## Description

This book gives a radically new reading of Russia’s cultural history. Alexander Etkind traces how the Russian Empire conquered foreign territories and domesticated its own heartlands, thereby colonizing many peoples, Russians included. This vision of colonization as simultaneously internal and external, colonizing one’s own people as well as others, is crucial for scholars of empire, colonialism and globalization.

Starting with the fur trade, which shaped its enormous territory, and ending with Russia’s collapse in 1917, Etkind explores serfdom, the peasant commune, and other institutions of internal colonization. His account brings out the formative role of foreign colonies in Russia, the self-colonizing discourse of Russian classical historiography, and the revolutionary leaders’ illusory hopes for an alliance with the exotic, pacifist sectarians. Transcending the boundaries between history and literature, Etkind examines striking writings about Russia’s imperial experience, from Defoe to Tolstoy and from Gogol to Conrad.

This path-breaking book blends together historical, theoretical and literary analysis in a highly original way. It will be essential reading for students of Russian history and literature and for anyone interested in the literary and cultural aspects of colonization and its aftermath.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexander Etkind is Professor of Russian Literature and Cultural History at the University of Cambridge, where he is also a Fellow at King’s College. His most recent book is Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience (2011).

FEATURES

• This is a radically new account of Russia’s cultural history.

• Etkind introduces the concept of ‘internal colonization’ in order to analyse the history of Russian Empire, culture and literature. By this he means a kind of colonization that involves colonizing one’s own people as well as others, something Russia achieved by domesticating its own heartlands.

• Etkind explores serfdom and the peasant commune, as well as the formative role of foreign colonies in Russia, and the revolutionary leaders’ hopes for an alliance with the pacifist sectarians.

• Written by a leading scholar in the field, this path-breaking book will be essential reading for all students of Russian history and literature and for anyone interested in the literary and cultural aspects of colonization and its aftermath.

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