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Alexander Etkind. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011. ix+289 p. ISBN 978-0-7456-5130-9.

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Although Alexander Etkind's book concerns "Russia's imperial experience," he presents empire as an "international project" (46). "International product" would be a more emphatic term to describe this important corrective to most recent studies of imperialism, which rarely transcend the national optic (Bassin 1999; Gerasimov, Kusber, and Semyonov 2009; Lieven 2000; Maiorova 2010). His reader is invited to a share of imperial experience through the double gaze of imperial administrators, theorists, and writers, who worked under multiple empires. Etkind uncovers echoes of Thomas Macaulay in Nikolai Gogol, ideas of Henri de Boulainvilliers in Vasilii Tatishchev, and those of American theorist of the frontier Frederick Jackson Turner and French race theorist Arthur de Gobineau in Sergei Uvarov. The Abbé Raynal's Russian partner is Nikolai Radishchev, and that of eminent French historian Fustel de Coulanges is the historian Vasilii Kliuchevskii.

Etkind's perspective is not chronological or genealogical but structuralist. Literature and fiction replace an absent theoretical tradition in critical thinking, a strategy that is justified in light of the multiple function of literary fiction in Russian culture. The book returns again and again to the plot lines of Gogol's *Nose* and Dostoyevsky's *Double*, which supply the book with more than a metaphor: these books offer the clue to what the formalists would have called the device through which the argument of *Internal Colonization* can be unlocked. The idea of the "double" brings a psychoanalytic dimension to imperial experience, inviting us to read it as a study of self. The double, or *Doppelgänger*, is the modern mind's quintessential "uncanny." As Said (2003) and others have shown, in studies such as *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud provided an example for tying his psychoanalytic work on "self" and "other" with his views on imperial decline, a synthesis which clearly served as an inspiration for Etkind's work. Another important model is Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* with its idea of "double consciousness."

In empires, Etkind suggests drawing on Frantz Fanon (1952), the subject of power is simultaneously the object; the administrator as colonizer is as much an object of colonization as the purportedly inferior population that he assumes to control. This has important consequences for the way Etkind studies empire. Instead of tracing the factual origins of imperial foundations from conquest to expansion, as traditional studies of empire might do, he interrogates how imperial identity as an intellectual system reinvents its own origins. At the heart of this project are influential historians based at Russia's academies of science, some of whom are of Russian background, like Vasilii Tatishchev and Mikhail Lomonosov, while others are

German, like August Ludwig von Schlözer. These historians, who served different Russian autocrats, viewed the first conqueror of Russia's future imperial heartlands, Rurik, variously as a Swede, a Slav, or a Norman. From this point of view, Russia's empire appears less and less as Russia's own and more as a contested space of redefinition. Russian imperial experience is not the history of how Russians colonized other peoples but rather an analysis of the political economy of imperial identity.

The "doubling" device not only turns attention to the Russian complements of a more familiar, Western narrative of imperialism and its critiques. It is also an invitation to an ironic critique of postcolonial studies and theories of empire. Colonization is "internal" in two senses. At the most apparent level, it describes the outward form of hierarchical economic relationships in Eurasia. Although different from overseas empires, empires with "internal" colonies share with them the tendency to justify economic hierarchy through a discourse of difference. This leads to the deeper, psychological and cultural level, captured by the term "internal colonization." As an effect of the mind, which is characterized by a "double consciousness," the very idea of Russian identity is dependent on a mythology of "self" and "other," which takes different forms in its imperial history but structurally remains the same.

Etkind's book can be situated within two revisionist debates on empire. One is the view of empire presented in post-subaltern studies of world history (Tignor et al. 2002). This perspective takes for granted the idea of empire as a Janus-faced creature, rather than just liberalism's dark side. It does so by looking at empire from a global rather than a national or postcolonial point of view. National identities are products of transnational mythologies and imperial markets. Etkind indicates that the national guise of imperial experience—in this case, it happens to be Russian—is the outcome, and not the causal force, of imperial experience. Empires only *appear* to be Russian, British, French, and so on. But, as he also shows, this should not preclude us from having illusions about seemingly supranational and supraimperial ideas. They do not transcend empires, but remain embedded in their political economy. The Enlightenment as a nationally indifferent "republic of letters" is deeply rooted in the administrative history of empires. His contextualization of European Enlightenment thinkers such as the Bentham brothers and Immanuel Kant with Russian imperial administrators such as Andrei Bolotov emphasizes the Enlightenment's own ambivalent relationship with Empire. Kant is introduced to us as a subject of more than one empire, and in this capacity appears as a "postcolonial thinker" *avant la lettre*.

The other debate concerns the relationship of nation-state and empire as ideal types, which previous interpreters have presented as dialectical (Weber 1976). More recently, historians began to emphasize the deep connections between European state building and imperial expansion. Imperialism is not the foreign side of Europe's internal identity, but is potentially built into the very heart of European identity (Bullard 2000; Fernández-Armesto and Muldoon 2008). It is at this end of the debate that Etkind's argument has left me slightly puzzled. While the overall premise of Etkind's work is a global, supraimperial, and philosophical perspective, his historical conclusion returns to a dialectic of empire and nation-state. As Etkind emphasizes,

in the Russian case the state's monopoly on violence does not, as it should, serve the purpose of protecting its citizens from themselves but instead serves the purpose of protecting the government's own monopoly over resources from its population. By contrast, Western states turned "peasants into Frenchmen" (in Eugen Weber's controversial thesis). Only in Russia did the "imperial experience" continue into and beyond Soviet totalitarianism, merely transforming one type of enslavement into another. Yet, Etkind's own analysis seems to contradict this conclusion.

In comparative perspective, "internal" colonization is not only globally entangled with the history of "overseas" colonization; it is also tied up with the history of allegedly "non-colonial" states. Like the state, the colony is a product of both the market and the mind. France and the United States—two "model nations" of the old narrative of the progressive nation—are examples of polities that developed both systems in close entanglement with each other.

Does such a global, networked character of colonial consciousness and society allow for a "special path" narrative of the Russian case, as Etkind seems to suggest?

Russia's role as a gas monopolist in the contemporary world has a prehistory in the international fur trade. This could also serve as an invitation to complement the case of Russia's ever-novel forms of self-enslavement with those underlying all Western states. The European world was full of corporate Leviathans that emerged neither from contract nor by conquest but through expanding trade on Europe's seas and rivers under the "roof" of various protectors; it forced numerous population groups into contracts, which created states and other structures of power along the way. State infrastructures and myths of nations continue to serve the interests of potentially transnational, even transimperial corporations, which exploit a number of different population groups at once, Russians among them.

The field of hegemony that Etkind interrogates most poignantly is the scholarly one. Consequently, the main double this book conjures up is one that most readers of imperial theories would recognize as their own: a Western, or Western-trained, academic who reads English, French (especially when translated into English), and German (occasionally, and when translated into English) and accepts the heuristic framework offered by these cultural traditions at the expense of other linguistic and scholarly communities. Isn't he ultimately the real subject of imperial experience?

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