

Colonial Mimicry and Disenchantment in Alexander Druzhinin's "A Russian Circassian" and Other Stories

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“A Russian Circassian” (1855) is a fascinating literary response to colonialism on the part of a writer who only recently has begun receiving the scholarly attention he merits.¹ The most prolific critic of the art for art’s sake tendency, Druzhinin (1824–64) was literary editor for the *Contemporary* from 1848 to 1855 and then for the *Library for Reading*, the journal where he took his stand against the political approach to literature advocated by Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Dobroliubov, and other radicals of the day. As a novelist Druzhinin won immediate acclaim for *Polinka Saks* (1847) and *The Story of Aleksei Dmitrich* (1848). Before his premature death from tuberculosis he produced several more volumes of criticism, feuilletons, translations, stories, and novellas. Never on par with his first two successes, those lesser literary works were often verbose, a defect that mars “A Russian Circassian.” This story of confused identity nevertheless displays a sophisticated sense of parody, “excellent style, interesting ideas and numerous shades of irony, including self-irony.”² Why, then, did the public ignore “A Russian Circassian” in its time?³ Limited artistry was perhaps the major explanation. But a more complicated reason might have

I wish to thank Thomas Barrett and an anonymous referee for stimulating suggestions.

¹Druzhinin’s opposition to the radical intelligentsia of the 1860s led Soviet commentators to marginalize him. See Anmartin-Michal Brojde, “Druzhinin’s View of American Life and Literature,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 10 (Fall 1976): 382–83. On Druzhinin’s career consult also Mikhail Loginov, “V mesto predisloviia (Listok iz vospominanii),” in A. V. Druzhinin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 8 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1865–67), 8:v–xiv; Anmartin-Michal Brojde, *A. V. Druzhinin: Zhizn’ i tvorchestvo* (Copenhagen, 1986); Derek Offord, *Portraits of Early Russian Liberals* (Cambridge, England, 1985), 156–68; Michael R. Katz, introduction to Druzhinin’s *Polinka Saks and The Story of Aleksei Dmitrich*, trans. Michael R. Katz (Evanston, 1992), 1–13; and Charles A. Moser, *Aesthetics as Nightmare: Russian Literary Theory, 1855–1870* (Princeton, 1989), 19.

²Quotation from Brojde, *Druzhinin*, 165–66.

³First published in *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* in 1855, “Russkii cherkes: Derevenskii razskaz” appears in Druzhinin, *Sobranie sochinenii* 2:178–220. References to “Russkii cherkes” will appear parenthetically in the text, as will references to other works by Druzhinin, after initial citation.

been that many readers were implicated in the very phenomenon that Druzhinin parodies: a Russian's dream world of Caucasian exotica collapsing under the impact of colonial reality.

Given the obscurity of "A Russian Circassian," remarks on narrative technique, the characters, and plot are immediately in order. Subtitled "A Rural Story," the tale is told by an undramatized narrator who restricts the characters' speech and thought. The storyteller witnessed part of the action as a tourist in Piatigorsk but is omniscient and steadily gives readers information not possessed by the main protagonist, Matvei Kuz'mich Makhmetov, a provincial ethnic Russian landowner whose surname's origins are unknown.⁴ As a literary type, Druzhinin's hero goes back to Don Quixote—the bored country squire whose reading transforms him into a deluded adventurer.⁵ A stout, fair-haired man with "nothing Muslim nor oriental in his appearance nor way of life" (p. 178), Matvei Kuz'mich patters about his little estate, pursuing odd projects inspired by the periodical press. A hyperactive imagination is manifested by the insomnia he suffers after devouring articles about California (p. 181). But this side of his personality is well curbed by his family circle, comprised of his vegetative wife, Praskov'ia Ivanovna, their placid twenty-year old daughter Varin'ka, and her fiancé Mushkin, a mild-mannered young neighbor absorbed in agronomy.

Enter Aslan Makhmetov, a Circassian peddler and metalworker (an ancient craft of north Caucasian mountaineers).⁶ In need of help after breaking an axle on his return to Piatigorsk from the capital, Aslan Makhmetov introduces himself to the Russian family as a Circassian prince and a Caucasian army officer. The narrator, though, tells readers about the intruder's resemblance to "oriental vendors in Petersburg who deal in pipes, rose water, and nielloed silver knickknacks inscribed 'Caucasus, such-and-such a year'" (p. 184). On the basis of their common surname, Aslan Makhmetov persuades Matvei Kuz'mich that he must be a relative of Circassian descent. The mountaineer's chatter about the wild frontier bedazzles the Russian squire, and the two men stay up long into the night, talking and drinking. After an exchange of gifts the next morning, the Circassian takes his leave, urging his host to visit the Caucasus in order to meet more Makhmetovs, ride in the mountains, and fight Shamil. More bored than ever, Matvei Kuz'mich plunges into reading about the Caucasus and comes to restyle himself a Circassian in dress, speech, and manner. After becoming the regional laughingstock, Matvei Kuz'mich goes to Piatigorsk with Varin'ka, in search of his alleged roots. At the spa he has a series of misadventures and nearly loses all his money to a Circassian con man named Izmail. Eventually Matvei Kuz'mich discovers Aslan Makhmetov's actual occupation. Jolted out of his dream of heroic Circassian ancestry, the Russian squire takes his daughter back home, a wiser but sadder man.

As the plot summary indicates, "A Russian Circassian" shares a central concern with Leo Tolstoy's story "The Raid" (1853) and *The Cossacks* (1863), a novella the two authors

⁴"Makhmetov" plays upon "Magomet," the Russian for "Mohammed."

⁵I owe this observation to Irene Masing-Delic and an anonymous referee. The latter also proposed Alphonse Daudet's *Tartarin de Tarascon* (1872). In Daudet, however, the French community at large suffers delusions of Tartarin's heroism, whereas Don Quixote and Matvei Kuz'mich strike people everywhere as madmen.

⁶On mountaineers' importance in this area consult Thomas M. Barrett, "Crossing Boundaries: The Trading Frontiers of the Terek Cossacks," in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, ed. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzarini (Bloomington, 1997), 240; and Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the North Caucasus," *Slavic Review* 54 (Fall 1995): 587.

discussed while it was taking shape in the late 1850s.⁷ All three works parody Russian men's passion for imitating the "Caucasian" experience, the principal authors of which were Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, for his tales "Ammalat Bek" (1832), "Mulla Nur" (1836), and travelogues; Mikhail Lermontov, for his poetry and novel *A Hero of Our Time* (1840); and, to a lesser extent by the 1850s, Alexander Pushkin, for his seminal verse tale "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" (1822). The romantic literature produced a syndrome of behavior documented in nineteenth-century memoirs.⁸ In the Caucasus for military service or tourism, Russian men wore frontier clothing, including the *burka* (an ample, stiff felt cape) and *cherkeska* (a long coat with cartridge pockets across the chest). Russians sported locally purchased weapons, sought mountain *kunaki* (consecrated friends), learned *dzhigitovka* (acrobatic horsemanship), ogled Cossack and mountain women, or even acquired a native mistress. The *Contemporary* would decry Russians' persistent absorption in "poetic fantasy" about the Caucasus in 1850 (not long before the editor-in-chief, Nikolai Nekrasov, so delightedly published young Tolstoy's "The Raid").⁹ However, Lermontov's essay "Kavkazets" ("The Caucasus' Russian," printed only in 1929) had already ridiculed his compatriots' turning "semi-Asian" in the southern borderland.¹⁰ Of special note in connection with Druzhinin's stories, Lermontov remarked how easily Caucasian natives sold adventure-hungry Russians shoddy daggers at high prices.

While "A Russian Circassian" participated in a tendency to parody the Russian passion for things Caucasian, Druzhinin attributed aesthetic value to much romantic literature. He did not care for Pushkin's "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," nor consider Lermontov flawless.¹¹ But on the whole he adored both those writers. Moreover, he defended Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, the gifted, if uneven writer whose flamboyant Byronism literary sophisticates of the time tended to disparage.¹² Druzhinin's defense of Bestuzhev-Marlinsky figured significantly in a rejoinder to Chernyshevsky, whose dissertation, "The Aesthetic Relations of Art to Reality," claimed that fantasy was "morbid" and that beauty in life was always superior to beauty in art.¹³ Tolstoy, too, disliked the outlook of Chernyshevsky (who assumed

⁷Tolstoy read parts of *The Cossacks* to Druzhinin while they were vacationing in Switzerland in June 1857. See Kornei Chukovskii, "Druzhinin i Lev Tolstoi," in Chukovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1965–69), 5:112; and Brodje, *Druzhinin*, 442.

⁸A. L. Zisserman, *Dvadtsat' piat' let na Kavkaze (1842–1867)*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1879), 1:1–5, 204–5, and 2:3; I. von der Hoven, "Moe znakomstvo s dekabristami," *Drevniaia i novaia Rossiia*, 1877, no. 2:221; K. P. Belevich, *Stikhi i razskazy* (St. Petersburg, 1895), 171; V. L. Markov, "Vospominaniia ulanskogo korneta," *Nabliudatel'*, 1895, no. 10:165–66, 229. See further discussion in my *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge, England, 1994), 125–31; and Lewis Bagby, *Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and Russian Byronism* (University Park, PA, 1995), 1–7.

⁹Boris Eikhenbaum, *Molodoi Tolstoi* (Petrograd, 1922), 92–94, 108–13; idem, *Lev Tolstoi: Kniga pervaiia, 50-ye gody* (Leningrad, 1928), 130–38. For a related response to Tolstoy's "The Wood Felling" (published in *Sovremennik* in 1855) see N. A. Nekrasov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 12 vols. (Moscow, 1948–52), 9:332.

¹⁰M. Iu. Lermontov, "Kavkazets," in his *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1983–84), 4:143–46, esp. 143.

¹¹See Druzhinin, "A. S. Pushkin i poslednoe izdanie ego sochinenii" (1855), *Sobranie sochinenii* 7:65.

¹²On Marlinsky's decline in popularity see Lauren G. Leighton, *Alexander Bestuzhev-Marlinsky* (Boston, 1975), 106; and Bagby, *Bestuzhev-Marlinsky*, 8–10.

¹³Druzhinin, "Kritika gogolevskago perioda russkoi literatury i nashi k nei otnosheniia" (1856), *Sobranie sochinenii* 7:205–6. This essay responded to Chernyshevsky's article on the "Gogol period." On Chernyshevsky's dissertation see Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior* (Stanford, 1988), 159–61.

control of the *Contemporary* during 1856–57). But Tolstoy also had a competitive grudge against romanticism, whereas Druzhinin, with his greater love of poetry (and lesser ambitions as a *littérateur*), proved more accommodating toward the traditional literary Caucasus, as we shall see.

Perhaps in part because Druzhinin was not so intent upon supplanting the romantics, his imagination hit upon the entirely new topic of colonial mimicry. As defined by V. S. Naipaul, mimicry refers to a colonized person's (or an entire colony's) search for identity through adoption of the imperial overlord's language and extensive imitation of his material culture and way of life, his literature and arts, his values, beliefs, and attitudes.¹⁴ Mimicry is largely unexplored territory in imperial Russian history.¹⁵ But one source that complements "A Russian Circassian" is an essay that the ethnographer and army officer Petr Uslar first published in 1868. According to Uslar, Caucasian mountaineers in the capital for schooling tended to fashion themselves after romantic Russian stories: "They tried their best to imitate Ammalat Bek, Kazbich, and so forth. Only in such masquerade could they make themselves interesting to the Russian public: what else might strike one as interesting in these semi-educated cadets?"¹⁶ The last comment takes the "Russian public" as an ideological monolith uniformly condescending toward the Caucasian natives. In fact, nineteenth-century Russians displayed fundamental differences of opinion about the character and fate of colonized mountaineers (as my article's last section will show). But whatever significance one may attribute to Uslar's patronizing tone, his discussion of Caucasians in literary "masquerade" helps insert Druzhinin's fictional mimickers into history.

The very scarcity of nineteenth-century sources about mimicry in the Russian Empire makes "A Russian Circassian" a particularly engaging cultural document to analyze in the light of postcolonial theory. As diagnosed by Naipaul, mimicry inevitably entails feelings of inferiority on the native's part, often to the point of paralysis. Naipaul's critics, however, stress mimicry's creative, subversive aspects. The first major retort to Naipaul was Derek Walcott's poetically written essay, "The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?"¹⁷ Although not widely known, this essay anticipated much in the thinking of Homi Bhabha, today's pre-eminent theoretician of mimicry as native empowerment. In an early critique of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Bhabha objected to the latter's pervasive "suggestion that colonial power

¹⁴Consult V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* (London, 1967); and his travel essay *The Middle Passage* (London, 1962). See also the treatment of Indians as a "people at play," "actors" out of Kipling, in Naipaul's incendiary account of his first trip to India, *An Area of Darkness* (1964; reprint ed. London, 1968), 191.

¹⁵Although not using the term "mimicry," two pertinent studies appear in *Russia's Orient*. Adeb Khalid, "Representations of Russia in Central Asian Jadid Discourse" (pp. 188–202, esp. 199–200); and Lazzarini, "Local Accommodation and Resistance to Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Crimea" (pp. 169–87, esp. 171–72, 185n.2). Of theoretical interest is Xiaomei Chen, "Occidentalism as Counterdiscourse: 'He Shang' in Post-Mao China," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 686–712 (cited by Khalid, "Representations of Russia").

¹⁶P. U. [P. K. Uslar], "Narodnyia skazaniia kavkazskikh gortsev: Koe-cto o slovesnykh proizvedeniakh gortsev," in *Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh*, vyp. 1 (Tiflis, 1868), 5. Kazbich is the vengeful Chechen maliciously wronged by Pechorin in Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*.

¹⁷Derek Walcott, "The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?" *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 16 (February 1974): 3–13. Homi Bhabha does not cite this essay but discusses Walcott's poetry in "How Newness Enters the World" (n.d.), *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 231–35.

and discourse is [sic] possessed entirely by the colonizer.”¹⁸ Unsympathetic to “traditional academic wisdom” about the Other as a silenced, passive victim of Western domination, Bhabha developed a metaphor of empire as a “narrative” which subjugated natives revise.¹⁹ In Bhabha’s view, the colonizer aspires to exert total control over the imperial project from beginning to end. And yet the very exercise of colonial authority provides opportunities for unsettling interventions on the part of the natives, whose “mimicry” of “civilization” yields hybrid individual identities and hybrid culture, rather than perfect reproductions of European models. The “narcissistic” colonizer likes to imagine that the colonized cannot help but pay him recognition as their superior. But the native’s “display of hybridity—its peculiar ‘replication’—terrorizes authority with the *ruse* of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery.”²⁰ What then is mimicry: compliance with the overlord’s civilizing mission? Or a (mis)appropriation of the colonizer’s language and culture for the native’s own devious purposes?

Keeping in mind mimicry’s disconcerting ambivalence, one can view Druzhinin as a parodist who tells postcolonial readers more than he knows about empire in the north Caucasus. If the civilizing mission is the colonizer’s master plan for improving foreign places and people, then Druzhinin shows things going awry. In his telling, the Russian impact on the Caucasus is all for the worse, as measured primarily by inroads of tourism in Piatigorsk (the fashionable spa the author visited at least once).²¹ With respect to mountain terrain, Druzhinin knew his disenchanted mind: imperial expansion was ruining the “poetic” land. With respect to Russianization of the natives, however, Druzhinin’s writings provoke the question *Kto kogo?*—exactly who is exploiting whom? Are the Russians and their dashing Cossack agents in charge of the Caucasus? Or are colonized rogues like Aslan Makhmetov not taking empire for a ride? In revealing worries on this score, Druzhinin was not alone, as we shall see in examining journalism, memoirs, and a travelogue of his era.

Let us begin close investigation of “A Russian Circassian” by measuring Aslan Makhmetov’s success in appropriating the empire’s romantic discourse about his people and homeland. Although the story never mentions *Eugene Onegin*, Druzhinin follows Pushkin’s strategy of staging an encounter between an unexpected guest who fashions

¹⁸Homi K. Bhabha, “The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism,” in *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference, 1976–1984*, ed. Francis Barker et al. (London, 1986), 158. In revising this paper for *Location of Culture*, Bhabha omitted the phrase I quote and found more common ground with Said, whose *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993) extensively treats resistance to colonialism. For related discussion of native agency see Benita Parry, “Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse,” *Oxford Literary Review* 9, no. 1–2 (1987): 27–58; Jenny Sharpe, “Figures of Colonial Resistance,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 35 (Spring 1989): 137–55; and Stephen Slemon, “Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World,” *World Literature Written in English* 30, no. 2 (1990): 30–41. These three articles are abridged, without their footnotes, in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London, 1995). See also Elleke Boehmer, ed., *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature, 1870–1918* (Oxford, 1998), xxi–xxii.

¹⁹See, in *Location of Culture*, Bhabha’s “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817” (1985), 105–22, esp. 112, “Sly Civility” (1985), 98–101, and “Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” (1987), 87–89.

²⁰Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders,” 115.

²¹Druzhinin’s presence in the Caucasus in 1851 is mentioned in P. S. Popov, ed., *Pis’ma k A. V. Druzhininu (1850–1863)* (Moscow, 1948), 42.

himself after literature, and a provincial unacquainted with the newcomer's textual models. To all indications a Petersburg resident, the narrator of "A Russian Circassian" knows literary Caucasia well. But those writings have barely penetrated the rural Russian milieu. Varin'ka has a little library including "*A Hero of Our Time*, Lermontov's poems, and all of Marlinsky," as well as "numerous works by imitators of Marlinsky and Lermontov" (p. 192). Mushkin, too, has some familiarity with romantic Caucasia, while Matvei Kuz'mich and Praskov'ia Ivanovna have none (the latter, in fact, reads nothing and finds her husband's zest for newspapers annoying.)

Knowing the literature allows both Mushkin and Varin'ka to recognize immediately that Aslan Makhmetov is a walking parody of Russian stories. A gender gap nevertheless divides the betrothed couple. When Varin'ka hears she is about to meet the "Caucasian officer Aslan Makhmetov," her "heart [throbs] at the recollection of Ammalat Bek" (p. 184). The provincial damsel's excitement conforms to the actual responses of the Russian readership's "ladies and girls" who purportedly fell in love *en masse* with Bestuzhev-Marlinsky's Ammalat Bek. Lermontov's "Izmail Bey" also piqued erotic imagination by portraying the Circassian hero as an irresistible seducer of Russian women during his time at a Petersburg military academy.²² Aware of romanticism's alluring tribesmen, Druzhinin's Mushkin understands Varin'ka's blushes but is not jealous because he had already seen heavy-set, unkempt, red-faced, and yellow-eyed Aslan Makhmetov, a man "with absolutely nothing attractive about him" (p. 184). A travesty of the handsome prototype Ammalat Bek, Aslan Makhmetov fails with Varin'ka mainly because he does not look the type he is playing, a type she believed so authentic that her pulse raced at the thought of seeing him.

With Matvei Kuz'mich, however, the Circassian succeeds in passing himself off as a martial prince. Oblivious to the mountaineer's appearance, the bored squire responds avidly to the voice of a mimicked Russian discourse he never knew before. The nature of Aslan Makhmetov's literary education is unclear, but his Russian may not have allowed much reading. With a cheerful disregard for standard grammar, he speaks an idiom of the variety, "Russia good, Caucasus better" (p. 186). Given Aslan Makhmetov's hybrid talk, we might suppose he learned the rudiments of romanticism primarily through social contacts in Piatigorsk and Petersburg. In the capital he has worked the Passazh shopping gallery, sampled alcohol, smoked cigars, frequented pool halls, and, most intriguingly, attended masked balls. (The mimicker licensed to pretend: What costume did he choose?) However he acquired his shopworn literary motifs, Aslan Makhmetov has learned to marshal them to good effect: *kunachestvo* (consecrated friendship), *dzhigity* (mountain braves), horses and swords; derring-do in combat against Shamil; Cossack outposts; the "Caucasus mountains' snowy crest," Elbrus, Kazbek, and the "murky Terek" (pp. 186–88, 190). The narrator tells us that Aslan Makhmetov is so carried away that he begins to believe his own tall tales. But all the same, the fast-talking intruder plays a self-serving game. For by igniting the provincial squire's imagination, he receives lavish hospitality and lodging for the night. Moreover, the Circassian comes out way ahead in the gift exchange (p. 190). After receiving from Aslan Makhmetov a "good-sized mountain" of rubbishy Caucasian

²²Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire*, 125–26, 134–35, 143–55.

garb, Matvei Kuz'mich gives his *kunak* a sterling silver snuffbox (an old present from Praskov'ia Ivanovna). The mountaineer then reciprocates with a dagger "about whose value it is difficult to say anything positive."

Matvei Kuz'mich's quixotic yearning for adventure allows him to go on believing in Aslan Makhmetov even after discovering the literature the Circassian mimics (whereas Pushkin's Tat'iana sees through Onegin once she reads his books). Afire to learn more about the land of his imagined progenitors, Matvei Kuz'mich begins with Varin'ka's copies of Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, Lermontov, and their imitators. The squire then sends for every other pertinent publication he can find, including the enormously popular real chapbook about the "beautiful Mohammedan" who dies of grief on the grave of her Russian Cossack husband.²³ The authorial voice ironically stresses the rural reader's lack of cultivated taste. Lermontov's "majestic, melancholic, soul-stirring music" sends Matvei Kuz'mich into a reverie (Druzhinin alludes here to the elegy "In Memory of A. I. Odoevsky" and "A Dream," the celebrated lyric about a Russian's death in Dagestan). But when the "Caucasus' poor admirer" consumes too much sensational fare, he moves from idle daydreams into the full-blown dementia of feeling Circassian. Naturally. For how is a gullible provincial to cope with

the poet Bekbulatov, the novelist Aibulatov, the tourist Bulatov, Circassian women dying of love, and tribal chieftains chopping off several heads a day?! Everything blended together and began whirling in a crazy dance. Mountains became bloodied giants. The Terek started howling in a human voice, and young *dzhigity* took to howling like the Terek. The Hassan Khans and Iskander Beks set to daggering each other, horses began snorting fire, cliffs trembled, and a cascade of blood flowed! (p. 193)

This passage takes jabs at high romanticism: the amorous, suicidal tribeswoman (who originated in Pushkin's "The Prisoner of the Caucasus"); the vocal river of Lermontov's "Gifts from the Terek" (1839); and the lurid decapitations of Russian officers in "Ammalat Bek" and "Izmail Bey." The main targets of Druzhinin's parody, however, are hacks—the imaginary Bekbulatov and company, whose real counterparts included Pavel Kamensky (1814–71), a Caucasian army volunteer (*iunker*) who wrote *Dead Men's Heads, or Russians in Chechnia* (1841).²⁴ The fact that a Russian critic of the 1840s could call Kamensky "our Cervantes" indicates that provincial squires were never alone in their relish for pulp.²⁵ "A Russian Circassian" satirizes that popular taste. Yet at the same time, Matvei Kuz'mich's spontaneous appreciation of Lermontov asserts the value of romantic poetry at its "majestic," "soul-stirring" best, all in accord with Druzhinin's commitment to art for art's sake.

²³Druzhinin, *Sobranie sochinenii* 2:192–93. *The Russians' Battle with the Kabardians, or the Beautiful Mohammedan Dying on the Grave of Her Husband*, was first published by N. Zriakhov in 1843. Consult Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Culture, 1861–1917* (Princeton, 1985), 222, 241; and Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire*, 168–69. The Russian hero converts the mountain woman to Christianity.

²⁴Kamensky's military service is cited in *Pis'ma k Druzhininu*, 147. Some of his writings receive attention in my *Russian Literature and Empire*, 157–59, 204, 206; and Paul M. Austin, *The Exotic Prisoner in Russian Romanticism* (New York, 1997), 141–44.

²⁵The commentator was Andrei Kraevsky, as quoted in V. G. Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols. (Moscow, 1953–59), 3:639.

Unhinged by literature, Matvei Kuz'mich is in no shape for unsupervised travel to Piatigorsk. Varin'ka sees this and stuns Mushkin when she decides to accompany her father as an undeclared nurse (the narrator will describe her as an Antigone with her Oedipus; p. 211). In the Caucasus, of course, Matvei Kuz'mich misjudges everything, until Aslan Makhmetov is finally unmasked before his eyes. With respect to scenery, the narrator tells us that the squire is dispirited to find the spa so calm: Where are the bloodied mountains and howling rivers, the tribal raiders and the corpses? As a counterpoint to that deluded quest for the wild frontier, the authorial voice celebrates vacationing in Piatigorsk in the off season, the time of year the Makhmetovs happen to make their trip.²⁶ Even then, lingering Russian tourists and residents toss their empty bottles over a cliff after a picnic (p. 212). But at least the high-season Russian crowds have gone, allowing the narrator to enjoy the "poetic sensations" of Piatigorsk and its environs in peace (pp. 206–7). Extensions of romanticism, these passages are particularly reminiscent of *A Hero of Our Time*. Besides sightseeing, another touristic activity signaled in "A Russian Circassian" is souvenir-hunting. Druzhinin's spa has numerous shops and one major "store from which every visitor in due course naturally has carried away a dagger, or a stick inscribed 'Caucasus,' or a full set of Circassian vestments, or a piece of coarse silk, or a cherry-wood chibouk, thus producing much annoyance and inconvenience on the return trip via a modest, incommodious tarantass" (p. 216). Neither Matvei Kuz'mich nor Varin'ka actually goes shopping, but the author's evocation of a thriving souvenir trade underlines just how remote Piatigorsk has become from the exotic wilderness the "Russian Circassian" hoped to find.

What thoroughly disenchant Matvei Kuz'mich is not the tame environment, but rather the discrepancies between imaginary mountaineers and the real ones he encounters at the tourist center. In his martial Caucasian clothing complete with dagger, the provincial Russian squire is an easy mark for Izmail, a violet-nosed Circassian who gambles and drinks up his money at the spa in high season and then sponges his way home for the winter (pp. 209, 213–14). Despite Russian residents' warnings, Matvei Kuz'mich falls for Izmail's act as a *dzhigit*. After eluding the doctor Varin'ka delegated to watch him at a picnic, Matvei Kuz'mich runs into Izmail, who makes a deal to conduct him to the Makhmetov clan in the mountains. As Varin'ka sleeps, her father meets the Circassian con artist at dawn and immediately pays him part of his fee. Matvei Kuz'mich craves tobacco for the road; but the shops are all closed, and the streets deserted. He searches increasingly seedy by-ways until he finally stumbles upon Aslan Makhmetov's "lousy little shop" (*lavchonka*) open for business (p. 216). A smith as well as a seller of "pomade, chibouks and fat cigarettes," Aslan Makhmetov, we soon learn, is notorious in Piatigorsk as a "coward and cheat" (p. 218).

The chance encounter tears the veil of illusion from Matvei Kuz'mich's eyes. At first the mountaineer does not recognize his Russian *kunak* who is too flabbergasted to speak. A *deus ex machina* then arrives in the form of Matvei Pashin, a Cossack outraged because Aslan Makhmetov substituted a worthless blade for the valuable one on a dagger he had left for repair. Pashin proceeds to ransack the shop, as the terrified owner runs for cover. The shocking revelation about Aslan Makhmetov allows Matvei Kuz'mich to penetrate Izmail's

²⁶There is a lapse in dating in the story: on 17 September the Makhmetovs are still in Russia (p. 195), but then depart for the Caucasus "in early August" (p. 205).

masquerade as well (p. 219). Upon rejoining his would-be guide, Matvei Kuz'mich calls him a "drunkard" and sends him packing (but does not recoup his money). The Russian hero then returns to his lodgings, gives away all his Circassian gear, puts on "European attire," and goes home with Varin'ka.

The Caucasian journey has restored Matvei Kuz'mich to normality, but the author leaves us wondering if the outcome is a victory or loss (p. 220). In place of reading poems and novels, the squire now sticks to agronomy and even produces an article on "Why our Fields are Not Irrigated with Firehouses." Is Matvei Kuz'mich's taking up the pen perhaps a mock-heroic reminder of the romantic literature that once proved powerful enough to change his life? Varin'ka, too, is a far cry from her Piatigorsk incarnation as the resourceful Antigone. Now more like her mother, she marries Mushkin and grows "exceedingly fat." The modish "Lovelaces" who occasionally visit the countryside read Varin'ka's bulk as evidence of a "cold, unpassionate, apathetic, and prosaic character." The story's final sentence protests, however, that "during two months of her life this apparently prosaic personage had been a true woman who had comprehended and accomplished her purpose" (in caring for her father). Repeated twice in quick succession, the word "prosaic" has the conventional connotations of the commonplace and dull, as opposed to "poetry" understood as wonderment, exaltation, audacity, and the like.²⁷ Druzhinin equates "prose" to rural vegetativeness, while constructing the Caucasus as a distant mountain land that quickens imagination—a place increasingly integrated into Russia, to be sure, but still capable of delivering "poetic sensations."

The conception of rural Russia as "prose" drives the story's final ironic wedge between the author and Matvei Kuz'mich. For the provincial squire, the literary Caucasus has become a mendacious, dead narrative, initially animated for him by the wily mimicker Aslan Makhmetov. Druzhinin's authorial persona, however, persists in affirming romanticism's poetic worth, despite (or because of?) the ever-widening gap between literature and life. As we have observed, the authorial voice of "A Russian Circassian" underwrites romantic discourse about the spa's natural environment, while stressing that tourism is spoiling the place. Druzhinin's related stories "The Singer" and "The Legend of the Sulfur Springs" express exactly the same conviction.²⁸ Although Bestuzhev-Marlinsky had had antecedents in this regard, he was the romantic who most pointedly treated colonial development as despoliation of nature: in his prophetic view, expressed in a *récit de voyage* of 1834, commercial and industrial development of the Caucasus was bound to mean a "loss for the poet."²⁹ In Bestuzhev-Marlinsky's day, the Caucasian spas already had their high-season

²⁷On the general pattern of thought see Iurii M. Lotman, "The Decembrist in Daily Life (Everyday Behavior as a Historical-Psychological Category)," trans. Andrea Beesing, in *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History*, ed. Alexander D. Nakhimovsky and Alice Stone Nakhimovsky (Ithaca, 1985), 126–27, 148. Compare Druzhinin's definition of "poetry" as timeless "romanticism" in his "Pushkin i poslednoe izdanie," 76. See also Offord, *Russian Liberals*, 162–65.

²⁸Druzhinin, "Pevitsa. Razskaz" (1851), and "Legenda o kislykh vodakh" (1855), *Sobranie sochinenii* 1:493–94, 502, and 2:5–6, 102.

²⁹A. A. [Bestuzhev-] Marlinskii, "Gornaia doroga iz Dagestana v Shirvan cherez Kunakentu," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 12 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1838–39), 10:159.

bustle and off-season calm.³⁰ But the crowding had grown considerably worse by Druzhinin's time. During high season in the early 1850s, Russian vacationers filled all Piatigorsk's lodgings, thronged the colorful local market, and made group excursions to nearby Karbardinian villages for festivals where natives performed *dzhigitovka* and exhibited their marksmanship.³¹ No wonder Druzhinin treated high-season tourism as a blight on the Caucasus' natural state. Interestingly enough, the Russian author expressed a similar aversion to the development of the United States, whose white settlers he accused of "spiritual poverty" because they regarded "beautiful virgin nature ... solely from an economic viewpoint."³²

While affirming the poetic majesty of undeveloped Caucasian terrain in the absence of mobs of tourists, "A Russian Circassian" travesties romanticism's noble savages. Aslan Makhmetov and Izmail mimic the Ammalat Beks and Kazbiches of Russian literature, but behind their masks lie the story's truths of peddling, boozing, gambling, and small-time thievery. These mountaineers communicate things about colonialism that Druzhinin himself did not fully appreciate. The author perceives Russian tourism contaminating the Caucasus' natural environment, but does not clearly bring into focus the empire's role in making the tale's mountaineers who they are. In the simpler case, the Russian spa has introduced Izmail to the bottle and the gaming tables. Colonialism's more elaborate role in engendering Aslan Makhmetov is illustrated best by the episode on Matvei Kuz'mich's estate. In response to questions from his host, Aslan Makhmetov spins a mini-history of Russian-Circassian relations, entailing much intermarriage between Russian women and Circassian men (a point the speaker emphasizes by staring at Varin'ka). Aslan Makhmetov's account also makes sheep-stealing a parodic metonym of internecine conflicts, shifting loyalties and ultimate accommodations to empire on the part of mountaineers swept up in the Russian conquest (p. 187). After all, concludes Aslan Makhmetov, "You gotta live" (*Nado zhit*). To the postcolonial reader, this passage says more than Druzhinin seems ready to grant about mimicry's reactive, defensive character. Aslan Makhmetov may be a "cheat," as the narrator indignantly declares (p. 218), but imperial expansion itself has surely prompted both mountaineers to do what they need to get by.

The opportunistic mountaineers of "A Russian Circassian" exemplify Druzhinin's more general dismay at the cash nexus that colonialism establishes. The story "Mademoiselle Jeannette" includes Abdallahov, a tribesman active in warfare but mainly dedicated to making money by scouting under false names for both Russia and Russia's enemies.³³ An old "Tatar" woman works as a spa attendant in "The Singer" (p. 493); and "The Legend of

³⁰A. E. Rozen, *Zapiski dekabrists* (Leipzig, 1870), 373, 383–84. Rozen remained a devoted fan of Bestuzhev-Marlinsky's Caucasian tales (ibid., 366–67).

³¹A. Opulskii, *L. N. Tolstoi na Kavkaze (Literaturno-kraevedcheskii ocherk)* (Ordzhonikide, 1960), 162; I. I. Drozdov, "Zapiski kavkaztsa," *Russkii arkhiv*, 1896, no. 10:221.

³²Quoted in Brojde, "Druzhinin's View," 386. Brojde argues that Druzhinin came to admire American economic achievements shortly before he died (pp. 393–95). But consider Druzhinin's reservations in his 1863 review of Trollope's *North America*. Americans are "amazingly energetic" but worship the "almighty dollar" (*bog-dollar*) and have sacrificed "virgin nature" to manufacturing; vast expanses of the United States are "deadly dull"; the cities cannot compare to European capitals; and the "arts are at a stage worse than infancy: they are at the stage of servile, tasteless imitation" (*Sobranie sochinenii* 5:610–11, and 602–4).

³³Druzhinin, "Mademoiselle Jeannette. Razskaz" (1852), *Sobranie sochinenii* 1:560–61.

the Sulfur Springs” features mountaineers dancing the *lezginka* to entertain tourists at the Caucasian resort (p. 46). Co-opted by colonialism to varying degrees, the natives of these stories are parodic debasements of romanticism’s valiant resisters, whose priorities are freedom and honor rather than material gain.

Like the touristic assault on virgin nature, the colonized mountaineers of Druzhinin’s stories bespeak the disenchanting loss of the wild. Demented Matvei Kuz’mich may perceive a corpulent peddler or violet-nosed drunk as a *dzhigit*, but the sane Russians of Druzhinin’s tales realize that mountain warriors are a vanishing breed, as in fact they were at this late stage of the empire’s struggle against Shamil. By the early 1850s the conquest had become a war of attrition in which Russian military deforestation played a major role (as shown in Tolstoy’s story “The Wood Felling”). Druzhinin gives the impression that he regarded Russia’s impending military victory as yet another sign of what he once called “our prosaic times.”³⁴ Fed by a conquest that had no end in sight, romantic literature of the 1820s, 1830s, and early 1840s had constituted the Caucasus’ “poetry” as pristine wilderness, risky touristic travels, magnificently uncivilized women, *dzhigity* ready to fight to the death for freedom and honor, and a vast military arena where Russian men could test their mettle.³⁵ In Druzhinin’s writings, however, the Caucasus has for the most part made a chronotopic shift from wild frontier to disagreeably tame colony.³⁶ By contrast to romantic literature’s bygone world, Druzhinin’s colony is a modern-day place where Russian picnickers pollute overcrowded, commercialized spas, venal mountain mimics exploit Russia’s literature, and roads are so safe that Russian male tourists yearn in vain for a chance to impress a lady friend by warding off hostile tribesmen (“The Singer,” p. 499). The only recourse for a would-be Russian hero in that situation was to ask pacified mountaineers to stage an “attack” (“The Legend of the Sulfur Springs,” p. 25), a form of fakery actually practiced in the period.

Druzhinin’s disenchantment with colonialism as a force bent on closing the frontier entailed a predictably complicated attitude toward mountaineers up in arms against Russia. In sober reaction to romantic literature’s glamorized wild men, the naturalistic battle scene of Druzhinin’s *The Story of Aleksei Dmitrich* tried to convey how it might actually feel to become a hostile native’s target. Back home in Petersburg, the veteran Aleksei Dmitrich recalls Chechens as “cunning, hardened” guerrillas whose tactics rendered utterly “inappropriate” the storyteller’s familiarity with “each one of Napoleon’s campaigns.”³⁷ No svelte handsome knights, these mountaineers include a sallow fat man. But graceless as they may be, they preserve a link to romanticism. After the guerrillas have fatally wounded the impetuous young Russian Kostia, Aleksei Dmitrich counterattacks with a frenzy that takes him by surprise; and in the heat of battle in the “primeval forest” he experiences “something

³⁴Druzhinin, “Sochineniia V. L. Pushkina i V. D. Venevitinova” (1855), *ibid.* 7:98.

³⁵Compare analysis of Russian readers’ desire to keep Central Asia an exotic site of adventure—a “place of testing, not conquest,” in Daniel Brower, “Imperial Russia and Its Orient: The Renown of Nikolai Przhevalsky,” *Russian Review* 53 (July 1994): 367–81, esp. 380.

³⁶On chronotope as the “time-space matrix that determines what kind of events can occur within its borders” see Caryl Emerson, *Boris Godunov: Transpositions of a Russian Theme* (Bloomington, 1986), 5–6.

³⁷Druzhinin, *Story of Aleksei Dmitrich*, 190, 186; subsequent quote at *ibid.*, 189 (for the original see Druzhinin, *Sobranie sochinenii* 1:151, 149, and 150). Katz translates *khitryi* as “deceitful” rather than “cunning.” Druzhinin uses “Circassians” synonymously with “Chechens,” a common nineteenth-century Russian confusion.

terrible, wildly poetic.” By their very acts of aggression, the Chechens help generate this martial “poetry.” The notion of war as a horrific but “entrancing” trial of manliness recurs repeatedly in the fiction and criticism of Druzhinin (whose own military service was limited to two years as the librarian of a regiment stationed in Finland).³⁸

Attempting to be hardheaded about Chechen guerrillas, yet attached to the romantic concept of noble savagery, Druzhinin reconciled his contradictory feelings about martial “poetry” in the personages of Cossacks. The dashing Cossacks of his fiction owe much to the fiery, dark mountaineers of Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and Lermontov. Witness the sparks that fly from the eyes in Matvei Pashin’s “swarthy, gypsy face” when he accosts Aslan Makhmetov near the end of “A Russian Circassian” (p. 217). Pashin has but a cameo role in that story. Druzhinin, however, directs the reader to his earlier tale “Mademoiselle Jeannette,” where Pashin emerges more fully alongside an older Cossack, Ippolit Mal’shevsky. Set largely in a Cossack stanitsa in the late 1830s, that story concerns Mal’shevsky, his orthodox Russian wife Natal’ia, and Dzhannet, a “savage” mountain girl the childless couple adopts (and christens “Jeannette”) after a Cossack raid on her village.

If mainly concerned with the married couple’s frustrated efforts to Russianize Dzhannet alias Jeannette, this story develops a striking theme of resemblance between Cossacks and mountaineers. The author recalls how romantic literature prepared eighteen-year-old Natal’ia to fall in love with Mal’shevsky during one of his visits to Russia. Dressed in the frontier style common to Cossacks and mountaineers, Mal’shevsky had an allure that Natal’ia’s reading had led her to associate primarily with Muslim tribesmen. En route to the Caucasus for the first time with her new husband, she “got scared at each encounter with a Cossack or pacified mountaineer, which did not prevent her from recalling passages from ‘Ammalat Bek’ along the way, greeting the mountains with the recitation of a poem from the period’s almanacs, and imagining a whole series of the most romantic adventures ahead—a rich theme for letters to her girlfriends” (p. 547). Having perceived Mal’shevsky through a Marlinskian lens in her parents’ home, the young wife sulks and wants to take a trip to Georgia to escape her “prosaic life” with a spouse whose daily routine turns out to be devoted to “target practice, his horses, gardens and—oh, horrors!—even the cows and sheep” (pp. 550, 548). Only when Ippolit helps repel some tribal raiders does he intoxicate Natal’ia on his own turf as the valiant Caucasian that literature planted in her head in the shape of a mountaineer.

Druzhinin’s contrast between middle-aged Mal’shevsky and young Pashin expands the story’s theme of fluidity between Cossacks and mountaineers. If having roots in the writings of Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and Lermontov, Pashin owes even more to one of Druzhinin’s favorite American literary creations—James Fenimore Cooper’s Natty Bumppo, the redoubtable woodsman more akin to Mohicans than to white settlers.³⁹ A half-breed

³⁸“Mademoiselle Jeannette,” 550; “Pevitsa,” 503; “Legenda o kisykh vodakh,” 15–17. See also, in Druzhinin’s *Sobranie sochinenii*, “Stikhotvoreniia Aleksandra Polezhaeva,” 7:428; “Obruchennye” [The betrothed couple] (1857), 2:296–97, 328–29; and “‘Voennye razskazy’: Soch. grafa L. N. Tolstogo” (1856), 6:248, 251–52. Druzhinin recognized ethical dilemmas in war, which leads Brojde to claim that he had a pacifist’s “hatred for bloodshed and killing” (*Druzhinin*, 35–36).

³⁹On Druzhinin’s 1853 article on Cooper see Brojde, “Druzhinin’s View,” 386–90; and Druzhinin’s review of Trollope’s *North America*, *Sobranie sochinenii* 5:617.

frontiersman, Pashin emerges as the ideal husband for the uprooted mountain heroine. The “Asian” Jeannette grows up to be an ivory-skinned, raven-haired beauty who outshines all the “European” women at a ball in an unnamed “major commercial” Russian center, where the Mal’shevskys go to live after Ippolit gets a promotion. Jeannette has an “innate disposition to our [Russian] ways” and particularly detests the soft city life (p. 566). When a Russian flirts with her, she beats him up and locks him in a storeroom. But when Pashin comes to town, and she sees him master a wild stallion, she thinks she has found her man. Confirmation comes shortly, when she ascertains from him that he speaks her native “Tatar” language (p. 573).

Besides his native command of a mountain *lingua franca*, the rugged Pashin has other qualities kindred to Dzhannet alias Jeannette. Son of a Russian father, Pashin is a noncommissioned officer in tsarist service, but the tale stresses his non-Russian ethnicity. His mother is a Dagestani mountaineer, and he himself has an exotic appearance: his “build and swarthy facial features make him look exactly like a gypsy” (p. 570). Since neither Pashin’s nor Mal’shevsky’s religious beliefs are specified, there is no way of judging whether anti-Islamic sentiments contribute to the elder Cossack’s initial fury at Jeannette’s marriage plans. Mal’shevsky despairs with Natal’ia at the futility of their long efforts to Russify Jeannette, yet he sees no point in his wife’s plan to impose a more acceptable fiancé: “Everything’s lost, it’s finished! You break her, and then even whipping won’t get her back to our side!” (*Ee slomish’, a uzh ne sognesh’ v nashu storonu!*; p. 575). Whether encompassing Orthodoxy or not, the phrase “our side” sets ethnic and cultural distance between the citified Cossack and Pashin, despite the latter’s record of loyal service to Russia. In Mal’shevsky’s view, wedding Pashin will deprive Jeannette of “all the advantages, amenities and joys of cultivated European life” (p. 577). But the heroine prevails and at the story’s end is completing her sixth year of married bliss in a remote *stanitsa* with Pashin and their seven children—five sons and two daughters of “exceptional beauty” (p. 579).

Unlike Druzhinin’s colonized mountaineers who feed off Russian tourism, the virile Cossacks of his imagination have a wholly fictitious aura of economic self-sufficiency. Farming provides young Mal’shevsky’s livelihood, as it presumably does for Pashin, too. Yet “A Russian Circassian” unwittingly unravels its own fantasy of Cossacks’ autonomy by indicating their dependence on mountaineers.⁴⁰ Pashin takes revenge when Aslan Makhmetov swindles him, but we can reasonably suppose the mountaineer will set up shop again. Where, after all, is the Cossack to go the next time he needs a dagger fixed, or wants to buy new weapons? Perhaps not to Aslan Makhmetov, if he can help it, but surely to another mountain metalworker, as the Cossacks had been doing for centuries. Tolstoy’s *The Cossacks* would note that the eponymous heroes’ “best weapons are obtained from mountaineers, and the best horses bought or stolen from them.”⁴¹ Had Tolstoy paid more attention to the economic life of the Terek *stanitsa* where he lived for about two and a half years, he might

⁴⁰My thanks to Thomas Barrett for making this point. The details about trade come from Barrett, “Crossing Boundaries,” 238–40.

⁴¹L. N. Tolstoi, *Kazaki*, in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, 12 vols. (Moscow, 1972–76), 3:161. For a recent study of Tolstoy’s contribution to mythmaking about Cossacks see Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature: A Study in Cultural Mythology* (Madison, 1992), 91–96.

have noticed that mountaineers supplied Cossacks not only with weapons and horses, but also with leather and silk handicrafts, clothing, textiles, grain, and wood. Thomas Barrett has underlined how this pattern of Cossack dependence inverted an imperial project dating from Catherine's time. That "old dream" was to draw "wild" mountaineers peaceably into the Russian Empire through commerce that would show them what wonderful products "civilization" had to offer.⁴² In fact, the dominant influence ran the other way, as Cossacks far from Petersburg came to rely on goods and services that the mountaineers provided.

In its wary, largely blind concern with mountaineers as economic actors, Druzhinin's "A Russian Circassian" and related stories intersect public debate about colonialism at the time. Soon after Shamil's surrender, several articles in the Russian press expressed relish for the challenges of making the Caucasus a productive new part of the empire: industry would tap the Caucasus' riches, railroads would make the territory a commercial hub, and the spread of European enlightenment would improve the natives, to produce a better world for everybody.⁴³ Some of these commentators maintained that mountaineers had fought Russia because they were "carnivorous beasts" driven by Muslim fanaticism and an instinctual urge to rob.⁴⁴ By contrast to the construct of "carnivorous beasts," other commentators viewed mountaineers as noble savages of the sort the "great poet" Pushkin portrayed: they were not animals, nor religious fanatics but rather people with a "rich, full character," "lively intelligence," a "humane soul," and creativity, merely obscured by an "exterior of savagery and ignorance."⁴⁵ These mountaineers' hostility to Russia had never stemmed "solely from a craving to rob," but rather from a "desire for independence; from a natural prompting in a people standing up for their freedom; from honor and a quest for glory" (p. 367). The paradigms of noble and ignoble savagery clashed in these respects, while sharing the assumption that mountaineers were economically primitive—unacquainted with market principles, for example.

What a shock, then, to learn (as does Druzhinin's Matvei Kuz'mich) that mountaineers knew a lot about turning a profit. A. Viskovatov's article "Subjugating the Caucasus" provides a glimpse into the Russian public's unsettling discoveries on this score. Viskovatov acknowledged that "many people" in Russia lacked enthusiasm for the empire's goals of transforming the Caucasus. Although those Russians recognized the material and human costs of war, they perceived the conquest's end as the death knell for the borderland's

⁴²Barrett, "Crossing Boundaries," 232–33, 242–43.

⁴³Examples are the anonymous review of R. A. Fadeev, *Shest' desiat let Kavkazskoi voiny*, in *Otechestvennye zapiski* 128 (June 1860), pt. 3:95, 102–5; and the article in three installments by S. I. Ryzhov, "Ocherki zapadnogo Zakavkaz'ia," in *Otechestvennye zapiski* 128 (January 1860), pt. 6:12–13, (March 1860), pt. 6:5–8, and (May 1860), pt. 6:45–49. Without considering the unenthused sector of public opinion, Thomas M. Barrett explores Russian celebration of the military victory in "The Remaking of The Lion of Dagestan: Shamil in Captivity," *Russian Review* 53 (July 1994): 353–54, 364–65.

⁴⁴R. A. Fadeev, *Shest' desiat let Kavkazskoi voiny* (Tiflis, 1860), 17–23. See further discussion of conflicting notions of the mountaineers in my "Nineteenth-Century Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery," in *Russia's Orient*, 82–96.

⁴⁵A. V[iskovatov], "Pokorenie Kavkaza," *Russkii vestnik* 27 (June 1860): 366–67 (the author is identified indirectly in Austin Lee Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire," *Russia's Orient*, 101, 111n.1).

“poetry.” The soul-stirring time of testing was finished, and nobody knew exactly what the future would bring. But one unpleasant harbinger appeared to be the money-grubbing mountaineer. As Viskovatov put it, “Upon first acquaintance, pacified, *Russified* mountaineers will strike people as excessively practical, overly positivist, calculating, and downright greedy for profit.”⁴⁶ Viskovatov sought to reassure his compatriots by arguing that mountaineers in fact possessed the nobility that Pushkin had ascribed to them, and that part of this character (which the poet never mentioned) was spontaneous joy in creative labor. In Viskovatov’s estimation, mountaineers traditionally produced clothing, leather goods, decorated weapons, and various other articles “not from financial calculation, nor for selling, but rather to satisfy a personal feeling.” The quality of their goods was extraordinary (much better than anything made by “our peasants or even our city craftsmen”), and their purportedly unprecedented exposure to the market was making some of them seem money-hungry. But according to Viskovatov, that impression was more apparent than real: mountaineers remained noble at heart.

If Druzhinin’s stories articulated a general perception of colonialism as a process encouraging lamentable mercenariness in mountaineers, “A Russian Circassian” coincided with a more specific real-life anxiety about sneaky natives preying upon tourists at Caucasian spas. Evgeny Verderevsky’s earnest account *From the Transurals to Transcaucasia* reported behavior that sounds like a mountaineer’s crafty exploitation of Russian ideas about *kunachestvo*.⁴⁷ The *kunak* had been a staple of Russian writings every since Pushkin’s “The Prisoner of the Caucasus” glossed the term. According to Verderevsky, a Kabardinian in Piatigorsk nearly fleeced him on the pretext of *kunachestvo*. After visiting the travel writer’s lodgings and eyeing his belongings, the local man repeatedly proposed gift-exchanges to solidify their “friendship” but always got much better than he gave. Presenting himself as a “victim” of his own “curiosity and trustworthiness,” Verderevsky advised Russian tourists to avoid “getting friendly with mountaineers and not to let them into your house on any account.” In a manner similar to what Verderevsky described, Druzhinin’s Aslan Makhmetov turns *kunachestvo* to his advantage right in Matvei Kuz’mich’s own home in Russia; and then comes Izmail’s turn to bilk the rural traveler in Piatigorsk.

While giving voice to Russian anxiety about unscrupulous, venal mountaineers, Druzhinin’s stories also signaled contemporary fears about Caucasian natives succumbing to “civilization’s” vices, instead of imitating its values. Izmail of “A Russian Circassian” is emblematic of real mountaineers whose appetite for drinking and gambling undercut the empire’s claim to be spreading enlightenment. To judge by N. Volkonsky’s account of a Dagestan campaign of 1857, mountaineers sometimes took to the bottle in Russian militias: they enjoyed getting drunk and having free meals but proved worthless when it came to fighting.⁴⁸ Those natives were turning a serious military scenario into a farce. Deeper concern about the spread of vice among mountaineers appeared in the published diary of Apollon Runovsky, the Russian officer initially put in charge of Shamil in captivity. In

⁴⁶V[iskovatov], “Pokorenie Kavkaza,” 348, 367–69.

⁴⁷E. A. Verderevskii, *Ot Zaural’ia do Zakavkaz’ia: Iumoristicheskie, sentimental’nye i prakticheskie pis'ma s dorogi* (Moscow, 1857), 155–56.

⁴⁸N. Volkonskii, “Lezginskaia ekspeditsiia (v Didoiskoe obshchestvo) v 1857 godu,” *Kavkazskii sbornik* 2 (1877): 217.

Runovsky's opinion, the empire faced an uphill battle in transforming the Caucasus because mountaineers had come to associate "civilization" with drinking, theatrical entertainments, and venereal disease. These conceptions stemmed from colonized men who had been to Russia: "Longstanding experience has shown that, with extremely rare exceptions, these people's familiarity with civilization is limited to theaters, taverns, and similar kinds of social institutions" (evidently including brothels).⁴⁹ Along the same lines, an article in *Russian Word* in 1861 maintained that conquest of the Caucasus had done little for mountaineers besides introduce them to vodka, gambling, and syphilis.⁵⁰

Retrieved from the margins of literary history, Druzhinin's Caucasian tales help bring to light these midnineteenth-century Russian misgivings about colonialism. The author's suspicion that empire-building was altering Caucasian wilderness and natives for the worse was not an anomaly, but rather a witness (and perhaps contributor) to a mood of disenchantment within one segment of public opinion in his day. The political import of Druzhinin's fiction remains debatable, of course. A beneficiary of empire, the author was a Europeanized Russian nobleman whose writings made conventional assumptions about the Orient, subscribed to certain notions of Asian "savagery," and never entertained the possibility of Caucasian peoples having sovereignty. But the stories Druzhinin told may nevertheless serve to remind us that the complex dynamics of real colonial encounters set "constraints and limitations" on empire-builders' manipulation of subjugated natives.⁵¹ Druzhinin's sly mimicker Aslan Makhmetov harnesses romantic literature to his pursuit of profit as a peddler and metalworker in the colonial economy; Izmail attempts something similar in his own loafer's way; and as for Dzhannet alias Jeannette, she undoes Russia's tradition of "beautiful Mohammedan" tales by bolting to the empire's edge to live happily ever after with a half-breed Cossack, who is no agent of Christian "civilization." To an extent that Druzhinin himself did not realize, his literary Caucasus dramatized natives' power to intervene in empire-building in ways unforeseen and undesired by the colonizers.

⁴⁹"Dnevnik Runovskago," in *Akty sobrannye kavkazskoiu arkhograficheskoiu kommissieiu*, 12 vols. (Tiflis, 1866–96), 12:1519. Runovsky added that Caucasian natives often brought back from Russia "syphilis infecting the civilizer's entire family and sometimes even reaching the proportions of an epidemic which infected entire village populations. ... All of this, of course, is more likely to make mountaineers loathe civilization rather than attract them to it" (pp. 1519–20). Extracts from the admiring discussion of Shamil in Runovsky's *Zapiski o Shamile* (St. Petersburg, 1860), appeared in Druzhinin's *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 158 (1860), pt. 3:71–78.

⁵⁰I. F. Iukhotnikov, "Pis'ma s Kavkaza," *Russkoe slovo* (April 1861): pt. 3:9–13.

⁵¹Consult Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, MA, 1999). For a similar argument about colonizers' representations of a place see Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840–1865* (Cambridge, England, 1999), 277–78.