siege, was a military attack on the Dubrovka Theater on 23 October 2002, performed by approximately 50 Chechen militants. The terrorists chose a famous Moscow theater, a place where a huge number of people gather together in one place for some cultural event that does not pose any danger or unexpected emergency situation. The Beslan school hostage crisis took place on 1 September 2004 with the capture of over 1,100 people as hostages. The terrorists attacked School Number One in the town of Beslan, North Ossetia, which is an autonomous republic in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation. September 1 is a Russian celebration day of knowledge when 6- or 7-year-old children go to school for the first time. A school typically organizes a big event that involves children standing in line, the speech of a school director, singing and dancing performances, and the First Bell. All the children, their parents, and teachers gather together in front of school and enjoy the cheerful and cloudless atmosphere of Knowledge Day. Both terrorist attacks were aimed at a place that can hold a thousand people. In both cases the attackers chose places associated with minimal risk or danger. Since the first Chechen war, terrorist attacks have become a part of Russian life, taking place every two or three years. Most often terrorist attacks take place in subways, airports, on trains or any other means of transport with increased passenger capacity. The Moscow theatre and the Beslan school hostage crises demonstrated a new tactic of Chechen terrorists who selected a place least expected to be attacked by criminals. Moreover, in both cases the terrorist attack was timed to coincide with some cultural event or celebration day in order to catch civilians off balance.

The militants responsible for the Moscow theatre hostage threatened to kill people unless Russian military troops were withdrawn from the Chechen Republic. A videotaped statement by the gunmen contained the following text:

> Every nation has the right to their fate. Russia has taken away this right from the Chechens and today we want to reclaim these rights, which Allah has given us, in the same way he has given it to other nations. Allah has given us the right of freedom and the right to choose our destiny. And the Russian occupiers have flooded our land with our children's blood…
>
> This approach is for the freedom of the Chechen people and there is no difference in where we die, and therefore we have decided to die here, in Moscow. Our nationalists have died but people have said that they, the nationalists, are terrorists and criminals. But the truth is Russia is the true criminal. (*CNN*)

The terrorists also demanded that Russia's President Vladimir Putin publicly announce the end of the war in Chechnya. The Moscow hostage-takers explained the motivation for their attack as well as their demands, which were later repeated during the Beslan hostage crisis. The Beslan terrorists also demanded the full Russian troop withdrawal from Chechnya and the recognition of Chechen Independence. A hand-written statement was sent to the Russian President and contained the following political message:

> From Allah's slave Shamil Basayev to President Putin. Vladimir Putin, it was not you who started this war. But you can finish it if you have enough courage and determination of de Gaulle. We offer you a sensible peace based on mutual benefit by the principle independence in exchange for security. In case of troops withdrawal and acknowledgement of independence of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, we are obliged not to make any

> political, military, or economic treaties with anyone against Russia, not to accommodate foreign military bases on our territory even temporarily, not to support and not to finance groups or organizations carrying out a military struggle against RF [the Russian Federation], to be present in the united ruble zone, to enter CIS [the Commonwealth of Independent States]. (*BBC*)

The reasons for each attack are strikingly similar: the independence of Chechnya and the complete withdrawal of Russian troops. Both messages mention Allah as the point where Russia and Chechnya differ greatly in advocating two separate religions: Islam and Christianity.

In both hostage crises the style of attack took the form of the capture of a great number of people during an event. From the very start, people with foreign passports were allowed to be released. Later, Muslims, some children, pregnant women were also released. The next step involved negotiations with public authorities and official representatives of the president. Unsuccessful negotiations resulted in a Special Forces raid, numerous assaults, chemical or shooting attacks, and the eventual evacuation of hostages by rescuers. Female bombers carried explosive belts to detonate them at the necessary moment. Mobile phones were confiscated and people were ordered to use the Russian language only. During both hostage crises the Russian government significantly downplayed the numbers, announcing to the media a lesser number of hostages. The notes with demands sent to the Russian president were kept secret by the authorities and such announcements later proved incorrect.

Chechen groups including the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment, the International Islamic Peacekeeping Brigade and the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs participated in the operations. Military commander Shamil Basayev claimed

responsibility for the terrorist attacks. Basayev defended the hostage-taking for giving "all Russians a first-hand insight into all the charms of the war unleashed by Russia and take it back to where it originated from" and said that his next "main goal will be destroying the enemy and exacting maximum damage" ("Chechen Warlord") and "the next time, those who come won't make any demands, won't take hostages" ("Warlord Admits"). Russia submitted Basayev's name for inclusion on the UNSC resolution 1267 Sanctions Committee list of designated terrorists for their links to al-Qaeda ("Patterns of Global Terrorism").

In Russian politics and media, Chechnya has been represented as an insurgent region terrorizing Russia for independence and sovereignty. The Chechen president is even less known than such a figure as Shamil Basayev, a Chechen militant Islamist and a leader of the Chechen rebel movement. Shamil Basayev is a name which is inscribed in Russian history. It is already not just a name of one person but a name representing the whole of the Chechen republic. After the adoption of "Chechenization" policy in 2001, the Russian government has skillfully used the image of Shamil Basayev in connection to the world-famous terrorist Osama bin Laden. After the 9/11 catastrophe in 2001, the US declared its intention to actively start a war against terrorism and Muslim extremism. Following the official position of the US government, Moscow claimed that Russia's struggle in the North Caucasus had become a war against militant Islamism and terrorism as much as a war against separatism. According to Gunaratna, the leading Chechen militants Basayev, Walid and Khattab were in close contact with Osama bin Laden and organized terrorist camps in Chechnya (135). Many Chechen attacks were claimed to have been subsidized by al-Qaeda and Shamil Basayev inherited most of its strategies, including the use of mass terrorist campaigns and female suicide bombers. The connection of Chechnya with terrorism, extremism and radical Islamism, which was skillfully revealed by Putin and

demonstrated to the international media, created an image of the Chechens that could be projected to the whole world. People are free not to believe in it, but the fear of being a victim of the next terrorism attack has formed the stereotype that a Chechen person may easily turn out to be dangerous and unpredictable. The link to al-Qaeda, the pictures of fully equipped Chechen militants, the use of female suicide bombers, the figure of Shamil Basayev – this all crystallized an image of Chechnya and made it difficult for Chechen people to overcome the framework of terrorist representation. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak notes, "The war [the Afghanistan war, 2001-present] is part of an alibi every imperialism has given itself, a civilizing mission carried to the extreme, as it always must be" ("Terror: A Speech After 9-11" 82). The Chechen war is another example of the colonizer subjugating, remodelling, and representing the Orient, in this case justifying Russia's imperial project.

In "Terror: A Speech After 9/11," Spivak has called for a reconsideration of the connections between epistemological and ethical constructions that should not be confused when it concerns the question of the other. Spivak writes, "I understand the ethical, and this is a derivative position, to be an interruption of the epistemological, which is the attempt to construct the other as object of knowledge. Epistemological constructions belong to the domain of the law, which seeks to know the other, in his or her case, as completely as possible, in order to punish or acquit rationally, reason being defined by the limits set by the law itself. The ethical interrupts this imperfectly, to listen to the other as if it were a self, neither to punish nor to acquit" ("Terror: A Speech After 9-11" 83). A Chechen terrorist becomes an unremembered other defined only by the abstract discourses of "terror" and "terrorism," which, according to Spivak, are conflated in the dominant discourse and automatically become the antonym for war ("Terror: A Speech After 9-11" 91). It does not seem to be unethical to wage a war against terrorists and terrorism since

physical violence becomes the category and the space of the other produced by it and responsible for it. Terrorism equals violence. War is the necessary action to stop the violence produced by terrorism. Spivak calls for an attempt to distance ourselves from the binary between civilians and soldiers, to be able "to imagine our opponent as a human being, and to understand the significance of his or her action" (93), to do "the exercise of the imagination" (94), to recognize "the sublimity of terror" (95), to remember "they [the state and terrorists] are both cops" (101), to think of the practice of secularism as "a mechanism to avoid violence that must be learned as mere reasonableness" (106), and – crucially – to revise the role of the humanities in order to "provide continuing practical instruction in detranscendentalizing the radically other" (110).

"Black Widows"

In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak argues that the subaltern cannot be heard by exploring the case of Indian sati, a Hindu custom in which a widowed woman immolates herself on her dead husband's pyre. During the British colonial period, sati was represented in two ways: first, as a slaughter of innocent women in the English perception, and second, according to the view of the male Hindus, as a voluntary act ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 300). Both the British and the Hindu ignored the fact that sati was often motivated by widows' inheritance of property. It was easier to define an Indian woman by using the practice of sati as suicide/sacrifice. Sati was defined as a good and loyal wife vs. a bad wife by the Hindu and as a poor and ignorant Indian vs. a civilized English woman by the British. In Spivak's famous account, the subalterns were not heard.

In this section, I want to explore how Caucasian women have also made an attempt to be heard. I argue that even though they "speak" through their acts of suicide bombing, the

Caucasian female subaltern are still often misrepresented and misunderstood in the Russian imperial discourse. The “Black Widows” are Chechen Islamist female suicide bombers who organize suicide bombings on Russian territory as an act of revenge for men and children killed by the Russian forces in Chechnya (Speckhard and Akhmedova 63). In Chechnya, the “Black Widows” are not regarded as dangerous criminals but rather as desperate women fighting for the rectification of injustices and taking revenge on Russian offenders. In comparison to the hostile attitude towards Chechen male fighters, Chechen “Black Widows” are treated by Russian media with more sympathy even in an abstract way. In Russia, the Black Widows are represented as lost women misled by the extreme direction of Muslim and bigots that become an easy weapon in the hands of Chechen male terrorists. In 2002, the Moscow theatre Dubrovka was taken hostage by 19 female bombers. Thousands of Russians watched TV news 24 hours per day with terror, having the same thought on their mind: “here is another act of revenge.” But was it just revenge? According to the demographic data on all female bombers in Russia, thirteen of them were single, three were married, five were widows, and one was in a second marriage (Speckhard and Akhmedova 66). That means that out of 22 female bombers only five were widows and could, possibly, organize a terrorist attack as an act of revenge for their murdered husbands. What about the rest of the so-called Black Widows? What motives did they have in sacrificing themselves in a foreign territory? Like the case of sati, the Black Widows acted and attempted to speak but failed to be heard in the narrative of terrorism and in the imperialist discourse of Russian politics.

Before detonating a bomb, a fictional suicide bomber whispers the following words: “Every human is made of water and clay, a clot of blood and a drop of sperm. But in the heat wave we simply split off in bits of freshly raw flesh” (Akhmedova 350). These are the words

spoken by Khadijah, the main character of Marina Akhmedova's 2011 novel *Khadijah, Notes of a Death Girl* (*Dnevnik Smertnitsi, Diary of a female suicide-bomber*). Akhmedova, a Moscow-based reporter, attempted to give a Caucasian woman a chance to speak and tell her life story of how she eventually became a suicide bomber. In this text, Khadijah is a young girl born in one of the Dagestani villages where she grows and learns to make life decisions, to understand and appreciate Allah and the Koran, to pass through the loss of both parents and experience the first feeling of love, to accept certain norms of traditional behavior in Dagestan and to vehemently revolt against other Muslim or Dagestani traditions, to come to a decision to leave the village for a big city and enter a university, and to always make a choice between black and white. From the very first lines, Dagestan is depicted the way a Russian reader would approve. Akhmedova employs a traditional Orientalist method of describing "them," subjects of the Orient. The text describes the village as a mass of identical people:

> All our neighbors are alike. All women and men living in our village are similar. It is different in a city: people are different there. They wear different clothes and women let their hair down in a different way. In our village when you see someone from far away down the road, you cannot guess who is coming until you reach each other close enough. Every old man, being of the same age as my grandpa, wears tall Cossack hats. They wear old jackets and overshoes. While walking down the road, they stoop their shoulders and put their hands behind their back. Women stoop their shoulders as well. When it is haying time, women carry the hay home. They tie the hay to the back and carry it – the whole pile of hay. (40)

Khadijah is the main narrator of the story, and she stresses the idea of a homogeneous and uniform society several times in the book: "In the village, there were identical lower houses,

identical families, and if you look into any window, you will see similar things going on" (Akhmedova 243). Deindividualization of the Caucasian people here appears to be similar to Said's critique of the silenced Orient. The Orient represents similar characteristics and follows identical models of behavior no matter where and when the people it depicts might live on Said's map of an "imaginative geography." Yet Akhmedova's protagonist and future suicide bomber does not have a nationality. The questions of her nationality, race, or ethnicity are not mentioned in the narrative. Only when the protagonist contrasts herself or her lifestyle with Russians, do we understand that Khadijah belongs to one of the ethnic minorities of the Russian Federation, although which minority is not specified. Moreover, we are unable to guess what language the protagonist uses to speak, to think, and to write a diary. Akhmedova uses the standard literary Russian language to present the diary, which is supposedly written by Khadijah. The author, however, overlooks the fact that Khadijah has spent her childhood and teenage years in a village without being properly educated and trained. When Khadijah moves to the capital city of Makhachkala and enters Dagestan State University, she is not aware who Eugene Onegin[32] is, and, therefore, she devotes her composition to Mahmud iz Kahabroso, a famous Dagestanian poet, instead of the famous Russian poet Alexander Pushkin during her entrance exams. When living in the village, Khadijah is allowed to read only the Koran:

> We don't have any books at all at home. Only the Koran and my textbooks. Grandma says that you don't need to read books in order to make a successful match – nobody would marry the clever one. I read Tolstoy at school. I did not like it. He is also a bad 'urus'

[32] A novel in verse written by Alexander Pushkin.

> [Russians who kill Chechen people]. Now I am convinced there are no good people among 'urus.' (31)

Akhmedova might seem to fall into a trap similar to that in which, according to Said, Orientalists find themselves when attempting to create true-to-life representations of the Orient and to form knowledge about it. Said claims that Orientalists investigate the East as a general, collective whole sharing similar characteristics and patterns of behavior and unable to overstep the limitations of the totality and exhibit individual traits. As Said contends, "Orientalists are neither interested in nor capable of discussing individuals; instead artificial entities, perhaps with their roots in Herderian populism, predominate" (*Orientalism* 154). Akhmedova attempts to single out a part of the collective whole and show the life of a future suicide terrorist as contrary to or different from what we would expect of the Oriental collective.

Khadijah, the protagonist, finds herself facing a constant choice – to follow the well-trodden path of a common Dagestani villager or challenge "the generality assigned to the Orient" (*Orientalism* 103). Akhmedova is willing to show the protagonist first as a young woman and only then as an Oriental subject. The Russian writer generalizes about the Caucasian people and contradistinguishes them to what or who Khadijah dreams to become:

> I know what awaits me. In a few years the grandmother will marry me off and just like Nadira I will be standing in a corner wearing a beautiful wedding dress. Women will be approaching me and lifting up the veil to see my face. The next day I will put on a bright dress and come out to the guests. And the day after I will wake up very early and start sweeping the floor or washing the dishes or doing the laundry. It is not interesting for you, my notebook. Because all women in our village have a similar life. Our villagers look alike

> – both men and women. Except for the general Kazibekov family but they are rich. I will not open you again. (96)

Khadijah's relatives are described as being so traditional and orthodox in their beliefs that we almost see a medieval type of family where any outside intervention is believed to be harmful and dishonest. When Khadijah borrows *Harry Potter* from her friend, she keeps her secret carefully and reads the book when nobody sees her. When later she is caught reading the book by her grandmother and punished for being disobedient, the following exchange takes place between them:

> "I am telling you, give me it!"
>
> "Grandmother, don't touch it! It is not my book!"
>
> "I'll show you what is what!" – She pulled the book out of my hands. – "What is this? What kind of ajdaha [mythological daemon] is portrayed here? Are you reading books about shaytans [the Devil in Islam]? How dare you take it in your hands? You committed a sin, Allah!" (121)

Before the grandmother finally burns the book, Khadijah tries to explain that there exists another world different from the Chechen one:

> "Grandmother! Don't! What am I going to do?"
>
> "You should have thought of it earlier! I will wean you from reading about shaytans! Shaytans are writing this and why are you reading what they write?"
>
> "Grandmother, they are not shaytans. It is written by one woman from England. Have a look, it is written on the book cover!"

> "I'm going to show you England. Didn't you hear the mullah say England was inhabited by shaytans?! Go away!" (122)

According to Akhmedova, Khadijah as well as all Dagestani villagers are evidently superstitious, religious, and god-fearing. Khadijah's family strongly believes in shaytan or the Devil in the Islam religion. Shaytans are believed to exist on the borderline between the light and dark side and often take a human form to perform demonic acts. They are said to have the power of temptation over human minds by means of whispering evil intentions or suggestions in people's ears. Khadijah hears the voice of shaytan throughout Part I of the narrative in which her childhood growing up is described as an endless process of choosing between good and bad. Khadijah admits the evil influence of shaytans and often misbehaves, forgets to read the Koran, steals sugar from the grandmother's reserves, and shirks from household chores.

In the second part of the book, in which Khadijah moves to Makhachkala and begins her studies at the State University, the word shaytan is never mentioned again. The author subtly implies that Khadijah does not need to make any further choice. The choice has been already made. Shaytan does not influence Khadija's decisions. Khadijah represents shaytan herself. She is destined to perform a demonic act – to become as a recruited suicide bomber and assault innocent people. Although Akhmedova distinguishes Khadijah from a grey mass of Dagestani villagers as a particular individual, she explains her life choice, in orientalist traditions, as something fatal, predestined, predetermined, mystical, unexplainable, mysterious, and superstitious.

In moments of life crisis, Khadijah sees the same mysterious dream about her future destiny. In her dream, she sees her great grandmother sitting at the weaving machine and making

a carpet. She is weaving blue, yellow, red, and green threads, making beautiful patterns of various shapes. Khadijah sees her great grandmother three times during her life: first, when Khadijah catches a severe cold and is on the verge of death; then when she makes a decision to leave the native village and move to a big city; and for a third time, right before she is recruited by Caucasian militants to become a weapon of murder. In her first dream, the small innocent Khadijah makes her first but fatal choice:

> "Would you like to try?" she asked.
>
> "I would," I answered.
>
> She put the bundles of threads of different color and asked me to choose.
>
> "Make a careful choice," she said. "Your destiny will depend on what thread you choose."
>
> At first my hand stretched out for a yellow thread. I like yellow – it is the color of the sun. Then I stretched for a red one – I like red, it can be noticed from far away. But I took the green thread because it is the color of summer – when everything is alive. The woman shook her head – she did not like my choice. (65)

Khadijah feels there is something wrong with her choice, but she is unable to change it. The great grandmother does not let her pick another thread. Khadijah experiences a similar dream ten years later, right before leaving the village. In the dream Khadijah cries and begs the woman to let her make another choice and pick a different thread. The great grandmother cannot fulfill her wish:

> "Don't cry," said the woman, "it hasn't happened yet but it will. What is written is not erasable."

"Where is it written?"

"On the carpet. Everything is written on the carpet." (136)

Khadijah cannot change her life decision:

"Let me… I want another thread…," I could barely talk because of the lump in my throat.

"You have picked your thread already," she said, "I cannot give you another."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because everything is already written on the carpet. I am finishing it." (136)

The most important dialogue between Khadijah and her grandmother, however, takes place in the third dream, which symbolizes the irreversibility of the girl's decision and so her destiny to become a terrorist. Khadijah's husband, whom she marries secretly against everyone's wish, turns out to be an illegal Dagestani militant who kills his own father and dies during a police raid. Khadijah, being pregnant, is rejected by her family, the villagers, and by the husband's relatives. She is condemned by Dagestani society, expelled from the university, and cast out by every person she knows. At this time the great grandmother comes to her dream for the last time. She says she has warned Khadijah to make a careful decision, a decision for which the girl is fully responsible. The woman explains the reason why the green color is associated with fatal consequences. The carpet tells us the history of the North Caucasus. Many years ago when the great grandmother's grandmother was still young, the war started. Thousands of people in green uniforms flooded the Caucasian mountains. The mountains were colored in red. Many people died at that time. Many fathers, husbands, and brothers never returned. They were rotting away in the mountain cracks and forests. There was nobody to bury them.

Khadijah's great grandmother had a brother who just turned sixteen at that time. Once a Russian hussar in a white uniform stopped at their house, grabbed the brother and wanted to take him away. That moment the great grandmother took out the ancient dagger and stabbed the hussar. The carpet still shows the white stripes which resemble the flying seagulls. Khadijah chooses the green color because it is the color of the Caucasian war. Khadijah is going to become a part of Caucasian military history. It is either green, the color of the military uniform, or red, the color of blood. In this way, Marina Akhmedova skillfully demonstrates how the history of the Caucasus is written and represented. Although the great grandmother repeats the idea that everyone makes their own choice and nobody can influence such decisions, we see a complicated situation of a young Chechen girl who makes a symbolic choice without realizing its fatal consequences.

As I noted above, "Black Widows" are often represented in the Russian media as desperate women joining military organizations to take a revenge against those who killed their loved ones. Akhmedova succeeds in portraying Khadijah as a victim, a poor woman who elicits our sympathy and even understanding. However, the text does not succeed or, perhaps, does not want to succeed in escaping the Orientalist trap. Akhmedova does not provide an alternative story of a female subaltern. She stresses the generality of female suicide bombers and their life path. Caucasian women do not have an option. Their choice is made before they are born. Those who take a dominant position have power to define, control, represent, understand, and create. Akhmedova finishes her novel with Khadijah's last words before detonating the bomb: "It is a pity I had been to my grandmother's room so many times and I was never able to read my destiny. In that case I would have been only waiting for the train to cross the line. I would have known that nothing depends on me and it is so easy to become eternal – you don't even need to

move a finger. Every human is made of water and clay, a clot of blood and a drop of sperm. But in the heat wave we simply split off in bits of freshly raw flesh" (350).

In *Khadijah, Notes of a Death Girl*, Akhmedova portrays a very orthodox and traditional society which regards women as intrinsically inferior to male members. Women are domesticated and expected to follow their husbands in any situation. If a woman disobeys any male member of the family, she is punished and sometimes physically abused by a husband. Akhmedova makes a very general statement about the patriarchal society in Dagestani families. She shows all the female characters, not only submissive and domesticated, but also unwilling to try a different role in the society. Most of the female characters in the book are obsessed with the idea of finding a good husband and having a successful marriage. All the conversations, rumours, gossips, and thoughts of the female characters revolve around the topics of possible marriage unions and potential husbands. Khadijah gets a rare chance to escape the orthodox village society and get a good education at the university in the city of Makhachkala.[33] However, even this choice is made by her grandmothers in the hope of educating her and finding a more established husband in the city. Khadijah herself does not treat education as a chance to escape the traditional role in the society. She does not study hard; she gives bribes to the professors to pass the exams; she is constantly occupied with the thoughts of clothes, appearance, status, and fellow students. On the first day of the classes, she falls in love with one of the students and devotes most of her diary writing to the dreams of marrying him. Akhmedova, trying to show an alternative story of a suicide bomber, provides stereotypical and very familiar to the Russian audience images of a Caucasian woman.

[33] The capital city of the Republic of Dagestan, Russia.

Akhmedova portrays the "Black Widows" as a minority group separated from the rest of the female society in Dagestan. The term "veiled" (Akhmedova 159, 167, 231) is used throughout the novel to refer to these extremist women, and it has a derogatory tone. Before becoming one of the extremists and suicide bombers, Khadijah criticises "veiled" women, disapproves their choice, and feels intimidated by them. Akhmedova shows "Black Widows" as scapegoated and unaccepted by the society. The author, however, does not go into detail to explain why there is general hostility towards them, and what makes individual female characters become Islamic extremists. Only at the end of the novel, the reader gets a glimpse into the Khadijah's mind before she commits a suicide. Akhmedova offers a familiar motif of despair and revenge to explain the decision of the main character to become a suicide bomber. The decision is not Khadijah's. It is made for her by the male members of Islamic extremism. They insist on Khadijah's duty to take revenge and fulfill Allah's mission. Khadijah is shown as a passive participant, almost like an observer of the events unfolding in front of her. She is not aggressive or revengeful, but rather hopeless and confused after losing her loved one and being rejected by her family members. The story, once again, confirms the common images of female suicide bombers who are motivated to join Islamic extremist groups from desperate circumstances. The female subaltern in this text seem unable to escape the paradigms of the Oriental collective.

Overall, in Chapter Two, I have analysed the representation of the Orient in Russian literature and cinema and explored the images of the Self and Other in travel writing, classical texts, local folklore, Soviet and post-Soviet literature and films. There are many instances in which the Orient created in Russian texts was similar to the Western (European) representation of the East. These included images of an alien and hostile Orient created in Russian travel literature, oriental tales, 18th and 19th century romantic writing. However, along with the

romantic image of the near or distant Orient, there was also created the image of Russian peasants as the country's main Other. The combination of the foreign Orient and the internal native Other complicates the application of Said's theory of Orientalism to the Russian case. The Soviet Orient becomes another case which exemplifies the internal Other that was studied and used as a tool of Soviet propaganda.

After analyzing the general representations of the Orient, I have turned to the exploration of the discursive control over the North Caucasus. I have used Frantz Fanon's social theory and come to conclusion that there exists a myth of the Caucasian man (a potential terrorist, suicide bomber, a religious fanatic, a bandit, and a rapist) while the racialization of the Caucasian man is localized. I have further demonstrated how the discourse of a potential threat from the North Caucasus becomes the tool in the hands of the Russian government to connect the Caucasus (Chechnya, in particular) with terrorism, extremism, and radical Islamism. Even the "Black Widows" are misrepresented in the Russian texts either as desperate women taking revenge or lost people misled and controlled by Muslim extremists. Marina Akhmedova's novel *Khadijah, Notes of a Death Girl* is another example that illustrates the Orientalist view on that.

The detailed analysis of classic and contemporary representation of the North Caucasus has revealed the transformation of the romantic image of a brave and proud mountaineer to Russia's military Orient defined in terms of fighting and surviving. I have shown examples of the military Orient in the poems of contemporary Russian poets including Dmitrii Mordasov, Akinfova Eugeniya, Valery Kachurin, and Eugene Mishin. The emphasis on representing the North Caucasus through the sole image of Chechnya brings us to the establishment of the so-called synecdochical Orientalism, according to which the multifaceted region of the North Caucasus is underrepresented and boiled down to the image of Chechnya, which is, in fact, only

one Republic out of nine regions in the Caucasus. The analysis of other Russian texts, including Nikolai Ivanov's war novel *The Chechen Boomerang*, Zakhar Prilepin's war novel *The Pathologies*, Marina Akhmedova's novel *House for the Blind*, Viktor Pelevin's short story "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers," Vladimir Khotinenko's film *A Moslem (Musulmanin)*, Andrei Konchalovsky's film *House of Fools*, and Nikita Mikhalkov's film *12* has helped me investigate the multilayered character of the Russian-Chechen war, which creates both the Russian and the Chechen Other; the blurring of boundaries between "us" and "them"; the opposition of terrorism to lawlessness of the Russian government, power, business, and media; and the apparent inability of the Caucasian subaltern to speak and be heard. It is now important to turn the problem of Caucasian resistance to Russian colonialism, subjugation, and misrepresentation.

Chapter Three: "Can the Caucasians Speak?"

1. Caucasian Resistance to Russian Colonialism

What possibilities exist for resistance against a larger, more powerful colonial state? To understand the historical forms of resistance by which an oppressed group can fight back against (neo)colonialism, the opening section of this chapter first examines the colonial model that was/is produced by the Russian State in relation to its Caucasian Other. This means outlining some of the similarities and differences between Russian neocolonialism (late 20th - early 21st centuries) and other colonial models, before turning to the way such resistance is articulated. The second part of this chapter turns its attention to literary and filmic narratives, which have been assembled here as a unique archive, a tool for the oppressed to "talk back" to Empire. Later, this chapter assesses this body of cultural narratives and explores the ways in which resistance is articulated or disarticulated by the Caucasian subaltern. The assemblage and establishment of the archive - a body of work produced by Caucasian natives - becomes the central point in disrupting the dominant imperial narrative and addressing the issue of underrepresentation.

Historically, the main forms of resistance were shaped in the Caucasus through language and religion because the variety of cultures, languages, and religious movements inside the whole region of the North Caucasus made unification very difficult. At first glance, the relationship between Russian and the North Caucasus appears to fit the settler colonialism paradigm as, historically, Russia made attempts to occupy the territories in the North Caucasus and resettle them with Russian peasants. To understand whether Russian practice of settler colonialism in the North Caucasus was successful, we must turn to Lorenzo Veracini and his theory on settler colonialism.

In his book *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, Veracini suggests that colonialism should not be confused with settler colonialism, which is "characterized by a settler capacity to control the population economy as a marker of a substantive type of sovereignty; on the other hand, this situation is associated with a particular state of mind and a specific narrative form" (12). Veracini's study investigates situations when a metropolitan power encourages colonists to settle in a territory. It is hard to apply Veracini's model to the Caucasus because during the expansion of the Russian state into the Caucasus in the nineteenth century, the line separating the periphery and the center became blurred, thereby complicating our understanding of Russia's colonial situation. As James Hughes claims, "the conflation of core and periphery in the making of Russian identity leads to a very distinctive problem of settler colonialism in Russia" (173). In its form, Russia's colonial policy appears similar to that adopted by other European powers in their dealings with tribal peoples but in its content, Russian settler colonialism bears distinct characteristics.

In 1816, General Aleksei Yermolov attempted to subdue Chechnya by means of "punitive raids on mountain villages, collective punishment, razing of houses and crops, deforestation, forced mass deportation, and settlement of Cossacks on lands vacated by Chechens" (Wood). The main goal was to drive the Chechens into the mountain areas where they ended up starving and to prevent them from building feudal structures in Chechnya (Trenin 139). Under a new leader, Imam Shamil, the Chechens showed resistance to the invader, which resulted in a full-scale war. During Russia's settlement policy, in effect from 1817 to 1864, the Chechen people suffered from mass deportations, simply on the basis of their ethnicity: of being Muslim. Moreover, dispossession, punitive raids, bombardment of mountain villages, arbitrary arrests,

confiscations of livestock, a massive population loss, and countless exiles - these all took place in the Caucasus.

The history of the Chechen invasion and the desire of the Russian empire to seize the land and its resources make the occupation of Chechnya appear similar to the form of settler colonialism on indigenous territories, as described by Patrick Wolfe:

> The primary object of settler-colonization is the land itself rather than the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labour with it. Though, in practice, Indigenous labour was indispensable to Europeans, settler-colonization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. The logic of this project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs a range of historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct – invasion is a structure not an event. (163)

The main goal of Russian colonialism was not a subjugation of people but territorial expansion. Russian settlers, however, were not able to completely settle down in the Chechen Republic and those who did were later violently driven out by indigenous people. Russian colonizers failed to become the majority of the population in Chechnya, while Chechen people, even after massive exiles and deportations, did not become a minority in their own land. Veracini's triangular system of relationships, comprising metropolitan, settler, and indigenous agencies, cannot be easily applied to the Chechen case since the settler component has been eliminated in the course of the Russo-Chechen conflict. The attempt at settler colonialism in the North Caucasus, not ultimately successful, was later transformed into neo-colonialism, a form of contemporary economic and political imperialism. Neo-colonialism took the form of Putin's proclaimed policy of "Chechenization" under which there were to be established pro-Russian Chechen units of

collaborators or the so-called “kadyrovtsy” under the command of R. Kadyrov, who became an executive president of newly-conquered Chechnya in 2007.

In this respect, contemporary Russia is no less imperial than the Soviet Union or Tsarist Russia. According to Putin, “for the Russian, a strong state is not an anomaly, not something with which he [the Russian] has to struggle, but, on the contrary, a source and a guarantee of order, as well as the initiator and main moving force of any change” (“Russia at the Turn of the Millennium”). Strong statehood, great power over peoples, centralization, the erection of the power vertical – these all constitute a “frame commonly used by imperial incumbents to justify their fight against anti-colonialism” (Omelicheva 7). Neo-imperialism in Chechnya can be also read as a strategy that responds to the failure of settler colonialism. The Russian metropolitan centre resorted to taking military measures against Chechnya since the settler state was not successfully implemented in the occupied land and because the Chechen people launched a separatist war to reclaim their sovereignty in 1994.

In the Caucasian case, settler colonialism failed while Russian people could not fully penetrate into the North Caucasus. As Ariel Cohen claims, “Russians did conquer the North Caucasus militarily, but they failed to assimilate the local population, extirpate the distinct identities of the North Caucasian peoples, or find a modus vivendi with Islam. The Chechens, the Ingush, the Circassians, and other local nations remember their tragic past and bear grudges against the Russians” (Cohen 76). Having taken military control over the Caucasian land, Russians literally and symbolically stayed outside, watched Caucasian people across the border, and created narratives of the North Caucasus. This set of historical circumstances led to the development of new Russian discourses about a Caucasian Orient with stereotypes, misrepresentations, and inscriptions of “terror.” Like Edward Said’s Orient, based on the beliefs,

ideas, and views of the colonizers, so the Caucasian Orient is likewise is built on such misrepresentations.

One of the main tools of (neo)colonization in both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union was the hegemony of the Russian language as the official language of both the colonizer and the colonized and, thus, the imposition of it in the places where other native languages were dominant. One of the most important characteristics of the language situation in the North Caucasus is its linguistic diversity. There are approximately 100 ethnic communities living in this region and speaking languages that belong to Ibero-Caucasian, Altaic, and Indo-European families (Lazarev and Pravikova). According to Lazarev and Pravikova, there are several patterns which describe the distribution of languages in the North Caucasus: 'Scattered/dispersed' pattern according to which major languages are spoken across most of territorial units; 'Patchwork' pattern when languages are spoken in certain geographical places with some overlap; 'Salad' pattern which presents the mixture of languages not tied to a certain territory; 'Linguistic enclaves' pattern when a specific language is spoken in a closed territory inside another territory; and 'Divided' pattern when some Caucasian languages are spoken outside of the territory of the North Caucasus. As Lazarev and Pravikova argue,

> The complex ethnic layout with the administrative-territorial units that have boundaries separating ethnic communities, the 'glorious' heritage of the rule-and-divide policy of the pre-revolutionary Russia and Soviet regimes, has led to the disastrous situation in the North Caucasus, when language, ethnic and religious borders do not coincide with each other, thus forming the basis for social tension and identities clashes.

The way the North Caucasus, perhaps in some cases unintentionally, has been resisting Russian linguistic colonization is twofold. First, there has been a tendency to revive the national languages of the North Caucasus and reduce the role of the Russian language. In places where the population is not ethnically Russian, such as Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, South Ossetia, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Chechnya, the Russian language does not have hegemony; instead, the national languages of the above-mentioned republics are dominant. The second way the Caucasus resists colonization is by using the language of the colonizer to unite different regions and form anti-colonial agency against the Russian government policy. The language allows inter-regional communication and alliances against the metropolitan power. This seems to be the reverse role that the language of hegemony is supposed to play: the colonized uses the instrument of the colonizer to undermine colonialism. As Paul Goble explains,

> Chechnya-Ichkeria,[34] for example, used Russian not only because many Chechens spoke it better than they did their national language but because it allowed them to reach out to others in the North Caucasus who were also oppressed by Moscow. And more recently, various Islamist groups in the North Caucasus have chosen to use Russian rather than national languages because it allows them to recruit, mobilize and command followers from a variety of ethnic groups rather than only one. In short, by promoting Russian in the North Caucasus, Moscow has created a serious problem for itself.

The result of these linguistic processes leads to some russification of the peoples in the North Caucasus but also - inadvertently - to the formation of the agency to oppose the oppressive

[34] The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was an unrecognized secessionist government of the Chechen Republic from 1991 to 2000.

regime of the center. As Goble claims, linguistically, Caucasian people might be Russian speaking but, mentally and spiritually, they will be anti-Russian and anti-Moscow. Russian linguist colonization has encountered several unforeseen obstacles in its bid for total domination over the North Caucasus.

In terms of religion, the North Caucasus has remained predominantly Islamic; most Caucasian peoples practice Salafi and Sufi schools of Islam. Even though there were attempts to convert peoples of the North Caucasus to Christianity, this attempt only had sporadic success and did not lead to overall religious colonization. Islam was brought to the Caucasus in the 8th century and the process of Islamisation lasted from the 8th to the 19th centuries. Even though there was a big discrepancy between Islamic laws and the tribal common laws in the Caucasus, as Uwe Halbach points out, religion had an important role in consolidating anticolonial organization:

> In the 18th and 19th centuries it was the religious authorities [Caucasian] that transcended narrow ethnic and tribal boundaries to bring the mountain peoples together in anti-colonial resistance movements, giving them state-like forms of organization. It was the Sufi variety of Islam that formed the ideological framework for the resistance ("Islam in the North Caucasus").

The Sufi school of Islam promoted the strongest resistance to Russian colonization. During the last two centuries, Christian Russia has been criticizing religious fanaticism in the North Caucasus, its Mohammedanism, ignorance, blind faith, and extremism. Nowadays, Russia's Christianity meets opposition not only from the Sufi school of Islam but also from the growing, traditionalist "Wahhabi" movement in Chechnya and Dagestan, according to which one should

reject polytheism and go back to the pure, literal teaching of Islam as "incorporated in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth (traditions of Muḥammad), with condemnation of all innovations (bid'ah)" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). It becomes clear that Russia failed to Christianize the majority of the population in the North Caucasus. Russia's so-called Islamic threat and its war on terror are the direct results of the failure of religious convergence and its weak control over the North Caucasus. The Russian colonial policy and the pressures of colonial subjugation on the Caucasian peoples led to the formulation and development of various Islamic doctrines that promoted ideology of independence, liberation, and self-determination. As Halbach concludes, "in its regional and nationality policies the Russian leadership has shown grave conceptual and organizational failings, and in the case of the North Caucasus even frightening incompetence."

The fact that the peoples of the North Caucasus resist Russian national culture and traditions can be traced by examining the official state holidays of historical importance declared by the government. One such national day in Russia is celebrated on February 23. On this date, Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and several other former republics of the Soviet Union celebrate what is called the 'Defender of the Fatherland Day,' a holiday that jointly marks the 1918 victory of the Russian Army over the Germans in Pskov and Narva, as well as the official establishment of the Red Army. The holiday is celebrated with parades and processions in honor of veterans and with women giving small gifts to their husbands, fathers, sons, and male co-workers. In the strictest sense, Russia is celebrating a historical victory, a marker of resistance against what may be perceived as German colonization and subjugation. Paradoxically, February 23 is also a date which marks another colonization campaign – but this time with the Russian Empire as the colonizer subject and Chechnya as the object of subjugation. February 23, 1944 marks the beginning of the mass deportation of the Chechen and Ingush

people to Central Asia and Siberia. In his speech entitled "The Sixty Ninth Commemoration of the Chechen Deportation on Feb. 23, 1944," Professor Mohammad Shashani describes in detail the events of that day (see Appendix C). For Russia, February 23 is a festive day of national celebration. For Chechnya, February 23 is a day of mourning. The symbolic date of two different colonization histories reveals how the dominant colonialist narrative popularizes one history (victory of Russian army over the Germans) and overshadows another history (deportation of the Chechen and Ingush peoples). The fact that the Chechen day of mourning is not taken into consideration by the Russian government reveals Chechnya's often unnoticed position in the Russian discourse of victimhood and resistance. Russia's perception as being subject to colonization makes no room for other models of colonization - where victimhood and resistance against a German power elides other types of colonization from within. In response to this official memorialization, Chechens refuse to celebrate the day of the Defender of the Fatherland, demonstrating their resistance to cultural colonialism. Another official holiday in Russia is May 21, which marks 450 years of the Russian union with the Adyghs (the people who live in northwestern Caucasus) but the Adyghs remember this day differently, as the day of the Circassian genocide: on 21 May, 1864, the Russian Tsar Aleksandr II declared the deportation and exile of the entire Circassian people because they refused to convert to Christianity from Islam. There are other such official days that celebrate one history at the expense of the colonized other. For example, the Balkars (a Turkic people of the Caucasus region) refuse to celebrate March 8, International Women's Day, a major day of celebration in Russia, because it symbolizes the starting day of their deportation too. In contrast to the institutionalization of a hegemonic Russian history, the North Caucasus rejects the traditions and customs of the dominant culture to recall instead the histories of mass trauma and victimization.

The North Caucasus shows certain aspects of resistance to Russia's linguistic, religious, and cultural colonization by refusing to adopt the dominant religion (Christianity), erase regional languages, and celebrate national holidays that contradict their own vision of history. In some parts of the North Caucasus, revolt becomes a tool of military resistance to colonialism. When we talk about Caucasian revolt to Russian colonialism, it is worth mentioning Albert Memmi's famous book *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, which explores the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized. In his study of colonial relationships, Memmi comes to conclusion that "revolt is the only way out of the colonial situation, and the colonized realizes it sooner or later. His condition is absolute and cries for an absolute solution; a break and not a compromise" (127). Similarly, one faction of the Caucasian colonized chooses revolt as its answer to colonization. In the Russian discourse about the Caucasus, terrorism, xenophobia, and racism are attributes of the revolt. Russia's racism is directed at people who belong to the Caucasian region, who are depicted as black, vulgar, uncivilized, dangerous, and extremist. In Caucasian discourse, on the opposite, the revolt "is not based on a belief in the inferiority of the detested group but on the conviction, and in large measure on the observation, that this group is truly an aggressor and dangerous" (Memmi 131). Caucasian revolt was partly formed in response to Russia's racism and nationalism, racial hatred against some peoples of the North Caucasus, and the Russian military's use of torture, disappearances, executions of Chechen people. Caucasian revolt does not fit Memmi's theory insofar as that Caucasian people organize revolts, rebellions and acts of revenge not only within their own territory but also outside of it, including very often within the metropolitan center or other large cities of the Russian Federation. These terror acts have included an August 1999 bombing of a shopping arcade and a September 1999 bombing of an apartment building in Moscow, two bombings in September

1999 in the Russian republic of Dagestan and southern Russian city of Volgodonsk, the October 2002 seizure of Moscow's Dubrovka Theater, street fighting in October 2005 in the south Russian city of Nalchik, an attack on the Nevsky Express in 2009, suicide bombings in a Moscow metro station in 2010, the notorious and devastating attack on a school in Beslan, killing around 300 people, and a recent bomb explosion at the Moscow airport of Domodedovo in 2011. All these criminal acts were committed by Chechen extremists beyond the borders of the Chechen Republic.

It is also important to mention that Memmi's theory takes a strictly "male-centered stance" (164), where women are elided as possible agents of colonization and decolonization. In the North Caucasus, however, women turn out to play a part in the vital process of refusing to be colonized. The "Black Widows" are Chechen Islamist female suicide bombers who organize suicidal bomb explosions in the Russian territory. These Chechen women act and their act represents a demand, which fails to be heard; it is subsumed in the narrative of terrorism, of "Black Widows" and revenge in the imperialist discourse of Russian politics. The Chechen female colonized refuse to accept colonization by destroying the colonizer and by destroying themselves [and their voice] at the same time.

It becomes clear that the North Caucasus has been showing certain resistance to Russian colonialism. It has demonstrated resistance to settler colonialism, linguistic colonization, religious conversion, and, to certain aspects, to Russian culture and traditions. Revolt and suicide bombing can be also read as a form of military resistance to oppression and imperialism of the metropolitan power. Cultural texts by Caucasian authors and film directors that I will be looking at in the next section do not represent direct resistance, but **they do recognize the subaltern position of the people in the North Caucasus and lack of representation of the region's**

history. They express the need for Caucasian people to reclaim their past. Some of the texts question the discourse of homogeneity of the North Caucasus and the dominant representation of female terrorists in Russia. **My project recognizes the existence of Caucasian cultural texts and assembles an archive of them which serves as a tool of recording and retaining stories told by Caucasian authors and film directors.** Many of them explore the themes of silence, loss of home and collective memory; therefore, the assemblage of the archive has a symbolic meaning of preserving memory. I will start talking about Caucasian voices in literature by addressing C.L.R. James' ideas about the burden of the skin color and common oppression of West Indian slaves. This idea resonates with the burden of representation of a Chechen man and the common oppression felt by people in the North Caucasus.

2. Caucasian Voices in Literature

In his famous lecture "The Making of the Caribbean People," C.L.R. James discusses the idea of common oppression suffered by the Caribbean people during the British colonization. James provides several examples of colonialist narratives that defined the people in the West Indies in terms of their primitive state, loss of culture, lack of capacity and economic development, pattern of betrayal, and their inability to do any work other than physical labour. James first introduces the dominant colonialist narratives and then refutes them by providing evidence of other narratives that give examples of the way slaves in the West Indies were able to learn new languages, run plantations, and organize themselves into "armed sections and popular bodies" ("The Making of the Caribbean People") to fight against the British army. James defines the desire for liberty as the fundamental fact which constructs the identity of the West Indian. He says, "the West Indian slave was not accustomed to that kind of slavery in Africa; and, therefore,

in the history of the West Indies, there is one dominant fact, and that is the desire . . . for liberty; the ridding oneself of the particular burden which is the special inheritance of the black skin" (*You Don't Play with Revolution* 33). For Chechen people, the desire for liberty has likewise shaped their history, character, and identity. The people in the North Caucasus have been also united by the common oppression exercised by the Russian Empire. Their history and identity have been constructed by the dominant imperial narratives, and they aim to rid themselves of the particular burden of representation. If one comes from the North Caucasus, one is perceived dangerous. If one is dangerous, one must be a Muslim. If they are Muslim, they might be terrorists. If they are terrorists, they must be from Chechnya or Dagestan. This tautological reasoning has much to do with the way Russians fear people from the North Caucasus (Chechnya, in particular). As Scott Anderson writes of the way Russians look at Chechens:

> For their steadfast defiance over more than two centuries, the Chechens had come to occupy a special and dangerous place in the Russian national psyche… [T]hey were reviled and feared… [T]he recalcitrance of these short, swarthy Muslims to accept the 'civilising' influence of Christian or Communist Russia [was] attributed to primitivism, stupidity and base criminality… By the 1970s, 'Chechen' had become synonymous with 'mafia' [in Russia], a vicious and scheming gypsy-like people never to be trusted. (257)

For Russians, if one is from Chechnya, he/she is considered a criminal, while the Russian (white) man, whatever his social behavior, is seen as a law-abiding subject, a man not capable of terrorist attacks and criminal acts, or capable of them but only in response to violence by the Chechen men. The Chechen people, as with the Caribbean people discussed by James, were deprived of the opportunity to construct their own identity. They were also deprived of their past and history replaced by the dominant colonialist narratives. Caucasian poets and writers have been trying to

interrupt mainstream discourses through the art of literature, appealing to local and international audiences. They address the problems of silence, voicelessness, and underrepresentation of Caucasian people.

Apti Bisultanov (1953 - present) is an acclaimed Chechen poet who devotes his poems to the themes of lost cultural roots and voicelessness of Chechen people. Bisultanov speaks both Chechen and Russian languages, but he intentionally uses the Chechen language to write and publish his poems. His poems have been later translated into Russian and English languages and published online for international audience. Bisultanov was a guerilla fighter himself, and he devoted a few poems to the victims of Stalin deportation of the Chechen people. In one of his poems, "Hoarse Hawk," the poet compares his sufferings with the life of a hawk:

Hoarse hawk how much you are like me
Unheard by God
Your aimless cry
Spread the wings
Let us be silent
Me on earth
You in the sunset glow.

In his poem, Bisultanov speaks on behalf of all colonized people whose voices are not heard. When comparing the voice of the Chechen people with the "hoarse cry" of the bird, the poet stresses that it is God who does not hear them. There is no evidence of colonizers, Russian injustice or military discourse. The voices are not heard by God. The religious motif suggests that Chechen people accept the war as their destiny; it is God's punishment that they should obey: "Let us be silent" (5). In an interview published in 2005, Bisultanov observes, "The world

is revealed in Chechnya. We learn the truth about the Russians' attitude to the Chechens, the Russians' attitude to each other, and the Chechens' attitude to each other. What's more, the rest of the world reveals its true colors in its silence about the war" ("A Conversation with the Author"). Bisultanov exposes Western complicity in this silence. For him, the Russian-Chechen conflict becomes a much larger fight when the oppression is ignored in the wider world. The early poems by Bisultanov call for silence, submission to destiny and to circumstance, and they express an inability or unwillingness to respond to the war enemy. The subaltern position of the Chechens is powerfully presented in these poems. Bisultanov's first poem represents a vivid example:

> Grab your heart with both hands
> That old hedgehog
> And sew up all its wounds tight
> with a cobbler's awl, like patching boots,
> And travel to every point on the compass
> And keep silence
> At least till the end of life. ("First Poem After Leaving Chechnya")

The poet composed this poem after his decision to leave his native country when the second Chechen war broke out in 1999. The poem represents the pain and the scars the war left in the hearts of Chechen people. Bisultanov does not call Chechen people for revolt, open resistance, or confrontation. Instead, the poet encourages the oppressed to quietly self-heal, leave the land, and speak nothing of the war: "And travel to every point on the compass / And keep silence / At least till the end of life" (5-7). Bisultanov's elaborate metaphors vividly represent the sufferings of Chechen people, but he points to the subaltern position and the Chechen inability to break the

silence of the subjugated in the dominant discourse. As if seeing no opportunity for Chechens to be heard, Bisultanov urges the Chechens to leave the war-torn land and search for a new homeland.

Bisultanov's poems have been described as being devoted to the topics of longing for "the lost cultural roots of the homeland" as well as for "a quiet religiosity" ("Apti Bisultanov: Chechnya"). One of the few poems translated into the English language is called "Childhoods," and it is devoted to the problem of lost memory. Chechen people are believed to have a strong bond with their land, their birthplace and childhood memories. Bisultanov shows the tragedy of the Chechen people being unable to "see," to remember their childhood or even to have one. Bisultanov starts the poem with a Chechen grandmother's belief: "If you see your childhood three times / You will live a long life" ("Childhoods"). Being able to see one's childhood means to have a retrospective memory of their past, the past of their family and the past of the homeland. As soon as the autobiographical memory is lost, a Chechen person enters the discourse of imposed representations in which memory is constructed along the lines of the dominant culture. Bisultanov ends "Childhoods" with the following lines:

I only saw my childhood once
When I went to war
I turned around
and saw it at the gate
too scared to come with me another step
Bombs tore up the streets
Then
with timid terrified children

it went to hide in a cellar

But a valiant pilot dropped a bomb on the house

My son never saw his childhood

He went to war as a child.

Chechnya's childhoods, which symbolize the collective past, histories, and origins, are wiped out during the war or hidden in the cellars of Chechen houses. The new generation of Chechens is born in a place that does not recall or possess a history other than a militarized one. Everything that is left to remember about Chechnya includes "a mountain's collapse," "the savaged people," "the wilderness of the graves," "the faces of the Shakhides," "the blood of the Chechens," "frog tears," and "the shadow left by a toppled rock" ("Memory"). These are trauma narratives which demonstrate the effect of catastrophic events on the peoples in the North Caucasus. The memories of pain and suffering are haunting Bisultanov's poetry.

Chechen poets struggle in their poems to make the homeland known, remembered, and respected. Rosa Bino, a member of old Chechen diaspora in Jordan, devotes her poem "Where We Belong" to the idea of remembering the place where one is born and supposed to belong (see Appendix D). For Bino, it is the greatest sin to forget one's home and lead a life bearing the burden of a lost nation and hidden history. Instead, Bino is willing to become "an old oak tree back home, / A tree that embraced our home land's soil" (32-3) Bino wishes to stand "still there, / Just like a great unbeatable mountain / To witness it all, / And tell the story / About the place where we belong" (35-9). Similar to Bisultanov, Bino left war-torn Chechnya and moved to live in Jordan. She talks about the loss of homeland and the sense of belonging: "How can someone forget the place / Where he is supposed to belong! / It's like I'm homeless" (9-11). For Bino, it is not the memory of war or pain that is haunting her, but the feelings of injustice, the loss of

cultural roots and identity: “Wherever I go / I feel different, / I try to blend in, / Try to forget, / Try to move on / But then before I go to sleep / I shed some bitter tears / For the years spent away / From the place they call home” (12-20). In the last line, Bino says, “**they** call home” (20). She does not say, “**I** call home” - as if to emphasize the fact that she does not know whether it can still be called her home. Someone else says that it is or was her home. Someone else is responsible for making Chechnya more or less **home** for people like Rosa Bino. She does not identify the culprits of the situation, but she expresses the suffocating feeling of injustice: “Sometimes, I wonder, / “Why our nation was the chosen one to be destroyed...” (25-6). She does not find the answers to these questions, but her whole poem is filled with the desire to go back to the roots, remember homeland, and find a strong sense of national identity. The poet is writing about displaced people who are in search of their Chechen identity.

The danger of being forgotten as Chechen Chechnya and, instead, being remembered as Russian Chechnya is forcefully expressed by another Chechen national poet, Ismail Kerimov. In his poem “Deportation,” Kerimov attempts to give voice to the previously silenced Chechen people who had been deported in 1944 on the orders of Joseph Stalin. As I discussed in Chapter Two, Vainakh peoples (Chechens and Ingushes) were deported from their native lands to Siberia and Central Asia, resulting in the death of some 144,000 civilians (“The Sixty Ninth Commemoration”). Kerimov reflects on the pain and sufferings of thousands of Chechens and Ingushes who have been forgotten fifty years after the 1940-1944 Chechen insurgency[35]:

I am an ache.

I am thousands,

Thousands of tears

[35] The revolt against Soviet authorities took place during 1940-44 in Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. It ended with the deportation of Vainakh peoples from their native lands.

Shed under the roar of the wheels in February 1994.

I am a sea.

I am hundreds,

Thousands of bodies collected in obscure stations.

I am a tombstone, a monument,

I am the despair of shattered mothers,

With frozen prayers.

I am the sky,

I am Khaibakh, Katyn and the GULAG

The bloody throne of a dictator,

I am glasnost,

I am the heart of a poet, nature, song

Swelling illness in the throat,

I am a voice and I command you

"Remember!" ("The Deportation")

Kerimov calls upon his readers to remember the subalterns and give them space to speak about their histories and stories. It is important to reconstruct the various stories of subaltern insurgency, including "Khaibakh, Katyn and the GULAG" (12). By drawing parallels between different atrocities that took place under the Soviet regime, Kerimov seems to link up multidirectional histories to highlight a common theme of oppression by the Russian government towards those they are threatened by. The author does not just ask, but he "command[s]" (17) the reading audience to remember and recognize the past and the trauma of Chechen and Ingush people. The problem of forgetting and remembering becomes a recurring theme in the poetry of

North Caucasian authors. Their poems do not address the issue of misrepresentation of Caucasian people. They rather talk about the problem of underrepresentation: disregard for Chechen individual and collective memory about tragic events in their history. Recognizing the existence of an archive of such poems and bringing them to light is one of the steps to disrupt dominant discourses and narratives in Russia.

Besides the Chechen voices represented in poetry, several novels written by Chechen writers and translated into the Russian or English languages have become available for general audiences: these present attempts to rewrite the Chechen national past and present and to resuscitate Chechen history and culture from a Russian-inflected view. One such writer is Kanta Ibragimov, a Chechen writer who has recently become well-known among the Russian speaking audience and who has been nominated for the Nobel Prize for two of his novels: the 2010 novel *Children's World* and the 2011 novel *Aurora*. Ibragimov has devoted most of his life to academic studies in economy, agriculture, and taxes. He is considered a well-established member of the Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic. Despite all the academic achievements, at the age of 38, he decided to pursue a literary career along with his academic one. Since then, he has been writing prolifically which has also raised many doubts among literary critics. As Majnat Kurbanova claims, "Ibragimov published many other novels, with a productivity unparalleled amongst Chechen writers. Up to date, he has written 8 novels, each of them boasting no less than 600 pages and an amount of academic monographs." The two novels - *The Children's World* and *Aurora* - have been published within two subsequent years with no pause between them. Ibragimov is often criticized for poor vocabulary and colloquial style of writing, underdeveloped characters, simplistic and rushed plotlines, extreme dramatization, and ambivalent political views. There are even rumors that Ibragimov does not write his books himself; he hires the so-

called “literary slaves” or poor writers who do all the work for a small amount of money (“Apti Bisultanov: Chechnya”). It is not clear whether these allegations are valid or not, but Ibragimov seems to be a controversial figure who does not voice his political views openly or directly; who does not criticize the government policy towards the Caucasus, but even supports the pro-Moscow Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov; and who talks and writes about Chechnya and Chechen people as if from a distance, not being fully a part of the conflict. Aslan Doukaev, the Prague-based director of the North Caucasus service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, goes as far as to provide a harsh criticism of Ibragimov’s work: “Interestingly, people even read anti-Chechen authors such as Kanta Ibragimov, a Moscow-based ethnic Chechen, who writes books in Russian which denigrate Chechnya and Chechens” (Amburn). To understand if this is the case, we need to look at one of his texts more closely and see the way the Russian-Chechen conflict is presented in his work. Ibragimov’s novel *Children’s World* presents a good case for our investigation.

Ibragimov’s novel *Children’s World* is a Chechen story as perceived through the eyes of a child who dreams one day to restore his favorite toy shop, “Children’s World,” which symbolically represents the destroyed Republic of Chechnya and the ruined hopes of Chechen society. According to Elena Churilova, “The novel’s figurative world is the most important point in the understanding of cultural and historical community of the Chechen and Russian peoples.” Ibragimov’s novel is important for “its actuality and value in the peace creation, and in the building of the common social and cultural area in the North Caucasus” (Churilova). The novel’s plot is based on events which took place in Chechnya during the first Russian-Chechen war (1994-1996); however, the centre of the storyline revolves not on the military conflict but around the destiny of a Chechen orphan named Kant. The significance of the novel is stressed by the

narrator who starts his narration with the following words: “It is time for me to calm down, step back, and forget everything. But I cannot, I cannot. I must, I have to tell about my guilt, about our common guilt, about our common tragedy” (1). The first two paragraphs of the prologue describe the agony of the narrator to tell this story: “It is not the first time I start this story, but I do not have enough courage. I cannot. I am exhausted. I am afraid” (1). There is a certain need to share the memory of the events, but there is also a lot of anxiety and uncertainty connected with making the story public. Such beginning of the prologue gives the reader a sense that the story comes from the genuine need of the author to share memories of the place (the city of Grozny) and people there. The prologue ends, and the narrator’s voice abrupts. The first chapter starts in the third person and tells the story of the Chechen War from the perspective of a child.

Ibragimov names his novel “Children’s World,” a naming that symbolizes the destroyed toy shop whose loss is strongly felt by a small Chechen boy who equates it with the tragedy of losing his parents during the war. “Children’s World” embodies the world of a happy childhood of which Chechen children, “the children of war,” have been deprived. The child associates the loss of the toy shop with the fact that he is Chechen and Chechen people are not allowed to have a “Children’s World.” The following dialogue takes place between a Chechen orphan and the narrator near the beginning of the novel:

> “When I was small my father was also carrying me in his arms.”
>
> “And are you not small now?” It slipped out of my tongue.
>
> “Of course not. I have even been to a penal colony.”
>
> “What kind of colony?”

> "The colony where everyone is beating you and calling you a Chechen . . . Are you Chechen as well? . . . Why is everybody beating us and shooting at us? . . ."
>
> "And how long are we going to be Chechens? . . ."
>
> "We were born Chechens and should stay Chechens for our entire life."
>
> "Does that mean we will not have 'Children's World' like others?"
>
> "Why not?!" I was puzzled and wanted to say something optimistic but at that moment behind the river, right opposite to us something exploded so heavily that my legs gave way. (12)

The child's logic is simple: as long as they are called Chechens, there will be no toy shop "Children's World" available for them. The term *Chechen* surpasses the meaning of an ethnic group of people living in the territory of Russia. *Chechen* stands for otherness in terms of deprivation, lack, absence, and vulnerability. Ibragimov does not give a specific name for his small protagonist. The child does not remember his real name and everyone simply calls him "Malchik" or "Kant," which both stand for "a boy" in the Russian and Chechen languages. Such a given name is transformed into a designation of the Chechen young generation, the future of the nation. The tragedy of any nation is not to provide a safe and reliable future for the growing generation. In this case, every child will be remembered as "a boy" or "a girl" among the ruins of Chechen society.

Ibragimov endows Malchik with a unique gift – a rare musical ear and a masterful ability to play the violin. When Malchik is noticed by diplomats and the international media, he receives an opportunity to leave Chechnya and start a new life abroad. Yet Malchik refuses to move

somewhere far from the toyshop "Children's World." It is where he belongs. It is where the Chechen nation belongs:

> "Where would you like to go," the doctor finally asks him quietly, "to the place where there is bliss or?"
>
> "Uchital! Uchital!" Malchik nuzzled close to the grandmother. "Home, I want to go home! To 'Children's World,' to the place where you were teaching me."
>
> "The war is going there."
>
> "My Mom and Dad are waiting for me there already. There is 'Children's World' and there is my home."
>
> "My home is also there," quietly whispered grandmother Uchital.
>
> "Yes, yes, our home is there," whined Malchik and grabbed the grandmother's wrinkled hand and kissed it. (50)

Malchik is surrounded by the two main characters – the elderly Russian member of the intelligentsia Anastasia Tikhonovna Afanasyeva (old Russian woman by the nickname grandmother Uchital) and Rosa (the boy's aunt), a Chechen woman – and each of them embodies the cultural and historical experiences of Russian and Chechen peoples. In this way, Ibragimov represents both women as victims of the Russian-Chechen system: they both went through moral humiliation, physical violence, solitary confinement, and loss of their children. The whole Chapter 4 is devoted to the story of Anastasia Afanasyeva. During the Second World War, Anastasia signs up as a volunteer in the Russian Army, but instead of fighting or working as a nurse during the war, she is morally and physically abused by her former professor Stoletov who

is appointed as a Major of the Division. Stoletov forces Anastasia to have sexual intercourses, treats her as his servant, and physically abuses when he is drunk (Chapter 4). After the war, she is falsely accused of the forgery of military documentation and sent to the labor camp for five years. In the exile, Anastasia is continuously abused by soldiers and army officers. She gets pregnant during the first year of the exile, but the physical abuse of the soldiers results in the miscarriage (Chapter 8). Five years later, she is finally released from the labor camp and allowed to go back to Moscow. Being a former prisoner, Anastasia is unable to continue her education or find a good job in the capital, so she leaves for Grozny (Chechnya) and settles down there. As for Rosa, her life is no much easier than Anastasia's. She gets married very young and constantly suffers from her husband's drinking, partying, cheating, and being absent from home for long periods of time. She gives birth to a girl who soon dies because of poor health. Her husband is absent from home when this happens. Rosa's husband turns out to be a corrupted criminal and thief, and he leaves Chechnya for a while in order to escape prosecution. Both female characters have been unhappy in their marriage, and both have found peace and bliss in caring for Malchik. Rosa takes care of his physical survival while Uchital teaches him how to play the violin, how to read and understand classic literature, how to speak foreign languages, and how to have good manners and follow the etiquette. The novel centers on this strange union of a Russian and a Chechen woman without which the future of a gifted child, a representative of the Chechen nation, becomes dangerous, if not impossible. They both provide food and shelter and give the boy a sense of home and security. Rosa's salary and Anastasia's pension are nearly enough to survive during the war. While living in the war zone, Malchik is able to get a good home education and even learn to masterfully play the musical instrument. The novel thus suggests that only the cooperation of two nations can provide a safe and happy future for the next generation.

When Rosa is kidnapped by her previous husband who turns out to be a Chechen militant, Malchik is left with a grandmother who gets weaker every day and is not able to find provisions for their survival. Right before Uchital's death the following dialogue takes place between her and Malchik:

> "And is war also hell?" Malchik is frightened.
>
> "War is mutual misunderstanding when people start speaking different languages, when they stop listening to each other and everyone considers themselves more important, more honest, more right… But in life the strongest blames the weak one…"
>
> "They don't build anything. They promised to build 'Children's World' soon – but where?" Malchik is frustrated. "And the beautiful balloon cannot return here; they shoot, kill, steal here! … Now I also don't want to be here, there is evil, war here. I am playing sorrow, grief, you see I cannot play a cheerful melody, the fiddlestick does not let me and if I force it – fraud, you hear it yourself." (224)

The grandmother soon dies and Malchik is left alone. He suffers from sleepwalking, a disorder often linked to trauma. One night in a dream, he sees "Children's World," his mother and father, grandmother Uchital inviting him to join them. Malchik takes the violin, comes close to the window, opens it, and jumps, shouting: "I am flying!" (230) Malchik does not die of an explosion or a bullet. He simply goes to another world where his parents and grandmother are waiting for him, inviting him to make the fatal step. Despite that, Ibragimov does not leave the novel on this pessimistic note but offers us some optimism through his portrayal of Rosa's future: she survives the attack of her husband, and later in her life she gives birth to two healthy children. We can read this ending as symbolizing some kind of hope for a Chechen future,

although one that is less ideal and less gifted compared to the one represented by Malchik. In her letter to the narrator, Rosa says: "Of course, it is not our Malchik . . . Our Malchik was a unique creation, he possessed an amazing spiritual gift and endless kindness! We could not save him. Perhaps, not deserving yet?" (234) One could argue that Ibragimov has written *Children's World* to save Malchik from our oblivion and indifference. The novel's narrator exclaims, "I want, I really want to prevent Malchik from leaving us; I want him to be with all of us. Forever!" (21) Ibragimov has thereby set a difficult task before himself – in creating a space, however fictional, for a prospective Chechen generation to stay alive, Ibragimov offers Malchik to his audience, to speak and be heard. This text has opened an opportunity for one Chechen boy to be remembered. Ibragimov gives the last words to Malchik: "Forgive me, forgive us all, please, forgive!" (234)

More recently, Ibragimov has published another novel that provides a powerful critique of the discourse of terror so much popularized by the Russian government and media to justify the war in the North Caucasus. In his book *Aurora* (2011), Ibragimov tells the story of a young Chechen woman who is forced to become a suicide terrorist, not by her own choice but under the pressure of the Russian Intelligence Agency working together with the Chechen militants. This scenario resonates with the plot of Pelevin's short story "Sheepskin Hats on Kremlin Towers" discussed in Chapter Two. Aurora, the main character of Ibragimov's novel, is not a typical female terrorist, who is often portrayed as an uneducated, deeply religious, and even extreme Muslim woman, for whom revenge is the main motivation against Russians or who is drugged by Muslim extremists and sent to fulfil Allah's will. On the contrary, Aurora is represented as a highly intelligent, educated, and reasonable Chechen woman who is in full control of her life and the lives of her family members. The whole novel is a story about the relationships between Aurora, a young and talented scientist, and a professor Tsanaev (Chechen by nationality) who

comes to the Chechen Republic to restore the Academy of Sciences there. Ibragimov puts much emphasis to describe the normal academic life among the ongoing war instead of focusing on the military conflict as the central point of narration. Tsanaev, a well-established professor working in Moscow, is sent back to Chechnya not to participate in military actions, but to revive science and education among the ruins of the Republic.

The novel is a representation of constant comparison between the life of Chechen immigrants in Moscow and the reality of Chechens living in Chechnya. Tsanaev is an important character in this regard because he experiences both worlds and is often caught between the two, not knowing how and who to identify with: "To be honest and direct, he was irritated by all the lies about Chechnya and Chechens; in fact, he was really becoming a Chechen himself … How else if at school, his son got a nickname after terrorist # 1 in Russia – Chechen" (*Aurora*). Tsanaev talks about Russian stereotypes very often: "They cannot catch and liquidate one injured terrorist #1 (he is hiding somewhere in the woods) so they have to shovel up the whole Chechnya and equate all Chechens with terrorists" (*Aurora*). In his conversation with Aurora, he hears the words he knows himself: "How can barbarian Chechens have science? Chechens are born to fight and steal" (*Aurora*). Tsanaev is naïve to think he can change something in Chechnya:

> He is certainly not a warrior or fighter. He is not young or driven as before, but, being in the midst of these bloody events, he feels himself as a knowledge holder, teacher, creator of a new Caucasian home, new society. Despite a never-ending roar of war, death, tears, dirt, chaos, and discomfort – in short, crazy and overwhelming distress – but this is life, struggle, development, and progress! (*Aurora*)

Tsanaev is aware of the fact that Chechnya is a place of chaos and lawlessness, but he regards these volatile circumstances as a revolutionary, even evolutionary form of development and wants to be part of it. However, when he fails to fit in this system and its reality of conflict, he is quickly excluded from the scholarly circle as an unnecessary item (*Aurora*). When Tsanaev does not follow the orders from above and when he starts supporting and helping Aurora who is believed to be a secret extremist, he is sent back to Moscow, fired from his academic position, and threatened by the Russian Intelligence agents. Tsanaev does not realize that he is a simple pawn in the hands of the Russian authorities, much as Aurora is a tool in the hands of Chechen and Russian crooks. He realizes, though, that the revolution happening in Chechnya is not going in the direction of evolution but in the direction of total degradation (*Aurora*).

Aurora spends most of her time living and working in Chechnya. She gets a few opportunities to go to Norway to do her research for a couple of weeks, but she always comes back to take care of the remaining family. Her academic success and the funding she gets from the Norwegian Research Institute make her an easy target for Chechen Islamic extremists. Ibragimov stresses the fact that Aurora is not hired by Chechen extremists to fulfill Allah's will. Aurora is, in fact, hired by a Chechen scientist and professor to make a contribution to scientific circles both in Chechen and Russian academia. For Aurora, research and doctoral dissertation are a way to get a good scholarship and substantial financial support to move her family from Chechnya to Norway. All of her brothers have been killed while participating in Chechen guerilla warfare, and some of her family members need special medical care due to ongoing illnesses. Aurora's life story revolves around her own survival, the rescue of her family members, and her escape from the brutal reality of Chechnya. Since Aurora's brothers have been fighting against Russian subjugation of Chechnya, her whole family has been blacklisted and

labelled as terrorist and religious extremist by the Russian Intelligence Agency. Aurora is, in fact, a deeply religious person, and religion plays a role of guidance and morality in her life. She prays, works, takes care of her close ones, tolerates life under unbearable circumstances, never complains, and behaves as a morally good citizen. Religion is not used by Aurora as a way to get revenge for the murdered brothers. Religion provides spiritual guidance for Aurora to be a good person and never give up in difficult situations. Russia's Federal Security Service and Chechens criminals blackmail and torture Aurora, threatening to do harm to her family members. The blackmailing and chasing happen both on the territory of Chechnya and outside it. Ibragimov stressed the pervasive and overarching power of Security Service agents and militants as they are able to follow Aurora everywhere and establish their presence in Moscow, Chechnya, and outside of Russia. Though she is able to leave Chechnya, Aurora is forced to give all the scholarship and grant money she gets from Norway's scientific institution to the Russian and Chechen bandits, working together. Aurora often warns Tsanaev not to get involved: "Gal Aladovich, do not get involved into this. Dirt! This filthy war is only for money and because of money. I had better buy off the last time, and that is it. We will work quietly and get more grants in future" (30). Aurora understands the situation better than anyone else. Tsanaev, having lived in Moscow for the last several years and being far from the military conflict, is too naïve to comprehend how things work in Chechnya. According to Aurora, "everyone who holds a gun is very often in collusion. They do, however, thrash each other sometimes … Don't you know that yet? Absurdity reigns here" (*Aurora*). In Aurora's assessment, Ibragimov reveals the complicated aspect of the military situation in Chechnya. It is not about the opposition between Russians and Chechens. Instead, Russian law-enforcement authorities often work together with Chechen criminals and extremists for a mutual profit: money. Aurora, as a Chechen woman

herself, blames both Russian and Chechen crooks for the situation in the region: “These bastards ruined our homeland and murdered people for money…why do they need the institute? Science for what? When they can smell big money, they turn into beasts and lose human face…” (*Aurora*). Aurora becomes the voice of all the local people who feel despair and anger at the sight of theft, corruption, and criminal activity exercised by those who profiteer from war and, thus, display loss of humanity.

Ibragimov’s novel *Aurora* is about the impossibility of rebuilding a postconflict society when the corruption has seeped in too deeply. The author hints at the fabricated character of terror, manipulation of terrorism, and the theatricality of war when innocent people are chosen to become the next Chechen terrorists. The characters in the novel create and invent the scenario of terrorism in which Aurora becomes the main actor. The author makes this explicit in his novel when he writes, “… those Majors, Bidaev’s colleagues, multiplied so much that they had to create work for themselves: they need explosions, terror acts, terrorists. If not, they won’t have shoulder straps, pips, and oversee cottage houses” (*Aurora*). Aurora figures out this axiom quickly: “The Intelligence Agency needs terrorists. If terrorism prospers, the Intelligence Agency prospers as well” (*Aurora*). In the following dialogue with Russia’s Security Service agent, Tsanaev learns the harsh truth of the fiction of terrorism:

> “There is demand for terrorism in the world!”
>
> “And you supply this demand.”
>
> “We regulate it, so to speak.”
>
> “Some sort of business?”

> "Ha-ha, I did not invent it. Even though I do not have scholarly degrees and titles, I am aware of well-known truth: war is the most profitable business. Terror is the most efficient power." (*Aurora*)

The Russian Intelligence Agency together with Chechen militants blackmail Aurora, and when she refuses to follow their rules, they create and implement the scenario of a terror attack in the airport. They force Aurora to put on an explosive belt and push the button when she is around many people. Aurora, having no hope of saving herself, tries to warn people around; she runs away from the crowd, shouting at them not to come closer and to save themselves. These are her last words before the explosives she is wearing detonate. Ibragimov stresses the fact that she does not push the button herself. She is the passive participant of this operation. The story of Aurora offers readers an alternative story of a Chechen woman: she is not an extremist or guerilla fighter. She is not influenced by Chechen militants or put on drugs to fulfil their plan of revenge. She is a highly educated woman, a scholar, a deeply religious Muslim who is willing to do everything to move her family from Chechnya to Norway and give them a better life. Aurora is not a stereotypical female suicide terrorist, yet she is forced to inhabit this character at the end of the novel. In her last letter to Tsanaev, Aurora writes, "The fate of Tausov [last name of Aurora] is the fate of all Chechens" (*Aurora*). Indeed, Ibragimov's novel abounds with examples of negative labels and stereotypes that determine the North Caucasus and the attitude towards the people of this region: "There are powers whose only goal is to show to the world, especially to Russians, that all Chechens are terrorists, enemies of Russia and mankind. The Tausov [last name of Aurora] are already widely promoted, famous, and the only thing left to do is to put a label: Shakhid, suicide bomber, terrorist. And if it is well-spread in the media, it is almost impossible to prove the opposite" (*Aurora*). The image of the enemy is constructed and

popularized by the media. Consequently, we can read Ibragimov's novel as a powerful critique of the discourse of terror in Russia, which uses dehumanizing language not about Chechen locals as terrorists, but in relation to the Russian military and the Chechen criminals who are responsible for implementing and benefiting from the terrorism scenario. In this critique of Russian and Chechen agents, Ibragimov suggests the two places are imbricated: Aurora's fate is also the representation of Russian life and her misfortunes are the troubles of Russia itself. Ibragimov concludes his tragic novel with the distressing words:

> In general, this is the misfortune of the whole society, the country of Russia which is being stymied and torn. Because life and development mean freedom and democracy. To achieve that, one has to eradicate corruption, annihilate the power of mafia-oligarchic capital and make sure people in power think about society, not just about how to profit more from oil and gas. (*Aurora*)

In this novel, Ibragimov is direct and forceful in his criticism of Russian government and media. He does not see any way out except in a change of power.

While Ibragimov is critical about the corruption of the Russian government and media, Alisa Ganieva, another writer from the North Caucasus, challenges the homogenous representation of the North Caucasus and portrays a mosaic-like state of culture in contemporary societies of the Caucasus. By using a literary technique of combining different narratives and writing styles[36] in her book *The Mountain and the Wall*, Ganieva also makes a bigger argument about the multilayered, diverse, and complex character of the society in Dagestan. It is

[36] It is a combination of folklore, magical realism, ethnographic data, dystopia, extracts from a novel and a children's story, newspaper articles, and realistic fiction.

controversial and problematic as the reality of contemporary Dagestani life is much more complicated than the simple clear-cut distinction between "us" and "them," "Caucasian" and "Russian," "Christian" and "Muslim." It a story of pluralism, diversity, and co-existence. Ganieva writes about the realities of Dagestani life in the twenty-first century by analyzing both old and new generations. Ganieva was born in Moscow in 1985 but moved with her family to Dagestan where she spent 17 years there before going back to Moscow. Even though she has been living in Moscow ever since, she writes novels and poems about the North Caucasus not as an outsider but as an insider who looks at her homeland from a distance. It is a unique perspective that gives an interesting picture of today's Makhachkala, the capital city of the Republic of Dagestan. Ganieva's novel *The Mountain and the Wall* was nominated for Russia's National Bestseller Award because, as Ronald Meyer says, "Ultimately, Ganieva's novel is not about politics, and not about the Caucasus being separated from Russia, but about the fate of her contemporaries, the young people of Dagestan, who both seek to reclaim the traditional past that was obliterated by the Soviet regime and to make their way in the twenty-first century" (8). The analysis of Ganieva's novel will give us an idea of a present and future situation in the North Caucasus, which can challenge the practice of synecdochical Orientalism in Russian media and literary texts.

The Mountain and the Wall is a dystopian novel about the decision of the Russian government to build a wall to separate the North Caucasus from the rest of the country. The events take place in Makhachkala, the capital city of the Republic of Dagestan. The main character of the novel is Shamil, a young reporter who gets the task from his manager to write an article about the craft and art of Kubachi armorers. In the middle of his trip to the goldsmith's

village of Kubachi,[37] he, together with all other citizens of Makhachkala, learns the news about the decision of the Russian government to construct a wall along Dagestan's northern border. After that, the plot develops within a few days. Shamil walks around the city, listens to the rumours and conversations, and observes how the city and community fall into disarray. The reader becomes witness to unrest, violence, protests, and overall panic among Dagestani people. The news about the wall spreads around Dagestan quickly and leads to locals offering various opinions on that issue. For example, Sharapudin Muradovich, a member of the editorial board for one of the Dagestani newspapers, refuses to believe this information, calling it a provocation and lie: "I'm on the phone with Moscow every minute! The Caucasus is Russia's primary defense in the struggle against terrorism, it's a buffer, hear me? A wellspring of democracy! What wall? You really believe that Internet-schminternet?" (Ganieva 39). The character believes that the North Caucasus is not a terror threat for Russia; it is, in fact, the "buffer" between Russia and other terrorist countries to the south of it. Shamil, the main character of the novel, is the first to draw historical parallels regarding the wall: "They say we're being walled off from Russia. Border troops, you name it. Like the Berlin Wall" (Ganieva 45). The Berlin Wall during the Cold War symbolized the division of people, the difference in ideology, loss of freedom and human rights, oppression and a symbolic boundary between "us" and "them." The Berlin Wall, according to Joe Cleary, and the "gradual development of different political, economic and cultural systems seemed to indicate . . . that two distinct national identities had permanently consolidated" (62). Ganieva is hinting at the political divisions that have been happening in Russia for the last several years, mostly driven by federal propaganda and Russian State ideology. Even though Dagestan represents a highly multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, it is

[37] Kubachi is the village in the mountains of Dagestan and home to roughly 3,000 people. It is 90 km (56 miles) south of Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan.

still misrepresented as a homogenous entity which has to be physically separated from the rest of Russia. Arip, Shamil's best friend, speculates that the purpose of the Russian government to build a wall around the Caucasus is to stop Russian subsidizing of the region and to save money, though he is skeptical that such subsidies even exist: "Have we ever seen any of those subsidies here? My village did everything on its own, installed plumbing, built a gym – and they did it at their own expense, with their own hands. All they got from the central government was excuses, and not a single kopeck…" (Ganieva 166)" Arip blames the wall on the pervasive corruption and bureaucracy in the country. The way the government chooses to deal with that, according to Arip, is laughable since "they're really just trying to hide from themselves" (Ganieva 166). The wall becomes an ironic symbol of division since corruption exists on both sides of the border. Some of the characters in the novel view the division symbolized by the wall in a positive light, hoping for a brighter future for the Caucasus: "Maybe there'll be some real change? We could have a new state, one that'll care about truth, justice, and morality more than cash…" (Ganieva 171). If that is, indeed, the scenario, is the building of the wall a utopian dream? What if the subconscious desire of Dagestani people is to be freed from the oppression and imperialism of the Russian state? Even though it seems like a plausible idea, it is quickly refuted by Shamil who predicts that the end of the Russian imperialism will lead to another form of oppression – an extremist Islam. This is exactly what occurs in Dagestan, just several days after the erection of the wall. Shamil goes around the city and finds the Emirate's tabloids everywhere:

> Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Who created us Muslims and Who blessed us with jihad, giving us the opportunity to earn Paradise. I praise Allah for the events that are taking place among us. A new independent state has come into being in the Islamic world.

> It has overthrown the Russian *tagut*, who was wallowing in vice. Guided only by the law of sharia, it will overcome the troubles of our time! (Ganieva 231)

In this propaganda, we can see how Dagestan is poised to become an extremist Islamic state in Ganieva's novel. Even though this is a fictional account of events, Ganieva realistically portrays the problems that have been evident in some parts of the North Caucasus: the prospering of radical ideas such as Salafi jihadism and the bombing of the North Caucasus by Special Forces.

Ganieva portrays extreme Islam negatively in the novel. Not everyone in Dagestan approves of religious extremism or religion in general. During the narration, the reader becomes witness to open and blatant criticism of extremism and Islamic fundamentalism, including the wearing of hijab and covering up of women's bodies. At the beginning of the novel, the reader is introduced to a typical Dagestani family with two parents and two sons. None of them is extremist or even religious enough not to drink alcohol and follow the rules of Islam. The mother Zumrud admits that she does not "like it when they start covering themselves up like that" (Ganieva 11). Zumrud is not a voiceless woman in the family. When she is confronted by Dibir, a religious relative, she can stand up for herself without the help of her husband:

> "A woman herself should understand that it's not something Allah is forcing upon her – her calling is to take care of her family, so let her stay home and do the right thing of her own free will."
>
> "Dibir, go preach to your wife," snapped Zumrud, only partly in jest. (Ganieva 17)

The reader feels the author's negative perspective on religious extremism especially in the description of Madina, Shamil's girlfriend, who is gradually converted to radical Islam and forced to break all the ties with her family and friends. When Shamil confronts Madina about her

strange behaviour, Madina says, “It’s because of people like you I can’t live an honest life according to the Prophet’s will. I can’t even dress the way I want. And I’m not talking about our parents – they were brainwashed long ago, but you’re young, you need to do everything you can to resist the *munafiqs* and all those *kufr* keepers. *Subhanallah*, now everything will be different. All the traitors will be punished” (Ganieva 88). Madina talks about the Soviet/Communist brainwashing of the older generation without realizing she has become subject to another kind of brainwashing. Ganieva shows the scenario in which the Caucasian Emirate is established after the erection of the wall and demonstrates the chaos and destruction it leads to at the end. The novel offers sharp criticism of any kind of oppression, subjugation, and imposition.

By showing the gloomy prospects of Dagestan after being separated from Russia, Ganieva represents not only the dystopian dream of both Russian and Dagestani people, but also the lost generation of Caucasian people in the 21st century. Dagestan represents a mosaic of ethnicities co-habiting the region and struggling for cultural and historical dominance. Some of these struggles can be traced in the opposition between Islamic extremists and completely anti-religious and secular families; the attempts to follow Caucasian traditions and rituals and the absolute rejection of Caucasian youth to lead humble and moderate lives; the traditional taboo on sex before marriage and the impact of the sexual revolution in modern Dagestan; the mixture of dialects and languages in their struggle for dominance, Ganieva’s representation reveals different worlds in co-existence and in tension in Dagestan, seen for instance, in her contrasting description of remote villages and their preservation of cultural artefacts and the traditional ways of creating art and tools alongside her descriptions of urban city life with nightclubs, modern technology, and the obsession of the youth with the sports instead of education. As with the cultural and religious mosaic of Dagestan, the genre of Ganieva’s novel represents a confusing

mixture. It comprises fiction, romance, adventure, political commentary, satire, myths and legends, and ethnography. This combination of genres and forms of writing symbolically represents the complex situation in Dagestan and the contradictions that exist there at the level of language, religion, culture, traditions, and beliefs. As one of the characters notes in the novel, "All I know is that everything is all mixed up" (Ganieva 48). Ganieva provides a complex perspective on all the sides of the society in contemporary Dagestan. For instance, Shamil, the main character of the novel, a young Avar, gives the reader an inside perspective into the lives of Dagestani young people. Through this insider perspective, the reader becomes witness to the way young people communicate, the way they spend their free time, and the way they see the situation with the wall. However, Shamil also becomes an outsider in Dagestan when observing the life of other nationalities. He sets on a journey to the goldsmith's village of Kubachi to explore the craft and art of Kubachi armorers and to write an article about it. This storyline is already peculiar since it replicates the genre of travel writing and an attempt of an outsider to represent the Orient. But in this case, the explorer or the writer is the insider who explores unique parts of diverse Dagestani culture. At the beginning of Shamil's adventure, some of his descriptions evoke representations of Oriental culture: "Every house in the settlement turned out to be a treasure trove, stuffed with antique minted plates, inlaid weapons, gold and silver engraved dishes, fantastical *kumgan* water jugs, filigreed knickknacks, and domed copper kettle lids in the shape of helmets" (Ganieva 34). The fact that Shamil does not even speak Kubach adds to the whole complexity of the insider-outsider perspective: "They spoke in Kubach, now and then switching to Russian for Shamil's sake" (Ganieva 35). Is Shamil an insider or outsider in this case? Can he fully comprehend the culture of Kubachi while being an Avar himself? Is Dagestan the only thing that unites them? If yes, Ganieva uses this unique way to represent how

non-homogenous the North Caucasus is and how complex and diverse it is not only to the outside observer but to also to the one who cohabits the same region. This is, perhaps, the greatest contribution of Ganieva's novel – to show Dagestan multidimensionally, contradictory, realistically, and stereotype-free. It is a confusing, self-destructive, polyphonic, and multilayered society:

> Just think about how small it is, and yet how many peoples and customs, languages and arts, animals and plants, coexist here. In tiny Dagestan you can see sand hills and tropical brushwood, eternal glaciers and mineral springs, arid plains and fertile alpine meadows, sea expanses and mountain canyons so deep you could fall for half a day and still not reach the bottom! We Dagestanis, all of us, are very different, but we are alike in our honesty, hospitality, our need for justice. (Ganieva 216)

Ganieva ends the novel with the explosion and bombardments of the city, performed by Islamic extremists, while all the Dagestani officials and government representatives flee the country. She portrays a total chaos, among which all the major characters, including the main one, are killed - this ending is strikingly similar to the way Kanta Ibragimov finishes his two novels, *Children's World* and *Aurora*, discussed earlier in this Chapter. In all the three novels, the main characters are not able to survive under the circumstances of violence, chaos, war, and corruption. The ongoing conflict between Russia and the North Caucasus, as portrayed in fictional accounts, deprives young generation of stable present and hope for a bright future. All the three novels show the lost generation of the North Caucasus. Malchik, the main character of *Children's World*, finds his solace in music to forget the harsh realities of the world. Aurora finds peace in religion, which helps her tolerate the brutality of life circumstances. Finally, Shamil, the protagonist of *The Mountain and the Wall*, feels happy when he dreams about the Mountain of

Celebrations where he is surrounded by friends and family; where everybody is singing and dancing; where there is light and hope for the future. As Patrick Hall suggests, "the Wall illustrates despair and division while the Mountain of Celebration exemplifies hope" ("Book Review: 'The Mountain and the Wall'"). All the three novels show the Caucasian subaltern and their struggles in the still colonized and oppressed society.

In this section, I have tried to show the subaltern position of the people in the North Caucasus as reflected in the poems and novels produced by Caucasian writers. These texts stress the problem of the silence and lack of representation of Caucasian people in the main discourse. Poems by Caucasian authors focus on the themes of oppression of the Caucasian colonized, trauma, and loss of homeland and collective memory. These issues are also explored in the novels by Ibragimov and Ganieva. The military discourse is embedded in the history and representation of the North Caucasus. I would like to continue this topic of the militarized past and present as shown in three films by Caucasian film makers: *Nochevala Tuchka Zolotaya* by Sulambek Mamilov, *Dom tsah* by Ruslan Magomadov, and *Ordered to Forget* by Hussein Erkenov.

3. Caucasian Voices in Cinema

In the last section of this chapter, I wish to make a shift into film and visual representation because there is an attempt to displace imperial narratives, bring to light the hidden history of deportation, and perhaps create space for the subaltern in the mainstream media. One of the earliest attempts to form a collective memory about a significant event in Chechen history – Operation Lentil (23 February 1944) – was by the Chechen director Sulambek Mamilov in his film *Nochevala Tuchka Zolotaya* (1989). Although the film presents a screen

version of Anatoly Pristavkin's famous novel *The Inseparable Twins*, Mamilov changed the plot line in several ways and produced a story as seen through the eyes of both Russian and Chechen peoples. *Nochevala Tuchka Zolotaya* is one of the first fictional representations of the Chechen deportation in 1944, the re-settlement of Chechens to Central and Eastern Asia, and the simultaneous re-settlement of Russian orphans and juvenile young offenders to Chechnya and the Caucasus. This symbolic interexchange of Russian and Chechen peoples and lands is necessary for the screenwriter and the director to represent the subjugation of Chechens, Russian orphans and juvenile delinquents to the Soviet regime by putting the two ethnically different peoples on the same side of the barricade against imperialism. The symbolic friendship between a Russian boy and a Chechen orphan enables the audience to remember the 1944 events not as a clear-cut confrontation between Russians and Chechens but, rather, as an imposed negative attitude towards Chechens skillfully fabricated and maintained by the Soviet government among ethnic Russians.

Mamilov's film begins with the movement of two trains: one going to the Caucasus and the other out of Chechnya. One train contains Russian children from a Moscow orphanage, the second train is filled with Chechen people being forcibly removed from the Caucasus. The entire film was shot in the mountains of the Caucasian region. Although the scene is set in the Caucasus and the movie aims at paying tribute to the deported peoples of Chechnya and Ingushetia, Caucasian characters are absent in the frame for the most part of the plot. The only significant Chechen character is a Caucasian orphan who is able to escape the deportation and hides in the mountains near the camp where Moscow orphans are settled. The Caucasus is depicted as an empty and abandoned land and the settlement of Moscow orphans symbolically

represents the repetitive form of settler colonialism practiced by Russians. When the orphans arrive at the camp for the first time, one boy asks the supervisor:

> BOY. Everything is growing here but nobody around. Pyotr Anisimovich, why is there nobody in the Caucasus?
>
> PYOTR ANISIMOVICH. Quiet, kids, quiet. They went to the field or, perhaps, to the mountains. It is not clear what is going on here…
>
> BOY. I want to go home!
>
> REGINA PETROVNA. Don't cry. Now everything around is ours: mountains are ours, the forest is also ours. Don't cry, don't cry. (Mamilov)

Some twenty minutes later we learn the meaning of the place where Russian orphans establish their settlement. Ilya, a trainman and a jailbird in the past, informs Sasha and Kolya of the origins of the land. Formally, the station is called *Beryozovskaya*, a typical Russian name. According to Ilya, the station bears a Chechen name *Deichur*, which means "the grave of the forefathers." The land has a particular meaning for Chechens whose tradition consists in respecting the previous generation, looking after the graves, and making certain sacrifices. By re-settling the Chechen land with Russian orphans, the past of Chechnya is represented as being erased, replaced, and finally forgotten. In the concluding parts of the film, for instance, we see Alhazur, a Chechen boy, fiercely crying over the tombs of his dead family and fearing the thought of leaving them forever. The theme of home or the absence of it penetrates the text. Not only Chechens are deported and, thus, deprived of their homeland; Russian orphans are in search of their homeland as well.

When Sasha and Kolya decide to run away from the camp, they ask a passing man on a wagon to take them to the train station and discuss their future plans:

MAN. Running away?

BOYS. Where?

MAN. Where, where . . . where everybody is running away to – home.

BOYS. Maybe somebody has a home but somebody doesn't.

MAN. True. So where are we going?

BOYS. Does it really matter? As long as to be away from here. Why on earth do we need this Caucasus? Bombs are being exploded everywhere.

MAN. Plenty of food, though. (Mamilov)

The boys never fulfill their wish to leave the Caucasus. They stay in the camp, work at a canning factory, watch Russian movies, and organize amateur performances. During their stay at the camp the boys Sasha and Kolya meet Demian Ivanovich, a former Russian soldier. As an imperialist voice of Soviet Russia, he does not sympathize with the deported Chechens because he equals their sufferings with his personal loss. During World War II, his wife, mother, and two children were burnt alive by the Germans. His logic follows the pattern: I suffer – let them suffer as well. In this way, Demian Ivanovich represents an anti-human voice of the Russian authorities taking revenge against innocent people whom he calls "chernye," which, as discussed in Chapter Two, in Russian means "black," "dirty," and "low." The tragedy of people living in the Soviet regime is the realization that they do not belong there, and, thus, can be subject to deportation,

re-settlement, abandonment or betrayal at any time. This is vividly demonstrated by the figure of Demian Ivanovich, who refuses to help Sasha and Kolya during the bombardment of the camp.

For Mamilov, it becomes more important to show the way a Russian child sees the war, ethnic conflicts, brotherhood, and peoplehood. Kolya's twin brother Sasha is killed during the bomb explosion, supposedly by a Chechen militant. One of the most important scenes is the one in which Kolya is saying goodbye to Sasha and reflecting on the meaning of war:

> You saw how our soldiers, glorious warriors, go to kill the Chechens. The one, who killed you, would be killed as well. You know, Sashka, I wouldn't kill him. I would only tell him: "Listen, Chechen, are you blind? Don't you see we are not fighting against you? We were brought to live here. And so, we live here. And later we would have left anyway. And now you see what happened. You killed our Sashka. The soldiers will come and kill you. And you will start killing them: and everybody, you and they will die. Can't we really live without disturbing each other? All the people on earth would be alive. (Mamilov)

Mamilov solves the burning issue of the Chechen-Russian war with the help of two boys: the Russian Kolya and the Chechen Alhazur. When Sasha dies, Kolya is left alone among the fighting Chechens and Russians. Another orphan, Alhazur, of Chechen origins finds Kolya and becomes his friend. Kolya's psyche is not ready to accept his twin brother's loss so he starts to regard Alhazur as his blood brother. He even calls the Chechen boy Sasha and repeats one phrase to him: "If I exist then you exist as well, do you understand? Both of us exist" (Mamilov). Mamilov is eager to show that Russians and Chechens share a history and homeland. If Russia does not exist it means there is no Chechnya and vice versa.

When being interrogated by the Russian security inspector, Kolya insists on his blood brotherhood with Alhazur:

> INSPECTOR. Let him enter. It is even better that they are both here. Well, where did you meet? You, Nikolai, near station Berezovskaya? You must remember where you met. I cannot pull any word from your friend.
>
> KOLYA. He is not a friend. He is my brother.
>
> INSPECTOR. What brother? Designated?
>
> KOLYA. He is my blood brother.
>
> INSPECTOR. Real blood brother? What's his name?
>
> KOLYA. Sashka.
>
> INSPECTOR. How-how?
>
> KOLYA. Sashka.
>
> INSPECTOR. You are saying, he is Sashka? Just look at him, he is dark and you are white. What kind of brothers are you?
>
> KOLYA. Real brothers. (Mamilov)

For Kolya and Alhazur, this declared form of brotherhood overcomes the limit of ethnicity, race, skin color, eye color, and background. The Chechen boy covers Kolya when a Chechen militant wants to kill the Russian boy. Kolya does not take revenge against a Chechen who killed Sasha. He wants to look in his eyes and understand whether he is a beast or still a human. As depicted in

Mamilov's film, these children do not love skin color or nationality. They simply love the soul of a good person. The film ends with a scene of a Chechen group performing a traditional act and sacrificing an animal. Their last words plead for the harmony and love between each other: "As it is supposed to be, our God. Bless our life. Bless our faith, happiness, day, and night. As it is supposed to be, our God. Make it so that we love each other. Amen" (Mamilov).

A noticeable lack of other well-known films by Chechen directors can be attributed to the absence of Chechen film studios and necessary knowledge and education for the production of high-quality works. It was only in 2010 that the Chechen government announced the beginning of the construction of the Chechen film studio, which was going to be the first not only in Chechnya but in the entire North Caucasus. The goal was to establish the national film-making and make non-commercial films that express the spirit of the people and their sense of identity. One of those non-commercial national films was made by Ruslan Magomadov, a Chechen filmmaker, who produced a short film *Dom tsah (Home),* which won prizes at festivals such as the Cottbus Film Festival in Germany and Kinofest in New York City. The film is based on a story portraying the prototypes of real people and the events Magomadov witnessed while living in Chechnya and surviving the war. Magomadov's brilliant short film, which lasts only twenty-five minutes and consists of everyday sounds of a Chechen life and almost no human speech, addresses an important topic of the subaltern's position, their silent and voiceless position in structural domination, and the reality which Spivak calls "epistemic violence" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 283).

The film demonstrates the story of an old man who strives to survive alone during the Chechen war, leads a lonely and depressing life in a nearly completely ruined house, hides in the cellar during the air bombing attacks, wanders around the destroyed city in search of food, finds

someone's car near an abandoned house, makes a plan to leave the war place, repairs the car, and starts the engine. While driving the car, the old man turns on the radio and hears Zaur Magomadov's song "My Grozny," based on a Chechen traditional melody "The Land of My Fathers." The film ends with the old man stopping the car and putting the hand brake up (*Dom tsah)*.

Magomadov's film can be viewed as an enactment of what Spivak attempted to theorize in her discussion of subaltern voicelessness. Spivak famously contested the idea of Foucault and Deleuze that the oppressed, if given the opportunity, can speak for themselves and reconstruct their own history. Spivak asks, "we must now confront the following question: On the other side of the international division of labor from socialized capital, inside *and* outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text, *can the subaltern speak?*" (283). Magomadov intentionally silences the protagonist, the old man. Instead of giving him voice and an opportunity to tell us his own story, the old man is speechless, voiceless during the entire plot. We do not know if the old man speaks Russian, Chechen, or any other language. In fact, we are not even aware of his nationality. His appearance as an old man with almost white hair, big glasses covering half of his face, and simple clothes does not indicate if he is Russian or Chechen. Magomadov's text does not allow the audience to see the protagonist closely. In an interview, Magomadov explains some technical moments: "In a picture there should be only one close-up – in the ending when the protagonist stops the car. As a common decision of myself and the director of photography we have decided to shoot the film with [a] static camera, to emphasize the feeling of a melancholy and sadness. Also essential was to keep balance between Russian and Chechens in the war. Here it is impossible to prefer any side, there were heroes and villains on both sides" (Padley). Spivak argues that "the colonized

subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogeneous" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 285). Magomadov takes this important point into consideration and explains the old man's subaltern position not from the point of view of his race, nationality, or ethnicity. The old man is subaltern under the consequences of a military situation launched and controlled by the Federal government of the Russian Federation. The film is called *Home* and most of the action takes place in the old man's house. Despite this we do not have a chance to see the interior of the house: the old man is either in the dark cellar or in the backyard of the house. Symbolically, the backyard represents the dominant imperialist discourse and the cellar – a subaltern position. The old man hides in a cellar to protect himself from the physical invasion of Russian troops or Chechen militants as well, perhaps, as from imposed representations and narratives.

Dom tsah is for the most part silent and its silence is interrupted with the following sounds: a radio news transmission, helicopters, the old man's carrying the trolley with firewood, him sawing the wood, the bombing of the house, shooting, raining, the swearing of Russian soldiers, the protagonist cleaning the house and repairing the car, the sound of the car engine, the Chechen song on the radio, and, finally, a sharp sound of the hand break. Silent moments in the movie are methodically interrupted by those sounds. Those outer sounds are the signs of dominant forces to interrupt the subaltern attempt to write their own "silent" stories. It is paradoxically in the silence that the subalterns start to be heard.

Spivak has noted that the only way for the subaltern to speak is to stop being "subaltern" and to pay attention to those who produce their narratives and texts and who, thus, possess some forms of privilege. According to Spivak, "To learn our privilege means, on the one hand, to do our homework, to work hard at gaining some knowledge of the others who occupy those spaces most closed to our privileged view. On the other hand, it means attempting to speak to those

others in such a way that they might take us seriously and, most important of all, be able to answer back" (Spivak and Harasym 4-5). Magomadov's film attempts to speak to the Chechen other in such a way that the message is received and, perhaps, even answered. At the end of the short film, the old man drives a car and hears the Chechen song performed in Russian, the dominant language of the Russian-Chechen imperialist discourse. The narrator speaks to the subaltern in the imperialist language; however, it ceases to be important as soon as we hear the lyrics of the song:

> Streets, roads are somewhere behind,
> With a light suitcase, with a song in heart
> I'm walking along the streets of a big city,
> Smiling at the passers-by just like my friends.
> In this city of bright lights,
> In this city of kind people,
> I've learned how to live and love,
> How is it possible not to love my Grozny?
> All flowers and fountains rustle tenderly,
> New quarters stand in line,
> Here amid the noise and horns of the port,
> The youth passed windswept. (*Dom tsah*)

The song is in Russian, but the message arguably surpasses the limits of any language. Chechens and Russians are defined by their devotion to the land, place, and country where they are born. Home ties are strong enough to let a person opt for staying instead of leaving during a military situation. The old man hears the song and stops the car.

According to Francine Banner, "In the face of epic problems, Chechen people confront more than just the silence of the world community. Like other societies that have experienced longstanding trauma, the Chechen Republic suffers with its own silences, stemming from the

lack of civil society and dearth of outlets through which to express the humiliation, frustration and pain resulting from years of conflict" (303). The 1944 deportation of the Chechen population was not properly voiced in the West or acknowledged as a genocide against its own peoples in Russia. The years following the deportation revealed negative attitudes to Chechens, their humiliating second-rate position in the Russian society and inability to fully return the colonized land. The First Chechen War (1994-1996) and the Second Chechen War (1999-2009) silenced the people of Chechnya and constructed and even invented their identities according to the discourse of terror. Magomadov's *Dom tsah (Home)* powerfully shows this "lack of space for the expression of communal suffering in Chechnya" and also "the deep sense of shame Chechens themselves feel about many of the horrors they experienced in war" (Banner 304). The silence of Magomadov's character represents not simply the silence of the individual but arguably the experience of a whole society and its collective memories.

Khusein Erkenov, Karachay[38] by nationality, produced a film which did not receive a film distribution certificate in Russia, and, thus, was banned for political reasons and controversial issues. Erkenov's film *Ordered to Forget* was, indeed, ordered to be forgotten again and removed from public screening in Russia. This is one of the few films that shows the deportation of North Caucasus peoples by Stalin's order in 1944, during which 700 people of one native village in the North Caucasus were burnt alive in the stables. As Crane suggests, "In its examination of the deportations of the peoples of the North Caucasus, the film returns to the subject of one of the director's earliest films, *The Chill* (*Kholod*, 1991). The topic is of personal significance to Erkenov, an ethnic Karachay, who was born to deported parents in Uzbekistan"

[38] The Karachays are a Turkic people of the North Caucasus, mostly situated in the Russian Karachay-Cherkess Republic.

(Crane). The film starts very symbolically with a small boy watching a colony of ants and counting them. His grandmother Seda tells him to leave them alone and not to bother, as this is their home. The boy argues that they can build another house anytime, but the grandmother says they will lose their close ones during this process (Erkenov 3:01). The colony of ants is an allegorical figure for the soon deported peoples of the North Caucasus. Even though they might build other houses for themselves away from their native land, they still lose their loved ones, heritage, and culture. The film starts with the present state Grozny, newly renovated and modernized, and with the posters of the Russian president and the president of the Chechen Republic everywhere. The boy goes to visit the grave of his grandfather, and this is where the first conflict arises. The boy asks the grandmother why the tomb stone shows two dates of death: 1944 and 2011. He innocently asks: "Can there be two dates of death? Is it real?" (7:20). The grandmother remains silent, not giving the answer to the boy or the audience, but the extended flashback that follows this scene promises to offer some explanations.

The film takes the audience back to the year of 1944 and tells the story of young Seda and Daud, the boy's grandparents, who become witnesses to the burning of their native village Khaibakh by the order of Joseph Stalin. In the flashback, Seda and Daud are in love with each other but their growing sympathy becomes an obstacle for Kasim, the local NKVD[39] officer in the village. Kasim desires Seda and persecutes Daud's family under the pretence of protecting the state security of the Soviet Union. Later on, the same destiny befalls Seda and her family. The only solution for the Caucasian lovers is to leave the village and hide in the mountains. The film director Erkenov gives a lot of voice to female characters in the movie. They are not silent but sometimes even more vocal than men about their growing dissatisfaction with the Stalin's

[39] The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the leading Soviet secret police organization.

repressions and collectivization of the agricultural sector in the North Caucasus. Before joining Daud in the mountains, Seda, for instance, openly confronts Kasim: “Stop, Kasim. You come to the house of the defenseless people and fight with the elderly and women when real men fight at the front. And, in fact, who are you? What family tribe do you belong to?” (35:40). This short but powerful speech almost costs Seda her life, and she has nothing else to do but run away from the village.

In Erkenov’s film, there are flashbacks inside flashbacks. The audience hears and sees the story about young Daud and Seda in the flashback of old Seda’s memories on the grave of her husband. Inside this flashback, Daud again recalls his own childhood and the conversation he has with his father on the river. They are talking about how Allah views every human being as the greatest and most sacred creation in the world (48:50). This double retrospection represents the cultural memory of the Chechen and Ingush peoples, which still exists in the minds of the survivors. This connection of several generations is shown through these flashbacks, which represent Chechen and Ingush peoples from the 1900s to the present day. This is also strengthened in the film by the inclusion of Caucasian traditional music, dancing, singing, clothes, habits, customs, and rituals. The language the characters speak is, however, predominantly Russian, and this could be explained by Erkenov’s intention to make this film for the Russian audience as this part of history – the deportation of Chechen people and the burning of the whole village Khaibakh – has remained obscure and silenced for most Russians. As Crane argues, “… the Ministry of Culture further supported its ban by the claim that it searched several archives without finding a single document verifying that the Khaibakh massacre occurred. The film offers a powerful response to this denial with its final image—a harrowing still photograph of the sole survivor of the Khaibakh massacre, Mumadi El'gakaev. Using El'gakaev’s

participation in the making of the film to legitimize the account presented in Ordered to Forget, Erkenov essentially counters the authority of the archive with that of human memory" (Crane). Erkenov's film provides a powerful response to silencing practices of Soviet and Russian colonial policy.

Erkenov's film abounds with violence. This is not the violence of the Chechen and Ingush people who are stereotypically portrayed in Russian media as aggressors and militants, but the violence of Soviet peoples – those who blindly follow Stalin's orders and allow violence to be part of their moral code. According to Crane, "*Ordered to Forget* depicts Soviet society as evil to its core" (*KinoKultura*). When openly criticizing the Soviet officers in the village, Seda says: "They kill people so often that they stop feeling the pain of others" (Erkenov 47:52). Unlike common representations of Caucasian mountaineers as evil and hostile in Russian texts, the film depicts the main character, Daud, as the one who is against violence and any crime against a human being. On his wife's question about why he did not kill the NKVD soldier in the office, Daud responds: "I promised to my dad not to ever shoot a human being" (43:50). However, even Daud's moral code and oath are broken when he sees a Soviet officer killing Caucasian children running away from the burning barn and having the horrifying expression of satisfaction on his face. Daud shoots the soldier and saves one child. Eye for eye, violence for violence. This is how Erkenov attempts to show the military conflict in the North Caucasus. In the middle of the film, the NKVD officer is replaced by Captain Ivanov, who is sent to the Chechen-Ingush republic to start the mass deportation of Caucasian people on 23 February, 1944. Erkenov intentionally changes the antagonist to show that the violence directed at Chechens and Ingush people is not based on some melodrama or romantic relationships. Violence was embedded into political, social, and cultural structures of the Soviet Union. Any

attempt to confront Soviet violence became a death sentence for an individual. In the film, the Chechen chairwoman of kolkhoz refuses to sign the indictment of villagers and faces execution. A Russian soldier prefers committing suicide to setting the barn with people on fire. Another one comes to Chechens and warns them in advance of the coming deportation, advising them to take more food. He says, "I am sorry" (55:50). When putting Chechen and Ingush people into the barn, the two Russian soldiers secretly give their flask with water to a Chechen woman (1:07:20). These small gestures of kindness and humanity are shown by Erkenov in both Caucasian and Russian people.

Overall, *Ordered to Forget* provides a powerful anti-Soviet critique demonstrating the failure of the communist campaign to provide peaceful co-existence of national and ethnic minorities within the large state. As Crane suggests, "*Ordered to Forget*, on the other hand, suggests that the Chechen encounter with the State was never anything but harmful, with the deportation and massacres as notable instances of a larger pattern of violence" (*KinoKultura*). The Chechens and Ingushs were once ordered to leave their homeland and forget who they were and where they came from. These Soviet tactics of oppression, deportation, and silencing can be still found in the present state of Russia where the Ministry of Culture censures Erkenov's film and prevents this hidden history from being revealed to a contemporary audience.

The three films discussed in this section show the literal and metaphorical loss of homeland, the suppression of memory, and the military conflicts in the North Caucasus from a subaltern position. Even though they attempt to provide a Soviet and post-Soviet critique of the deportation processes and the erasure of culture and memory, they are still far from entering the process of decolonization and disrupting Russia's imperial discourse. They recognize the trauma and loss of identity, but the call for action or change is not there yet. In his powerful book *The*

Wretched of the Earth, Fanon argues that colonialism "turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (209). Caucasian writers and film directors demonstrate this repeatedly: Russia's colonial policy involves devaluation of pre-colonial history of the North Caucasus. However, most of the texts discussed in this chapter make it a point to express the inability of the Caucasian subaltern to speak and be heard. Not many texts attempt to re-establish the forgotten past and culture. There is still a need for the North Caucasus to reclaim their past and culture and reassert their distinct identity.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

In my dissertation, I have explored the possibilities and challenges of situating Edward Said's theory of Orientalism within the context of Russia with a special focus on the North Caucasus as Russia's Orient and Other. Russia's peripheral position between the Orient and the Occident and its twofold role of the colonizer and colonized at different historical periods complicate Said's model of Orientalism and make it clear why Postcolonial discourse has been largely ignored in the field of Russian Studies. Orientalism has been present in Russia for many years, but it had its own distinctive features, including the triptych model of power relations with Russia in-between the Orient and the Occident, the inconsistent dominance over the Orient and the past experience of being controlled by the East, the practice of Orientalism as a means of self-affirmation in the eyes of the West, and the phenomenon of self-orientalization. During my research, it has also become an interesting revelation that even before the publication of Said's influential book *Orientalism*, there existed a group of scholars (Rozen School) in Russian Academia who first introduced the idea of the power-knowledge relationship and influenced governmental policies towards ethnic oriental minorities in Russia. The work of these scholars has been largely ignored in the West even though they might be considered the pioneers of Orientalist discourse. There is a need for future research on the early prototypes of Orientalist patterns in Russia and around the world which might have shaped Said's main concepts.

The history of Oriental Studies within Russia provides a powerful insight into the relationships between power and knowledge in Russia and shows how often Western epistemology was used by Russian Orientology for different political goals. The idea of existence of multiple Orients and Others within Russia is shown in the very formation of Oriental Studies. Oriental Studies in Russia represented an all-encompassing field, covering not only the so-called Oriental

countries (China, Japan, Afghanistan, Ottoman Empire, etc.) but also the Southern and Eastern parts of Russia annexed to the Russian territory and, thus, considered Oriental, different, and subject to investigation, analysis, and control. The development of Oriental Studies was caused by various reasons at different historical periods and country needs: trade relationships, adoption of Christianity and pilgrimage, expansionist policy, political and military goals, colonial expansion, the unification of indigenous cultures under the guise of native homeland, consolidation of Russia's Orient in the fight against Western imperialism and capitalism, and anti-religious propaganda. The development of Caucasian Studies (as part of Oriental Studies) had strategic significance for Russia as well: the geographical position of the Caucasus (proximity to the Middle East) and the control of peoples with different cultures and religions. Despite that, the history of Caucasian Studies is not linear or consistent because of the constantly changing political climate in Russia, the influence of two World Wars on the situation in the Caucasus, the anti-Islamic propaganda, the problem with the definition and place of Caucasian Studies in Russian Academia, and lack of unified scientific centers of Caucasian Studies. With all these problems in mind, I have come to the conclusion that the main aim of the establishment of Caucasian Studies in Russia has been to build a strategy to manage the Northern Caucasus – an idea very much similar to imperialism, dictatorship, and colonialism.

In my dissertation, I have analyzed the representation of the Orient in Russian literature and cinema and explored the images of the self and other in travel writing, classical texts, local folklore, Soviet and post-Soviet literature and films. The images of the Other in Russian travel writing seem to be similar to early European representations of the East as an unknown, hostile, alien, Muslim Other. Oriental tales, popular in Russia in the 18th and early 19th centuries, continued the practice of exoticizing and eroticising the East. However, in addition to the romantic image of

the near or distant Orient, there was also created the image of Russian peasants as the country's main Other. The combination of the foreign Orient and the internal native Other complicates the application of Said's theory of Orientalism to the Russian case. In the 19th century, the Caucasus becomes Russia's most explored Orient. The Caucasus embodies both the distant Muslim Other for predominantly Orthodox Christian Russia and the internal Other, an official part of the country and the place where many Russian peasants are sent to settle down the conquered lands. In many ways, the Caucasus was described by famous 18th and 19th century Russian writers and poets through the lens of European Orientalism; however, there also existed a certain affinity with the East and an opposition to and fear of Western progress and European materialism. The Soviet Orient was studied and used as a tool of Soviet propaganda while the Post-Soviet Orient has been often defined in terms of war, threat, and confrontation.

One of the most important findings during my research becomes the establishment of synecdochical Orientalism. This concept explains a tendency of viewing a part of the region as representative of the whole region. If we follow this logic and apply this model to the Caucasian case, then Chechnya stands for the part that represents the whole of the North Caucasus. All other parts of the region become obscured, overshadowed, unseen, unheard, forgotten, and disregarded. The differences between peoples and their cultures in the North Caucasus are neither recognized nor celebrated. This intensifies the practice of Othering through abstraction, underrepresentation, and symbolic erasure. The region of the North Caucasus, thus, falls into the trap of double or multiple misrepresentations. First, it is represented as a homogenous, uniform region associated mostly with Chechnya and, secondly, the Chechen Republic itself is misrepresented as a terrorist region in Russian media, literature, and films.

With the help of the social theory advanced by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, I have highlighted the existence of a myth of the Caucasian man as a potential terrorist, a suicide bomber, a religious fanatic, a bandit, and a rapist. The discourse of a potential threat from the North Caucasus becomes the tool in the hands of the Russian government and media to connect the Caucasus (Chechnya, in particular) with terrorism, extremism, and radical Islamism. The contemporary image of the North Caucasus as Russia's military Orient is different from the romanticized image of a land of brave and proud mountaineers. In the twenty-first century, the North Caucasus (Chechnya, specifically) has become mostly defined in terms of fighting, military behavior, war images, hostility, religious conflicts, terrorism, and tragedy. Chechnya's distant, exotic, and mysterious nature is relegated to the background, and it is, instead, replaced by a Chechen ability to fight, attack, defend, remember, recover, and survive. Contemporary Russian poets dehumanize Chechen people, glorify Russian soldiers, silence the Chechen fighters, and call Chechens "foreigners" in their land. Despite this very Orientalist perspective on the North Caucasus, there have been emerging texts by Russian authors that refrain from the clear-cut division into "us" and "them." Writers like Mishin, Ivanov, and Prilepin separate Moscow (the Kremlin) from the whole Russia and put the blame for the military conflicts on it. Both Russian and Chechen people, involved in the military conflict, are the oppressed "Other" in the eyes of the Russian government. Marina Akhmedova's novel *House for the Blind*, about blind people living in the capital city of Grozny and not seeing it, makes us contemplate the idea of the invisibility of Chechnya as such. The only image that is visible to us is the "military Chechnya," which obscures all other sides and parts of this culture and region. In Akhmedova's novel, Chechnya exists only in the discourse of war - the discourse created by Russia's imperial policy.

People in the North Caucasus have demonstrated resistance to colonialism in different ways: opposition to assimilation through settler colonialism, preservation of their own cultures and languages, resistance to religious conversion and acculturation. Literary and cinematographic texts by Caucasian writers and directors also demonstrate the attempts of the subaltern to speak and be heard, or at least they recognize the problem of silence, erasure, and misrepresentation. Some Caucasian authors, like Apti Bisultanov, admit the position of the Caucasian people as subaltern and their inability to break the silence of the subjugated in the dominant discourse. The image of Chechnya as a military Orient is also emphasized in these texts: the new generation of Chechens is born in a place that does not possess a history other than a military one. The danger of being forgotten as Chechen Chechnya and, instead, being remembered as Russian Chechnya is forcefully expressed by such poets as Rosa Bino and Ismail Kerimov. They call upon us to remember the subalterns and give them space to speak about their histories and stories. Ibragimov's novel, *Children's World*, addresses the same problem and creates a space, however fictional, for a prospective Chechen generation to stay alive, speak, and be heard by a reading audience. Ibragimov's other novel, *Aurora*, presents harsh criticism of the discourse of terror in Russia and Chechnya. The author hints at the fabricated character of terror, manipulation of terrorism, and its staged character when arbitrary, innocent people are chosen to become the next Chechen terrorists. The "Black Widow" here is not a desperate woman seeking revenge or some weak person controlled by extremists through the drug use. Aurora, the main character in the novel, is not even a widow. She is a single, highly educated and intelligent woman who is blackmailed by the Russian Intelligence Agency together with the Chechen militants to become the next suicide bomber. Ibragimov succeeds in challenging the common portrayal and stereotypes of Chechen suicide bombers. Ganieva's novel *The Mountain and the Wall* attempts at contesting synecdochical

Orientalism by focusing, first of all, on Dagestan (not Chechnya) and, second, by representing the complex situation in Dagestan (not homogenous) and contradictions that exist there at the level of language, religion, culture, traditions, and beliefs. This is, perhaps, the greatest contribution of Ganieva's novel – to show Dagestan multidimensionally, contradictory, realistically, and stereotype-free. It is a confusing, self-destructive, polyphonic, and multilayered society. And so is the North Caucasus.

In my dissertation, I have attempted to look at the North Caucasus, an insurgent region of the Russian Federation, through the lens of Orientalism. The unsuccessful or incomplete colonization of the Caucasian land; the Caucasians' ways of cultural resistance to Russian imperialism; the uniqueness of the establishment and development of Oriental Studies in Russia; the political, rather than cultural or literary, character of Orientalism in Russia; and the discourse of "terror" – all these issues extend the idea that Said's concept of Orientalism should be applied, if at all, to the Russian case with caution. Synecdochical Orientalism is a conceptual variant of Said's theory of Orientalism that might be productively used and applied to other regions in the world to explain the exclusion and underrepresentation of peoples and cultures. I have demonstrated how Russia's discourse on the North Caucasus falls into the trap of synecdochical Orientalism and how Chechnya itself is subject to several layers of misrepresentation. There is a need to explore other regions of Russia whose cultures might be in danger of being obscured by the dominant discourse of Russian imperialism and colonialism. The future research on other regions of Russian, Soviet or Post-Soviet spaces can reveal alternative histories and hidden stories about colonial pasts which can provide a further post-soviet and post-colonial critique.

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Appendix A

Fig. 1. The map of the North and South Caucasus from: "North Caucasus Maps." *Eurasian Geopolitics*, eurasiangeopolitics.com/north-caucasus-maps/.

Appendix B

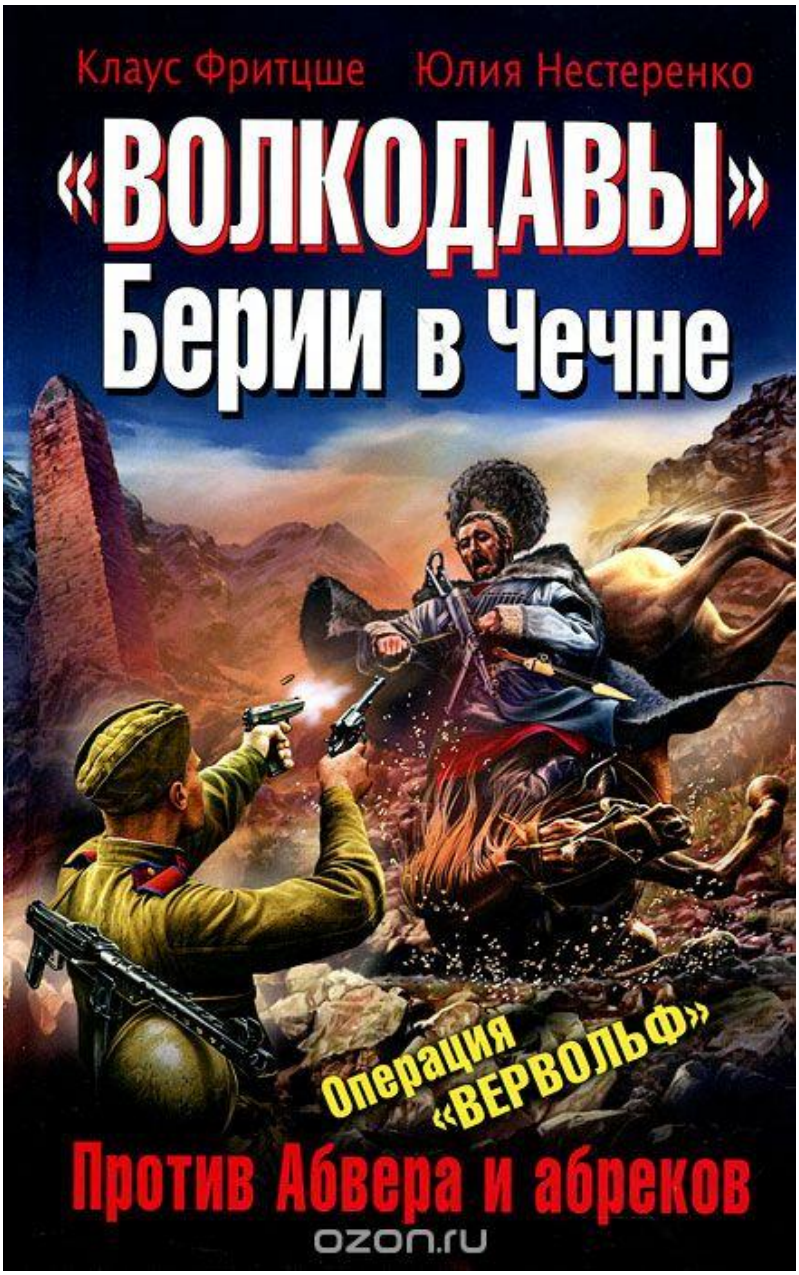

Fig. 2. The book cover of Nesterenko's *Wolf-Dogs of Beria: Against Abwehr and Abreks* from: "Wolf-Dogs of Beria: Against Abwehr and Abreks." *Ozon*, www.ozon.ru/context/detail/id/19680519/.

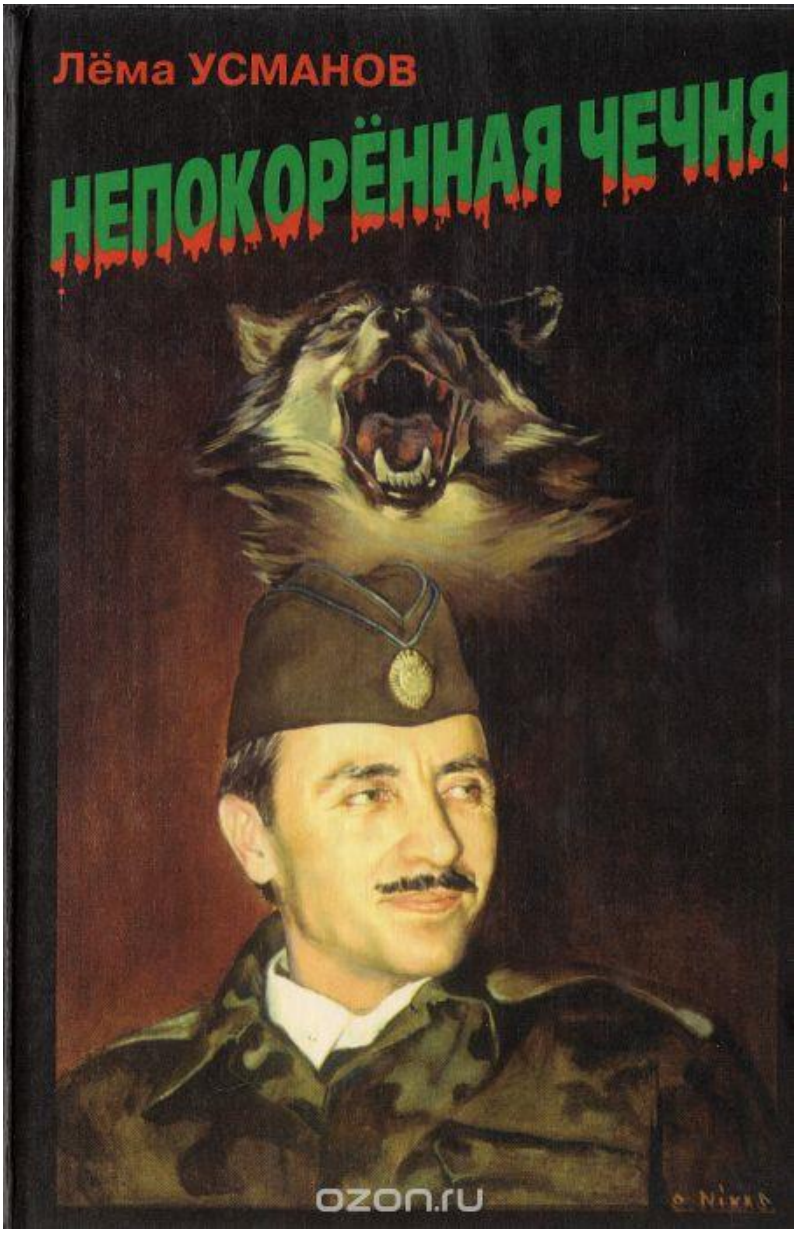

Fig. 3. The book cover of Usmanov's *Unconquered Chechnya* from: "Unconquered Chechnya." *Ozon*, www.ozon.ru/context/detail/id/32557057/.

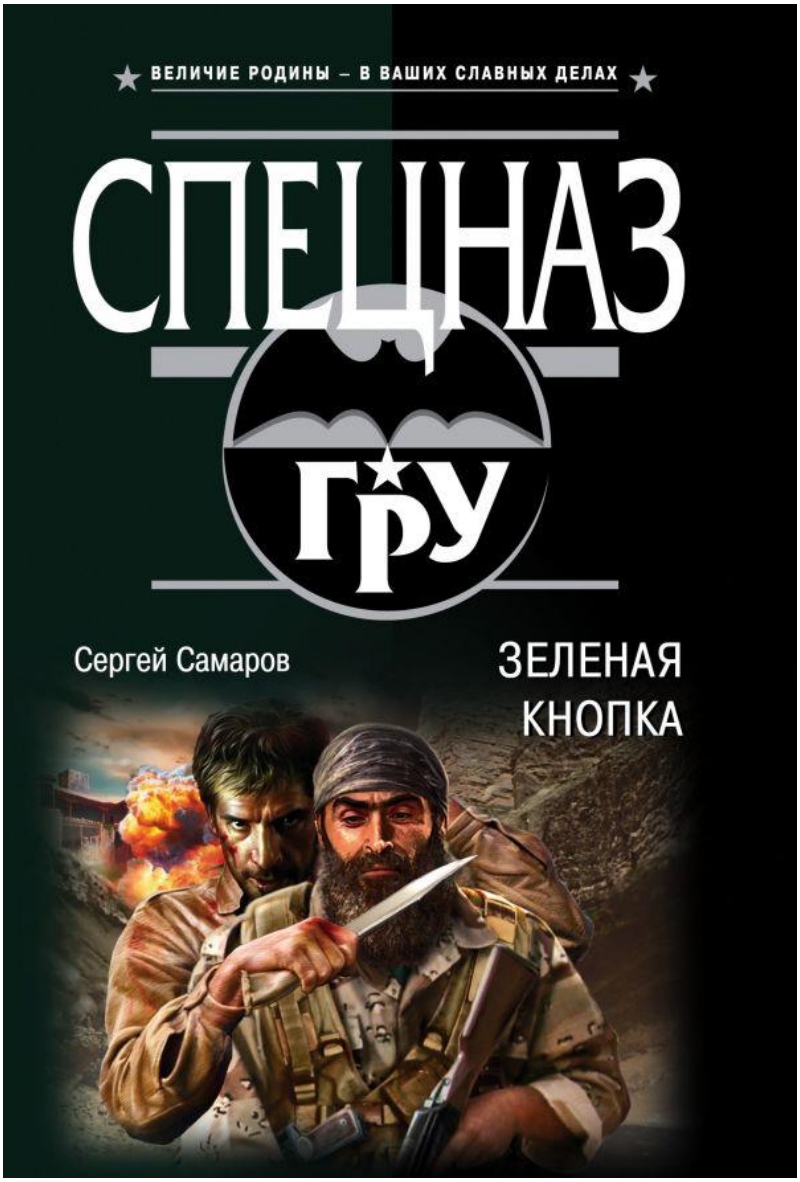

Fig. 4. The book cover of Samarov's *Special Forces: Green Button* from: "Green Button." *Eksmo*, eksmo.ru/book/zelenaya-knopka-ITD936196/.

Fig. 5. The book cover of Kiselyov's *The Glory of Undefeated Regiment* from: "The Glory of Undefeated Regiment." *Ozon*, www.ozon.ru/context/detail/id/144045691/.

Appendix C

"On the eve of February 23, 1944 all citizens of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic were to celebrate the Red Army Day in the public squares of every town and village. They all gathered and they were in a festive mood. Security forces surrounded each public square and the military Commander read to the citizens of each town the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of deporting the whole Chechen and Ingush people to Central Asia and Western Siberia and ordered them to report to specific deportation centers. The people were shocked and in disbelief, and on everybody's mind was, why? But no answers came from the soldiers except to tell them sternly that they have only 15-20 minutes to get ready. After that all those who were unable to quickly obey the order, i.e., weak elderly, Children and Women, were forced outside. Any sign of resentment shown was punished with death. Any attempt to run – shot to death! Misunderstood order – shot to death! All orders were given in Russian, even though some Chechens didn't understand it. After the first few days of the carnage, most of the mountains and plains, towns and villages were covered with dead bodies. They were discovered everywhere: in houses, in inner yards, along roads, in the vicinity of villages, and in forests. Russians killed Chechens everywhere: they blew them up with mines, burnt them, drowned them and poisoned them. Most food products were poured with Kerosene and burnt, but poisoned food was scattered about and mostly starving children fell victims."[40]

[40] "The Sixty Ninth Commemoration of the Chechen Deportation on Feb. 23, 1944." *Waynakh*, www.waynakh.com/eng/2011/02/the-sixty-seventh-commemoration-of-the-chechen-deportation-of-1944/.

Appendix D

There is a wound in my heart,
The older I grow the deeper it gets,
‘Cause the older you get the wiser you become,
The wider your eyes open up.

I tried to forget,
And
Move on,
But,
How can someone forget the place
Where he is supposed to belong!

It’s like I’m homeless.
Wherever I go,
I feel different,
I try to blend in,
Try to forget,
Try to move on,
But then before I go to sleep
I shed some bitter tears
For the years spent away
From the place they call home.

Home!
Isn’t that the place people peaceful live in?!
Then how come we call it home,
When nobody actually enjoyed living there!

Sometimes I wonder,
Why our nation was the chosen one to be destroyed
When there is many others,
I wish no harm to anyone,
But accepting the fact that
I might never take a free air breath is suffocating me.

I wish,
I was an old oak tree back home,
A tree that embraced our home land’s soil.

I wish,
I stood still there,
Just like a great unbeatable mountain
To witness it all,
And tell the story
About the place where we belong.[41]

[41] Bino, Rosa. “Where We Belong.” *Waynakh*, www.waynakh.com/eng/2012/08/where-we-belong/.

Appendix E

Archive of Cultural Texts

Russian Movies about the North Caucasus

1. *Kidnapping, Caucasian Style* by Leonid Gaidai
2. *Prisoner of the Mountains* by Sergei Bodrov
3. *12* by Nikita Mikhalkov
4. *Blockpost* by Aleksandr Rogozhkin
5. *War* by Aleksei Balabanov
6. *The Charge* by Nikolai Stambula
7. *Chistilishche* by Aleksandr Nevzorov
8. *Alive* by Aleksandr Veledinskiy
9. *Grozovye Vorota* by Andrei Malyukov
10. *Mertvoe Pole* by Aleksandr Aravin
11. *Geroy Nashego Vremeni* by Aleksandr Kott
12. *They Met in Moscow* by Ivan Pyrev
13. *Adam and Kheva* by Aleksey Korenev
14. *Chest Imeyu!...* by Viktor Buturlin
15. *Break-through* by Vitalyi Lukin
16. *Captive* by Alexei Uchitel
17. *A Simple Story* by Yuri Yegorov
18. *No Comment* by Artyom Temnikov
19. *Alexandra* by Aleksandr Sokurov
20. *Spetsnaz* by Andrei Malyukov
21. *Countdown* by Yevgenyi Lavrentyev
22. *Achilles Heel* by Igor Talpa
23. *Caucasian Roulette* by Fyodor Popov
24. *Mertvoe Pole* by Aleksandr Aravin
25. *Voyna Okonchena. Zabudte…* by Valeryi Kharchenko
26. *Russkaya Zhertva* by Mikhail Dobrynin, Yelena Lyapicheva, et al.
27. *Goryanka* by Irina Poplavskaya

28. *House of Fools* by Andrei Konchalovsky
29. *Brother* by Aleksei Balabanov
30. *A Moslem (Musulmanin)* by Vladimir Khotinenko

Caucasian Movies about the North Caucasus

1. *Ordered to Forget* by Hussein Erkenov
2. *Shooter* by Arman Gevorgyan
3. *Marsho* by Murad Mazaev
4. *Gorskaya Novella* by Iles Tataev, Ismail Burnatsev
5. *Kogda Otzovetsya Eho* by Iles Tataev
6. *Dalyokiy Vecher* by Beslan Terekbaev
7. *Taina Rukopisnogo Korana* by Rafael Gasparyants
8. *Nochevala Tuchka Zolotaya* by Sulambek Mamilov
9. *February* by Ruslan Magomadov
10. *Dom Tsah* by Ruslan Magomadov

Russian Literary Texts about the North Caucasus

1. *Prisoner of the Caucasus* by Alexander Pushkin
2. *A Hero of Our Time* by Mikhail Lermontov
3. *Valerik* by Mikhail Lermontov
4. *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* by Leo Tolstoy
5. "Prisoner of the Caucasus" by Vladimir Makanin
6. *The Cossacks* by Leo Tolstoy
7. *Hadji Murad* by Leo Tolstoy
8. "Chechen Hats in the Towers" by Victor Pelevin
9. *Dnevnik Smertnitci Khadizha* by Marina Akhmedova
10. *Dom Slepyh* by Marina Akhmedova
11. *Zhenskii Chechenskii Dnevnik* by Marina Akhmedova
12. *Chechenskii Bumerang* by Nikolai Ivanov
13. *The Pathologies* by Zakhar Prilepin
14. *My War* by Arthur Liteinyi

15. *Esli Vrag ne Sdaetsya* by Mikhail Nesterov
16. *Logopsikh* by Rita Volkova
17. *Krovnik* by Lev Puchkov
18. *Kaskad Nachinaet Proryv* by Igor Sribnyi
19. *Rota Morpekhov* by Andrei Zagortsev
20. *Vodki Letchikam ne Davad* by Andrei Zagortsev
21. *I Budem Zhivy* by Valery Gorban
22. *Pamyat Krovi* by Valery Gorban
23. *Chechenskoe Koleso* by Aleksandr Mikhailov
24. *Kontrabasy i Dikie Gusi Voiny* by Sergei German
25. *Gilzy na Skalah* by Eugene Annikov
26. *Sniper* by Pavel Yakovenko
27. *Zulphagar: Mech Khalifa* by Nikolai Starodymov
28. *Poslednyaya Molitva Shakhida* by Aleksandr Tamonikov
29. *Shpion Federalnogo Znacheniya* by Andrei Ilyin
30. *Krestom i Bulatom* by Dmitrii Cherkasov
31. *Show Must Go on* by Maksim Shahov
32. *Shans Tolko Odin* by Maksim Shahov
33. *Chechen Roulette* by Maksim Shahov
34. *Five Against* All by Andrei Tamantsev
35. *Chuzhaya Igra* by Andrei Tamantsev
36. *This War is Not Over Yet* by Boris Babkin
37. *Fourth Toast* by Aleksandr Bushkov
38. *Okhota na Volkov: Zhivym ne Brat* by Sergei Sobolev
39. *Blockpost-47d* by Andrei Yephremov
40. *Neotmazanye: Oni Umirali Pervymi* by Sergei Aksu
41. *Pisma Mertvogo Kapitana* by Vladislav Shurygin
42. *Translator* by Aleksei Sukonkin
43. *Ne Speshite Nas Horonit* by Rayan Pharukshin
44. *Okhota na Sheikha* by Vyacheslav Mironov
45. *Jahannam, or See You in Hell* by Yulia Latynina

46. *Niyazbek* by Yulia Latynina
47. *The Land of War* by Yulia Latynina
48. *No Time for Glory* by Yulia Latynina
49. *Iduschiye v Nochi* by Aleksandr Prohanov
50. *Forgotten Chechnya* by Yuri Schekochikhin
51. *War* by Arkadii Babchenko
52. *Muravei v Steklyannoi Banke* by Polina Zherebtsova
53. *Zachistka* by Nikolai Ivanov
54. *Vityanya-Nyanya* by Vladimir Novikov
55. *Planeta Raiad. Minuta Nenavisti ili 60 Sekund Schastia* by Mikhail Krikunenko
56. *Chechen Short Stories* by Aleksandr Karasyov
57. *Chechenskii Izlom* by Gennadii Troshev
58. *Asan* by Vladimir Makanin
59. *Togda Kogda Sluchitsya* by Vasilii Dvortsov

Caucasian Literary Texts about the North Caucasus

1. *Grief of My Heart: Memoirs of a Chechen Surgeon* by Khassan Baiev
2. *The Oath: A Surgeon Under Fire* by Khassan Baiev
3. *Detskii Mir* by Kanta Ibragimov
4. *Aurora* by Kanta Ibragimov
5. *Pryamoi Navodkoi po Angelu* by Kanta Ibragimov
6. *Zelimkhan* by Magomet Mamakaev
7. *Dark Ages* by Idris Bazorkin
8. *Imam Shamil* by Mariam Ibragimova
9. *Ideal* by Bers Yevloev
10. *Po Zakonu Gor* by Bers Yevloev
11. *I am Chechen* by German Sadulaev
12. *Shalinskii Reid* by German Sadulaev
13. *Nad Bezdnoi* by Issa Kodzoev
14. *Imam Shamil* by Shapi Kaziev
15. *Synovia Beki* by Akhmet Bokov

16. *The Last of the Departed* by Bagrat Shinkuba
17. *Solntse Vstayot nad Selom Dzauga* by Vadim Bitarov
18. *Vernyi Drug Makhacha* by Badavy Ramazanov
19. *Pora Krasnyh Yablok* by Akhmedhan Abu-Bakar
20. *Ozherelye dlya Moei Serminaz* by Akhmedhan Abu-Bakar
21. *Gorst Zemli* by Bemurza Tkhaitsukhov
22. *Zov Razluchennoi Ptitsi* by Kamal Abukov
23. *Tainy Ostrova Tash-Kapur* by Zulphukar Zulphukarov
24. *Zapoved* by Georgy Cherchesov
25. *Protivoborstvo* by Georgy Cherchesov
26. *Prikosnovenie* by Georgy Cherchesov
27. *Buinyi Terek* by Hadji-Murat Muguev
28. *Navstrechu Zhizni* by Yezethan Uruimagova
29. *Posli Gor* by Vasilii Tsagolov
30. *Dagestan* by Fazu Aliyeva
31. *Korzina Speloi Vishni* by Fazu Aliyeva
32. *Salaam, Dalgat!* by Alisa Ganieva
33. *Holiday Mountain* by Alisa Ganieva
34. *The Bride and The Bridegroom* by Alisa Ganieva
35. *Krovnaya Mest* by Ibragim Kharaev
36. *Odna Lastochka Esche ne Delaet Vesny* by German Sadulaev