INTRODUCTION

Fifteen new countries came into existence in December 1991. But for a brief spell in the twentieth century, some had regained their independence after more than two hundred years, while others had done so after a century. It was a popular referendum that decided on a breakaway from the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Today these newly formed nations are groping and faltering, yet determined to rediscover their lost identities and dignity. They want a place among all other nationalities of our planet. Theirs is a common pursuit for all the peoples of the former USSR, including the Russians, as indeed it is for others elsewhere—the Kurds or the Irish, the Basques of Spain or the Mohawk of Canada and the Queqchi of Guatemala.

The search of the fifteen countries goes beyond initial endeavours to reach out for the tangible, seemingly concrete, manifestation of their culture in the form of a church or a mosque, or in the reappearance of multi-plaited school girls in the Ferghana region of Central Asia, or even in the re-establishment of cultural, political and economic ties with their neighbours. A process of soul-searching has begun. Some of the aspirations of all these peoples can perhaps be understood best in the words of the Lithuanian writer, Yestimas Martsinkyavichyus.

> *The earth which we have inherited from our ancestors—is our earth. We call it Lithuania and do not want this name to disappear either from the geographical map or from the languages of different peoples. We write and pronounce this name along with the names of other equally deserving peoples and nations. And we want others to pronounce our name with the same respect.*
> *The history that is our past is our history. Let the ray of light and of truth illuminate its tragic and heroic, bloody and gloomy pages, the old and the new relics of its culture. The language which we speak and which we are proud of—is our language. It does not threaten anyone nor does it turn anyone down. Just like other languages it wants to live.*
> *The human being who looks at us demands truth and justice. His life, work and creativity must be properly defended.*
> *The environment in which we live—is our environment, but we are also its children. Come, let us wash its clogged-up green eyes, and surround its creations with love and care.* [1]

Soviet-watchers and the media were taken by surprise at the swiftness of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Figures of economic progress were brought forth world wide for measuring the achieved prosperity of diverse nationalities. Data and statistics were provided to prove the development of yesterday's ostensibly backward Asian regions which, for unknown reasons, were rejecting a union that was clearly to their advantage, especially in economic terms. Sympathizers acclaimed the achievements of the USSR in solving the problems of a multi-national state. They could not understand the logic behind the need, in today's world, for the independence of small nations, all the more so when Europe was in the process of unification. Today's globalization process with its single market economy was generally viewed as the only correct path. Reaching out for one's identity or language was regarded as a hankering for the irretrievable past. Those that turned to Islam were seen by the Moscow authorities as Pan-Islamic and this convenient label was readily picked up by the West.

This book presents a different reality to that projected by the Soviet state for over half a century. This book is about the wilful destruction of peoples, cultures and the environment by a centralized state. It is about the dehumanization of society, of human dignity and human values. The freedom sought by the remnants of these trampled cultures has turned for many into a nightmare not of their own making. The origins of this ordeal go back to tsarist times when colonization of their lands began, when derogatory Orientalist attitudes emerged leading to the denigration of the conquered peoples. This derision became a part of Russian Orientalism. The Orientalist discourse consisted of a series of justifications about the superiority of the ruling colonial regime, including superiority of race, culture and history. The justification of exploitative governmental policies in the annexed regions ran parallel to the stereotyping of Oriental villany in Russian administration, research and creative writing. Mirror image of the colonizer, the aggressor was transferred to the colonized who was typified as the savage and the barbarian. It is ironical that Russia derived many of its linguistic and cultural roots from its eastern and southern neighbours while simultaneously striving to reject these very roots by adopting European thoughts and ideas.

* * *

In 1829 Peter Chaadaev commented on the Russia of Nicholas I times:

We may be said to be an exception among peoples. We are

one of those nations which do not appear to be an integral part of the human race, but exist only in order to teach some great lesson to the world.[2]

More than 150 years later his remarks find an echo in Yeltsin's Russia, where it is being ironically said that the boomerang is a Russian invention. Whatever Russia launches only returns to strike it back.

These two statements sum up the paradoxes of Russian historical experience. And Russian Orientalism, a unique phenomenon, is part of this paradox. Without being colonized by Europe, Russia chose to be dominated by foreigners. The state in Peter the Great's time (1682-1725) invited Europeans to run the country. The Russians, despite having been identified and labelled as 'Oriental barbarians' by the French, English and the Germans, invited the same Europeans, primarily Germans, to set up and administer the tsarist institutions of learning and administration. The new post-Petrine Russian elite was at the receiving end of European Orientalist attitudes from the teachers of these new institutions. It initially readily accepted its Oriental status. Subsequently it made efforts to shed these derogatory inferences, passing them on, instead, to Russia's colonies. The elite simultaneously tried to be accepted as European. It readily adopted European ideas and turned its back on its own culture. Russia's colonial practices were, in many ways, identical to the European colonial encounter, which served as a model for emulation.

The subsequent disillusionment with Europe, the internal dilemma and debates leading to the proliferation of nineteenth century Russian literature and thought processes were confined to the Russian elite. The debates between the Westerners, upholders of Russia's Europeanization policies and of European rationalism and positivism, and the Slavophiles, who defended Russian orthodoxy and absolutism, were confined to two warring world views with parallels in European debates between rationalism and idealism.

Totalising theories were not the prerogatives of the rationalists alone. They were linked to earlier European experience. Christianity's monotheism adheres to the concept of a single God and a single truth. This is in sharp contrast to polytheism existing in numerous non-European areas of the world with multiple religions, thousands of gods and an absence of one single book. For such societies it is well nigh impossible to establish where the truth lies, for each person is expect-

ed to discover the truth himself. Multiple truths deny the monopoly of truth. Neither is truth the prerogative of philosophers or a body of scholars alone. Conversely, Christianity, as the religion of The Book, believes in the authenticity and supremacy of God's word, which is both infallible and sacrosanct. Furthermore, the physical and the rational, pleasures of the flesh and those of the soul, were considered not as complementary, as in other societies, but as antagonistic categories. Christianity asserted both the human being's power over all life on earth while simultaneously reducing him to a vassal of God, i.e. human assertion and human submissiveness. And finally, in Europe, Christianity being a state religion, the church exercised power over an individual's life. There was an outside agency overlooking human deeds rather than the human being himself, or the collective, as in other societies. The result was that individuals constantly veered from one extreme to another: from attempts at self assertion to the depths of meekness and repentance.

These extremes formed the basis for much of the dialogue in European society and the positing of the authenticity and supremacy of one or another belief. If the church claimed the supremacy of God's word and disclaimed the findings of a Galileo or Copernicus, the reaction to the church was equally formidable on the side of those who advocated the primacy of reason, or the right to human assertiveness. The pendulum of debate swung within the confines of these two extremes—idealism and rationalism.

European history abounds in examples of this constant battle against authority, the Renaissance being an early example. Later cultural movements of Europe and Russia manifested these tendencies at regular intervals in the arts, including Romanticism, Symbolism, Realism, Futurism and Existentialism. Each time these cultural movements refuted other movements and attempted to place themselves at centre stage. And every time the battle involved the nihilistic rejection of other prevailing beliefs. The question of the cohabitation of diverse streams of thought was seldom found acceptable. Many of these theories were harmful as was subsequently borne out by the actions of the state, which manipulated them to further its own interests.

Positivism arose from the specificities of European history. The rise in Cartesian thinking, merging with that of Euclidean geometry, Newtonian physics, Hegelian dialectics and Darwinian theory of evolution coincided with Europe's accelerated industrialization and expanding colonial empires. Theories on the survival of the

fittest, and anti-Chartist pronouncements, were the political justification for the exploitation of one's own population. Marx's *Capital* remains one of the most important works providing an in-depth analysis of the European scene. These theories initially served to advance the supremacy of the new state power, the local bourgeoisie over its own population. Debates around domestic issues were extended to the colonized lands, but now they were based on the supremacy of race, culture, language and history, such as Darwin's justification of American slavery. Moreover, theories were now projected as ultimate truths, sacrosanct and universal, not because they were God's word but because they were sanctified by reason and science alone. Orientalism and theoretical justifications for domestic colonization (Malthus) or its repudiation were all within the European historical context and confined to the elite. Importantly, no divergence of views existed between the various ideologies on the necessity of colonialism and its positive influence.

Marxism was not different. Its models were bounded by the limitations of knowledge and theories current in the nineteenth century, models based on Darwin and Hegel in their approach to human development. Now development was approached from the point of view of material production and economic relationships. Although the founders of Marxism showed insights into capitalist relations, the models were polemical. Many questions remained unanswered or completely contradicted the history of the human race. Yet they were being forced into artificial moulds. Historical and dialectical materialism turned into the alpha and omega of the Marxists, who claimed that once it had been scientifically proven, the human being, the party or the state had the right to intervene in the historical process and accelerate change.

Soviet Marxism shared many of the drawbacks of Christian societies, for it displayed the same zeal in its rejection of alternate truths as the Christians. Once again it was proclaimed that only one universal truth exists, applicable to the entire human race. Many of the actions of the Soviet government were reminiscent of the Crusades and the Inquisition. Bonfires were made of books, people were arrested, exiled or shot dead for attempts to uphold their own beliefs. Arbitrary models of cultural and economic life were forcibly implanted all over the country, including non-Russian regions.

This was an inevitability, going beyond the socialist experiment of this century. Whether it is the centralized socialist state or modern day nation states, this predatory tendency is present in all of

them. The nation-states, in varying degrees, seek a uniform education, control over the media, often a planned economy, for their smooth functioning. All the levers of control have to be centralized. So it does not matter if a child in northern Yakutia and one in Tajikistan are being taught the same syllabus which is irrelevant to their own history or environment. They are united with the school-going Russian in that they all can serve the hegemonic designs of their government better, while becoming alienated from their environment.

If the USA and Europe indulged in Soviet-bashing of one kind, the radicals of the left turned their backs on the USSR, which began to serve only as a negative reference, a deviation from Marxist principles. Consequently, they sought refuge at different time periods in Mao, Cuba and Che Guevara – upholders of Trotsky's permanent revolution thesis – Santiago Carillo, Marcuse, Althusser and finally Gramsci. What was ignored in the Soviet experience, which spilled over to Eastern Europe, China, Cambodia and elsewhere, was the inherent contradiction within the theory, whose ultimate aim was the happiness of all. A communist utopia of equality can never be built on hierarchies, which not only belittle the human being but turn him into an abstract entity by linking consciousness to material production. These hierarchies are self-defeating, for they justify the hegemony of truth to a select few and regard the rest of the population as a malleable material to be moulded, channelled and developed. Even Gramsci could not escape this when he distinguishes between cultures (the common sense of the masses and the higher culture). Hierarchies justify aggression against one's own population, the majority nationality, as well as the 'periphery'. Any theory with claims to hegemony and which approaches progress along a unitary development system is destined to turn totalitarian, for it privileges truth to the select few, and excludes the majority from access to it.

Only when the tight centrist control was loosened in the USSR were the other nationalities given a voice. The heart-rending accounts and chilling facts are in themselves a verdict on the universalizing theories. The constant refrain of the non-Russians since the advent of *glasnost* is tragedy, catastrophe, holocaust. A Kafkaesque picture is unfolding. Between the Soviet census of 1926 and 1979 the number of nationalities was 'reduced' to almost half, from 194 to 101 (although, ironically, the number rose to 128 in the 1989 census). This was termed as the inevitable extinction of races in earlier times. Now we are discovering the manner in which

this extinction, or assimilation, as it was also known, was brought about.

This book deals primarily with two regions of the former Soviet Union: Central Asia and the Caucasus. These regions contained pluralistic, multi-lingual cultures, constantly assimilating from the neighbouring cultures of China, Persia, India and the Near East. In turn, they enriched the material and spiritual culture of these adjoining regions. Their towns were great repositories of wisdom for the entire region. The book attempts to chronicle the destruction of these cultures and their economies through colonization, genocide and the marginalization of the populations. It also shows the imposition of state hegemony in the fields of economy, language and politics, its justification through linear universal models, and the spread of demeaning stereotypes of the backward Oriental.

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The work is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the rise of Russian Orientalism, its specificities and links with European thought and tsarist expansionism. In addition, it takes up Orientalist attitudes amongst administrators, scholars and writers, all of whose prejudices determined subsequent Russian readings and interpretations of the Russian Orient. The second part of the book examines the praxis of Marxism in the twentieth century towards the 'national minorities', as the non-Russians came to be labelled. The work is not an in-depth analysis of the Eurocentricity prevalent in Russia's policies, but rather its dominant trends and attitudes. The first part of the book is primarily concerned with the pre-revolutionary scenario, without which the second part, i.e. the twentieth century, cannot be understood. Moreover, the second part deals with many issues that go beyond the narrative.

This narrative was inextricably tied to theories and the practices; state-instigated programmes, whether in the fields of politics, economics or culture, sanctified by a theory, were all linked to Orientalism. Not only were these aspects little known, I was constantly dealing with a 'Bakhtinian ambivalence' of state rhetoric, cloaked in the language of camaraderie and bonhomie. Conversely, Orientalism in the Soviet Union cannot, in many cases, be delinked or viewed in an isolated manner from coercive practices, justified by theories, towards the dominant nationality, the Russians. Not all non-Russian nationalities have been dealt with. But that does not in any way mean that their fate differed from the rest.

This book differs from other works on Orientalism, including Edward Said's seminal studies. Interspersed throughout the text is a glimpse into the reality and response of the Other. The reasons for it go beyond the unfamiliarity of the reader, Russian and non-Russian alike, with the area concerned. The centralized Soviet system, with strict surveillance and censorship, provided selective, often biased and false readings, many of which continue to act as reference points for the outside world, including E.J. Hobsbawm (*Nations and Nationalism* and *Age of Extremes*). The last chapter delves into the national resurgence in the 1970s, its emergence out of the unitary models common to the entire country, and its importance in subsequent developments, including in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Although the book discusses Russian Orientalism, yet at the theoretical level it questions the primacy and validity of linear models and evolutionary theories of progress as an enforcement agency on human society. It questions reductionism, compartmentalisation and hierarchies not necessarily as tools of analysis, but as means for moulding, channelling and denigrating the human race for the perpetuation of power relations.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Martsinkyavichyus, Yustinas, *Vozrozhdenie*, 1, 16 September, 1988, p. 1.

2. Chaadaev, Petr Iakovlevich, 'Letters on the Philosophy of History,' in Raeff, Marc, *Russian Intellectual History. An Anthology*, New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1988, p. 164.

1

The Rise of Orientalism

Few Soviet publications, until recently, referred to Russia's contacts with the East. Instead, the emphasis was on links with Byzantium, and later with the Germans and other Western European countries. Yet Russia had close contacts with diverse cultures: the Swedes, the Balts and the Germans in the north, the Lithuanians and Poles in the West, Byzantium, the Caucasus and the areas adjacent to the Caspian Sea in the south, the Turkic people in the eastern regions. But because in the eyes of most Europeans the Russians were Orientals, nineteenth and twentieth century Russian scholars and intellectuals chose to displace this term on to the Slavs, thereby distancing themselves from its denigrating connotations.

Russia's contiguous geographical terrain facilitated its numerous contacts with many of the eastern civilizations. These influences came through the Byzantine empire in the south as well as from the Silk Trade Route merchants, who were in search of merchandise. Well before the formation of the kingdom of Kiev in the ninth century, Central Asian and Arab travellers frequented the Caspian sea route, along the Volga river right up to the Baltic Sea. This is evident from the numerous excavations of silver Arab dirhams of the eighth to eleventh centuries as far north as Scandinavia. Similarly, the Indian Ocean monetary unit, the *cowrie* shell, has also been found in Scandinavia. Detailed accounts of Russia's geography, culture and military exploits are mentioned in the works of Arabic geographical treatises of Ibn Khurdadhbih, Ibn Hawqal and an anonymous Persian geographer, all belonging to the ninth and tenth centuries. A reference to the Eastern Slavs is made by Syrian and Armenian writers. Seventy years before the kingdom of Kiev adopted Christianity, Ahmed ibn Fadlan, from Baghdad visited the region of the Volga river. He described in detail an elaborate Russian custom of burial and cremation, whereby wives and girls were buried or cremated along with the man. Fadlan also mentions the Bulgarians, the Khazars and the Tekke Turkomans whom he encountered on his journey in 921-22. These accounts provide valuable information which is lacking in subsequent Russian annals.

The close geographical proximity of the Turkic peoples, including the Kipchaks (also known as Polovtsy) and the Khazars of the Khazar kingdom, inevitably led to close contact with the Russians. Subsequently, such links extended to the Crimean Khanate established in 1443. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Turkic title 'kagan' was given to the first ruler of Kiev, Prince Vladimir. The first coins minted

in Russia were replicas, both in size and weight, of the Arab dirham. The subsequent Mongol rule of over 200 years led to further cultural assimilation between Russia and the East. In 1245 the Russian prince, Alexander Nevsky, with the help of the Mongols (Golden Horde), succeeded in warding off the German crusaders who attacked Russia. The town of Novgorod was similarly saved by the Turkic people and the Mongols from the advancing German crusaders primarily because Alexander Nevsky had befriended the Mongol conqueror Sartak, Khan Batu's son. The Lithuanian attempt to capture Moscow in 1406 was repulsed by Khan Shadi Bek's army. The Russian princes contributed money for the upkeep of the Mongol army—a mutually beneficial arrangement. As has been mentioned, the princes turned to the Mongol and Turkic peoples when threatened by invaders. Their help was also sought when one of the Russian princes wanted to attack another.[1] Such ties continued even at the time of Peter the Great, when the Kalmyk and Bashkir infantry helped him win the battle against the Swedes.[2]

Apart from political alliances, mixed marriages were a widespread and common phenomenon in these parts. Matrimonial ties between the ruling elite with the Turkic and Georgian ruling families were a regular practice in the early years of the Kievan state. Subsequently, it extended to the Mongols and other peoples of the Caucasus. The Grand Duke Izyaslav of Kiev married the daughter of the Georgian King Demetre I in the twelfth century, and Georgia's Queen Tamar was married to Yuri, the Prince of Novgorod. Dmitry Likhachev, a scholar of ancient Russian culture, mentions the innumerable ties with the Polovtsy (Kipchaks), who were Turkic.

> *Oleg "Gorislavich" was married to the daughter of Khan Asalun, Svyatopolsk Izyaslavich of Kiev was married to the daughter of Tugorkhan, and Yury Dolgoruky took as his wife the daughter of Khan Aepa, granddaughter of Khan Osen. Monomakh's son, Andrei the Good, married Tugorkhan's granddaughter, Rurik Rostislavich married Khan Beglyuk's daughter, while Khan Konchak's daughter was the wife of Yaroslav Vsevoldovich.*[3]

In fact, Prince Igor, the hero of Russia's earliest literary work, *The Lay of Igor's Host*, led a campaign against his son's father-in-law, Khan Konchak. Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) was a descendant of Mamai on the maternal side. In 1561 he married the daughter of Temruk, a Kabardian-Circassian count.[4] From the sixteenth century onwards close ties, including dynastic ones, were established with the Caucasus.

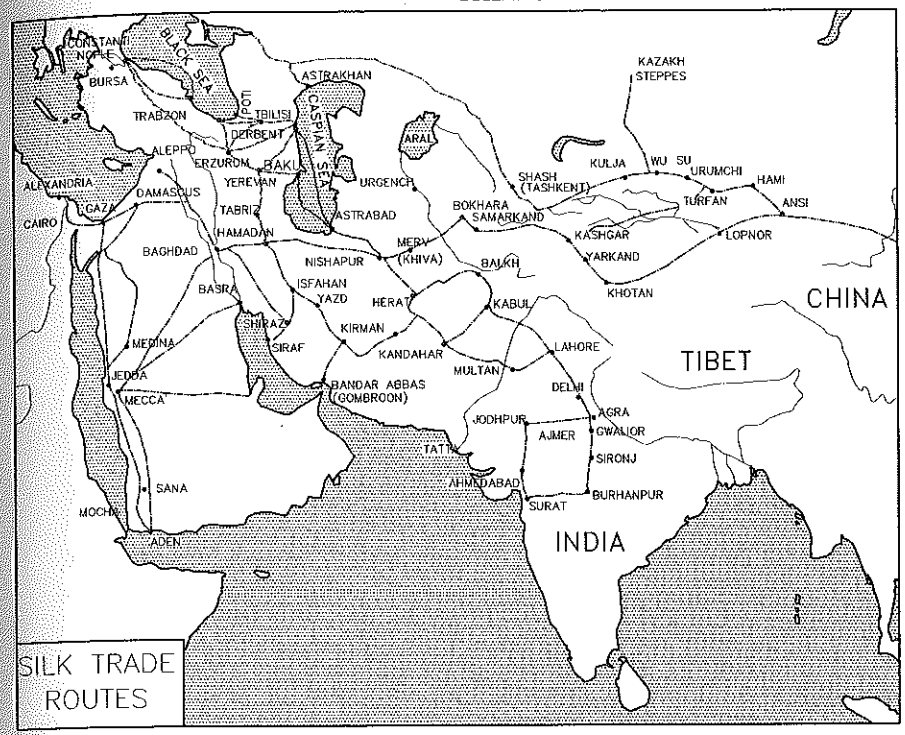
Subsequently, Boris Godunov, also a descendent of a Mongol family, sought contacts with the Caucasus through a marriage alliance. Tatishchev's mission in 1604-5 was to search for a bride and bridegroom for the Tsar's children in the Kartlian lands.[5] Ivan Borisovich Cherkassky, a Circassian, as the name suggests (in Russian this nationality is referred to as Cherkes), was a commander in the army of Tsar Vasily Shuisky.[6] Famous families of the nobility were the Yusupovs and the Urusovs, whose antecedents go back to the Nogai descendants of the Golden Horde. Marriage alliances were not confined to the rulers, but also took place among the gentry and the commoners. 'In the eighteenth century, about one-third of the Russian aristocratic families had Turkic names—Turgeniev and Karamzin, Suvorov and Kutuzov, Yusupov, Shirinskii or Veliaminov ...'[7] Cooptation of the local elite formed an integral part of the tsarist government's expansionist designs from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Until recently much of the information about Russia's non-European links was either suppressed, doctored or simply dismissed.[8] Numerous Russian scholars have, in the period of *glasnost*, publicly deplored the systematic distortions of history instigated by the state and its historians. Lev Gumilev, a leading historian, much of whose work was banned for many years, can today reiterate that the Russian race is composed of the Slavs, the Finno-Ugrians, the Turkic peoples and the Mongols.[9]

For centuries there existed regular cross-cultural assimilation and cross-cultural transference of dress, food, living habits and language. The Russian language embraces a wide range of foreign terms from the peoples of the east. The study of words and their etymology reveals interesting insights which are, quite often, deliberately glossed over by exigencies of state politics. For words become part of a vocabulary only after they have become part of the common experience. A look at the Russian language reveals that between the first and the seventh centuries the Slavs came into contact with and imbibed many words from the Turkic, Persian, Caucasian and Finno-Ugric languages. Of the large and varied terminology that entered the Russian language from the Turkic, that pertaining to vegetation and geography, administration, socio-political matters, economy, food, dress, dwelling and household items was most prominent.[10] Many Mongolian words became part of the Russian language indirectly through the Turkic language which had adopted them earlier. This process of assimilation was an ongoing one and continued well into this century. Among the significant terms assimilated by the Russian language from ancient Turkic were terms relating to knowledge: *bumaga* (paper), *kniga* (book), *karandash* (pencil); currency: *dengi* (money), *denga* (0.5 kopeck), *altyn* (3

kopecks), *nagota* (medieval Russian unit of currency, the equivalent of 1/20 *grivna*), *kazna* (treasury); weights and measures: *girya* (weight [noun.]), *arshin* (equivalent to 71 cm.); and also *bogatyr* (mighty hero) and *tovarishch* (comrade).[11] The term for temple (*khram*) also was a derivative of Turkic-Arabic. Similarly, the words *kharalug* (steel) [12] and *chugun* (cast iron) are among the many Turkic terms adopted. The conquest of the Caucasus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to further induction of terms, concepts and words from the languages of this area, including Persian words which were in abundance not only in Georgian and Armenian but also in the other Caucasian languages. All this became possible through close socio-economic and cultural contacts stretching over long periods of time. A pluralistic environment, moreover, inculcated in the Russians a sense of tolerance, hospitality and warmth and an absence of racism.

Early Russian impressions about India were vague and derived from secondary sources. Information about India could have reached Russia through trade contacts that the latter had with the Central Asian and Caucasian traders. The etymology of indigo provides some insights. In Persia this dyeing agent was known as *lahori* because it was transported from the Indian town of Lahore. By the time it reached Russia *lahori* was transformed into *lavra*. There is a mention in the 1705 account book of the Russian State Treasury that "the dye *lavra*" from India was sold in Moscow for 17,568 roubles. Indian tales from the voluminous *Ocean of Stories* and the *Hitopadesha*, a collection of Indian fables, travelled westwards from their country of origin, undergoing a series of transformations on their journeys. The names of the characters, the flora and the fauna acquired a local flavour, depending on whether the tale was being narrated in Persia, Central Asia or Greece. In France and Europe the *Hitopadesha* came to be popularly known as *Aesop's Fables*.

The stories of Buddha reached Russia through the *Jataka* tales. Buddha's story came to be known as *The Tale of Varlaam the Hermit and Jasaf, the Indian Prince*. This is a story about the Buddha's early life encounters with poverty and misery, from which he was sheltered, and his subsequent escape from his father's palace. The tale was initially translated into Persian and Arabic, then into Georgian and Greek. There were two known Greek translations of the story, one done by a Palestinian priest in approximately the seventh century, and one by a Georgian. The story could have reached Russia from Bulgaria, which had adopted Christianity and where the tale was the first printed book. If the Arab version incorporated Islamic elements in the story, the twelfth century Slav translation, along with the earlier Georgian version, introduced the Christian element. Varlaam, the hermit, converts



Jasaf (also known as Josaphat in some countries) to Christianity. In Russia this became one of the most popular tales. Both in Europe and in Russia the church accepted it as a tale of a Christian saint, and 19 November was celebrated in memory of Varlaam and Jasaf.[13] Other works gave information about India, many of which were translated into Russian after the country's adoption of Christianity in the tenth century. Those conversant with the Greek or Bulgarian languages might have been acquainted with the writings of Ptolemy and Strabo, as well as the image of India in the minds of the Europeans of the Middle Ages. India was supposedly a fairy-tale land with strange animals and vegetation, a land whose borders touched Ethiopia. The apostles had ostensibly preached in India.[14] India was both a country of one's desires for the riches it seemingly possessed [15] and simultaneously a land of cannibals.[16] The heroes of numerous Russian folk epics, the *bylina*, were Indians but with Russian names like Dyuk Stepanovich and Volkh Vseslavyevich.[17] India is also mentioned in one of Russia's earliest literary texts, the twelfth century *Povest' vremennykh let* ('Tale of Bygone Years'):

After the deluge Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth divided the earth. Shem inherited the east—Persia, Bactria and even up to India...Ham inherited the south—Egypt, Ethiopia,which was adjacent to India... [18]

Each nationality has either a written law or a custom, which those people, who are not familiar with the law, practice as the tradition of their fathers. Amongst the first are the Syrians, who live on the edge of the earth. They follow the customs of their fathers: do not ... engage in adultery, do not steal, slander or kill, and especially, do not engage in evil deeds. The Bactrians have the same law. It is different for the Indians, their neighbours. These are murderers engaged in foul deeds, and their rage is beyond all measure. And in the inner regions of their land, people eat human beings, kill the travellers and even eat the dogs.[19]

Indians traded in the areas close to the Russian lands, including the Caspian Sea coast and along the southern branches of the Silk Route along the Caucasus belt.

Cultural distancing between Russia and the East first became apparent with the adoption of Christianity and attempts at the imposition of a mono-culture. In Russia this was a long and tortuous process accompanied by coercive methods to eradicate polytheism and nature worship.[20] However, traces of the earlier beliefs remained, and some aspects became incorporated into Christianity. Even polygamy, a taboo in Christian precepts, was known to occur as late as the seventeenth century. Ivan the Terrible had six wives and Semyon Shakhovsky, the well known writer of the early 17th century, had four.[21] Both Tsar Alexis and Peter I had two each. The adoption of Christianity in 988 did not lead to an estrangement with the East. (Russian church architecture and icon paintings are a testament to the fusion of eastern cultures. Santa Sophia church in Byzantium, present day Istanbul, which served as the model for Russian churches, was said to have been built by the Egyptians.) If more written literature came from the Byzantine empire, the East infiltrated through tales, oral and written traditions via Byzantium as in the case of the Buddha story. Greek and Armenian merchants regularly visited Moscow. Eastern visitors included emissaries and traders from Persia, Samarkand, Bokhara, Urgench, Khiva, Tashkent and Yarkand. Even in the nineteenth century there is a mention of traders from India in Petersburg and Moscow. But because the script had been adopted from Byzantium along with Christianity, the Greek chronicles dominated. Translations of texts were undertaken

from the other Slav language, Bulgarian, which had adopted the Greek script along with Christianity earlier than Kiev. Ivan the Terrible's claim to German ancestry did not affect state policies. It was only in the seventeenth century that radical changes came about in Russian cultural life and in attitudes towards the East. This is the watershed of Russian history, to which every scholar of Russian history must refer.

Coercive Transformations

A cultural distancing between the ruling elite and the masses was initiated in the reign of Peter I. This was the second instance of the forcible imposition of an alien culture on the Russian people. The process of Europeanization of the country was set in motion by the state. Europeans, primarily Germans, were to rule the country, occupy key positions in administration and education, both of which were set up on European lines for the training of a new kind of 'patriotic' and subservient elite. Russian policies, both domestic and foreign, were managed for long periods by Germans, who also rewrote a new, racist history of the country. Russia was targeted as the victim of Orientalist attitudes in the eighteenth century; in the nineteenth it attempted to subvert them from within.

It was alleged that Peter I was confronted with a clean sheet of paper, a backward people without a culture or a history, and that it was his genius that introduced enlightenment and civilization to his countrymen. Peter's Europeanization of the country was not confined to the adoption of the title 'emperor' or the German term 'burg' for his new capital, St. Petersburg, or even the European style of architecture and town planning. The state encroached upon the private lives of its citizens, undermining the values of the collective. This again did not stop at the outward appearances of cutting the beards and shortening the gowns to expose people's legs 'in German fashion'.

In 1717 a book entitled *An Honourable Mirror of Youth* was printed. The work, a translation from German, was reprinted thrice in Peter's time and ran into several more editions, including a reprint by an imperial order in 1740. It was allegedly a complete code of social conduct of the European gentry and was utilised as a guideline for the emerging Russian elite. The book was intended to impart ostensibly correct ways of sneezing and blowing one's nose in public, along with the art of greeting, fencing, dancing and table manners. More importantly, the book explicitly forbade the emulation of Russian customs, which were equated with the lower classes. It further cautioned the reader from conversing in his mother tongue. On Peter's orders S. Puffendorf's

Introduction to a History of the States of Europe was published in Russian translation in 1718 and 1723. Here, Russians were subjected to the vilest forms of abuse by the German writer. This, as the writer Alexander Griboedov wryly commented later, was the manner in which Peter sought to inculcate reading habits amongst the Russians.[22] The first monarchical history of Russia with racist connotations was also written by a German, G. Miller, but of that later.

While in Holland in 1697-98, Peter assigned the first Russian printing press to a Dutch trader, Jan Tessing. Located in Amsterdam, the press was required to print geographical maps, treatises on architecture and military combat for the needs of the Russian empire, and to do these in three languages: Russian, Latin and Dutch. The printer had strict orders to extol the virtues of the ruler of Russia. Books from Amsterdam were sent to Russia by sea to the port of Arkhangelsk and from there were distributed to various towns in the country.[23] By 1711 and 1712 printing presses were set up in St. Petersburg and Moscow to serve the new demands of the ruler. Among the first publications during this period was de Cambray's *Maniére de fortifier de Mr de Vauban*, a work dealing with the famous French Marshal Vauban's city fortification plans.[24] Up to the end of the eighteenth century, private printing presses were owned by foreigners in Russia.[25]

Both during and subsequent to the reign of Peter I all major publications were translations of European authors. These included treatises on military tactics, European history and etiquette, geography and mathematics. Towards the latter half of the eighteenth century the translated works of French philosophers, including Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot, were printed along with the drama and fiction of Racine, Molière Fielding, Swift, Sterne and Milton.[26] Indeed, the most popular writer of eighteenth century Russia was Voltaire. Catherine II corresponded with him and, after his death, bought his works and manuscripts, all of which were transferred to Russia. In fact, the legal codex of the country, the *Nakaz* ('Instructions'), was formulated by Catherine. She lifted much of the material from her favourite readings of Montesquieu, among others. According to her, Russians, being Europeans, deserved European sources alone. But Catherine's flirtations with liberalism ended soon after the French revolution and Voltaire's works became taboo in Russia.[27] Rousseau replaced Voltaire in the next century.

Peter I envisaged the induction of a European world view through new institutions of governance and through educational schemes. The Swedish model of administration—the Senate and Ministerial Colleges—was looked upon as being the most suitable for Russia. With

a view to setting up an Academy of Sciences, Peter corresponded with Leibnitz, Wolf, Fontenelle and the abbot Binon. This project did not materialize in his lifetime. What Peter I did achieve, however, was the Europeanization of the script. In 1707 Peter signed an order for a new printed alphabet, which meant the replacement of the Cyrillic and the induction of numerous Latin letters. The results of Peter's reforms are all too evident to this day. There is a discrepancy between the written Cyrillic script and the Latinised printed one. In some cases Peter I personally carried out the changes. This script was termed the 'civil' script, as opposed to the Cyrillic, which continued to be used by the clergy.

A conscious shift towards Europe now manifested itself in the marriage alliances of the ruling dynasty. Peter I's son, Alexis, married Princess Charlotte of the House of Brunswick and Holstein, both of whom became very powerful in Russia in the reign of Anne, Peter's niece, who married the Duke of Kurland. One of Peter's daughters, Anna, was married to the Duke of Holstein and her son was Peter Ulrich, better known as Peter III. Peter's other daughter, Elizabeth, was betrothed to Prince Karl Augustus of Holstein-Gottorp. Catherine II was a German. Both Alexander I and Nicholas II were married to Germans. By the end of the nineteenth century one can safely say that the royal family ruling Russia was primarily of German extraction. Such marriage alliances could be considered inconsequential under normal circumstances, for Russia's pluralistic society could, with ease, accommodate diverse nationalities as was done earlier. The new alliances diverged from previous practices in that they served to marginalize the Russians. With the influx of foreigners, primarily Germans intent on pursuing their own interests, Russia had opened its doors to foreign domination.

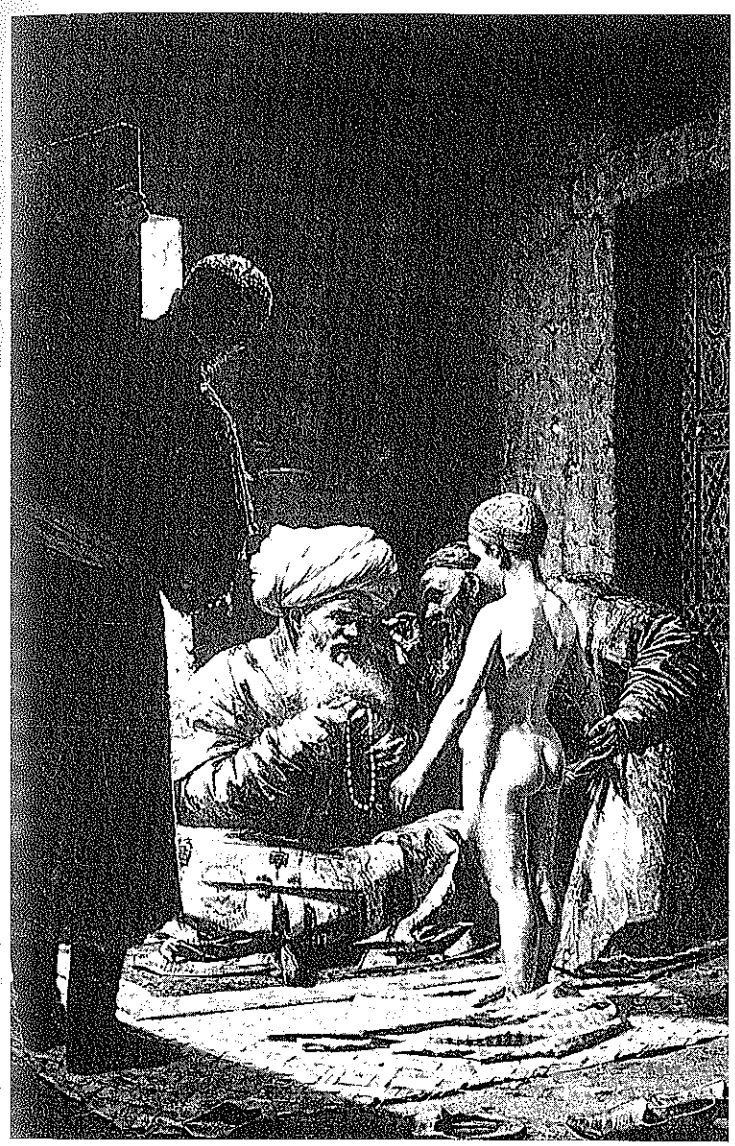
The ten years of Empress Anne's rule (1730-40), for instance, have been variously described as 'sinister', 'a black memory' and the 'murkiest blot on Russian history'. Empress Anne, the widowed Duchess of Kurland, returned to St.Petersburg with a coterie of Germans to administer the country. The extreme savagery and cruelty of the state is associated with Anne's German entourage, who governed the country. Ignorant of Russia and disdainful of its people, those in power extracted exorbitant taxes from the population, a measure resulting in famine and deaths. A vast espionage network was set up at this time through the Chancellory of Secret Inquisition, whereby those suspected of harbouring anti-German sentiments were flogged and executed. Over 20,000 people were exiled to Siberia. Protectionism, bribery and corruption were openly encouraged. Amongst the notable officials of Anne's power nexus one can mention Count Ostermann who single-

handedly directed Russia's domestic and foreign policies for over a decade (1731-41). Field Marshall Münnich, the chief of the armed forces, inducted numerous foreign officers, primarily German, into the Guards. Then there were the Löwenfeld brothers and Anne's favourite, Biron, whose name turned into a byword, *bironshchina*, associated with gruesome tortures and cruelty.

Peter III's brief six-week reign similarly brought to the surface his German leanings. Much of his childhood and youth had been spent in Germany. His disdain for Russia was matched by his blind admiration for everything German, including Frederick II. Following in his grandfather's footsteps, Peter III ordered the Russian clergy to shave their beards and dress like Lutheran pastors. He introduced German uniforms and regimen in the army and once again surrounded himself with a German entourage. In later times Tsar Nicholas I boasted that his aim was 'to conquer the poverty and savagery' of the Russians.[28] Yet it was his reign that was referred to as the long "iron winter" of repression associated, in no small measure, with the Grand Marshal of the Imperial Court, Alexander Benckendorff, the infamous head of the Third Section, i.e. the Secret Service. By the end of the nineteenth century there were over two million Germans in Russia. This naturally led to German predominance in the administrative, political and educational spheres. German culture, philosophy and ethos started making inroads into Russia. The Russian rulers vacillated in their likes and dislikes. At times it was the Germans who were the favourites, at other times the French or the English. However, the fact remains that Europeans arrived in large numbers to set up a new type of state structure.

It suited the rulers to perpetuate the state structure that had been set up earlier: autocracy and serfdom (virtual slavery) along with strict state censorship. The Russian aristocracy was guaranteed a parasitical existence from its feudal estates as long as it remained a faithful servant of the crown. The educational system trained future state officials as loyal subjects, inculcating in them ideas on unequal races and cultures. The ready-made Oriental discourse, fast expanding with the colonization process, reiterated European racial and cultural superiority, and was reinforced by officials recruited from Germany, France and England.

German and Dutch experts were invited to set up the new centres of learning. The academic staff of Russia's first university, the Moscow University (1755), consisted of Germans. During the reign of Empress Elizabeth, German influence, in the court and in academia, was replaced by French, which became the court language and the language of the aristocracy at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the



2. V.V. Vereshchagin (ca 1872) : Selling a child slave. The painter, a willing accomplice of colonial policies, created stereotypes of the 'lustful' and 'degenerate' Central Asians.

nineteenth century.The most prestigious school in St. Petersburg was run by the Jesuits, who imparted education to the children of the Russian elite in Latin and French. Pushkin and his friends, many of whom became better known in later years as the Decembrists, enrolled as the first batch of students to the prestigious Tsarskoe Selo Lycee set up by an Imperial Order in a portion of Catherine II's palace. The underlying idea of this institution was to train people for high office in the state. Instruction here was in Russian, French, German and Latin. The elite absorbed an imported culture and language and began to look to European models in the administrative, military, educational and cultural spheres. 'Russia is the only country, Count Vorontsov stated in 1805, 'in which the mother tongue is ignored and the younger generation has no knowledge of anything relating to the fatherland.'[29]

A character in A. Sumarokov's eighteenth century comedy, *The Monster*, is disdainful of the Russian language. Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* is replete with references to the English culinary habits and literature that invades Russian homes, along with French etiquette and dress. In Alexander Griboedov's play *Woe from Wit*, it is fashionable for the aristocracy to be members of the English *clob* ('club'), a matter of prestige for this class. Even the Russian countryside did not escape this trend; feudal landlords tried to outdo each other in employing 'German tutors' for their children as in Fonvizin's comedy, *The Infant*.

> *Culture was entangled in a web of French, English and German affectations. It was a period of imitation, plagiarism, antipatriotism, of intellectual subjugation to the outworn fashions of Europe. It was the negation of the Russian genius by the Russians themselves.*[30]

Although French was the language of this strata of society, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the government, wary of the liberal rumblings in France, preferred to encourage the Russian elite to study in Germany rather than in France. (Mikhail Lomonosov, regarded as the founder of Russian science, studied at the university of Marburg. Alexander Radishchev (1749-1802), the liberal, was at Leipzig University. Between 1838-41 the writer Ivan Turgenev studied in the Berlin University.) This policy backfired: the Germans had already been influenced by the ideas of the French Enlightenment and were in a state of intellectual fervour. The ideas of the Enlightenment promoted bourgeois norms and reiterated inequality, based on class and race. They filtered into autocratic Russia, a land of serfdom and strict censorship.[31]

Russia As The Orient

The new generation of aristocrats was a product of the European thinking processes, but one not easily accepted by its adopted big brothers. For the French, the English and the Germans the stereotype of the 'Oriental' applied just as much to the Russians as it did to other non-Europeans. The Russians supposedly suffered from all the maladies of the already subjugated races, namely, laziness, crudity and savagery, oriental despotism and oriental cruelty. The Byzantine church, or Orthodoxy, moreover, had always been relegated to the furthest back benches by Rome. Describing Muscovite nobles, C. Marsden writes that their manners were

> *those of savages; their behaviour, especially towards women...led to diplomatic remonstrances. Filthily dirty, clad in long, cumbersome garments which prevented all free movement, unkempt hair down to the shoulders, and matted beards, they behaved hoggishly at table, dipping their black and greasy fingers indiscriminately into plates of dishes, always eating too much and drinking noisily and greedily out of unwashed vessels.*[32]

Adam Olearius, the Holstein ambassador to Russia, describes the people and their manners in a book which became a standard work on the country in Germany and the rest of Europe. Published in 1647, the book was translated into English, French, Dutch and Italian. According to Olearius the Russians are uncouth, indecent, depraved and the most barbarous people 'in their nature and manner of life'.[33]

Even more damaging to the Russians was the 1839 travelogue of the Frenchman, Marquiz de Custine. In Europe this book was published in French, German, English and Swedish with a record circulation, for those times, of 200,000 copies. Apart from repeating the earlier stereotypes of the barbaric Russian, Custine remarks:

> *I do not condemn the Russians for what they are, but censure them for attempting to pass themselves off as us. They remain totally uncultured. This would not deprive them of hopes of becoming that if only they were not so absorbed with the desire to ape, like monkeys, other nations, while simultaneously making fun, like monkeys, of those whom they ape...these people are lost to primitive conditions and are unfit for civilization.*[34]

The tsarist authorities stated that the book was an exaggeration, while

Russian liberals, including Herzen, welcomed it. In fact, many of Custine's insights on tsarist autocracy retain their relevance for this century. Antipathy towards Russia remained. In the nineteenth century attitudes were determined largely by the big power rivalry over the colonies. George Curzon contemptuously describes Russia's conquest of Central Asia at the end of the nineteenth century:

> *The conquest of Central Asia is a conquest of Orientals by Orientals, of cognate character by cognate character. It is the fusing of strong with weaker metal, but it is not the expulsion of an impure by a purer element. Civilized Europe has not marched forth to vanquish barbarian Asia. This is no nineteenth-century crusade of manners or morals; but upon its former footsteps to reclaim its own kith and kin.*[35]

Inferiority Complex

The Russian aristocracy was well aware of this feeling of disdain and yet it continued to make efforts to gain recognition and acceptance as an equal member of Europe: '...we not only shall be, but are already becoming European Russians and Russian Europeans...we want to be Russians in the European spirit'.[36]

> *Our first representatives of polite society shocked European society by their Tatarism, but there soon appeared people who could be considered its adornment and who amazed the Parisians by their refinement and good breeding.*[37]

The Russian elite became mentally colonized without having ever been a colonial subject. This was the uniqueness of Russian history and created the inherent contradictions of Russian Orientalism, whereby the Oriental attitude directed at them was accepted by the Russians and subsequently employed to downgrade the conquered people, as we shall shortly see.

All this served to widen the hiatus between the Europeanized elite and the masses. More importantly, it led to a rejection by the Russian gentry and intellectuals of their own culture. The defenders of the Petrine reforms were to loudly proclaim that Peter 'shaves beards with the razor and hacks ignorance with the axe'.[38]

Self-rejection is evident in Nikolai Karamzin's statement in *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika* ('Letters of a Russian Traveller') about the pre-Petrine Russians, who 'suffered from coarseness both internal and external, along with ignorance, laziness and boredom.' The customary

beard and long gowns came to symbolize 'a state of savagery' for the writer for whom Peter's reforms, including the introduction of the German dress, came to symbolize 'important and useful novelties'.

Other 'useful novelties' included European literature and aesthetics whose introduction into Russia was not considered as a source of enrichment but as a further means of self-rejection, as can be gleaned from Belinsky's remarks:

> *The monotonous forms of our poor national poetry were adequate for expressing the limited content of the tribal, natural, immediate and semi-patriarchal life of old Rus, but the new content did not suit them, did not fit into them; it needed new forms for that purpose. Our salvation then lay not in nationality but in Europeanism.*[39]

Belinsky spurned his culture and took pride in distancing himself from the rest of the population by proclaiming, 'Who, except theorists and visionaries, would say that European dress and habits have not now become national for the best, i.e. the most educated part of Russian society...'[40] These sentiments were shared by the critic's contemporaries, including Chaadaev and Herzen.

Russian culture and history were termed barbaric from the Russian pulpits of learning, first by the foreigners and subsequently by the local population. Gerhard Friedrich Miller was among Russia's first post-Petrine court historians. Miller, along with two other fellow German historians, G.S. Bayer and A.L. Schlozer, were termed 'Normanists' inasmuch as they held that it was the Normans who raised the standards of the Slavs. Left to themselves, the 'barbarian and backward' Slavs were incapable of independent economic, political or cultural growth. This approach in historiography was sanctified by the Russian court in the eighteenth century. It was therefore natural for the nineteenth century Russian to try to refute these charges while at the same time striving to be more European than the European himself. He also proceeded to reject his own links with the non-European cultures. And because the state was the patron and client of research, books on Russian history by Karamzin and Tatishchev, S. Soloviev and Klyuchevsky, approached their own past in a Eurocentric manner and distanced themselves from their Asian connections. Sergei Soloviev, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, repeats Montesquieu's and Rousseau's ideas on geographical and climatic determinism:

> *Nature has been a loving mother to Western Europe, and a mean stepmother to the nations fated to live in Eastern Europe. Thus we observe*

> *European civilization gradually spreading from the West to the East as decreed by Nature, since it was in the West that the most favourable conditions for its early successes were created, growing less and less favourable as one moved East.* [41]

The Mongols and the Turkic people, with whom the Russian Princes had close ties for centuries, now suddenly became the crude, barbaric Mongol-Tatars who brought to a halt Russia's development. In fact, the term *Tat-ar* in ancient Turkic signified alien people or alien clan. The invading Mongols were called Tatars by the Turkic people, including the Kipchaks, who fought them. The Russian term Mongol-Tatars, in the post-Petrine period, came to imply both the Mongols and the Turkic people east of the river Volga. With time the label Tatar was extended to denote all those professing Islam, Turkic or non-Turkic such as the people of Azerbaijan, the Chechens, the Ingush and the Circassians. They were now variously described as vermin, insects and snakes by the eighteenth century poet G. Derzhavin in his 'The Lyrical Song Dedicated to the Russians on the Capture of Izmail'. These peoples were portrayed as barbarians in the verse of O.M. Somov, V.N. Grigoriev and Kheraskov, to name just a few. The ostensibly negative traits in the Russian character were now attributed primarily to the Mongol Tatars. Karamzin, the court historian of the early nineteenth century states, '...the present day character of the Russians retains some of the stains, with which it was soiled by the barbarity of the Mongols'.[42] Belinsky echoes his views:

> *Then came the Tatar irruption which glued the scattered limbs of Russia with her own blood ...how many were the incidental vices it ingrafted. Seclusion of women, slavery in notions and sentiments, the knout, the habit of burying money in the ground and going about in tatters for fear of showing one's self a rich man, corruption in the affairs of justice, Asiatism in ways of life, mental sloth, ignorance, despising of self—in a word, everything that Peter the Great had been eradicating, everything in Russia that was directly opposed to Europeanism—all this was not our native characteristics but ingrafted upon us by the Tatars.*[43]

In these words, sadly, lay an acceptance of all that the Russians had been made out to be by the Europeans. This acceptance speaks of a sense of inadequacy and, with it, an attempt to make a scapegoat of extraneous forces. The term *Mongol yoke* was introduced into the Russian lexicon at the time of Catherine II. Along with it come the tales of 'oppression'

and stagnation of Russian culture because of this 'barbaric' presence. Facts were either doctored or misquoted and the Mongol-Tatars were turned into marauders and 'sworn enemies of Christianity'.[44] The Mongols' religious tolerance, including exemption of taxes from the clergy, was substituted with tales of their religious fanaticism. Conversely, the brutality of the German crusaders in Russia or the French crusaders' desecration of Constantinople's St. Sophia church, a symbol of Orthodoxy, was now glossed over. More myths came into being including the one that Russia had stagnated for centuries. This, too, was attributed to the Mongol presence, something that could be done by a selective reading of the past. Henceforth, the Christian, as opposed to the non-Christian, became the leitmotif in the works of statesmen and scholars alike. The seeds for this were sown by the foreign 'experts' but the Russians turned out to be diligent students of their mentors as I shall attempt to illustrate in the ensuing chapters.

Orientalist Studies

The distancing from the East was further accentuated in the programmes of study set up by the government. The rise of Orientalism or the state-sponsored study of the East was initiated and promoted by the tsarist authorities in tandem with the expansion of the empire. The study of the East in Russia was inextricably linked to its foreign policy in the region. Its purpose, initially, was totally subservient to the political, military and economic interests of the state. Knowledge of the terrain gradually came to be accepted as a prerequisite for its subsequent conquest. This became even more apparent when, in 1801, Tsar Paul I ordered his army to proceed to India and reach the river Indus. It formed part of the French and Russian design of thwarting the English presence in India, a plan worked out jointly by Napoleon and Paul. Ignorant of the geography and climate of the route to be traversed, the Russian soldiers embarked on their mission through Central Asia at the height of winter. The expedition was a failure for a number of reasons, including the murder of the Tsar and a palace coup. Russian designs on India, however, continued well into the nineteenth century, and this abortive attempt made the government realize the necessity of understanding and knowing the terrain they were hoping to capture. A similar ignorance existed amongst the ruling elite about Turkey, the Caucasus, Persia and Central Asia, areas of Russian political and military interest. In 1797 Paul I issued an order to establish a desk dealing in Asian matters within the Ministry of External Affairs. This plan did not materialize until 1820. Three years later the teaching of 'oriental'

languages commenced in the Asian department of the Russian Ministry of External Affairs. The organizational set up of the centre was undertaken by two Frenchmen, J.F. Demange and F.B. Sharmois, in 1817. They were both students of Silvestre de Sacy, the French orientalist and pioneer of modern orientalism, who had recommended them to the Russian government. (Sacy paved the way for orientalist attitudes by elaborating on how to 'read' and approach the Orient).[45] The first director of the department was G.M. Vlangali, a specialist in Turkish and Persian. Vlangali had earlier served as the principal interpreter of the Commander in Chief of Georgia, A.P. Yermolov. The next director was F.P. Adelung, who remained in this post until his death in 1842, after which A. Demezon took charge until 1872. The courses, meant for entrants to the ministry, were open only to graduates of the Russian nobility belonging to the Russian Orthodox church. After a two year course they were allotted their place of work. Many served in the annexed areas as administrators. Some, like V.V. Grigoriev, took part in military operations, combining these duties with 'research' in the area. The direction of these courses was laid down by the Europeans. The first batch of Russian teachers who taught eastern languages had been primarily educated in Europe, whereas the native speakers of the language concerned had undergone training in European methodology and approach in the institutions set up by the tsarist government.[46] The first Russian Indologists were similarly students of Franz Bopp, who had studied under Sacy and was the founder of comparative grammar. Others were sent to Germany, France or England after their graduation.

The Language Department in the ministry was preceded by that of the Russian universities which opened in the eighteenth century. The first Department of Oriental Studies (initially understood to mean the study of 'Hebrew and the Muslim languages') was set up at the Kazan University. The town of Kazan had been captured by Ivan the Terrible as far back as 1552 for gaining access to the Silk Trade Route. The population here was, as in earlier times, a diverse mixture, including the Chuvash, Bashkirs, Central Asians, Armenians, Persians and others, and most people were multi-lingual. Arabic was introduced in the Russian university in 1807, and Persian a decade later. The Russian government offered a professorship to Christian Fraehn, a German, who had studied at the Rostock University and attended lectures in Göttingen and Tübingen. At his recommendation, another German, F.I. Erdman, joined the staff as a professor of Persian. The two Germans taught Arabic and Persian at the university through the mediums of German and Latin. The experiment was a failure. In 1825 the

Administrator of Education of the Kazan area was forced to write a letter to the Minister of Education:

> *Although we have at our disposal native speaker-teachers for oriental languages, especially in Kazan and Astrakhan, and all the necessary means of acquiring manuscripts which are unknown to Europe, we are nevertheless spending large amounts of money in order to get de Sacy's students from Paris. And we appoint them as professors of that very language which they should be studying from us... The foreigners, who learn the Oriental languages from books, are not only incapable of speaking or teaching them properly—they cannot even decipher the manuscripts.*[47]

The plea seems to have fallen on deaf years. F.I. Erdman remained at the university until 1845, spending, in all, twenty seven years. For all we know he might have taught Leo Tolstoy who joined the Oriental department of the Kazan university in 1844, only to transfer himself to another department the following year. Christian Fraehn, on the other hand, remained at the Kazan university until 1817 and then became the first director of the Asian Museum (later renamed The Institute of Oriental Studies) in St. Petersburg. The fascination for Europe continued. The Germans and other foreigners teaching in the Russian institutions were not, as the above examples shows, necessarily imparting knowledge but attitudes, an enterprise in which they succeeded remarkably well.[48]

Fraehn, remained director of the Asian Museum for 17 years. On his recommendation, Bernhardt Dorn was invited to teach Sanskrit at Kharkov university. He, too, taught the language through the Latin medium. Most leading Indologists were, at one time or another, students of F. Bopp (Robert Lenz, Pavel Petrov, Otto von Böhtlingk, Ivan Minaev) or his successors. Russian linguists of the latter half of the nineteenth century, like A. Potebnya and F. Fortunatov, also studied in Berlin. The European school of thought dominated the approach to Oriental Studies.

A Geographical Society was set up to study the colonized terrain and the possibilities of raw materials for export. Departments of Oriental Studies were subsequently opened at the Moscow and St. Petersburg universities in the first half of the nineteenth century, and, as in the case of Kazan, were dominated by foreign experts, primarily German (Georg Jacob Kehr, Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer, P. S. Pallas, Anton Gottlob, Jacob Schmidt, F. Adelung, Böhtlingk, Middendorf etc.). The Europeans formulated the educational policies, the programmes of study, the models and methods of teaching. Their prominence in government service influenced, moulded and shaped the attitudes of the dominant Russian class towards the East, including Turkey, India and Central Asia.

Oriental Studies were also introduced in the military academies. One of the first such academies was located in Orenburg, the Asian headquarters of the Russian empire. The study of Asian languages was becoming a prerequisite for the fast expanding empire in Central Asia. The conquered people were encouraged to send their children to study at the Russian school in Orenburg by waiving the taxes imposed on them. The government's intention was to subsequently recruit local cadres into the Russian military service. Among the many non-Russian Orientalists were Chokhan Valikhanov, a Kazakh, who worked as an intelligence officer in the Russian army. His mapping of Central Asia was utilised for subsequent conquest of the area. Valikhanov's research on Kazakhstan and Central Asia follows the European parametres of approaching his own culture, and this is also true of the work of G. Tsybikov, a Buryat, who specialized in Buddhist studies.

Unmindful of the incongruity of the situation mentioned in the letter from Kazan quoted above, the initial translations of oriental texts into Russian were also undertaken from the European languages. The Koran was translated twice in the eighteenth century, in 1716 and 1790. Both translations were from Du Rier's French edition. In 1792 a translation from the English version appeared with an appendix. It was entitled, *A Reliable and Detailed Description of the Life of the False Prophet, Mohammed.*[49] Excerpts from the Indian epic, *The Mahabharata* ('The Bhagavata Gita' and 'Nala and Damayanti'), were translated from English and German in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The 'discovery' of Sanskrit by William Jones provided the Europeans with the origins they had long been seeking. If seventeenth century Europe adopted Greek civilization as its genesis, divesting it of its Egyptian links, Sanskrit seemed to provide them with an even more ancient past. The fact that Sanskrit shared common linguistic features with many European languages was utilized to perpetuate the theory that migrants from the West had brought a high culture to India (the Indus valley civilization, which predated the Vedas by about a thousand years, had still not been discovered). The term *arya* in the Indian texts was misconstrued as a race. And thus the myth of the Aryans was created. An exhaustive analysis of the genesis and development of this concept is in Romila Thapar's 'Ideology and the Interpretation of Early Indian History', Leon Poliakov's *The Aryan Myth*, Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*. The Aryan myth was initiated by the German Indologist, Franz

Bopp in 'Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin and Gothic', but perpetuated, among others, by Schleicher, who linked language to Darwin's theory of evolution, and Max Müller. In a series of lectures, delivered at Cambridge in 1882, Max Müller, who had never set foot in the country of his specialization, stated:

> *And even a root as, to breathe, was an Aryan root, not Semitic, not Turanian. It possessed an historical individuality—it was the work of our forefathers, and represents a thread which unites us in our thoughts and words with those who first thought for us, with those who first spoke for us, and whose thoughts and words men are still thinking and speaking, though divided from them by thousands, it may be by hundreds of thousands of years.*[50]

Max Müller is careful to disassociate the Europeans from the multitude of Indian races and cultures:

> *...I am not here pleading for Gonds, or Bhils, or Santhals, and other non-Aryan tribes. I am speaking of the Aryans and more or less civilized inhabitants of India.*[51]

For the German Indologist, the over 10,000 ancient Sanskrit manuscripts listed in the bibliographical survey of the British raj meant that this archive exceeded 'the whole classic literature of Greece and Italy put together.'[52] What did Müller discover? 'We find there the Aryan man, whom we know in his various characters, as Greek, Roman, German, Celt, and Slav, in an entirely new character.'[53] Linguistic theories arose as 'scientific and objective truths' about the supremacy of one race over another. Complementing them were the notions of physiological differences between the races in the works of Herbert Spencer and Darwin.

> *...the concept of evolution...integrated both the old idea of the superiority of so-called advanced races and that of human progress into a grandiose scheme...it was perfectly clear to Spencer that this advance was to be made under the leadership of the white race, and that other races would for a while be left behind in a primitive or backward state.*[54]

Racism was formulated, to quote M. Foucault, 'on the flamboyant rationality of social Darwinism', as can be discerned from yet another of Belinsky's statements:

> *In Australia we see savages divided into tribes; they devour their own kind — and physiologists tell us that the reason for this shocking aberration is their constitution which requires nutriment in the form of human flesh. The native of Africa is a lazy, beast-like dull-witted creature doomed to perpetual slavery and working under the threat of punishment and dire torment. In America only the smaller tribes of the outlying islands were addicted to cannibalism, while on the mainland the two great monarchies of Peru and Mexico represented the highest level of civilization attainable by savages of a relatively higher organisation. What regularity of sequence, what strict consecutiveness in these passages from the lower to the higher genus...We must look in Asia for the further evolution of humanity... From clans and tribes nations are formed, and from families—states... The same laws apply to mankind... it too has its ages of infancy, youth and manhood.*[55]

The civilization of Asia, for Belinsky, is mankind's infancy, that of Greece—the age of youth, and the discovery of America by Europe—the period of manhood.

In 1868 N. Dobrolyubov, belonging to the next generation of Revolutionary Democrats, as they came to be known, reiterated the anthropological backwardness of the Africans and the Australians:

> *We consider it useless to expatiate on the differences between the skulls of the Negroes and other inferior races. Everyone knows about the peculiar development, among the former, of the upper part of the cranium leading in some cases, such as the Australians, to almost total absence of the top part of the brain. And no one is ignorant of the fact that, with regard to the development of intellectual faculties, these people are vastly inferior to the Caucasian race.*[56]

These views were shared by the literary critic, Chernishevsky and Zaitsev, the translator of Karl Marx's works into Russian. Moreover, Zaitsev justified American enslavement of Africans on these very grounds.[57]

The Russian critics were only echoing the thoughts of Rousseau and subsequently Hegel on the stagnant Orient which remained outside the pale of history and in the childhood of civilization. Hegel gave a further twist to non-European art forms in his lectures on aesthetics. For the German philosopher, dialectics in art was approached through the relationship of form and content. Greek art, thus, was the quintessence of this unity as opposed to the barbaric representations in Indian art, where content could not find a fitting form.

> *Defectiveness of form arises from defectiveness of content. So, for example, the Chinese, Indians and Egyptians in their artistic shapes, their forms of deities, and their idols, never got beyond a formless phase, or one of a vicious and false definiteness of form, and were unable to attain genuine beauty; because their mythological ideas, the content and thought of their works of art, were as yet indeterminate in themselves, or of a vicious determinateness, and did not consist in the content that is absolute in itself. The more that works of art excel in true beauty of presentation, the more profound is the inner truth of their content and thought.* [58]

This idea was reiterated in Belinsky's analysis of Zhukovsky's rendering of the Indian tale, 'Nala and Damayanti', from *The Mahabharata*.

> *As far as the poem is concerned it is Indian in the full sense of the word. Gods, animals and human beings participate in it. The Gods and the human beings are as like as two peas, and the human beings, neither more nor less are just like the animals. The geese, for instance, play such a role in the poem that without them there would be no poem. And these geese speak and think just like the human beings. Whereas the human beings, on their part, speak and think exactly like the geese. The geese here are not wiser than the human beings, and the human beings—not wiser than the geese. The pantheism and the entire Indian outlook is expressed in this. The Indians regard nature as god; the spiritual gaze of the Indian does not go either beyond or above nature. For that reason in his eyes, a goose or a cow are just as important as the king and the hero, not to mention the ordinary man. That is why the Indian immerses himself in the universal substance and his individuality is under developed. It is easy for him to break away from himself and immerse himself by looking at the tip of his nose in contemplation of the divine nothingness. Out of all this emerges the monstrosity, absurdity, savagery, genuine warmth, fascinating naivete and, at times, even the grandeur of his poetry.*

While acknowledging the need for such translations, Belinsky adds: 'For us Europeans this poetry is interesting as a fact of the primitive world, but we cannot sympathize with its ugly poetics.'[59] He further maintains: 'The individual is the base of the European spirit for whom, therefore, man is above nature.'[60] There is an ironical twist here. The Russian intellectual thinks like a European, sees himself as one and yet is not considered one by the Europeans. For Belinsky, Indians were 'a great tribe', believing in an amorphous matter which destroys man's

individuality.[61] It was more natural, or so it seemed, for the Russian critic, given his background, to look upon *The Iliad* as the cradle song of civilization.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries European stereotypes about the conquered nations and nationalities had permeated deeply into Russian parlance. Such stereotypes also fed the colonial expansionist ambitions of the Russian empire. Social Darwinism, with its Eurocentric bias, was fast penetrating areas of linguistics, physical and social anthropology, economics and fine arts. Its alleged scientism and objectivity was utilised by the state to initiate a drive aimed at eliminating a plurality of cultures, including those of the protagonist's, for purposes of domination. The terms most widely used in this period of Russian history to define the Orient or the Other were Asiatic despotism, Asiatic backwardness, Asiatic swinishness. Indeed, over time, even the word 'Asiatic' in Russian became a swear word.

The earlier fascination for Rousseau and Voltaire was replaced, in the 1840s, by the French Utopian Socialists, Saint-Simon and Fourier along with Proudhon, and later Darwin and Malthus. However, Hegel continued to dominate Russian minds. Herzen's famous words about Hegel's philosophy being 'the algebra of revolution' were later picked up by the Russian Marxists. Most of the theories emanating from Europe were as concerned with Orientalism as with ways of curbing the growing labour unrest within its own societies, details of which are found in M.Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and *Madness and Civilization*. Hierarchies were meant both for the colonized and as a 'scientifically proven' means of containing discontent at home. We have only to recall Malthus's ideas on the inevitability of proletarian suffering, and his statement:

> *A mob which is generally the growth of a redundant population goaded by resentment for real suffering, but totally ignorant of the quarter from which they originate, is of all monsters the most fatal to freedom.*[62]

Darwin was undoubtedly indebted to Malthus with regard to 'the survival of the fittest'. Moreover, Marxism was a synthesis of Darwinism and Hegelian dialectics, all of which had an impact on Russian intellectuals. Many, like Belinsky, were the forerunners of later Russian Marxists. Belinsky was known to have confessed that, like Marat of the French revolution, if he were forced to cut off a hundred thousand heads, he would not hesitate to do so if it was for the cause of socialism.

The Russian elite, over a period of time, became alienated from its

own cultural ethos and adopted colonial Europe's views of the Other in the guise of scientific and thus, irreducible truths. State initiated attempts to impose a mono-culture gave rise to an acute feeling of inadequacy amongst the aristocracy. These measures also succeeded in increasing the gap between the gentry and the masses because the new ideas did not touch the life and values of the population.

The Russian elite became entangled in its own web. Rejection of tsarist absolutism and the adoption of European ideas were put to test during the Napoleonic war, and its subsequent fallout. A reassessment of their own history in the light of the Napoleonic war saw the emergence of debates between the Slavophiles and the Westerners, or, in other words, the followers of Schelling and those of Hegel. (In later years Dostoevsky, who epitomized the culmination of this inner contradiction, realized the enormous abyss and alienation between the 'haves' and 'have nots'). The debates, however, were confined to the status of Russia and did not touch on colonization. All this is part of the complexity and contradictions that plagued the Russian intellectual in the nineteenth century.

Reductionism, linear theories of progress, anthropological superiority, the assertion of the self and compartmentalisation of reality formed the basis of Russian Orientalism. This approach persisted even after a strong school of Russian Orientalism emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. The examination 'of things Oriental', to use Edward Said's phrase, 'was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign western consciousness'.[63]

Vasily Barthold, a renowned Russian scholar of Central Asia of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, aptly states:

> *The opinion of one of Russia's foremost Orientalists [S.F. Oldenberg] is more than simply polemical when he declares: "The Orient's neighbour, Russia, always knew and understood it well". It would be more appropriate to say: "The Orient's neighbour, Russia, despite its geographical proximity, often preferred to refer to shoddy western books on the Orient rather than to a direct study of the Orient, and especially the Muslim Orient."*[64]

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Dmitry Likhachev, a champion of Russian Orthodoxy and Russian cultural supremacy, has, in recent times, acknowledged the religious tolerance of the Mongol-Tatars in Russia. In Chernov, Andrei, 'Predvaritel'nye itogi tysyacheletnego opyta,' beseda s akademikom D.S. Likhachevym, *Ogonek*, 10, March, 1988, pp. 11-12. Another well known historian George Vernadsky concedes: 'Paradoxical as it may seem, the Mongol age was the period of blossoming of democratic institutions in the north Russian city-states of Novgorod and Pskov, in spite of the fact that north Russia was under the nominal authority of the Mongol khans.' Vernadsky, George, *Kievan Russia*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1966, p. 16.

2. Gumilev, Lev, 'Vsechelovechnost' ili natsional'nost' kul'tury?' *Druzhba narodov*, 6, 1990, p.190.

3. Likhachov, Dmitry, *The Great Heritage*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1981, p. 181.

4. Kim, G.E., Shastitko, P.M. (eds), *Istoriya otechestvennogo vostokovedeniya do XIX veka*, Moscow, Nauka, 1990, p. 23.

5. Ibid.

6. Other non-Russians are also mentioned in the historical chronicles of the early 17th-century writer, Shakhovskoi (note the name, the root of which is Shah). Shakhovskoi, S.I., 'Letopisnaya kniga,' in Dmitriev, L.A., Likhachev, D.S. (eds), *Pamyatniki literatury drevnei Rusi XVI-XVII vekov*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1987, p. 391.

7. Lemercier-Quelquejay, Chantal, 'Cooptation of the Elites of Kabarda and Daghestan in the Sixteenth Century,' in Broxup, Marie Bennigson, (ed.), *The North Caucasus Barrier*, London, Hurst & Company, 1992, p. 38.

8. More on this is in the Chapter, 'Distortion of History.'

9. Gumilev, Lev, 'Menya nazyvayut evraziitsam...,' *Nash sovremennik*, 1, 1991, p. 139. Gumilev's other major works on the subject include: *Drevnie Tyurki* ('The Ancient Turks'); *V poiskakh vymyshlennogo tsarstvo*, St. Petersburg, Abris, 1994; 'Mify i real'nost' etnosfery,' *Druzhba narodov*, 11, 1989, pp. 195-99; Gumilev, Lev, Panchenko, Aleksandr, *Chtoby svecha ne pogasla. Dialog*, Leningrad, Sovetskii pisatel', 1990. Gumilev, the son of Russia's leading poets, Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev, spent many years in labour camps and prison for being 'the son of the enemy.' His father was posthumously rehabilitated in the *glasnost* period.

10. Baziev, A.T., Isaev, M.I., *Yazyk i natsiya*, Moscow, Nauka, 1973, pp. 159-60.

11. In Fasmer, M., *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo yazyka*, Moscow, Progress, 1986; Shanskii, N.M., Ivanov, V.V., Shanskaya, T.V., *Kratkii etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo yazyka*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 1971; Suleimenov, Olzhas, *AziYa*, Alma Ata, Zhazushy, 1975, p. 186. Ingrained prejudices about the Turkic language and culture surface in Vasmer's

research. He forcefully rejects claims that the Russian word for paper was a derivative of the ancient Turkic. Vasmer states that 'historical and cultural reasons' make it 'highly unlikely that the Turkic people played a role in the spread of paper to Russia'. Fasmer, M., vol. 1, p. 241. Yet it is well known that manufacture of writing paper was introduced into Samarkand by the Chinese in 751 A.D. Between the 8th and 10th centuries Samarkand paper, considered 'matchless', was exported to all the countries of the Arab world. Subsequently paper manufacturing units on the lines of Samarkand were set up in Iraq (8th century), Egypt (9th century), Syria (11th century) and Morocco (12th century), from where it was introduced into Spain—under Arab rule—and then to France and Italy. Hitti, Philip K., *History of the Arabs*, London, Macmillan, 1985, p. 347, pp. 414-15; Vollmer, John E., Keall, E.J., Nagai-Berthrong, E., *Silk Roads. China Ships*, Toronto, Ontario, Royal Ontario Museum, 1983, pp. 78-9; Gafurov, B.G., *Tadzhiki. Drevneishaya, drevnyaya i srednevekovaya istoriya*, Dushanbe, Irfon, 1989, pp. 69-70. From the Iranian language important adoptions include *bog* (god) and *mir* (peace). *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Chicago, Aukland, 1993, vol. 22, p. 681. In 1987 A.N. Baskakov concedes that for 700 years, i.e. between the IX and XVI centuries the Russian language was 'enriched by the Finno-Ugrian, Iranian and especially the Turkic languages.' Baskakov, A.N., 'Vliyanie neindoevropeiskikh yazykov narodov SSSR na Russkii yazyk,' in Desheriev, Yu.D. (ed.), *Vzaimovliyanie i vzaimoobogashchenie yazykov narodov SSSR*, Moscow, Nauka, 1987, p. 220.

12. 'The Polovtsy bowed their heads before the steel swords' is a phrase from the Russian epic poem, *The Lay of Igor's Host* of the 12th Century. The adjective *khaluzhnyi* is used here.

13. There are over 140 versions of this tale in 30 languages. Dmitriev, L.A., Likhachev, D.S. (comp. and eds), *Pamyatniki literatury Drevnei Rusi: XII vek*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1980, p. 653. More details are given in the following books: Khalfin, N.A., Shastitko, P.M. (eds), *Rossiya i Indiya*, Moscow, Nauka, 1986, pp. 29-30; Bongard-Levin, G., Vigasin, A., *The Image of India*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1984; Goonatilake, Susantha, *Aborted Discovery. Science & Creativity in the Third World*, London, Zed Books, 1984, p. 46.

14. Khalfin, N.A., Shastitko, P.M., (eds), *Rossiya i Indiya*, Moscow, Nauka, 1986, pp. 26-44.

15. In the bylina folk epics: 'Dyuk' and 'Dyuk Stepanovich' in Bazanova, V. (ed.), *Byliny*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, vol. 2, 1958, pp. 210, 225.

16. 'Povest' vremennykh let,' in Dmitriev, L.A., Likhachev, D.S., (eds), *Pamyatniki literatury drevnei Rusi. XI-nachalo XII veka*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1978, p. 33.

17. These long narrative poems undoubtedly assimilated a great deal from other non-Russian epics popular among the Turkic language peoples, including the Azerbaijanians, Kazakhs, Turkmens. Even the term *bogatyr* is a derivative from the Turkic word *bahadur* meaning brave. In the bylina, 'Vol'kh Vseslavyevich' we read that the Indian Tsar, Saltyk Stavrulyevich, along with his wife, Yelena Alexandrovna Azdyakovna, is intending to invade Kiev. The Russian 'bogatyr' defeats him in battle, marries Azdyakovna, and his soldiers marry the Indian girls. In Kravtsov, N.I. (ed.), *Russkoe narodnoe poeticheskoe tvorchestvo*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 1971, pp. 149-53.

18. 'Povest' vremennykh let,' in Dmitriev, L.A., Likhachev, D.S. (eds), *Pamyatniki literatury drevnei Rusi. XI- nachalo XII veka*, op. cit., p. 23.

19. Ibid. p. 33.

20. Iakov, an 11th-century monk, writes in praise of the ruler of Kiev, Vladimir, who introduced Christianity in Russia. He 'destroyed...the heathen temples everywhere, smashed the idols and then adorned the entire Russian land with Churches.' Monakh Iakov, 'Pamyat' i pokhvala russkomu knyaz'yu Vladimiru,' *Voprosy literatury*, 7, 1988, p. 186.

21. Likhachev, D.S., 'Podstupy k reshitel'nym peremenam v stroenii literatury,' in Dmitriev, L.A., Likhachev, D.S.(eds.), *Pamyatniki literatury drevnei Rusi. Konets XVI-nachalo XVII veka*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1987, pp. 10-11. There is a discrepancy between Likhachev's statement and Shakhovskoi's text which states that Ivan had seven wives. p. 361.

22. Griboedov, A.S., 'Zametki,' *Sochineniya*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1959, p. 453.

23. Barenbaum, I.E., *Knizhnyi Peterburg*, Moscow, Kniga, 1980, p. 4.

24. Ibid., p. 19.

25. Only in 1783 did the government allow the Russians to set up printing presses. ibid., p. 56.

26. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

27. Ibid., p. 78.

28. Kyustin, Markiz Astol'f de, *Nikolaevskaya Rossiya*, Moscow, Politicheskaya literatura, 1990, p. 137.

29. In Troyat, Henri, *Pushkin*, New York, Minerva Press, 1975, pp. 32-33. Peter Chaadaev wrote in 1837 about Russia's indebtedness to Europe since Peter the Great's time: '...our eyes have been constantly turned towards the countries of the Occident; we did nothing more, so to speak, than to breathe in the emanations which reached us from there, and to nourish ourselves on them...our princes almost always took us by the hand, almost always took the country in tow, and the country never had a hand in it; they themselves prescribed to us the customs, the language, and the clothing of the Occident. We learned to spell the names of the things in Occidental books. Our own history was taught to us by one of the Occidental countries. We translated the whole literature of the Occident, we learned it by heart, and we adorned ourselves with its tattered garment. And finally, we were happy to resemble the Occident...' Translation taken from Chaadaev, Peter, 'Apology of a Madman,' in Riha, Thomas (ed.), *Readings in Russian Civilization*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1969, vol. 2, pp.

310-11.

30. Ibid., p. 44.

31. Like Catherine, Paul I vacillated in his relations with France. In his early years Paul was a Francophobe but later formed an alliance with Napoleon. When 'liberal' writings from Europe were banned the Russian elite acquired them clandestinely. This was part of the specificity both of Russia's past and present.

32. In Parker, W.H., *An Historical Geography of Russia*, London, University of London Press Ltd., 1968, p. 98.

33. Olearius, Adam, 'Voyages and Travels of the Ambassadors from the Duke of Holstein to the Great Duke of Muscovy and the King of Persia.' In Wilson, Francesca, *Muscovy. Russia Through Foreign Eyes. 1553-1900*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1970, p. 72. An Indian travelogue by the Russian aristocrat, Alexei Saltykov, served as a reference for Karl Marx.

34. Kyustin, Markiz Astol'f de, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

35. Curzon, George N., *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*, London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967, p. 392. In another passage Curzon describes General Skobelev, infamous for his brutality in the capture of the Tekke-Turkmen stronghold, Geok Tepe: 'In many respects his character was typical of the Russian nation, in its present phase of development, with one foot, so to speak, planted in a barbarian past, while the other is advancing into a new world of ideas and action.' ibid., p. 92.

36. Belinsky, V.G., 'The Acts of Peter the Great, the Wise Regenerator of Russia,' *Selected Philosophical Works*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1948, p. 138.

37. Ibid., p. 138.

38. Ibid., p. 142.

39. Belinsky, V.G., 'A View of Russian Literature in 1846,' *Selected Philosophical Works*, op. cit., p. 355.

40. Ibid., p. 353.

41. In Zelinsky, K., *Soviet Literature. Problems and People*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1970, p. 14. Rousseau in *The Social Contract* had stated: '...in terms of climate, despotism suits hot countries, barbarism cold countries, and that a good polity suits temperate regions.' Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *The Social Contract*, London, Penguin Books, 1968, p. 126. The notion of the Orient as the opposite of the Occident are explicit in Rousseau's *A Discourse on Inequality* where he argues that 'the peoples of the North are more industrious than those of the South.' Rousseau, Jean-Jaques, *A Discourse on Inequality*, London, Penguin Books, 1984, p. 89. See also pp. 87-90.

42. In Parker, W.H., *An Historical Geography of Russia*, op. cit., p. 83.

43. Belinsky, V.G., 'The Acts of Peter the Great, the Wise Regenerator of Russia,' op. cit., p. 120.

44. For details see: Gumilev, Lev, 'Mify i real'nost' etnosfery,' *Druzhba narodov*, 11, 1989, pp. 195-9.

45. For more details on Silvestre de Sacy see Said, Edward, *Orientalism*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, pp. 123-30.

46. Sultan Khan-Girei, the author of *Notes on Circassia*, belonged to the Adyg gentry. He was educated in St. Petersburg and graduated from the Cadets Corps. Of him it is said, that 'it was the Russian culture, which he had mastered, that largely shaped Khan-Girei as a researcher'. A Eurocentric approach is also evident in the works of Chokan Valikhanov, a Kazakh, who graduated from the Siberian Cadet Corps in 1853 and was appointed an adjutant to the Governor-General of Western Siberia, G.Kh. Gasfort. Details on Russian Orientalist studies are in: Kim, G.F., Shastitko, P.M., (eds), *Istoriya otechestvennogo vostokovedeniya do serediny XIX veka*, Moscow, Nauka, pp. 198, 990.

47. In Kim, G.F., Shastitko, P.M., (eds), op. cit., p. 990 and pp. 120-21.

48. Bongard-Levin's work, *The Image of India*, is silent about these aspects and does not mention the many foreigners supervising the study of Orientalism in Russia.

49. Kim, G.F., Shastitko, P.M., (ed.), op. cit., p. 73.

50. Müller, Max, 'India. What can it teach us?' Lecture 1. *India. What can it teach us ?* Delhi, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1961, p. 24-25.

51. Müller, Max. 'Character of the Hindus', Lecture 2. ibid., p. 46.

52. Ibid., p. 75.

53. Ibid., p. 85.

54. Poliakov, Leon, *The Aryan Myth. A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*, New York, Basic Books, 1974, p. 290.

55. Belinsky, V.G., 'The Idea of Art', *Selected Philosophical Works*, op. cit., pp. 172-3. For more details on the perceptions of the Orient of Russian historians and intellectuals see Becker, Seymour, 'Russia Between East and West: the Intelligentsia, Russian National Identity and the Asian Borderlands,' *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 10, 4, 1991.

56. In Poliakov, Leon, op. cit., p. 125.

57. Ibid., for more details see: Chernishevskii, N.G., 'Ocherk nauchnykh ponyatii po nekotorym voprosam vseobshchei istorii,' *Izbrannye filosofskie sochineniya*, Moscow, Politicheskaya literatura, 1951, vol. 3, p. 573.

58. Hegel, G., 'Lectures on Aesthetics' in Friedrich, Carl (ed.), *The Philosophy of Hegel*, New York, 1954, p. 373.

59. Belinskii, V.G., 'Retsenzii i zametki, yanvar'-mart 1844. Nal' i Damayanti,' *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Moscow, Akademiya nauk, 1955, vol. 8, p. 113.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Malthus, T.R., 'On the Principle of Population,' in Bukharin, N.I., 'Darvinizm i Marksizm,' *Izbrannye trudy*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1988, p. 92.

63. Said, Edward, op. cit., p. 8.

64. Bartol'd, V.V., *Istoriya izucheniya Vostoka v Evrope*, Leningrad, 1925, p. 295.

2

Romanticism : The Caucasus of Pushkin, Griboedov, Lermontov

Beauty, mystery and adventure were terms that symbolized the Caucasus in the imagination of early nineteenth century Russian intellectuals. The snow-capped peaks and mountain rapids provided a dramatic contrast to the flat Russian landscape and its meandering rivers, and inspired many poets, including Derzhavin and Zhukovsky.[1] However, it was Pushkin's genius that brought the Russian reader face to face with the Caucasus: 'the magnificent mountain range with its summits of ice', 'growling streams', 'thundering white avalanches' and 'the wild Terek roaring' were some of the metaphors introduced in the poet's first Romantic narrative poem, *The Prisoner of Caucasus* (1821). The magical appeal of the area is evident in another poem written seven years later, 'The Caucasus' (1829):

Below me the silver-capped Caucasus lies...
Nearby an abyss yawns and, far down, a roaring
Stream swift rushes past; o'er the peaks calmly soaring,
An eagle seems motionless, pinned to the skies.
Here rivers are born that mid rocks, grumbling wander
And landslides begin with a crash of thunder....

And, laugh-crazed, the Terek goes tumbling and leaping.
It lashes about like a beast in a cage
With food out of reach, full of hunger and craving,
And licks at the boulders, and howling and raving,
Strikes out at the shore in a frenzy and rage.
Alas ! it is thwarted: the mountains surround it;
Mute, threatening giants, they press darkly round it.[2]

Pushkin's successor, Lermontov, gives yet another emotionally charged description of the Caucasus in his poem, *The Demon*:

And so — exiled from paradise —
He soared above the peaks of ice
And saw the everlasting snows
Of Kazbek and the Caucasus,
And, serpentine, the winding deeps