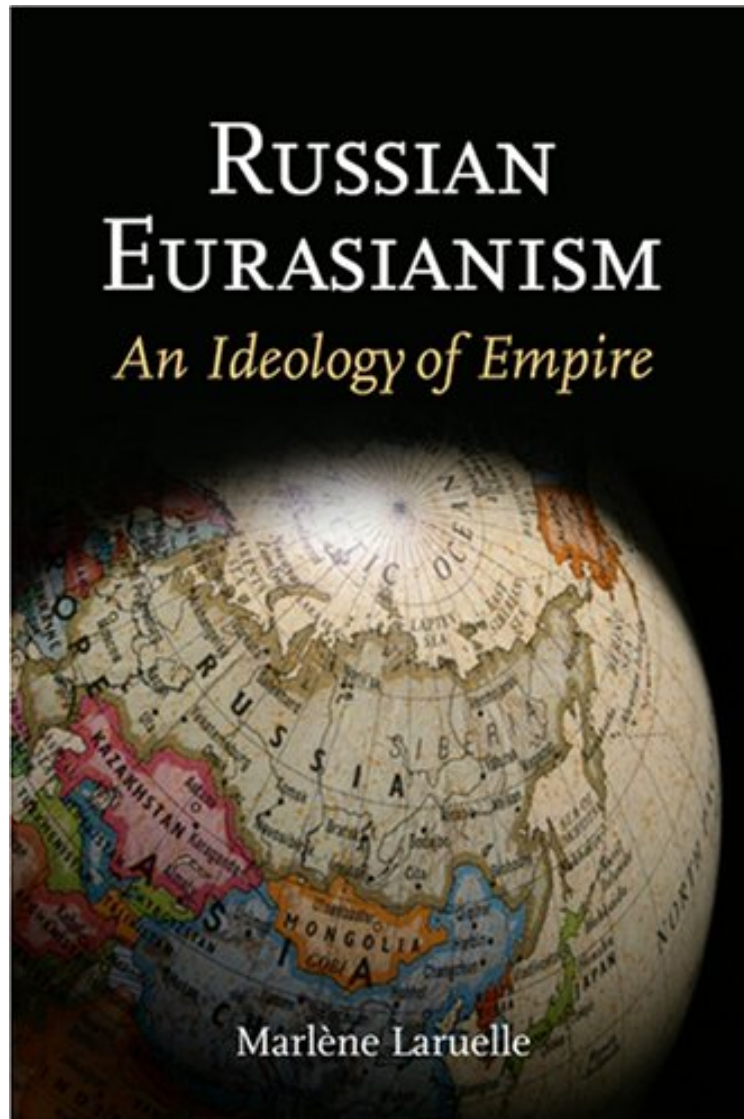


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## Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire (Woodrow Wilson Center Press)

*Marlène Laruelle*

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**Marlène Laruelle : Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire (Woodrow Wilson Center Press)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire (Woodrow Wilson Center Press):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Russian Eurasianism is often seen as an attempt to build ...By J. D. Morrow Russian Eurasianism is often seen as an attempt to build a new Tsarist/Soviet empire. But it is more complex

than that. Founded in the ashes of Tsarist thought, Russian Eurasianism became almost a utopian dream to obfuscate the failures of the Whites. Laruelle follows the three main Russian Eurasianists. The first two are from the Soviet era - Gumilev and Panarin. The last is the modern alt-Right Aleksandr Dugin. Each of these theorists have slightly different takes on what Eurasianism is and its purpose. It might be a civilization led by ethnic Russians or a civilization led by the Russian nationals or it might be a civilization with a common ethnos. Throughout, each of these (and the earlier theorists) appears to try to create a "non-European" ideal where Russia can reject both the Russia of the contemporary and the European ideals - whether Marxist or liberal. She finishes with a chapter on non-Russian Eurasianism. While interesting, I find it a tack on. 12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Excellent overview of post-Soviet "neo-Eurasianism" By Andreas Umland The present book is, perhaps, Laruelle's most important contribution among her many recent publications as she combines here deep knowledge of the precursors, representatives and followers of classical Eurasianism with an excellent understanding of post-Soviet politics and thought. The book first discusses the issue of whether Eurasianism is marginal or a mainstream phenomenon. It then deals with the early Eurasianists of the 1920s and 1930s before devoting special chapters to Lev Gumilev, Aleksandr Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin. Two further chapters deal with non-Russian neo-Eurasianism in Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey. The conclusions interpret the evolution of Eurasianist ideas from hermeneutic and comparative viewpoints. This book will probably acquire the status of seminal reading with Russian nationalism studies. It displays the author's enormous factual knowledge and her firm grip of the peculiarities of current Russian discourse. I found every page of this monograph worth reading, and can recommend it whole-heartedly as a reliable and engaging introduction to the complicated issue of Eurasianist nationalism. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the book is a translation from French and that it has greatly benefited from having Mischa Gabowitsch as its translator. As this text expresses well, Gabowitsch is not only a native-like speaker of both French and English, but himself a researcher of Russian nationalism with an exceptionally profound understanding of the substance of the Laruelle's argument. It is only against the back-ground of such expressive enthusiasm that I dare to make one critical remark concerning this and some previous interpretations of the Dugin phenomenon by Laruelle. Aleksandr Dugin is the currently most relevant representative of "neo-Eurasianism" among the various political thinkers and actors introduced by Laruelle here. He seems to have more or less far-reaching ties within both the Russian political elite, including the Presidential Administration, and civil society, not the least academia. In light of the increasing presence of Dugin in Russian public life, Laruelle might have been less determined when, for instance, at one point asserting that his ideas "cannot be equated with fascism if that is understood to designate the contemporary racist extreme right - a designation that is moreover, historically and conceptually incorrect" (p. 132). Here Laruelle enters a decades-long international debate about the nature of generic fascism, and, if one acknowledges the usefulness of that concept, the way it should be defined and interpreted. Laruelle seems neither familiar with that literature nor particularly interested in the, partly, heated debates around the issue of Dugin's fascism of students like Leonid Luks, Alexander Yanov, Stephen D. Shenfield, Alan Ingram, John B. Dunlop, Roger D. Griffin, Walter Laqueur, A. James Gregor, Anton Shekhovtsov or myself. Thus, it would have been preferable if she had either avoided the topic, or presented the relevant comparativists' arguments for and against a classification of Dugin as a fascist. With almost no reference to relevant explorations of generic fascism and without any discussion of its previous applications to Russia, Laruelle's various statements on that topic look empty, and are, at points, self-contradictory.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has been marginalized at the edge of a Western-dominated political and economic system. In recent years, however, leading Russian figures, including former president Vladimir Putin, have begun to stress a geopolitics that puts Russia at the center of a number of axes: European-Asian, Christian-Muslim-Buddhist, Mediterranean-Indian, Slavic-Turkic, and so on. This volume examines the political presuppositions and expanding intellectual impact of Eurasianism, a movement promoting an ideology of Russian-Asian greatness, which has begun to take hold throughout Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. Eurasianism purports to tell Russians what is unalterably important about them and why it can only be expressed in an empire. Using a wide range of sources, Marlène Laruelle discusses the impact of the ideology of Eurasianism on geopolitics, interior policy, foreign policy, and culturalist philosophy.

"A tour de force not merely because of the depth of the scholarship and the skill of the argument but also because Laruelle unveils a subject crucial to understanding today's Russia but never given proper due... Even the most serious student of contemporary Russia will get from this book a vastly deeper sense of what makes Russian intellectual life, for all of its vexed affinity with the West, fundamentally different." (Robert Legvold Foreign Affairs) "A masterful job of describing the various philosophical threads of Eurasianism... The author's lucid style makes the book accessible to the educated general public." (Choice) "This volume certainly engages the reader to explore... Laruelle's deft treatment of Eurasianism's shifting position in contemporary discourse makes this a fascinating volume that extends beyond the boundaries of any single academic discipline." (Kathleen Macfie Eurasian Geography and Economics) "Laruelle is to be congratulated on her lucid and intellectually disciplined discussion of the ambiguous, intricate, and often

contradictory ideas that shape Russian Neo-Eurasianism... a must-read for intellectual historians, policymakers, cultural scholars, Russia Watchers, or for that matter, anyone who uneasily senses that something is moving in the deep currents beneath the surface of contemporary Russia, but is not sure of what it is." (Maria Carlson Russian )" Russian Eurasianism is a lucid and rational guide, based on thorough scholarship and an admirable reluctance to sensationalize or to claim too much." (Edmund Griffiths Times Literary Supplement)"A richly interdisciplinary and meticulously researched analysis of both the historical and contemporary sources of Eurasianist cultural and philosophical/ideological traditions and discourse... this book will be an invaluable resource for policymakers and academics providing a deeper understanding of the forces shaping Russia's identity and the unfolding of circumstances for the entire Eurasian region." (Sharyl N. Cross Journal of Slavic Military Studies)"Laruelle, an established authority in the field." (International Affairs)"An impressive achievement. The author writes with an erudition and breadth of insight that is unique in the burgeoning field of what we might call 'Eurasianism studies.'" (Mark Bassin Slavic )"Extremely informative and enlightening reading." (Andreas Umland Europe-Asia Studies)"The importance of this work lies in the remarkable, even extraordinary, research effort that underpins its writing. The work's best features are the breadth of its coverage and the trenchancy of its analysis." (John B. Dunlop, Hoover Institution)"This book is an impressive achievement?wide-ranging yet sensitive to context and careful to bring together the many varieties of Eurasianism that have emerged over the 20th century. Laruelle makes us see why and how the idea of empire continues to appeal in post-Soviet space." (Willard Sunderland, University of Cincinnati)From the Back CoverSince the dissolution of the USSR, an ideology promoting Russian-Asian greatness has taken hold among an influential group of Russian scholars and intellectuals. The ideology, Eurasianism, purports to tell Russians what is unalterably important about them and why it can only be expressed in an empire. In *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*, Marlène Laruelle examines the presuppositions and impact of this movement."This book is a tour de force not merely because of the depth of the scholarship and the skill of the argument but also because Laruelle unveils a subject crucial to understanding today's Russia but never given proper due."?Robert Legvold, *Foreign Affairs*" Russian Eurasianism is a lucid and rational guide, based on thorough scholarship and an admirable reluctance to sensationalize or to claim too much."?Edmund Griffiths, *Times Literary Supplement*" Russian Eurasianism is a must-read for intellectual historians, policymakers, cultural scholars, Russia watchers, or, for that matter, anyone who uneasily senses that something is moving in the deep currents beneath the surface of contemporary Russia, but is not sure of what it is."?Maria Carlson, *The Russian*"Laruelle's scrutiny of neo-Eurasianism is sympathetic, balanced and perceptive?a signal achievement given the muddled, and sometimes messianic, nature of much Eurasianist writing."?John Berryman, *International Affairs*"The author writes with an erudition and breadth of insight that is unique in the burgeoning field of what we might call 'Eurasianism studies.' The basic point to emerge from her study is the utterly extraordinary ideological malleability of Eurasianism."?Mark Bassin, *Slavic* About the Author Marlène Laruelle is currently a research fellow at the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University. In Paris, she is an associate scholar at the French Center for Russian, Caucasian, and East-European Studies at the School of Advanced Social Sciences Studies.