Steppe Realism: Nikolai Karazin's *Two-Legged Wolf*

i. Introduction: Nikolai Karazin, *Turkestanets*, and his readers

Popular, well-connected, and omnipresent in his day, Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin, born 1842 in Kharkov, was a jack-of-all Turkestan trades, a *Turkestanets*, as the class of career military men and Orientalists who made their professional lives in Central Asia were known. He served in the so-called Turkestan campaigns of the 1860s and, after retiring from military service in 1871, began almost immediately to publish essays, fiction, and sketches based on his experiences in the region. During the 1870s and 1880s Karazin made a name for himself as a novelist while advancing his multifaceted career as a servant of Russian imperial expansion.[1] He published novels, most of them originally serialized in popular literary magazines, until the turn of the century, establishing himself as an entertaining writer and a trusted source of information on Central Asia. A front-page profile in the journal *Niva* [*Grainfield*], for which Karazin was also an occasional correspondent from Turkestan, lauds his productivity and range, citing an impressive publication record of two long novels, multiple stories and essays, and over 200 small paintings over the course of three years. The profile also presents Karazin as the ideal medium for information about Turkestan, asserting that he unites "the powers of observation of an ethnographer with the talents of a writer and painter, and [is] an Orientalist thanks to his

[1] "Karazin, Nikolai Nikolaevich," in *Russkie pisateli 1800-1917, biograficheskii slovar'*, vol. 2, ed. P.A. Nikolaev (Moscow: Nauchnoe izdatel'stvo "Bol'shaia Rosiiskaia Entsiklopedia"), 468-9.

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Николай Николаевичъ Каразинъ.

Ученая экспедиція по теченію Аму-Дарьи, снаряженная весною нынѣшняго года съ цѣлію ближайшаго изслѣдованія недавно-пріобрѣтенныхъ Россіею странъ и народностей, занимаетъ въ настоящее время умы всей читающей публики. Дѣятельное участіе, которое принималъ въ этой экспедиціи даровитый сотрудникъ «Нивы», Николай Николаевичъ Каразинъ, обѣщая много интересныхъ очерковъ и рисунковъ нашему журналу, въ то же время придаетъ новый и такъ сказать общественный интересъ его личности. Пользуемся этимъ случаемъ, чтобы познакомить нашихъ читателей съ жизнью и дѣятельностью художника, давно уже извѣстнаго имъ со стороны его литературнаго и художественнаго таланта.

Каразинъ родился въ 1842 году, и получивъ воспитаніе во 2-мъ московскомъ кадетскомъ корпусѣ, вступилъ на военное поприще. Вся долговременная служба его представляетъ непрерывный рядъ боевыхъ походовъ, что дало ему возможность ближе изучать и въ совершенствѣ усвоить себѣ тревожное житье-бытье русскаго солдата. Сопряженная съ лагерной жизнью постоянная перемѣна мѣстъ, а также частыя поѣздки по Россіи и Азіи помогли ему пригладѣться и къ народному быту посѣщенныхъ имъ странъ. Въ то время Каразинъ еще не думалъ о карьерѣ художника и безъ всякой опредѣленной цѣли набрасывалъ въ своемъ альбомѣ эскизы подорожныхъ мѣстностей и типы различныхъ народностей — единственно въ силу своей артистической натуры, безсознательно пробуждавшагося таланта и врожденной наблюдательности. Такъ совершилъ онъ польскій походъ 1863—1864 годовъ, принимая участіе въ болѣе значительныхъ стычкахъ съ польскими бандами при Джарахъ, Заболотцахъ, Порицкѣ, Волчьемъ постѣ и Грушевѣ, — а затѣмъ и туркестанскій 1865—1871 годовъ, въ теченіи котораго онъ участвовалъ

Николай Николаевичъ Каразинъ, Рис. Тегаццо, грав. Пуцъ.

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Figure 1. A front-page profile of Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin in the journal *Niva*, August 1874.

service in Central Asia."[2] Given his facility with multiple popular creative genres and his familiarity with Russian Turkestan, Karazin became a popular authority on the territories that the Russian Empire was assimilating in the late nineteenth century.[3]

[2] "Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin," *Niva* 5, no. 36 (31 Aug. 1874), accessed 11 May 2018, https://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/45538237. See Figure 1.

[3] My understanding of the course of Karazin's life has been greatly enhanced by Elena Andreeva's recent monograph on Karazin. The first full-length study of Karazin and his work in English or Russian, it provides a biographical sketch of Karazin's time in Russian Central Asia and a comprehensive overview of the fiction, painting, reportage, and memoir he produced there. Elena Andreeva, *Russian Central Asia in the Works of Nikolai Karazin, 1842-1908: Ambivalent Triumph* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2020).

Karazin's considerable achievement was to have reconciled Russian literature's engagement, especially in the latter years of the nineteenth century, with the Russian people [*narod*] with its interest in Russia's imperial peripheries. Karazin's Central Asian fiction sutures multiple competing modalities of Russian identity, which it represents as arising from both the imperial state *and* the people—that is from both the political and military elites and the common soldiers and laborers who carry out their orders. His literary output about Central Asia thus reveals a certain idealizing tendency in Karazin's thinking, which attempts to make the entirety of the empire accessible and comprehensible to the everyman. This utopian project works on multiple literary historical and formal levels, allowing Karazin's Central Asian writing to both represent and resolve certain tensions and contradictions within Russian literature and historiographical thought.

Central Asia provided Karazin with "free" space with which to invest his imperial vision. In addition to numerous essays, reportage, short stories for adults and children, and a collection of essays on Central Asia called *Ot Orenburga do Tashkenta* [*From Orenburg to Tashkent*, 1871], Karazin published four novels set in the region, all of which explore the conversion of Central Asian territory into Russian colonies, in the final three decades of the nineteenth century. The first, *Na dalekikh okrainakh* [*On the Distant Outskirts*] (1872), takes a critical view of the debauched lifestyles of petty officers in colonial Tashkent, as does *Pogonia za nazhivoi* [*The Pursuit of Profit*], which appeared the following year, in 1873. *Dvunogii volk* [*The Two-Legged Wolf*] (1874), on which the present essay will focus, treats the Russian annexation of the Khanate of Khiva, focusing on the hardships endured by the Russian soldiers who served in the operation. A final novel on colonial themes, *Nal'* (1891), relates the strange tale of a young man, the son of an English governess and a Russian officer in Petersburg who discovers that his biological father

is Indian royalty and must then negotiate the forces of competing empires as they manifest in his genetic and cultural inheritances.[4] In all of his Turkestan novels Karazin addresssed the Russian transformation of Central Asia as well as the changes Russia itself was experiencing as it conquered and settled the region, especially as it concerned the Russians who were migrating there.

Scholarly and critical literature on Karazin flourished during the decade or so in which he published frequently but, by Soviet times, only a handful of references to his literary work could be found. Current treatment of Karazin is similarly sparse, though the past several years have seen a small gathering of interest around his work.[5] The critical reception of Karazin's fiction, from his contemporaries in the late nineteenth century down to the occasional scholarship which appeared about him during the Soviet period and in the present day, has been remarkably consistent in its estimation of the purpose and value of the work.[6] While some accounts,

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[4] I have provided the dates in which these novels first appeared in print according to "Karazin, Nikolai Nikolaevich" in *Russkie pisateli, 1800-1917*. Many of Karazin's novels were initially serialized, in which case the dates shown above correspond to the publication date in literary journals. All were later published as books, and Karazin's collected works appeared in 1904-5 in Nikolai Nikolaevich Karazin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenie v 20 tomakh* (St. Petersburg: P. Soikina), 1905.

[5] In addition to Andreeva's monograph (see n. 3), in the past several years Eleonora Shafranskaia has published in Russian several articles on Karazin's literary construction of Central Asia as well as the monograph *Turkestanskii tekst v russkoi kul'ture: Kolonial'naia proza Nikolaia Karazina* (Self-published, St. Petersburg, 2016). In that work Shafranskaia notes that Karazin's extensive collected works were so neglected in the Soviet period that none of his fiction ever appeared in the the modernized orthography of the post-revolutionary period (pg. 28). Elena Andreeva's mongraph on Karazin is the first and only, apart from the present document, scholarly work in English on Karazin.

[6] In addition to the profile in *Niva* extracted above, see a thorough summary of the critical reception of Karazin's literary work by his contemporaries in Kal'sim Shakirovna Kereeva-Kanafieva, *Russko-Kazakhskie literaturnye otnosheniia* (Almaty: Izdatel'stvo "Kazakhstan," 1975), 136-40. An additional source from the Soviet period provides a summary of Karazin's oeuvre and some discussion of his critical reception: V. Shumkov, "Zhizn', trudy i stranstviia Nikolaia Karazina, pisatelia, khudozhnika, puteshestvennika," *Zvezda vostoka*, no. 6 (1975). *Russkii Turkestan. Istoriia, liudi, nravy*. Accessed 21 July 2019. https://rus-turk.livejournal.com/146485.html. In recent years, Karazin's work has garnered some attention from Russian researchers interested in Russian colonialism and orientalism in Central Asia: Eleonora Shafranskaia, *Turkestanskii tekst v russkoi kul'ture: Kolonial'naia proza Nikolaia Karazina* and "Fazy kolonial'nogo diskursa v russkoi proze o Turkestane," *Filologia i kul'tura*, no. 2 (48), 2017: 218-24; Aleksandra Kazimirchuk, "Podpis' k risunku kak osobennyi zhanr orientalistskoi poetiki N. N. Karazina," *Mediinye protsessy v sovremennom gumanitarnom prostranstve: podkhody k izucheniu, evoliutsiia, perspektivy* (MPGU, Moscow, 2016), 81-9 and PhD diss. *Orientalistskaia proza N. N. Karazina: osobennosti poetiki*,

especially by Karazin's contemporaries, have critiqued the stylistic and philosophical simplicity of his writing (a contemporary critic wrote that Karazin's novels "act on the reader externally, not causing him to think or seriously extend sympathy to the spiritual life of their heroes,")[7] most have agreed that it fulfills a different, didactic function. His fiction, reportage, sketches, and watercolors have been taken as an accurate and true portrayal of life as it was for both Russian soldiers and local populations in 1870s and 1880s Turkestan. Karazin wrote, one said, "like a picture [картинно], just as he paints," while another observed that "a poetic feeling sometimes appears" in his watercolors.[8] Another critic observed that he wrote "like a painter," providing only "broad outlines of characters."[9] A laudatory obituary in *Niva* observed that Karazin's novels were "not read but looked at. And looked at with interest and pleasure."[10] But even his more strident critics, some of whom harbored serious stylistic reservations about his work, acknowledge the authentic quality of the content of his fiction.[11] It is undoubtedly true that Karazin's fiction informed the Russian reading public about a region which most Russians would never visit personally. However, perhaps because Karazin was neglected during the Soviet period, he was overlooked during the late twentieth century, when scholars of Russian literature and empire (and, indeed, following Edward Said's *Orientalism*, literature and empire more

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Moskovskii Gorodskoi Pedagogicheskii Universitet, 2015; and E. K. Dubtsova "Zhanrvoe svoeobrazie proizvedeniia N. N. Karazina 'S severa na iug," in materials from the conference *Liki traditsionnoi kul'tury: proshloe, nastoiashchee, budushchee*, Cheliabinsk Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 15-17 May 2008.

[7] This quote and others pertaining to the reception of Karazin's work, especially his watercolors and sketches, in the 1870s can be found in Shumkov, "Zhizn', trudy i stranstviiya Nikolaia Karazina." The original reads: "[романы Каразина] действуют на читателя внешне, не заставляя его думать или серьезно уходить своим сочувствием в душевную жизнь героев."

[8] These quotes are from unnamed sources qtd. in Shumkov.

[9] Qtd in Kereeva-Kanafieva, 137.

[10] *Niva* no. 52 (1908), accessed 20 August 2019, http://zerrspiegel.orientphil.uni-halle.de/t1127.html.

[11] Another of Karazin's contemporaries, Garshin, quipped that he wrote for "нетребовательным читателям." And the Soviet critic K. Sh. Kereeva-Kanafieva notes in Karazin's work "недостатки (отсутсвие глубокой психологической характеристики героев; любовь автора к нагромождению событий и усложнению ситуаций с целью вызвать острые ощущения у читателя, и т. д.). See Kereeva-Kanafieva pgs. 136-40 for a thorough summary of the critical reception of Karazin's literary work by his contemporaries.

broadly) began to understand the two terms as coconstitutive, and to examine the ways in which Russian literature not only represented but helped to produce the imperial experience.

Karazin's literary oeuvre has only very recently been subject to this mode of scholarly inquiry, with the appearance of Eleonora Shafranskaia's 2016 monograph, *Turkestanskii tekst v russkoi kul'ture: Kolonial'naia proza Nikolaia Karazina* [*The Turkestan Text in Russian Culture: the Colonial Prose of Nikolai Karazin*]. In this work, Shafranskaia provides a Saidian reading of Russian Central Asia, arguing that the literary tropes and ethnographic details which became common in Russian representations of Central Asia—in genres as wide-ranging as fiction, journalism, scientific and military reports, and film—form a retrospectively visible "colonial canon," which continued productively into the Soviet period with such works as Andrei Platonov's novella *Soul* [*Dzhan*] and Vladimir Motyl's film *White Sun of the Desert* [*Beloe solntse pustyni*].[12] Those works' interest in the settlement and irrigation of Central Asia appear as regional permutations of Soviet ideologies and aesthetics but, as Shafranskaia shows, Russian cultural interest in making Central Asia a populous and agriculturally productive land date back to the Russian imperial conquest of that territory, and much of the language used to describe such goals is remarkably consistent across military, political, and literary documents, and seems to have its origins in Karazin's Turkestan fiction. Whether or not texts like *Dvunogii volk* served as intertexts for later Russian explorers and writers, including Platonov, Shafranskaia argues persuasively that Karazin did more than any other single figure to generate the elements that went into circulation as the hallmarks of the Turkestan text. These core traits Shafranskaia describes as the presence of:

> a traveler-narrator, an observer, a commentator; a combination of adventure, sociological, and historical plots; the position of an individual [частного человека] within historical

[12] Shafranskaia 21-5. See *Beloe solntse pustyni*, dir. Vladimir Motyl (Moscow: Mosfil'm, 1970) and Andrei Platonov, *Dzhan* in *Sobranie: Andrei Platonov* (Moscow: Vremia, 2010), vol. 4.

> events; a preference for the construction not of personality [характер] but typological characters [типологический персонаж]…the existence of detective motifs; an ethnographic component. In sum, [the Turkestan text] realizes one of the main functions of artistic literature—a familiarizing [ознакомительная] function.[13]

That familiarizing function, based on the construction of generalized and portable fictional character types against the backdrop of real historical events, allows Karazin to imagine and ultimately "build a model of the future" in Russian Central Asia.[14] And, though they wouldn't have called it a Turkestan text, it was in that combination of ethnographic detail, generalized character types who nonetheless lend specificity to historical events, and an orientation toward an imagined, but apparently imminent, future that Karazin's contemporaries found his work's aesthetic merit lay.

Figure 2. Karazin's sketch "Caravan," which appeared in *Niva* in 1892.

[13] Ibid., 30-1.
[14] Ibid., 21.

ii. Bridging Russia and the periphery, romanticism and realism: Karazin's literary heritage

Karazin's fiction reflects a period in which Russian identity was particularly indeterminate. Often described, in the late nineteenth century and down to the present day, as a dialectical contest between the influences of East and West, or center and periphery, the Russian identity with which Karazin grapples is multifaceted, comprised of shifting, interrelated discourses on the core aspects of Russian identity: the state, the gentry, and nation. The historical context of the Karazin's time, with the Russian state rapidly expanding its imperial territory, made the tension between these discursive strands particularly acute. As Maiorova argues, during the nineteenth century more than at previous times "the edges of Russia's core were undefined, the boundaries between the center and periphery were porous, and the state's outward growth seemed unstoppable."[15] In this period, Maiorova notes, Russian imperial identity and Russian national identity, categories which were historically related but imperfectly aligned, were frequently at odds with each other. Karazin's Turkestan novels reflect an attempt to resolve that tension—and in doing so produce the vernacular imperialism which defines his literary fiction—by knitting together a Russian identity that was formed primarily in contrast to non-Russian "others" on the imperial periphery, and a more recent conception of national identity, based on the nineteenth-century assertion of Russian *narodnost*', or internally generated national character.

The history of Russian identity's formation in contrast to "others" beyond its borders is long. During the Muscovite period, identity was conceived primarily in religious terms, and the identity of the Muscovite state rested on Orthodoxy in opposition to Catholic Europe and to the Tatar populations on the edges of Slavic territories, with whom western Slavic peoples had

[15] Maiorova, 5-6.

cohabited, peacably or otherwise, for centuries.[16] The Petrine revolution of the early eighteenth century, however, weakened the contrast between Russia and Western Europe, as the Russian state and then Russian thinkers and writers sought to absorb and emulate western Enlightenment ideals.[17] The effects of the diminished sense of Europe as the location of Russia's primary oppositional, and therefore definitional, cultural locus are evident in the work of Nikolai Karamzin, traveler, belletrist, and popularizer of European Enlightenment ideas. On the one hand, Russian thinkers and writers actively compared themselves to their contemporaries abroad. Beginning in the final decades of the eighteenth century, Karamzin, along with his senior contemporaries Derzhavin and Radishchev, looked toward Russia's western peripheries and saw "new scientific and philosophical ideas [of the European Enlightenment] as a particular set of challenges that needed to be domesticated."[18] On the other hand, Western Europe was no longer an adequate "other" against which Russia could define itself, a loss which set Russian thinkers and writers gaze inward, to Russia itself. Andreas Schonle frames Russia's eighteenth-century encounter with Europe this way: "Western European countries had all constructed an 'other' that helped them stabilize their identity: England had France, France had the Orient, and Germany had Italy. Russia had nothing, except, perhaps, its own past, a fact that created intense soul-searching."[19] Andrew Kahn argues that Karamzin's groundbreaking *Letters of a Russian*

[16] The following section will discuss the cultural significance of Russian-Tatar relations in somewhat greater detail. For the history of that relationship and of Russia's imperial expansion before the nineteenth century see Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Indiana UP, 2002); George V. Lantzeff and Richard A Pierce, *Eastward to Empire: Exploration and Conquest on the Russian Open Frontier, to 1750* (McGill-Queen's UP, 1973); and Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Cornell UP, 2004).

[17] A recent history of the Petrine period with a focus on discursive shifts in Russia's encounter with and apprehension of European Enlightenment values can be found in James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004).

[18] Andrew Kahn, Introduction to *Nikolai Karamzin: Letters of a Russian traveller* trans. Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003), 3.

[19] Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790-1840* (Harvard UP, 2000), 13.

Traveller (1797), in which a Russian narrator turns a literary and philosophical gaze on Western Europe for the first time, had to adapt for the Russian public "a sense of national identity [which] was a function of mental (and even imaginary) geographies in which their own cultures and civilisations could be compared to other countries."[20] This particular function was "long understood" by European writers, whereas Russian writers had to simultaneously produce both a sense of national identity and knowledge of other nations to which Russia could be compared. At the same time, because Russian ruling elites had begun to channel state power into the form of an expanding overland empire, a new configuration of Russian national identity had to be constructed in opposition to recently conquered populations on the imperial periphery. Hence, a duality emerged between Russian-ness as a primarily contrastive identity, on the one hand, and a burgeoning sense of Russian *narodnost'*, or internally-generated national identity, on the other. Reflecting this duality, Russia's literary gaze by the beginning of the nineteenth century vacillated between "Russia proper" and the world at and beyond its borders, helping to establish the complex relationship between Russian national and Russian imperial identity.

Russian literature's encounter with the Caucasus, which began with the generation following Karamzin, was fundamental in establishing the parameters of both national and imperial identity, though it also generated certain ambiguities regarding the cultural significance of the peripheries of the Russian empire. In some senses, the "literary Caucasus," as Susan Layton calls the encounter in her foundational study of the period, returned Russians' ability, obscured during the Petrine revolution, to define themselves in contradistinction to Europe: the Caucasus "assumed [cultural and psychological functions] as a clarifier of the semi-

[20] Kahn, "Nikolai Karamzin's discourses of Englightenment" in *Nikolai Karamzin: Letters of a Russian traveller* trans. Kahn (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003), 459.

Europeanized Russian self."[21] For Layton, the Caucasus provided a region in which Russian writers could work through the state of semi-Europeanness by staking out for Russia an identity which lay somewhere between European and "Asiatic," while establishing a stable ground. A middle ground, Layton argues, gave Russian writers, the ability to appropriate desirable cultural traits and displace undesirable ones, casting themselves as European where they perceived Europeans to be civilizers, and non-European when they perceived European influence to be corrupting. Similarly, they identified with the "Eastern" traits, which the literature of the Caucasus itself helped to produce, when those traits connoted liberty, purity, and moral rectitude; and distanced themselves from the East when it connoted decadence and brutality. However, the Russian writers who depicted the Caucasus also had to confront and account for the violent reality of imperial conquest and the imperatives of an imperial government which endangered the very cultures which helped produce an early-nineteenth century sense of Russianness. Thus, as Harsha Ram argues, the Russian romantics who generated the Caucasian theme in Russian literature themselves "became an ambiguous third element in the otherwise binary conflict between colonizer and colonized," identifying ultimately with both positions.[22] Through its encounter with the Caucasus, Russian literature saw a definition of *narodnost'*, a complex term whose nineteenth-century usage is comparable to Western Europe's "nationality," begin to coalesce around certain idealized "folk" characteristics.[23] *Narodnost'*, when it was used to define

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[21] Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge UP, 1994), 288.

[22] Harsha Ram, *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire* (The University of Wisconson Press, 2003), 11.

[23] The first use of the word "*narodnost'*" is usually attributed to Prince P. A. Viazemskii, Ostafevskii arkhiv kniazei Viazemskikh (St. Petersburg, 1899), 1:357. For a discussion of the term and accompanying concept as it was applied and its definition honed on the peripheries of the Russian Empire, see Katya Hokanson, "Literary Imperialism, Narodnost', and Pushkin's Invention of the Caucasus," *The Russian Review* Vol. 53 No. 3 (July 1994), pp. 336-52.For an discussion of the historical development of the term see Alexey Miller, "Natsiia, Narod, Narodnost' in Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Some Introductory Remarks to the History of Concepts," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge vol. 56 No. 3 (2008), pp. 379-90.

Russianness, posed Russian authenticity in contrast to a Europeanized Russian ruling elite; applied instead to non-Russian populations on the edges of the Russian empire, it implied a sort of categorical equivalence between Russians and their Caucasian counterparts, while reinforcing the cultural contrast between these groups in possession of authentic national characteristics, and the urbanized gentry.

Authenticity in regards to Russian identity was never merely a question of culture or locality, but also one of class. The Caucasian encounter produced some early literary representations of Russian *narodnost'*, in the form of characters like Lermontov's Maksim Maksimych from *Geroi nashego vremeni* [*A Hero of Our Time*, 1840], who stand in contrast to the Europeanized gentry, while also occupying a transitional space between urban Russians from the imperial core and the non-Russian Caucasians on the periphery. In the first pages of Lermontov's novel, for example, Maksim Maksimych is introduced in "an officer's tunic with no epaulettes and a Circassian fur hat," ["На нём был офицерский сюртук без эполет и черкесская мохнатая шапка"] signaling even in the most immediately evident aspects of his appearance that he serves the empire but does not wish to stand out for his service, and that he has adapted and partially assimilated to the customs of the non-Russian, only partially incorporated imperial periphery.[24] In other words, Maksim Maksimych's dress simplifies the issue of Russian class—his tunic marks him as an officer without revealing anything else about his rank or status—even as it complicates the issue of nationality via his Circassian hat.

That vision of *narodnost'* as a reflection of both nationality and class identity finds full expression in Tolstoy's *Kazaki* [The Cossacks, 1863]. In this short novel, set in the Caucasus but written well after the heyday of romanticism, Tolstoy sought to demystify the romantic

[24] Mikhail Lermontov, *Geroi nashego vremeni* in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 5 tomakh* (Leningrad: Akademia, 1935-7) 5: 187. English translation from: *A Hero of Our Time* trans. Nicolas Pasternak Slater (Oxford UP, 2013), 7.

representation of Caucasus and, simultaneously, establish the parameters of the *narod* which, he believed, Caucasian romanticism had misrepresented by its emphasis on "poetic feeling" rather than attempting the "faithful transmission of reality."[25] In *Kazaki*, Tolstoy situates Russian folk authenticity among the Cossacks of the Terek River in the North Caucasus, who, like Maksim Maksimych, serve as a contrast to the Europeanized, urban elites of Moscow and Petersburg. The latter category is represented by Dmitrii Andreevich Olenin, a young nobleman who, becoming disenchanted with Moscow society, enlists to serve in the Caucasus, seeking freedom from the excesses of his youth. As Olenin travels south from Moscow, he discovers southern Russia and the Caucasus populated by "Cossacks, coachmen, and station masters [who] seemed to him simple folk with whom he could just joke and converse simply, without having to consider to what class they belonged." ["Все казаки, ямщики, смотрителя казались ему простыми существами, с которыми ему можно было просто шутить, беседовать, не соображая, кто к какому разряду принадлежит."][26] As Olenin takes up residence in a Terek Cossack village and seeks to adapt to its customs and people, he comes to greatly appreciate and love the "simple beings" who tolerate, without fully accepting, his presence. Olenin's indelible status as an outsider, and the Cossacks' ultimate rejection of his apparent desire to join them, reinforce a sense of Cossack authenticity and a corresponding sense of a deficit in Olenin—he is not precisely duplicitous, but neither is he able to live as straightforwardly as he perceives the Cossacks to. He gains some measure of acceptance in the village by demonstrating the very simplicity he so admires, though Olenin's simplicity is often depicted, and perceived by the

[25] Quotations taken from the unfinished fragment "Zapiski o Kavkaze. Poezdka v Mamakai-Iurt'" (1852). http://tolstoy-lit.ru/tolstoy/chernoviki/zapiski-o-kavkaze.htm [accessed 4 April 2020]

[26] L. N. Tolstoy, *Kazaki (Kavkazskaia povest' 1852)* in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 100 tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 2000), 4:16. English translation from Leo Tolstoy, "The Cossacks" in *Great Short Works of Leo Tolstoy* trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), 95.

Cossacks, ironically. When he befriends the village elder Uncle Eroskha, the definition of simplicity shifts to align with Eroshka's immediate desires: "*Простота* Оленина очень понравилась ему (простота в том смысле, что ему не жалели вина)." ["Olenin's 'simplicity' (simplicity in the sense of not grudging him a drink) pleased him…."][27] Later, as he develops a relationship with his young friend and rival, Lukashka, Olenin gives the Cossack a horse, perplexing the villagers, who "were perplexed and began to be on their guard against the cadet. But despite their fears his action aroused in them a great respect for his simplicity and wealth." ["[Казаки] пришли в недоумение и стали опасаться юнкера. Несмотря на такие опасения, поступок этот возбудил в них большое уважение к *простоте* и богатству Оленина."][28]

Yet for all Tolstoy's emphasis on simplicity as the defining characteristic of, and the criterion for acceptance into, Cossack society, the Cossacks in his novel have a quite complex relationship to Russianness, to Olenin, and to the state power he represents. They are just as frequently described as "carefree and reckless" ["беззаботные, удалые"] as "simple," and a current of violence and lawlessness runs through their society and stands in contrast to the loving generosity Olenin tries to cultivate in himself. Lukashka, in particular, is reckless, prone to theft, murder, and drunkenness, and jealous of Maryanka. His demise, and Maryanka's wavering and ultimate refusal of Olenin's advances, complicate even further the distinction, in which Olenin invests so much meaning, between Cossack "simplicity" and Russian society. This, then, is the configuration of *narod* which Karazin inherited from Tolstoy a decade later, and which he applied to Central Asia, the new locus of Russian imperial expansion. For Karazin, too, Cossacks function as transitional figures between urban Russian gentry and the non-Russian "Asiatic" peoples on the periphery. And, like Tolstoy's Cossacks, Karazin's are primarily defined in

[27] Ibid., 56; Maude trans. 145.
[28] Maude trans. 175; Tolstoy 78.

contradistinction to Russian society, which is represented in *Dvunogii volk*, as it is in *Kazaki*, primarily by one noble officer—in the case of *Dvunogii volk*, the antihero Rovich. However, Karazin simplifies one of the most complex aspects of Tolstoy's Cossacks—the issue of state power. His Cossacks are not Tolstoy's "carefree and reckless" braves but good-natured, straight-forward, and honest to the point of self-effacement. In fact, the noble Rovich is the only "carefree and reckless" character in *Dvunogii volk*, and those qualities take on, in Karazin's writing, not the positive qualities of freedom and self-determination that they have in Tolstoy, but of carelessness and selfish disregard for the welfare of the group. Where Olenin leaves Moscow forswearing romantic entanglements and denouncing the falseness of infatuation, Karazin has Rovich return to Moscow bragging of his fabricated "дон-жуановские похождения" ("Don Juanish adventures") in Khiva.[29] Karazin inherited Tolstoy's aesthetic project: he, too, sought to demystify life on the imperial periphery, to present it as it was without the romanticism that, Tolstoy feared, could produce a "poetic feeling" but untrue perception. But the shifting meaning of freedom, from carefreeness to carelessness, marks a serious ideological difference between them. Where Tolstoy's Cossacks are somewhat skeptical about—and their lifestyle somewhat immune to the intrusions of—state power, represented, for all of his own ambivalence about it, by Olenin, for Karazin the military power of the empire and the social power of the state reside precisely with the Cossacks, not the gentry. The noble Rovich in *Dvunogii volk* is little more than an impediment to the success of the novel's two main plots: the Russian conquest of Khiva, and the successful marriage of the narrative's two most morally upright characters.

This shift allows Karazin to both address and resolve a difficult tension between his aesthetic

[29] Ibid., 251.

and ideological projects. One contemporary critic, Eleonora Shafranskaia, frames the issue as an internal ambivalence about the expansion of the Russian empire into Turkestan:

> Karazin, being a Russian officer, sworn to the emperor, subscribed to the ideology of the Turkestan project, and this is reflected in many aspects of his painting and literary work—on the one hand. On the other, as a realist and an ethnographic writer he could not skirt the bloody and violent character of that project.[30]

In order to acknowledge the "bloody and violent character" of the conquest while retaining his vision the common man, the representatives of the *narod*, as the heroes, not the victims, of the imperial project, Karazin develops a utopian ideal of Russian imperial identity produced by and for an archetypal, idealized folk nation. This is Karazin's major, and overlooked, contribution to nineteenth-Russian narratives of empire— what I call vernacular imperialism,which seeks to align the culturally potent characteristics of the Russian nation with those of the Russian empire. The Turkestan novels' vantage point at the very limits of the Russian empire's outward growth, at an undeniable remove from the metropole, allows for the suturing of the two kinds of identity, while at the same time allowing Karazin to largely discount the influence of elite, Europeanized Russians on the imperial project.

iii. The steppe: landscape, topography, and symbolic geography

Just as Karazin sought to reconcile the imperial interests of the Russian ruling classes with those of the subaltern and emerging middle classs, he sought to resolve a tension between supposedly discrete forms of Russian colonialism—state-sponsored conquest and settlement, on one hand, and the more diffuse processes of popular colonization of the periphery of Slavic territories, on

[30] Shafranskaia, Eleonora Shafranskaia, *Turkestanskii tekst v russkoi kul'ture: Kolonial'naia proza Nikolaia Karazina*. (Self-published, St. Petersburg, 2016).

the other. The relationship between these two modes of Russian expansion into the non-Slavic territories on its southern and eastern frontiers is complex, and debates were active during the nineteenth century, as they are among today's historians, as to how distinct the two modes of coloninization really were.

In the late ninenteenth century, when Karazin was publishing his Turkestan fiction, the prevailing view among historians was that popular and state-sponsored colonization were in fact aspects of the same process. Among the most famous of nineteenth-century historians, Sergei Soloviev and his student, Vasilii Kliuchevskii, saw colonization as the defining *national* characteristic of Russia from ancient times, as well as the mechanism by which the modern empire extended its borders.[31] As Alexander Etkind has shown, Solviev's famous formulation that "ancient Russian history is the history of a country that colonizes itself [*koloniziruetsia*]" was transformed by Kliuchevskii in the late nineteenth century into a unifying formulation of Russian history and the consolidation of the Russian state from the earliest identifiable period down to Kliuchevskii's own present day:

> [The ancient] Eastern Slavs found themselves stranded upon a boundless and inhospitable plain [east of the Carpathians], the inhabitants of which had neither civilisation nor memorials to bequeath. Debarred from close settlement by the geographical features of the country, the Eastern Slavs were forced for centuries to maintain a nomad life, as well as to engage in ceaseless warfare with their neighbors. It was this peculiar conjunction of circumstances which caused the history of Russia to become the history of a country ever undergoing colonisation—a movement continued up to, and given fresh impetus by, the emancipation of the serfs, and remaining in progress to the present day.[32]

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[31] See Vasilii Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii* (Moscow, 1956) and Sergei Soloviev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen* (Moscow: Mysl', 1988). For contemporary discussions of the history of Russian colonization of its borderlands, and of the concept of colonization, see Seymore Becker, "The Muslim east in nineteenth-century Russian popular historiography," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 5 No. 3/4 (1896), pp. 25-47; Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011); Alberto Masoero, "Territorial Colonization in Late Imperial Russia: Stages in the Development of a Concept," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 14 No. 1 (Winter 2013), pp. 59-91; and Sunderland, 5.

[32] Kliuchevskii, 31-2. Translation from V. O. Kluchevsky, *A History of Russia* trans. C. J. Hogarth (London: J. M. Dent & Sons), 1911.

In this vision of Russian history, Kliuchevskii evinces a geographical determinism which in essence asserts that, the ancient proto-Russians had no choice but to battle and, when victorious, civilize their neighbors—a slow process, imposed by the environmental conditions of the "boundless and inhospitable plain" of the Russian steppe, which he calls colonization. For Kliuchevskii, the Russian Empire and its military conquests of neighboring lands was merely the modern version of this process, which was almost a function of nature. I will return to the significance of nature later, that is, the "boundless and inhospitable plain" and simply note, for now, that Karazin echoes many of the tenets of Russianness which Kliuchevskii establishes: for Karazin, too, Russians were defined by being settled people, not nomads, who were nonetheless compelled by the vast territories and uncivilized populations on their periphery, to stay in motion and in conflict with non-Russians, assimilating and domesticating new territory as they expanded their frontier. While it is unclear whether Karazin was familiar with Kliuchevskii (whose lectures on Russian history were delivered in the 1880s and collected and published in the early twentieth century) before he wrote *Dvunogii volk* (1876), the novel nevertheless evinces a similar interest in the colonization of Turkestan as part of a "a centuries-long movement," rather than a unique course of events, an extension of the process, begun in ancient Rus', of Russia's inexorable spread into the plains on its southern and eastern frontiers.

At the same time, *Dvunogii volk* is also quite obviously invested in state-sponsored colonization, distinguishable from the centuries-old and uncoordinated process described by Kliuchevskii. In describing Kliuchevskii's formulation of Russian history, Alexander Etkind argues that the school of thought which sees Russia as a country that colonizes itself as part of a natural or spontaenous process, sees "no point in differentiating between the subject and the

object of Russia's colonization."[33] Willard Sunderland, in the definitive contemporary history of the the colonization of the Russian steppe, argues, to similar effect, that the plains and grasslands, assimilated into Russia in the centuries-long process described by Kliuchevskii, became "central to notions of Russianness."[34] Sunderland notes that the conquest of Central Asia differed structurally and economically from the longer, earlier process of colonizing the southern steppes: in Turkestan, colonization was carried out in a coordinated fashion by Cossack border guards rather than by quasi-independent Russian settlers, and unlike the colonization of the steppe, which was characterized by the transformation of grassland into ploughed cropland, the expansion into Central Asia had no agricultural component.[35] And Alberto Maseoro argues that, while the territories acquired during the Russian Empire's final expansionary push—the south Caucasus and most of Central Asia—"were largely an extension of an autochthonous expansionistic pattern," their cultural valence differed from that of the Russian steppe because their annexation "made it plausible to compare these new tsarist possessions to European colonies," therefore providing some incentive for the Caucasus and Central Asia to remain non-Russian, and explicitly foreign, in the imperial imagination.[36] Masoero's observation that the Caucasus and Central Asia made a comparison of Russia to Europe plausible also explains the apparent connection between the two regions, in many ways so different from each other, as itself a function of Russia's adoption of European Orientalism over the course of the nineteenth

[33] Etkind, 63.
[34] Sunderland, 208.
[35] Sunderland, 158. It is interesting to note that, by the early Soviet period, Central Asia's incorporation into Soviet life was viewed in largely agricultural terms. See Andrei Platonov, "Zhizn do kontsa" in *Fabrika literatury: Literaturnaia kritika, publitsistika*, Kornienko and Antonovna, eds., (Moscow: Vremia, 2011), 609-13; "Dzhan, povest'," in *Schastlivaya moskva, ocherki I rasskazy 1930-kh godov*, Kornienko, ed., (Moscow: Vremia, 2010), 111-234; and "Takyr," ibid., 289-310. This view was not wholly utopian, as the transformation of much of the territory of Uzbekistan into cotton fields shows. However, Uzbekistan's cotton crop came at the expense of the draining and devastation of the Aral Sea.
[36] Masoero, 165.

century.

Let us return to Kliuchevskii's characterization of the steppe as a "boundless and inhospitable plain," a phrase which has special significance for Turkestan, differentiating it in the Russian imagination, and linking it to Russia in ways unavailable to the Caucasus. Russian writers and historians have long noticed, and theorized, Russia's vast size—an issue which is closely connected to the flat, expansive, unforested landscape of the steppe. Harsha Ram notes an awareness in the eighteenth century of a physical "boundlessness that became a source of pride as well as anxiety in Russian cultural consciousness."[37] That idea crystalized in the early nineteenth century, with the philosopher Peter Chaadaev's thesis that Russia's apparent lack of historical development was connected to its vast territorial expanses. Chaadaev wrote in the 1830s that "everything departs, everything flows away, leaving no traces," and leaving Russians even in their largest settlements "more nomadic than the herdsmen who let their animals graze on our steppes, for they are more bound to their deserts than we to our cities."[38] As the empire developed and expanded, Russia's territory became not only a challenge to political administration but a discursive problem. As Katya Hokanson shows, during the same period in which Chaadaev wrote, just as the Russian Empire was beginning to resemble European empires—with colonies more or less differentiated from the center by economic function and the racialization of indigenous populations—it was also contending with the notion, propagated in travelogues about Russia and by the nation's own burgeoning intelligentsia, that "its spaces were vast, empty, and undifferentiated, embodying a frightening lacuna of meaning, culture, and history."[39] In other words, Russia's vast spaces seemed to mirror, or even to explain, the curious

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[37] Ram, 22.
[38] Peter Chaadaev, "First Philosophical Letter" in *The Major Works of Peter Chaadaev* trans. Raymond McNally (University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 28
[39] Katya Hokanson, *Writing at Russia's Border* (University of Toronto Press, 2008), 4.

fact that it seemed not to accrue historical developments.

It was not only Russia's open expanses but the quality of its native landscape that posed a discursive problem for eighteenth and nineteenth century writers who sought to stabilize Russia's cultural position, particularly with respect to Europe. Sara Dickinson observes in her study of Russian travel writing that, in taking their aesthetic cues from Western European travel literature, early Russian practitioners of the genre were initially troubled by the fact that "the Russian Empire contained vast expanses of space, but much of it was topographically dissimilar to the fashionable landscapes of Western Europe."[40] Some of the earliest innovations in travel writing—and in Russian artistic prose in general—arose out of Russian writers' need to articulate the literary or imaginative meaning of local landscapes which themselves had no precedent in European letters. Dickinson focuses on the late eighteenth century and the generations of Russian writers—Fonvizin and Karamzin—who most self-consciously looked west for their aesthetic cues. But the problem persisted into the nineteenth century, and the valence of certain landscapes changed as Russian territory expanded. Katya Hokanson, for example, argues that the Caucasus became important to *literary* Russia in part because they gave Russia both a topographically distinct borderland and a set of aesthetically fashionable landscapes of its own.[41]

In the next generation, however, as the Russian Empire expanded into Turkestan, the problem of vast, open, flat territory returned. Now, in place of dramatic alpine landscapes, Russian soldiers encountered the deserts east of the Caspian Sea. Tellingly, explorers and writers, including Karazin, called these landscapes the steppe. Though more arid than the steppe further north and west, vast expanses of flat, topographically monotonous land were essentially Russia's

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[40] Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushking* (Leiden, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2006), 16.
[41] Hokanson, 3-22.

native landscape in an important cultural and imaginative sense—even though, as Sunderland points out, the territories and ecosystems known as the steppe "were, in fact, so diverse in so many ways that one might legitimately wonder whether they constituted a coherent region at all," the concept of "the steppe" nevertheless contained a curious tension within Russian identity, functioning as both the core of Russian power and at a remove from the "center" of Russia in Moscow and Petersburg. Moreover, it was precisely the steppeland which had provoked Chaadaev to ask whether Russia possessed a history at all. As much as he inherited the Janus-faced Orientalism of the Caucasian encounter, Karazin inherited this constellation of deep-rooted, old cultural valences concerning the steppe when he set about describing the Russian acquisition of Central Asia. This posed a problem for a writer of imperial and military, albeit middle class, valor because, as Sunderland puts it, "the steppe and its peoples were simply too well-known to appear exotic."[42] In order to resolve the problem of Turkestan's foreignness, Karazin uses the landscape of Turkestan to both differentiate Russia from Central Asia from a cultural, and assimilate it to Russia from a natural, essential standpoint.

While the literary Caucasus had helped Russia internalize new European discursive modes, Karazin's Turkestan *externalized* some of the traits found to be undesirable, by Europeans and Russians themselves, in native Russia. From its first pages, *The Two-Legged Wolf* transposes the standard tropes which foreigners used to describe Russia onto Turkestan. The steppe is, as we might expect, "endless," with "no foreseeable end or beginning" [не предвидится ни конца, ни начала].[43] The first of the novel's evocative descriptions of

[42] Sunderland, 19.

[43] Nikolai Karazin, *Dvunogii volk* in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii N. N. Karazina* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie P. P. Soikina, 1905), 3. I have provided my own translations, unless otherwise noted. An English translation of the novel, by Boris Lanin, was published in 1894 (N. N. Karazin, *The Two-Legged Wolf: A Romance* (Chicago: Rand McNally & co, 1894)).

Turkestan's landscape also features its first instance of heavy-handed foreshadowing of the bloodshed to come:

> К западу склонялось жгучее солнце. Багровые сумерки расползались понизу; чуть-чуть потянуло прохладою. Пожарным заревом вспыхнул горизонт, и, словно политые свежей кровью заалелись вершины бугров и наносов, вершины отдельных, разбросанных по степи камней, отбрасывая от себя бесконечно-длинные, расползающие тени….[44]
>
> (The burning sun sank to the west. Crimson twilight crept over the earth; little by little it cooled off. A fiery glow lit up the horizon and reddened the tops of knolls and dry stream beds as if they'd been smeared with fresh blood, and the tops of the more prominent stones scattered over the step cast endlessly long shadows, which dissolved into darkness.)

Even as it employs precise description, providing a sense of place and specificity beyond undifferentiated "endlessness," this passage underscores the horizontal expanse the novel dramatizes. Multiple instances of the verbal prefix "raz-", here indicating dispersal or spreading, and the association with horizontal motion of nearly every verb, establish the prominence of the horizontal plane for this novel. Its characters will contend with Turkestan's vast distances and difficult terrain, as Karazin reckons with the natural and political valences of the novel's horizontal motion—the flat distances of the southern steppe, contiguous with Russia, but punishing in their breadth; and the Russian Empire's colonial expansion into those territories.

However, the landscape of Turkestan does more than merely receive and contain negative stereotypes about Russia itself. *The Two-legged Wolf* covers a wide expanse of Central Asia as its plot follows the Russians' sack of Khiva, and Karazin takes care to imbue certain narratively important places with specificity and detail, removing them from the category of "undifferentiated expanse" and making them candidates for discrete places with the potential to

[44] Ibid., 6

accrue history and meaning. And so, in addition to desert and steppe, he describes the agricultural landscape around the oasis city of Khiva as well as the alluvial ecosystems of the Amu Darya river. Vivid landscape descriptions often set the scene for a chapter's action. For example, a chapter in which soldiers are encamped near the Amu Darya opens this way:

> Крутой, обрывистый берег Аму-Дарьи спускался почти отвесно. В розлив вода подходит в плотную к этому берегу, поднимается и подмывает его снизу, образуя длинные параллельные борозды, в глубине которых остается осадочный ил, и разная водяная растительность; затем вода спадает, отходит от этой обрывистой, подрытой стены и образует плоские, сырые отмели, тянущиеся у подножья обрыва. Эти отмели—второй ярус берегов, они на туземном языке зовутся—"тугаи", любимое местопребывание чаек-рыболовов, куличков, пчелоедов и прочей водяной птицы…[45]
>
> [The steep, precipitous banks of the Amu Darya descended almost vertically. During spring floods the water approaches the level of these banks, rises up and washes them under, forming long parallel furrows, in whose depths sedimentary silt and various river vegetation remain; then the water recedes from these steep, carved walls and reveals level, gray sandbars stretching along the foot of the cliff. These sandbars—the second level banks, in the local language they're called "tugas," are the favored spot for fishing gulls, sandpipers, bee-eaters and other aquatic birds…]

Karazin's turn here from the vicissitudes of the novel's plot to ethnographic information about the region are evident in this paragraph's verb tenses. The paragraph's first sentence marks the troops' experience of the river's appearance in the past tense, in which all of the novel's action takes place ("the banks…descended" / "берег…спускался"). The rest of the paragraph marks its departure from the novel's characters and plot with the appearance of the present tense in "water…approaches, rises up…then the water recedes" ["вода подходит…поднимается…затем вода спадает"] and a description of the river's flora and fauna, also in the present tense and conveying a general sense of location and scene, rather than advancing plot or character development. The shift into the present tense recalls Chaadaev's vision of Russia's timeless,

[45] Ibid., 111.

ahistorical expanses, as well as Anne Lounsbery's more recent assertion that the literature of the Russian provinces, in contrast to the metropolitan center, "evokes stasis, immutability, a permanent "backwardness" that is *not* in the process of being transformed into something else."[46] The remainder of this essay will examine how Karazin's *Dvunogii volk* begins with a Turkestan that is timeless, changeless, and non-Russian, but ultimately envisions a "transformation into something else" that would make Turkestan into Russia, while simultaneously rescuing Russia from meaningless spatial expanse, giving it the specificity and history of place.

Much of the novel's narrative drama arises from an episode in which the troops reach the desert wells in Adam Krilgan only to find them almost dry, with far too little brackish water for all of the men and animals who have arrived. A native Central Asian who is loyal to the Russians saves the entire group when he reveals his knowledge of different wells slightly farther on. The second motor of narrative tension in the novel is the plight of Natalia Martynovna, a "Sister of Mercy" who travels with the Cossacks, and the mother in the passage quoted above. She is, as we learn early in the novel, herself native to Central Asia, born to a veteran of the previous generation's campaigns who had settled in the region.

[46] Anne Lounsbery, *Life is Elsewhere: Symbolic Geography in the Russian Provinces, 1800-1917* (Cornell UP, 2019), 13.

Figure 3: Karazin's Painting, "The Khiva Campain of 1873. Turkestan troops crossing the dead sands to the wells at Adam-Krilgan."

She is a competent, independent woman, who acts as both nurse and morale booster in camp, content with the military life along with her young son, Petka. The child is the result of an affair with Rovich, carried out several years earlier around Tashkent. Rovich subsequently abandoned Natalia Martynova, but the company of Cossacks are openhearted and accepting: not bound by the norms of polite society, they don't hold the indiscretion against her. The rest of the novel follows two interwoven plot lines, concerning two characters, either of whom could be the titular two-legged wolf. The first revolves around Atam Kul, a local Central Asian leader and prisoner in the Cossack camp who escapes during a sandstorm and kidnaps Natalia's son. The next day, she sneaks away to find her child, and her rescue becomes as important to the soldiers as their official task of sacking Khiva. The second plot concerns Rovich, the Russian officer from a prominent Petersburg family who is the father of Natasha's son. Rovich joins the campaign toward the end of the novel and learns that Natasha will soon be rescued and plans a melodramatic reunion with her, which she coolly and summarily rebuffs. Finally, Natasha

marries one of her Cossack admirers, and together the two make a pleasant, Russian-style homestead in Turkestan.

When the episode at the wells passes, the troops reach the banks of the Amu Darya and hear some news of Natasha's whereabouts, the novel begins the process of envisioning and representing change. This registers first in the alluvial landscape, first presented, as I note above, in a timeless present, but soon coming to bear the ways in which *Dvunogii volk* becomes both specific and historical. When the narrative's standard past tense reappears and the novel's plot resumes, we learn that circumstances have had a beneficial effect on everyone in camp:

> Общая бодрость и веселье, по достижении цели похода, отразились на всех здоровых; это веселье не могло не отразиться и на больных:—лазаретные носилки, с каждым днём все пустели и пустели…Докторам работы с каждым часом становилось все менее и менее.[47]
>
> [A general vigor and happiness at the success of the campaign spread over all those who were healthy; and that happiness couldn't help but affect the sick as well—stretchers emptied out day by day…And doctors' labor lessened with each passing hour.]

The narrative attributes this new festive mood to Russia's military victory, and both the causes and effects of the change are strictly contained within the bounds of Russian soldiers' experience. In other words, the joy in camp, and even the soldiers' revivification after crossing the punishing and arid desert, is detached from the actual land of Central Asia. Despite the clear role of the river itself, the Amu Darya, in returning essential hydration and high spirits to the troops, in the narrative structure of the novel it is separate from this emotional development: cordoned off from the events of military victory and celebration by the ahistorical present tense, relegated to a different kind of fact, the banks of the Amu Darya become timeless, changeless even in the

[47] Ibid., 112-3.

persistent, seasonal movements, and available therefore as empirical information. This formal separation of landscape from human action disguises a correspondence, even an affiliation, however, between the land of Central Asia and the mood of the Russian invaders. In presenting the Amu Dayra banks as a stage on which Russian soldiers enact the experience of relief, joy and healing, Karazin partakes in the old Orientalist trope of the oasis, naturalizing Russian affective responses to landscape in a way that would not just help Russian readers incorporate new knowledge about Central Asia's real physical landscape, but aid, too, in generating a discursive understanding of the region as familiarly foreign, rather than wholly alien.

iv. Domesticating Turkestan: Natasha and the family novel

In this paradoxically familiar foreignness, which presents Turkestan as simultaneously unknown territory, subject to the ethnographic gaze of the conquering Russian and native, a natural extension of the Russian nation, Karazin's Turkestan novels are a bridge between the Western-facing literary Caucasus and the inward gaze of Russia's urban realism, an amalgamation of the exoticism of the Caucasian theme and the self-examination of positivism. The introduction of a famil plot allows the novel to explore, and ultimately embrace, a new kind of domestication: Karazin dramatizes not just the assimilation of Khivan territory to the Russian Empire's system of governance, but also the process by which Russian domesticity might be imported to the region. And so, in addition to looking both east and west, both outward to Central Asia and inward to Russia itself, the novel is janus-faced in yet another way—it looks both backward into the (recent) past and forward to the future. While the adventure plot of *The Two-Legged Wolf* is, essentially, historical fiction, the marriage and domestication plots which close the book envision a future of Russian life in Turkestan.

Part of that potential involves giving the novel's heroine, Natasha, a narrative of her own situated entirely within Turkestan. After her son is kidnapped in the second half of the novel, Natasha is unable to fulfill the idealized role she played in the first half. Her behavior becomes inexplicable, and her grief obvious—this change motivates the novel's exploration of Natasha's individual consciousness and the emotional bases of her alienation from her surroundings. As she detaches herself from the society of camp, the narrator detaches from her, taking a new, omniscient approach:

> Она почувствовала себя совершенно чужою в этом лагере: словно лопнуло, прорвалось всё, что до сих пор её с ним связывало.
>
> Она пережила уже самую тяжёлую минуту—и после этой минуты ничего уже не было для неё страшного, никакой шаг не было для неё невозможен.[48]
>
> (She felt completely foreign in this camp: in a word, everything broke and ruptured which had tied her to it until then. She had passed through the most terrible moments—after that nothing frightened her, and no step was impossible for her to take.)

This musing on Natasha's internal state of alienation breaks the flow of the narrative, interrupting both the business of the Cossack camp preparing its attack on Khiva, and the machinations of the local warlords who have captured her son. It also provides one of the novel's only clear descriptions of transformation, despite the fact that the it deals, in the largest sense, with the transformation of Central Asia in the 1870s. In this way, and because of the narrator's special access to her internal state, Natasha becomes a measure of ideology, politics, and history in the novel.

First, the narrator's access to Natalia follows directly her emotional separation from camp life: the point at which she becomes foreign is the point at which the narrator can treat her as information. After the original observations that Natalia "felt like a stranger in the camp," the

[48] Ibid., 127.

narrative reiterates her foreignness and separation, not just from camp but from her previous role as the emotionally perceptive figure of motherhood, and even "natural" humanity. As she's secreted out of camp during the night, "Наташа…шла не как живое существо, а как машина" ("Natasha…walked not like a living being, but like a machine").[49] And in the next chapter, as she languishes "half-alive" ("в каком-то полубытье") on the road, she "protects herself mechanically" ("машинально защищалась") when her captors disguise her in Central Asian men's clothing. But Natasha's anguish is also a hopeful foreshadowing Despite her emotional isolation and eventual physical escape from the Cossack camp, Turkestan has not robbed her of her most stereotyped and most fundamental trait: her motherhood. The loss of her son torments her here, in the punishing steppe, as it would back home. After *The Two-Legged Wolf* stages the taming of Central Asia on a grand, military scale, it can turn to the second domestication project: the creation of a space appropriate for Russian settlement and the reproduction of Russian culture.

The location of Natasha's maternal distress—and, eventually, when Petka is returned to her and the marriage plot is concluded, the full expression of her maternal character—in Turkestan helps Karazin with this second project, by showing that Natasha and the full range of her "natural" emotional life has a place in Turkestan. Furthermore, situating Natasha's *specific* story in Central Asia gives the region, as far as it is depicted in the novel, the historicity it lacks in earlier chapters, where its landscape exists in the eternal present. In a sense, it is Natasha's personal domestication plot, rather than the military plot of the rest of the Russians as a collective unit, that allows Karazin to bring Central Asia into the sphere of Russian culture, history, and literature at once. Finally, through Natasha—as helpful a character for Karazin as she

[49] Ibid., 129.

is for the Cossacks—the novel begins to resolve the tension between the brutality that realism about Central Asia can't help but express and Karazin's loyalty to the imperial project.

Karazin accomplishes this by way of a class distinction, assigning more admirable traits—generosity, honesty, emotional insight and especially Natasha's "maternal love for humanity" ("материнская любовь к человеству,")—to the Russian characters of lower social standing, and a few of the native characters who have gone over to the Russians.[50] The cruel and foolhardy aspects of the human character reside chiefly in Rovich, during his occassional appearances in Turkestan from Petersburg. The novel is merciless in its portrayal of Rovich as a ridiculous, self-involved coward and liar. Though Rovich's role is limited to a few chapters near the novel's conclusion, his actions becomes the object of the narrator's gaze and clear moral judgment. Against the backdrop of the steppe landscape and the roving Cossack camp, which the novel has already established as its appropriate and "natural" setting, Rovich appears as the clear foreigner, placed in opposition to every aspect of the world the novel has thus far developed as its own. The Cossacks distrust him and constantly interfere any time he tries to approach Natasha, but their more generous nature would have, we learned, inclined them toward forgiveness were Rovich himself not so base:

> …его поверхностная натура не могла догадаться, не могла понять, что если бы откровенно, хотя бы в тяжелые минуты своего раскаяния, явился бы в этот кружок "друзей Натали Мартыновны",—если бы у него хватило силы и способности высказаться перед ними, предстать хотя таким, каким он был на самом деле, в эти тяжелые, бессонные ночи… он бы потушил разом эту ненависть в их сердцах,—и, очень может быть, что, если бы они увидели вновь пробудившиеся у Наташи чувства нежности к отцу своего ребенка, они бы первые искренно, дружески, протянули ему руку…
>
> Но это естественное и прямое отношение к делу было не по силам Сергея

[50] Ibid., 31

Николаевича [Ровича]…[51]

> (…his superficial nature could not guess, nor comprehend, that if he would openly, during one of his periods of shame, reveal himself to this circle of Natalia Martinovna's friends—if he had had the strength and ability to confess before them, to present himself as he was during those hard, sleepless nights…he would have extinguished the hatred in their hearts at once—and, very likely, had they seen feelings of tenderness toward the father of her child arise again in Natasha, they would have been the first to extend him a friendly hand….But this natural and straightforward relationship to the matter was not within the power of Sergei Nikolaevich Rovich.)

Karazin's explicit mention of the "natural and straightforward" manner recalls Tolstoy's Cossacks—the very trait which Rovich (like Olenin) cannot muster, is the way in which the Cossacks (and Natasha) always approach life. Rovich is alienated from the wholesome lives and clear consciences of the Cossacks, as well as from his own desires—he seems, at times, to feel real shame and remorse over Natasha but, as we have seen, proves unable to overcome his pride and actually approach her. Insofar as it comments on Russia and Russian society, *The Two-Legged Wolf* suggests that this is one of the problems from which the honest and straightforward middle classes might escape by settling in Central Asia, a territory for them, in which Rovich and his ilk are unable to thrive.

The Two-Legged Wolf ends with Rovich, back in Petersburg, telling a completely fabricated story about his "дон-жуановские похождения" ("Don Juanish adventures") in Khiva.[52] Paragraphs before this final mocking critique, though, Karazin finally concludes the novel's marriage plot, revealing that Golovin and Natasha have settled down in Natasha's childhood home, where Golovin is raising her son as his own, and the family has turned their small patch of parched and dusty Turkestan into a Russian homestead:

> Густые массы вьющейся зелени заплели все стены снаружи домика, и сквозь эту

[51] Ibid., 211.
[52] Ibid., 251.

> вырезную, изумрудную листву сверкали оконные стекла и чистые белые занавески. Палисадник пестрел яркими цветами и зеленью, по усыпанному песком, чисто-выметенному дворику прогуливались куры с своим важным петухом-супругом…[53] (250).
>
> ("A dense mass of climbing vines covered the outer walls of the little house, and between the sculpted emerald leaves sparkled bright windows with clean white curtains. The little garden shone with bright flowers and greenery; over the scattered sand of the clean swept yard promenaded hens, escorted by their self-important rooster-husband…")

This final scene resolves another of the novel's tensions: between Turkestan's landscape and the vision of domesticity which the novel repeatedly puts forward. Here the sandy steppe is confined to a neatly swept yard, the house, itself a vision of orderly and upright living, is concealed and protected from the harsher environments of Central Asia by its lush vegetation, and even the domesticated birds have settled down into a conjugal relationship. In other words, Karazin's vision of domestication—of Central Asia and the Russians in it—is complete. The narrative drama which so enticed Russian readers of the 1870s was neither the love story nor the military victory—or not only those—but the imaginative transformation of Turkestan from a place of dangerous and obscure meaning to one available, appropriate for settlement, and easily assimilable to Russian cultural and aesthetic norms.

[53] Ibid., 250.