

Translator's Introduction

Rossiiia i evropa (Russia and Europe) is Nikolai Iakovlevich Danilevskii's magnum opus, and it is important in two contexts. It is first a seminal work in the intellectual history of nineteenth-century Russia, condensing the Slavophile point of view articulated in the 1830s and 1840s, and recasting it in the mold of 1860s pragmatism and *Realpolitik* toward a broader, Pan-Slavic purpose. Danilevskii addressed the frustration of some Slavophiles and their sympathizers that a preoccupation with the past left them irrelevant to the present and the future. They were hung up on the reforms of Peter the Great, especially the most superficial (the adoption of Western clothing and the removal of facial hair), and prone to romanticize the distant past preserved in medieval chronicles. In this regard, Slavophilism aligned with other forms of romanticism across Europe, as an escapist refuge from the realities of modernity slowly but relentlessly transforming the continent.

The yearning for a different time—various adjectives may be applied to it: simpler, more spiritual, less turbulent, exotic, gallant, elevated, mysterious, wholesome, etc.—offered only stasis in regard to the present, and wariness toward the future. Informed by German philosophy, Slavophilism of the 1830s and 1840s constructed a romanticized notion of the ideal Russian people existing before the reforms of Peter the Great. Once the Great Reforms of the 1860s were well underway, the escapist preoccupation with an idealized, golden-hued past and native identity offered nothing concrete to meet the challenges and aspirations of the present. Danilevskii preserved the Slavophiles' reverence for the past in terms of establishing national identity and distinctness, but accepted the realities of the post-Emancipation era, not only within Russia, but across Europe.

In Russia and the U.S., the defining events of the 1860s involved the elimination of involuntary servitude. Following a humiliating defeat in the Crimean War and the death of the uncompromising Tsar Nicholas I, Russia opted for voluntary reform, beginning with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and expanding to the adoption of judicial reforms, greater press freedom, and local self-government. The U.S. fought a bloody civil war lasting the first half of the decade to end slavery and preserve the union of states. But in Europe, the defining events of the 1860s were the unifications of two states, Italy and Germany, where there had previously been separate kingdoms, duchies, and other sovereign entities of medieval invention, subject to conquest or swapping around among the more powerful dynastic empires on the continent. As Danilevskii was writing this book, Germany and Italy were

steadily, and inexorably, taking shape, and references to these events and the leaders pursuing them are scattered throughout its chapters. Bismarck, Cavour, and Garibaldi were men of ambition and political genius whom Danilevskii could not help but admire, along with their historical antecedents, such as Philip II of Macedon or Constantine the Great, for consolidating new state entities on the basis of common identity and purpose. While this was a book for Russians, it was written with an eye on recent events in Europe. Implicit throughout the book is Danilevskii's longing for Russia to provide such a leader to unite the Slavic peoples along the same lines, along with mild but consistent criticism of its past rulers' hesitancy to pursue what Danilevskii saw as Russia's national interests abroad.

In this regard classical Slavophilism lacked ambition and goals, its adherents having a narrowly Russian focus, rooted in the past. Danilevskii crystalized the identity politics of the Slavophile movement, but gave it a broader future orientation outside Russia's borders. The Crimean War drove home the fact that Russia's rank among the Great Powers was slipping, and German unification (more than its Italian counterpart) suggested that weak states binding together would become strong. But the source of strength, for Danilevskii, lay in the alignment of peoples with polities.

Here his scientific career informed his politics. It is crucial to remember that Danilevskii the nationalist was first and foremost a naturalist (or what we now call a biologist), concerned with the proper classification of specimens by their inherent similarities or differences. His vocation provides the essential metaphor and the scientific-positivist outlook shaping the book. Its main idea is that Russia should not be classified as part of Europe, but that these two represent fundamentally different civilizational types: Europe, the Germanic-Roman civilization, and Russia, the Slavic. As a naturalist he was concerned with proper classification, grouping like organisms together on the basis of similarities. His reviews of the state of various sciences in chapters 4 and 6 are now outdated, but serve his purpose of illustrating that all sciences progress from artificial combinations and classifications of data, based on some pre-conceived notion, to natural systems, aligned with the observable realities of the natural world.

Assuming that politics should be as rational as the sciences, he saw the Slavs as a group of peoples that by nature belonged together, but were politically divided and, except for Russia, subject to non-Slavic rule by the Ottoman and Austrian Hapsburg Empires, which were every bit as artificial and outdated constructions as the artificial and outdated systems of science. The Slavs must be liberated from Austrian and Ottoman rule, Danilevskii believed, and Russia must act as Prussia did within the German states, to create a unified Slavdom on the basis of common Slavic identity. The book argues that the Slavs have more in common among themselves—language, history, and, in most cases, religion—than with Western Europe, which developed from the foreign principles of combined Roman and German cultural founda-

tions. So long as the Slavs remained divided, they would be subject to predations from the West or, in the Ottoman case, the Islamic East.

Danilevskii envisioned the All-Slavic Union (chapters 14 and 15) as a protective shell around a united Slavdom, to allow Slavic civilization to come into its own and flourish, as something distinct from the Germanic-Roman civilization of the West. Danilevskii preserved the Slavophiles' mission of resisting foreign influences, updating and expanding it to encompass all of Slavdom and incorporate the realities of the 1860s: serfdom was now abolished, and the peasants had a path to small-scale landownership; multiethnic empires were in decline and the Concert of Europe had broken down; the intelligentsia of each people inclined toward liberal politics and away from the All-Slavic cause; Western scholarship increasingly led to atheist materialist conclusions; Russian nihilists revealed the harm these foreign influences could have. He saw Western civilization approaching decadence, which was all the more reason to consolidate and protect a separate space for Slavic civilization to come into its own.

The All-Slavic Union was not merely a euphemism, in his mind at least, for Russian imperialism, which set him at odds with more chauvinistic Russian nationalists of his day (some critics, according to Strakhov's essay below, considered the book "too modest").¹ Readers of Dostoevskii know Danilevskii as the suspected inspiration for the character Shatov in *The Devils*, whose tepid faith in God is an act of logical necessity and therefore of will, but not genuine conviction. The two writers shared a link to youthful revolutionism as members of the Petrashevsky circle in the late 1840s. Dostoevskii enthusiastically read the first chapters of *Russia and Europe* in the journal *Zaria*, but grew disenchanted with Danilevskii's treatment of Orthodoxy as merely the Russian national faith and not the universal truth.² He openly disputed with Danilevskii in the pages of his nonfiction journal *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* (A Writer's Diary) over chapter 14, "Tsargrad," which called for Constantinople to become an independent federal capital, like the District of Columbia in the U.S., of the All-Slavic Union. No, Dostoevskii told his readers over several installments, "Constantinople must be ours."³ Danilevskii's vision of a Slavic United Nations headquartered in Constantinople seems liberal by comparison with Dostoevskii, who was on balance pleased with *Russia and Europe*, and

¹ Nikolai Strakhov, "Zhizn' i trudy N. Ia. Danilevskogo," in N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossia i evropa* (1895; New York: Johnson Reprint, 1966), xxvi. For a complete translation, see pp. xxvii–xliii in the current volume.

² Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 354–55, 483–84.

³ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, trans. Kenneth Lantz, 2 vols. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994), 527, 1206–12.

predicted that it would one day become a coffee-table or reference book (*nastol'naia kniga*)⁴ for Russians, a prediction which now seems prescient.

Danilevskii believed Russia could provide leadership, drawn from its long experience with independent statehood, which the other Slavs had either never had, or not enjoyed since medieval times. But Russia's relative weakness compared to the Western powers left it ill-equipped to maintain a much larger empire. Thus Danilevskii argued that the structure of the All-Slavic Union should be a federation, preserving the dignity and autonomy of all its Slavic parts, with the smallest Slavic peoples amalgamated into viable state combinations. He assumed that because it was natural for all the Slavs to bond together, it was also essentially inevitable. This was an optimistic view, a best-case scenario, and Danilevskii only tentatively addressed the incidental things that could go wrong. After all, not all the German states had eagerly submitted to Prussian hegemony, but once accomplished in fact, they made their peace with the new reality. Danilevskii argued that the All-Slavic Union could not be created without violence, but not directed against the Slavs. Rather, Germanic-Roman Europe would never permit the rise of a strong neighbor on its eastern flank, so the Slavs would have to contend with it to claim their destiny. Just as Prussia used wars to unite Germany—the Danish War of 1864, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and the final stroke, after this book was written, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870—so would war provide the means to unite Slavdom, being the only measure strong enough to break the status quo and rally the Slavs behind Russia.

Danilevskii subsequently saw vindication for this view, briefly, in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, when Russia secured autonomy for Greater Bulgaria and independence for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania, among other provisions. In Danilevskii's view, Russia won the war but lost the peace at the 1878 Congress of Berlin. As predicted, the Western powers did not welcome a large, autonomous Bulgaria friendly to Russia, or the further expansion of Russian influence in the East, and managed to reduce the gains it made in the tentative Treaty of San Stefano ending the war. At Berlin, Bulgaria was divided, half returned to Ottoman rule, with Bosnia-Herzegovina placed under Austro-Hungarian rule. Danilevskii documented his aspirations in a series of articles in the St. Petersburg newspaper *Russkii Mir* (1877–78), and his final dejection in a concluding piece for the journal

⁴ Letter to Nikolai Strakhov, 18/30 March 1869, in F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972–), vol. 29, bk. 1, 30. Cf. "reference book," *Fyodor Dostoevsky: Complete Letters*, ed. and trans. David A. Lowe (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990), 3: 150; "bedside book," Frank, *Dostoevsky*, 354. Olga Maiorova perhaps renders it best as "handbook," in *From the Shadow of Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 184.

Russkaia Rech' in 1879.⁵ But the war did bring an uptick in sales for his book, which gradually sold out its initial print run of 1200 copies. This translation includes the marginal comments Danilevskii added to several chapters of his book sometime in the early 1880s, in preparation for a new edition. In these comments, besides incidental commentary on the intervening decade of the 1870s, we see a mixture of self-congratulation and retraction: "This was proven true," or "Everything I wrote here is nonsense." Danilevskii died in 1885 before this new edition came out, with little by way of events to change his ambivalence toward his work. He left his literary estate to his friend, the literary critic Nikolai Strakhov, who eulogized the author in an introductory essay, "Zhizn i trudy N. Ia. Danilevskogo" (The Life and Works of N. Ia. Danilevskii), included in the 1888 edition and most subsequent editions. It has been translated for this edition as the most complete contemporary biographical sketch of the author; Strakhov's commentary on the book itself is limited to the promotion of Strakhov's Slavophile concerns.

The book was an important landmark in the nineteenth century, but that is not to say it was a great commercial success. The book first appeared serially in a start-up journal named *Zaria* (Dawn), which folded shortly thereafter for lack of subscribers. With a subsidy from a nationalist group, the installments were collected and published in book form, to modest sales. Subsequent editions were published only after the author's death in 1885, when Strakhov reissued the book as ammunition in an ongoing polemic with the philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev, who generally opposed the religious nationalism of the Slavophiles in favor of a form of ecumenism, and attacked the book's Pan-Slavism and advocacy of violence.⁶ The controversy drove sales of the 1888 and 1889 editions. After an 1895 edition, however, the book remained out of print in Russia for almost a century.

Rossia i evropa, as stated above, is important in two contexts, and now we come to the second. By 1991, Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms had fully set in motion the forces that would dismantle the Soviet Union by the end of the year. Russians and resurgent national minorities were hounding out the regime that had hounded out the last remnants of tsarism and the Provisional Government in 1917. Soviet rule had come to Russia and its surrounding territories in a series of dramatic events, and now its end marked another dramatic and traumatic transition to an uncertain future. During this momentous year, a new edition of Danilevskii's book finally appeared in

⁵ Collected in N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Sbornik politicheskikh i ekonomicheskikh statei* (St. Petersburg, 1890). The 1879 piece was originally called "Rossia i vostochnyi vopros" (Russia and the Eastern Question), but was renamed by Strakhov "Gore pobediteliam!" (Woe to the Victors!).

⁶ On this quarrel, see Linda Gerstein, *Nikolai Strakhov* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 113–19; and S. A. Vaigachev, "Posleslovie," in N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossia i Evropa* (Moscow: Kniga, 1991), 560–64.

print, reflecting a decision that precisely such a moment as this was the time to publish the book anew.

In this context, other aspects of the argument in the book seemed more relevant to present concerns. In general, Danilevskii's message was that Russians needed to quit trying to be something they are not (i.e., European) and concentrate on developing according to their true nature. Danilevskii's book explicitly challenged the Western European notion of Civilization (in the singular, capital-C sense) as something other peoples either lack or possess to the degree of their conformity to Western ways. He argued instead that there are multiple human civilizations, each on its own timeframe of development.

Departing from biological convention, he saw "human" as the genus, with "people" or "nation" as the species, bundled into similar groups he calls "types." Type is used in the sense of biological taxonomy (the conventions of which have remained in flux but were especially fluid in the nineteenth century), where "kingdom," "family," "order," and "class" reflect various degrees of similarity and differentiation. Although we speak of the human species, Danilevskii saw "human" as a generic (in the sense of "genus-level") term. He argues there can be no actual generic or universal human, any more than there can be a generic cat, but only humans or cats of various kinds. Without lions, panthers, housecats, or saber-toothed tigers as actual variations, the idea of "cat" becomes meaningless and dull. In the same way humanity without the various nationalities becomes a meaningless abstraction. Humanity is divided into "peoples" or nationalities identified by the distinctive civilization they produce, which unites similar peoples and separates them from others. These collective groups of peoples united by a distinctive civilization Danilevskii calls "cultural-historical types," and attempts to develop a scientific system of their analysis and classification, including laws of their "movement and development," which he validated by comparison to the systems of other natural sciences.

The 1991 edition was for 70,000 copies, and was made required reading at Russian military academies.⁷ The afterword appended to the new edition sounds a warning: "In light of the events of our recent history, Danilevskii's warning that we cannot sacrifice national interests in the name of abstract goals that are falsely considered 'progress' sound, it seems, more than timely.... Danilevskii's book contains many ideas whose relevance has greatly increased in the closing of the twentieth century. One of them is the author's warning ... about the denationalization of culture. The establishment of the global hegemony of a single cultural-historical type would be harmful for all humanity, since the hegemony of a single culture, a single civilization, would deprive humanity of a necessary condition for improvement: the element of

⁷ J. L. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 5. I pressed Black for his source for this claim; he recalled seeing it in booksellers' advertisements but could not provide an exact reference.

diversity.... Danilevskii strongly condemned the West for imposing its own culture (under the fig leaf of 'universal values') on the rest of the world."⁸ It was a warning not to abandon all the national interests of the Soviet empire to embrace the West, as Russia, deep in an identity crisis during the 1990s, mostly did. Appealing to nationalism to shore up Soviet power was not new. In World War II, or the "Great Patriotic War" as it was known in Russia, Josef Stalin promoted nationalism to bolster public morale in ways that communist ideology and intimidation by violence could not. If the release of Danilevskii's book was intended to do something similar in 1991, it came too little too late.

But the book caught on. At least seven subsequent editions of *Russia and Europe* were published in 1995, 2002, 2003, 2008, and 2010 (see appendix). The 1991 edition of 70,000 copies is a no-frills affair, printed in dense text on thin paper with a modest cloth cover, stressing utility and economy over aesthetics. A deluxe edition of 20,000 copies published in 1995, however, suggests not only a positive reception but consumer demand for a lavish, "coffee-table" edition. Bound in handsome blue tooled leather, with ornate designs and gold trim on the cover, tsarist crests on the flyleaf, and patriotic illustrations at every chapter heading, the 1995 edition is a monument to resurgent Russian nationalism.⁹ Russian scholarship on Danilevskii became a veritable growth industry during this period, and new books continued to appear regularly into the new century. His book, which was only modestly successful in his lifetime, now enjoys the greatest fame and readership it has ever had—within Russia at least. Until now, only excerpts have been translated into English.

In the West, the book has been considered a seminal work in Russian intellectual history as a Pan-Slavist manifesto, and is mostly discussed in that context. Beyond that, Pitirim Sorokin, pioneer of sociology as a discipline at Harvard, was influenced by Danilevskii, Oswald Spengler, and others in the 1930s and 1940s to formulate his social-cycle theory as a rejection of the linear progress of social evolutionism rooted in the Enlightenment.¹⁰ The only full-length monograph in English devoted to Danilevskii is Robert MacMaster's 1967 book, *Danilevsky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher*, which combined two hot topics of the mid-twentieth century (now rather dated), existentialism and totalitarianism, to call him an "intellectual totalitarian" and thus a philosophical forebear of Stalinism.¹¹ Other works addressed Danilevskii in the context

⁸ Vaigachev, "Posleslovie," 566–67.

⁹ The 1991 edition was published in Moscow by Kniga; the 1995 edition was published in St. Petersburg by Glagol, through St. Petersburg University Press.

¹⁰ See his *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (New York: Harper, 1928) and *Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis* (Boston: Beacon, 1950).

¹¹ Robert MacMaster, *Danilevsky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967). In *Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis*, Sorokin grouped Danilevskii with several other "totalitarians" who see civilizations as the

of conservative nationalism and Pan-Slavism in the intellectual history of Russia.¹² His importance today, and the main rationale for this translation, is that since 1991 more Russians have been reading him than at any other time in the past, so perhaps those who cannot read the original Russian ought to be able to as well.

What does the book say to Russians in the post-Soviet period? For Russia, the nineteenth century had a promising start that worked its way toward a disappointing end, not unlike the twentieth century. Published in 1869, *Russia and Europe* reflected the decline of Russia's fortunes from the high point of 1815, with the rout and overthrow of Napoleon, to the low point of defeat in the "Eastern" or Crimean War of 1853–56. The defeat of Napoleon in 1815 established Russia as one of the Great Powers at the Congress of Vienna, and its staunch defense of monarchy and legitimacy under Nicholas I earned it the reputation of "gendarme of Europe" for the first half of the nineteenth century. The image of the Russian Empire as backward and fiercely autocratic—in its denial of press freedoms, its defense of serfdom, and its oppression of its subject peoples—came to symbolize Europe's greatest misgivings about monarchy in general, and the tsarist juggernaut in particular. The parallels with the Soviet era are certainly suggestive, as post-Soviet Russians are positioned to see.

Writing the book in the middle of the tumultuous 1860s, Danilevskii voiced the frustration of Russian nationalists: that imitation of the West never seemed to bring the approval of the West that Russian Westernizers obviously craved. The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 began the era of Great Reforms that continued for much of that decade. These reforms, which included the introduction of press freedoms, jury trials, and local self-government, among other liberal initiatives, did little to improve the West's perception of Russia. They proved no more successful in this regard than had Peter the Great's Westernizing reforms almost two centuries prior. In the 1990s, Russian nationalist politicians attracted a following by voicing complaints in the same vein, and average Russians had to consider not only the benefits of the end of the Soviet Union, but also its costs and consequences.

In the first three chapters of the book, Danilevskii offers his readers an explanation for Russia's Westernization frustration: the reason lay in the fact that Europe, consciously or unconsciously, harbors an innate hostility to Russia that will not allow it to see Russia as part of itself. In chapter 1, he con-

cause behind all effects, but MacMaster prefers the political science literature of totalitarianism and does not cite Sorokin in connection with the term (*Danilevsky*, 321–22).

¹² See, for instance, Edward C. Thaden, *Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964); and Frank Fadner, *Seventy Years of Pan-Slavism in Russia: Karazin to Danilevskii, 1800–1870* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1962).

trasted the years 1854 and 1864 to make this point. In 1854 much of Europe went to war to defend the Ottoman Empire when Russia demanded the right to protect Orthodox Christian subjects in the Balkans and the holy sites in Palestine, all under Ottoman rule. Russia's humiliating defeat in the Crimean War pleased not only the governments of Europe but also its public opinion as revealed by the Western press. Ten years later, European governments and public opinion both were strangely silent when Prussia and Austria attacked Denmark—"one of the smallest states of Europe," Danilevskii observed, "not known for being warlike, but highly enlightened, liberal, and humane"—to seize from it the provinces Schleswig and Holstein. The blatant hypocrisy of Europe's aggressive response in the Crimean War to the expansion of Russian influence, and its benign indulgence of naked German aggression against Denmark ten years later, obviously failed the test of rationality. Something irrational was afoot, and Danilevskii introduced his book as an attempt to explain what that was.¹³

Questioning why Europe is hostile to Russia in chapter 2, Danilevskii posited that it sees Russia, first, as a "colossal aggressor state, constantly expanding its borders, and thus threatening the peace and independence of Europe," and second, as "a dismal force, hostile to progress and freedom." In rebuttal, Danilevskii offered a vision of benevolent imperial expansion, incorporating the lands of scattered Finnic tribes and steppe nomads, bringing them the protection and services of an organized state (while predictably shifting the blame for the partitions of Poland to Prussia and Austria). Most of Russia's military endeavors in Europe, he argued, served European interests more than Russian interests, for which Europe never gives Russia credit. When Napoleon, on behalf of France, offered to divide all Europe between the two states, Alexander I refused and forced him into the disastrous campaign of 1812. Bearing the brunt of this invasion, Russia did not seek its own interests at the Vienna peace congress but championed the balance of powers and the restoration of Europe's toppled monarchies. True, Russia had taken up arms against the lofty principles of the French Revolution. But so had the rest of Europe, which applauded Russia's victories. Europe welcomed Russian peasant emancipation, but backed the Poles in their uprising of 1863: Polish vigilantes "become heroes, as long as their vile behavior was directed against Russia." If Russia was a dismal force and hostile to progress, Danilevskii argued, that's Russia's problem, not Europe's; in fact, Russia's enemies should rejoice to see it languish.¹⁴

While the victory over Napoleon may be less fresh in the minds of post-Soviet Russians, it taps the same feelings as Russia's victory over fascism in the Great Patriotic War (i.e., World War II), which remains one of the greatest sources of national pride from the entire Soviet era. The occupation and polit-

¹³ Danilevskii, *Rossii i evropa* (1895), 1–2, 18–19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20, 21, 39–42, 44–45, 49.

ical subordination of Eastern Europe, some Russians will still argue, was generally protective and paternalistic. Through the expansion of NATO and the European Union since 1991, the West seems determined to claim as many of Russia's former client states as it can. When Danilevskii was writing, European imperialism was strong and growing. Europe "looks at Russia and the Slavs in general as something foreign to it, but at the same time as something that cannot serve merely as raw material to extract for its own benefit, as it does from China, India, Africa, the greater part of America." If it is foreign, and cannot be used for Europe's advantage, then Europe can only regard it with hostility, "taking the form of distrust, Schadenfreude, hatred, or scorn, depending on the circumstances."¹⁵

The title of chapter 3 simply asks, "Is Russia Europe?" Geographically speaking, Danilevskii argued, Europe is an artificial designation anyway, being more a peninsula of Asia than a continent in its own right. The significance of "Europe" however is not geographical, but historical and cultural. "Europe is no more and no less than the realm of the Germanic-Roman civilization; or in the wider metaphoric sense, Europe is this Germanic-Roman civilization in itself. They are synonymous." In this respect, Danilevskii asserted Russia's dignity and worth, even while standing apart. "Neither true modesty nor true pride would allow Russia to claim to be Europe. It did nothing to deserve that honor, and if it wants to deserve a different one, it should not claim what it does not deserve. Only parvenus, having no concept of modesty or noble pride, insinuate themselves into what they consider the highest circles; people who understand their own merit consider it in no way beneath themselves to stick to their own circle and try to ennoble it, so that there is nothing to envy from anyone or anything else."¹⁶

Russia will never be welcomed in Europe as one of its own, so why should it keep striving for something it can never attain? This impossible infatuation with Europe, Danilevskii indicated, prevents Russia from seeing other possible alternatives: "But even those who simply cannot claim the honor of belonging to Europe are so blinded by its brilliance that they do not understand the possibility of progress beyond the path it has paved. Their fixed gaze does not allow them to see that European civilization is just as one-sided as all others on earth."¹⁷ The critique of eurocentrism and the rise of multiculturalism is familiar ground for academics today. But in 1869 it was a marginal, and largely rejected, way of thinking. Present-day detractors find Danilevskii's notion of Russia as a defender of cultural diversity insincere.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., 49–50, 53.

¹⁶ Ibid., 59, 61.

¹⁷ Ibid., 71.

¹⁸ See, for instance, Andrzej Nowak, "'Poor Empire or a Second Rome'—Temptations of Imperial Discourse in Contemporary Russian Thinking," *The Polish Foreign Affairs Digest* 3: 8 (2003): 142.

But the discourse of multiculturalism can certainly be co-opted by the powerful, as shown, for instance, by white South Africans demanding “minority rights” and “protection of cultural diversity” with themselves in mind.

Out of print for almost a century, Danilevskii's book has elements of a time capsule of Russian nationalism. The tsars are gone, the communists are gone, but Russia remains. The 1990s brought privatization, crony capitalism, rampant inflation, and an embrace of the West in both consumer goods (at one time almost anything foreign was preferable to anything Russian) and international alignments (suddenly NATO membership seemed possible). But as Danilevskii's readership grew, so did his currency. Danilevskii's observations in the 1860s fit many Russians' view of the 1990s. The essence of what Danilevskii has to say to Russians is arguably unchanged, or at least adaptable to post-Soviet circumstances. Europe still applauds Russian reforms when they suit the West, but it protests whenever Russia seeks its own interests. Just as Europe sympathized with the Polish Uprising of 1863, so the West sided with the cause of Chechen separatists in the 1990s and the anti-Russian drift of the “color revolutions” in recent years. A predictable outcry comes whenever Russia raises energy prices, plants a flag underwater at the North Pole, or contrives to keep a popular ruler in high office after the end of his term as president (although it turns out Russians were more amenable to Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency in theory, beforehand, than they have been since its occurrence in fact). The message Danilevskii would seem to have for present-day Russians is that they should neither be surprised by this, nor deterred.

Translation requires some difficult choices. One of the persistent challenges in this book concerns the word *narod*, which means “people” in a general, collective sense, often rendered as “nation,” a unit defined by the people constituting it, not by its government (but often used interchangeably with “government” or “state,” as in the United Nations, etc.). While I have found it stylistically impossible to be completely consistent, I have preferred the often awkward “people” over the more conventional but hazy term “nation” for several reasons. At the simplest level, Danilevskii does also use the words *natsiia* and *natsional'nyi*, unambiguously signifying “nation” or “national.” This does not prevent *narod* from meaning “nation” in some cases. But “nation” is often taken as shorthand for “nation-state,” which poorly suits the ethnic mashup of nineteenth-century Eastern Europe. Danilevskii's particular grievance that so many Slavic peoples at that time lived under Ottoman or Austrian rule, makes it all the more crucial to avoid that connotation.

As a biologist Danilevskii was concerned with the study of life forms: different kinds of living things and different stages of their development and life cycles (rejecting Darwinism, he saw the differences of species and their life

cycles as fixed).¹⁹ Biology is not concerned with individuals except as specimens of the larger collective group. So “people” or “peoples” (*narod, narody*) are used in the book sometimes interchangeably with “tribe” or “tribes” (*plemia, plemena*) as collective biological terms like “herd” or “breed.” He knew and accepted the contemporary discourse of nationalism, with the nation as an often romantic abstraction rather than something concrete. There is plenty of abstraction in Danilevskii’s notions of Slavdom and Europe, and ample romanticism in his view of history. But he strove, as a corrective, to ground his theory in concrete, empirical reality, using historical events and cultural phenomena as classification data for distinct peoples. His theory of “cultural-historical types” attempted scientifically to group together similar peoples at an intermediate level between peoples or nations, on the one hand, and all humanity on the other. At the end of chapter 4, Danilevskii explained that global human civilization had developed in ten distinct cultural types (a suspiciously round number that has drawn criticism, especially since cultures not making the list are designated mere “ethnographic material”). Each cultural-historical type within human civilization is as distinct as the species within the genus; so while human biology is universal, human civilization is local and varied.

Human sciences, or social sciences, have always had difficulty bringing the same level of rigor to the study of humanity as the natural sciences apply to the study of the natural world. Danilevskii is no exception, though not for lack of trying. His ideas resonate as much at the intuitive as the rational level. At the end of the Cold War, Samuel Huntington promoted the “clash of civilizations” as the new, definitive historical narrative, to replace the discarded narrative of a global struggle between capitalism and communism.²⁰ The narrative of clashing civilizations offers a compellingly simplistic, rough-and-ready rationale with popular appeal, providing broad, intuitive justification for the wars on Islamic terrorism or “islamofascism” of the early twenty-first century, despite the technical merit of Huntington’s critics.²¹ Danilevskii aligns easily with Huntington (preceding him at the writing, but his contemporary in present-day Russian readership), a fact highlighted in the introduction to the 2010 edition, which reviews the prominent “civilizationists” from Danilevskii to Huntington, comparing them by their lists and tallies of civilizations, as well as the bases of civilization identified from Plato to the pres-

¹⁹ See the multivolume critique he left unfinished at death, published posthumously: N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Darvinizm* (St. Petersburg, 1885).

²⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). A Russian translation was published in 2003.

²¹ For an early sample, see Samuel P. Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations”: *The Debate* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996), a collection of articles from *Foreign Affairs*, summer, September–October, and November–December issues, 1993.

ent.²² Even though Russia landed on the side of the West in the “clash of civilizations,” post-Soviet Russians still felt persistent tensions. In the early twenty-first century, Vladimir Putin was quick to seize the issue of antiterrorism and permitted NATO the use of Russian airspace and former Soviet bases in Central Asia, and just as quick to frame the ongoing Chechen conflict within the new narrative, as a war on terrorism. Yet making common cause with the West against terrorism did not allay Western fears of Russia’s new status as an “energy superpower” or redeem its resistance to the “color revolutions” in former Soviet client states of the near abroad.

The biologist in Danilevskii was not only concerned with classification, but also with analysis of life cycles within peoples and their cultural-historical types. History, the study of change over time, viewed naturalistically, reveals apparent stages in the development of people groups. While it sounds dismissive to call cultures outside his cultural-historical types “ethnographic material,” for Danilevskii this was not necessarily pejorative, but merely a way to describe the embryonic stage of tribal existence where all peoples begin the life cycle. Civilizations are organic, literally growing into existence: some to bear fruit, others not, like unpollinated blossoms left to wither. Danilevskii sometimes used *vospitanie* (“upbringing” or “breeding”) in regard to peoples, but more often spoke of *razvitie* or “development” over time. The political process of state formation was one aspect of this process, but Danilevskii meant it in the broadest sense of “breeding a people,” a distinct life form whose “peculiarities” (another favorite Danilevskii term) develop in response to its circumstances, just as animal breeds take on distinctive forms by selection over numerous generations. Both “upbringing” and “breeding” imply some figure guiding the process; Danilevskii saw history, sometimes divinely personified as Providence in the text, as fulfilling that role. History is an idiosyncratic guide, leading each people on a rambling tour with odd turns and chance encounters, but often enough moving in a discernible direction. “Development” is an ongoing process, and should not be taken, in Danilevskii’s usage, to mean ever-rising linear Progress, but rather movement through that idiosyncratic life cycle.

All peoples have life cycles of indeterminate length, with stages of growth and decline, gauged by their cultural productivity. Danilevskii’s view of history is often described as cyclical, but this should be understood in an organic, rather than mechanistic, sense. His view could be called deterministic, even material deterministic (if the matter in question is organic). But whereas Karl Marx cut the cake of human society horizontally by class hierarchy, Danilevskii cut it vertically into wedges: large wedges for civilizations or

²² A. V. Repnikov and M. A. Emel’ianov-Luk’ianchikov, “Nikolai Iakovlevich Danilevskii,” in N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossiiia i evropa*, Biblioteka otechestvennoi obshchestvennoi mysli, vol. 61 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010), 9–15. The authors include some civilizations Danilevskii mentioned, but did not number separately, to inflate the count to fifteen.

types, divided into smaller wedges for peoples. But the cake analogy falsely implies uniformity among the pieces; rather he saw a variety of produce coming in different seasons in a scarcely-tended, sprawling English garden. Europe in Danilevskii's day was yielding the full fruit of its civilization. But after autumn harvest comes winter defoliation and dormancy. Russia and all of Slavdom, lagging the West, he saw as a civilization still in the bud.

The book can be divided into three sections. The first, chapters 1–7, develops his theory of the biology of nations to explain the disconnect between Russia and Europe, and compares his theory to other sciences—which progress from data collection to an “artificial system” or flawed paradigm that requires a “natural system” or improved paradigm to resolve its flaws—to justify his theory of cultural-historical types as a “natural system” of this kind for the study of human history. The second section, chapters 8–11, delves deeper into history to explain a series of differences or distinctions (*razlichiiia*) between the Germanic-Roman and the Slavic types: the difference in mental framework, the confessional or religious difference, and the difference in the course of historical upbringing. It concludes in an examination of Russian history diagnosing “Europeanism” (*evropeinichan'e*) as the sickness or syndrome afflicting Russia in its development, forcing its growth into an unnatural course. The last section, chapters 12–17, concerns the Eastern Question (the host of issues surrounding the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the fate of its territories and waterways), in which Danilevskii saw a coming shock that would jolt the Russian national spirit to awaken from its slumber, shake off this disease, and fulfill its historical destiny: to create a political federation of Slavic states with Russia at the head, bringing the Slavic cultural-historical type to fruition.

The second and third sections account for Danilevskii's association with the Slavophiles and the movement known as Pan-Slavism, although this requires some context. While he did quote Slavophiles in the text and epigrams throughout the work, and while his friend Strakhov called the book a “catechism or codex of Slavophilism,”²³ Danilevskii pressed the romantic nationalism of the Slavophiles into the pragmatic mold of Bismarckian *Realpolitik*. During the writing of the book, the process of Bismarck's unification of the German states under Prussian leadership was nearly complete. It is clear that, more than any Russian ruler, Danilevskii admired Bismarck for his principled ambition and pragmatic opportunism. The All-Slavic Union (*vseslavianskii soiuz*) Danilevskii envisioned as the Slavic counterpart of the Germany taking shape during the years he wrote the book (although organized more loosely in a federation of states). Only in a united federation, he believed, could Slavdom offer a counterbalance to the hegemony of Western Europe, as the Eastern Bloc in the Soviet era (its other defects and brutal legacy notwithstanding) would later demonstrate. His present-day Russian readers surely do not want

²³ Strakhov, “Zhizn' i trudy N. Ia. Danilevskogo,” xxiii.

the Iron Curtain back, but neither do they welcome the unipolar world order dominated by an American “hyperpower,” as seen since the end of the Cold War. In the twenty-first century, Russia finds support in Danilevskii’s book for seeing itself as a regional power seeking its place in a multipolar world order. “We have the unique ability,” says the introduction to the 2010 edition, “to look at Danilevskii’s works not as ‘archaic,’ referring only to the distant past, but as a concept allowing us to understand the contemporary world in all its fullness, variety, and variability of development.”²⁴

Readers of the Russian text of this book will appreciate (though it may not be apparent to those unfamiliar with the original) the efforts made in this translation where possible to simplify Danilevskii’s tortuous syntax, divide his interminable sentences, and reduce his redundancy, all without sacrificing the meaning (for a sample of more authentic nineteenth-century prose, readers are directed to the excerpt from Thomas Carlyle as the epigraph to chapter 10, or the excerpt from Alexander Kinglake’s multivolume history of the Crimean War in chapter 11). This translation preserves the original division of paragraphs, however, to facilitate comparison to the original text for those motivated to do so. The result is still ponderous perhaps, but much less so than a more literal rendering would have been. Also preserved are his occasional culturally-insensitive and inflammatory statements on topics like Poland, Roman Catholicism, Islam, China, Africa, and so on. While some are products of unmasked scorn, others merely reflect ethnocentric assumptions held in the certitude of scientific observation and shared by most of his contemporaries. Explanatory annotations have been made, perhaps unnecessarily in some cases, to make Danilevskii’s references clear to undergraduate or non-specialist readers.

Difficulties of style and opinion notwithstanding, it is worth persisting with this text because of its important place in Russian intellectual history of the nineteenth century, and its impact on the thinking of a growing number of twenty-first-century Russian readers. Danilevskii provides essential background for Russian Pan-Slavism and Eurasianism, the ideologies best poised to inform Russian policy over the next decades. This makes a case for calling *Russia and Europe* the most important nineteenth-century book for the post-Soviet period, and thus an object worthy of further study by specialist and non-specialist alike.

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²⁴ Repnikov and Emel’ianov-Luk’ianchikov, “Nikolai Iakovlevich Danilevskii,” 19.