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REDEFINING ETHNOS. GUMILEV'S CONCEPT OF ETHNOS

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Summary

Examining complexity of Gumilev's ideas, the author attempts to point out its strengths and weaknesses. To ground an analysis of Gumilev's views, this paper discusses geography and behavioural stereotypes as determinants of the embodied practices of becoming an ethnos as shown in his works. According to the scholar's views, it highlights the roles religion and language play in the formation of ethnos. The author regards the above outlined concepts as of certain academic interest for those pursuit of better understanding the issues surrounding ethnic identities and inter-ethnic relations in contemporary Russia. This paper also attempts to show a direct relationship between politics and the current situation with Russian and Western scholarly views on ethnos.

Key Words: Gumilev, Ethnogenesis, ethnic theories.

What is "familiarily known" is not properly known, just
for the reason that it is "familiar"
Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind^[1]

Introduction

Ethnic theories in the 20th century

Soviet scholars Bromley and Kozlov argue^[2] that ethnos (Greek ἔθνος) is an intergenerational group of people connected by a long cohabitation in a particular territory, with a common language, culture and self-consciousness. As outlined by Anderson (2019: 207):

it is not easy to summarize the early versions of *ethnos*^[3] theory. This lightly evolutionist and primordialist worldview was pervasive at the end of the nineteenth century in France, Germany and Russia. The theory itself underwent its own involution from an early classificatory definition stressing a ‘crystallised’ identity, single-language use, and a bundle of unique customs.

As Anderson et al points out^[4], Nikolay M. Mogilyansky (1871–1933) was the first scholar to employ the term provided a broader description of the concept as: a group of individuals united together as a single whole [*odno tseloe*] by ... common physical (anthropological) characteristics; a common historical fate, and finally a common language. These are the foundations upon which, in turn, [an *ethnos*] can build a common worldview [and] folk-psychology—in short, an entire spiritual culture.

All approaches to understanding *ethnos* are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Hence, at present we can speak of the three concepts of *ethnos*, ‘sharing a single centre ... with some notable and important differences.’^[5] The earliest example of the *ethnos* are tribes or groups of tribes. Nations emerged at the times of slave and feudal formations^[6] from the development of the productive forces and commodity-money relations between people or ethnic groups. As Anderson et al^[7] point out, regarding Russian academic research in ethnography as a precursor of cultural anthropology, the basis of the ideas on what *ethnos* is, are set out in the works of S. M. Shirokogoroff, who performed most of his academic work in Siberia and northern China in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of Shirokogoroff’s works were originally published in English and French in China. The scholar viewed the *ethnos* as a critical form of the existence of local groups of people, with ‘the unity of origin, customs, language and way of life’^[8] their main feature. Despite the significant contribution Shirokogoroff made to the field, he faced many difficulties promoting his views. At one stage, his concept of *ethnos* became an argument in the racist and eugenic findings of Scottish anthropologist Arthur Keith, whose works on human evolution ‘tended to emphasise the competitive factor and interpreted racial and national prejudice as inborn’.^[9] Interestingly, as Arzyutov points out, Keith was one of the ‘principal defenders’ of Shirokogoroff’s ideas in the mid-1920s. Shirokogoroff highly valued Keith’s opinion, despite Keith not citing him in his book, *Ethnos; or, the Problem of Race Considered from a New Point of View*.^[10] Accused of racism Shirokogoroff’s name remained a taboo in Soviet humanities and was also not in favour among Western academics. Ironically, under the name Shi Lu Guo, as Zhang Guangsheng points out, Shirokogoroff became the founder of Chinese anthropology and fostered some of the Chinese anthropologists who influenced the intellectual history of contemporary China.^[11] As Chinese scholar Ma Rong notes,^[12] Fei Xiaotong’s (1910–2005) concept of the *Zhonghua Minzu*, ‘the Chinese nation’, originates in the works of Shirokogoroff. Shirokogoroff, who viewed ‘society as a complex and delicate equilibrium, resulting from adaptation to the environment’,^[13] encouraged Fei to develop the ideas further and ‘look at the equilibrium between population, land (environment), and culture’.

Arzyutov (2014)^[14] notes that the concept of the *ethnos*, since its very emergence in academic discourse, fell into the hands of all sorts of politicians and nationalists. The logic of the concept fits all sizes, so it can easily be converted and encrusted into nationalistic or eugenics ideas. Consequently, the concept of *ethnos* has been causing a tug of war for decades between academics and politicians not only in the former republics of the USSR but around the world striving to balance the academic explanation of the phenomenon and political claims of the rights to land, culture and language. In some ways, it can be seen as a phenomenon of a merge between politics and the object of research, in this case, the *ethnos*.

Key points of Gumilev's ideas

Many scholars in a number of different disciplines have attempted to understand people's behaviors and predict their actions.^[15] One such scholar whose theoretical work on the concept of the ethnos developed further, is the controversial Soviet historian, ethnologist and anthropologist Lev Nikolayevich Gumilev (1912-1992). Gumilev, who held a doctorate in geographical and historical sciences and lectured at Leningrad University believed that 'there is an undoubted link between ethnic history and geography' and 'the historian without geography stumbles'.^[16] By showing the connections between ethnicity, history and geography, Gumilev suggests here that to come up with a vivid and tangible understanding and description of any scientific or cultural issue, an interdisciplinary approach is required. Gumilev was born to two famous Russian poets, Nikolai Gumilev and Anna Akhmatova. During 1930s and 1940s, he was subject to political repression, arrested three times and even sentenced to death (later replaced with deportation to remote areas). Describing his first arrest, Gumilev, as cited in Runivers, 2018^[17] wrote: 'It was me who gave rise for my arrest. An incident took place at the lecture of Professor of the Department of History of Russian Literature L. V. Pumpyansky'. Gumilev described the incident in his own words:

the Lecturer [Prof. Pumpyansky] began to laugh at the poems and the personality of my father. 'He wrote about Abyssinia', Pumpyansky exclaimed, 'however he has never travelled further than Algeria!' I could not stand that and shouted at the Professor: 'No, he has not travelled in Algeria, but in Abyssinia!' Pumpyansky indulgently responded to me: 'Who knows this better, you or me?' I said, 'Certainly I do'. The audience of about two hundred students laughed. Unlike Pumpyansky, many of them knew that I am Gumilev's son. Everyone turned to me and realised that I really know [the facts of my father's life] better. Pumpyansky immediately ran to complain about me to the Dean's office. Apparently, he even complained further. In any case, the first interrogation in the internal prison of the NKVD ... an investigator, Barkhudaryan, began with reading to me a paper in which all the details were reported about the incident that occurred at the lecture of Pumpyansky.

I mention this seemingly irrelevant fact of Gumilev's biography to illustrate the psychological pressures he might have worked under most of his scholarly life. Gumilev had grown as a scholar at the times, when as Bassin notes^[18] '[q]uestions about the nature of ethnicity and the formulation of nationalities policy were central concerns in the ideological construction of [the USSR] in the 1930s'. It is hard to deny the fact that that time scholars were cautious in expressing ideas nonconforming official ideological views. Hence, now we only can predict how Gumilev's ideas would have developed if he was free in self-expression.

Despite the difficulties he faced in his academic career, Gumilev published a great number of works, including several monographs. In his writing, particularly in *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere* (1989), Gumilev saw the ethnos as an element of the ethnosphere, a unique biosocial reality that develops according to its own unique laws. In this book Gumilev talks about the emergence of ethnic groups and their relationship with the Earth, with nature. Based on up-to-date findings of biogenetic studies of ethnic groups, Gumilev attempts to describe the mechanism of the origin and functioning of the peoples of Earth. Gumilev explores one of the hottest topics of 1960–1980 in Soviet scholarship on the dynamics of the migration of peoples and ethnic groups in search of their historical niche, and a conflict with the environment. Ethnos can be in a persistent (cyclical) and dynamic state. The transition to the latter is due to a kind of mutation, *passionarnyi tolchok*, a passionate impulse. The ethnos experiences many stages in its development and, like all other living organisms, dies. Considering the ethnos as a biological concept, Gumilev concludes that ethnic

identity is transmitted through genes. Gumilev's conclusion is supported by examples and deduces that ethnicity is not a product of human consciousness; rather, it is something else that needs further research and discussion (Passionariun 2016). As Mark Bassin clarifies^[19]:

Each ethno-organism, Gumilev maintained, was associated with its own gene pool, which had to be protected from exogenic influences if the integrity of the group was to be maintained. Failure to do so could lead to metisatsiia [metisation] or interbreeding among different ethnos[s], with potentially (although not necessarily) detrimental results for subsequent generations. In this regard, the cultural institution of endogamy served a specifically genetic function, by 'stabilizing [protecting] the composition of the gene pool' and thereby helping to consolidate the 'sustainability of the ethnic collective'.

In his findings about the necessary conditions for ethnic groups to emerge, Gumilev refers to several academic disciplines: history, geography, landscape studies, biology, ecology and genetics. In other writings, Gumilev^[20] promotes his idea that all people are connected in the ethnosphere in the form of ethnicities; hence, the ethnos itself has a biological component within. Further, he argued that 'cultures are creations of human hands and there is no human being outside an ethnos. The creation of ethnos and its development, that is ethnogenesis, is like running an electric current through a stopped engine, after which it starts working again'.^[21] In other words, as a biological component, ethnogenesis provided the drive for the creation and development of culture.

According to Gumilev, each ethnos has its own internal structure—a unique ethnic marker—and behavioral stereotype that 'came into existence and was then passed on from generation to generation'.^[22] The structure of the ethnic behavioral stereotype is a strictly prescribed range of relations: a) between a group of people and an individual; b) individuals among themselves; c) internal interethnic relations; and d) between the ethnos and the intra-ethnic groups. Sometimes the structure and behavioral stereotypes of an ethnos may vary from generation to generation, which indicates the continuous development of the ethnos. When the new generation reproduces the life cycle of the preceding one, the structure of the ethnos may appear to be stable.

Thus, Gumilev sees the ethnos as a constant, naturally formed unity of people, which opposes itself to all other similar ethnos and can be determined by the following:

1. *Komplimentarnost'*. This refers to the instinctive mutual sympathy of people within one ethnic group. In most of his works, it is translated in English as complementarity, a notion of division into 'us' and 'others'. The concept of *komplimentarnost'* serves as a tool to analyse how the ethnos interact with each other. As the scholar points out, the degree of sympathy or antipathy between ethnos relies upon their ethnic fields, *etnicheskoe pole*, 'to which all infants are exposed and which works to ensure that behavioral features and patterns foreign to respective ethnos are not absorbed'.^[23] In 'Issues of the Inter-Ethnic Contacts in the Works of L.N. Gumilev', *Pushkin*^[24] contends that in Gumilev's theory, *komplementarnost'* determines historical destinies of interacting ethnos and individuals. Further, 'through interacting they not only increase mutual sympathy, but also form common to all goals in life'.^[25] However, Gumilev did not provide a comprehensive characterisation of *komplementarnost'*. He believed that this mutual sympathy was devoid of any obvious visible causes; therefore, it cannot be fully determined consciously or rationally. As an aside, relations between Russian and Ukrainian people supports this statement. Despite heavy manipulation through propaganda, denial and political rhetoric regarding the conflict in Donbas, an eastern part of Ukraine, neither the majority of Russians nor most Ukrainians consider themselves (ourselves) as hostile nations; both people understand and admit their (our) cultural and historical unity. People on both sides of the conflict understand the

political motives of the problem. For many of them (us) the common goal is to stop the undeclared war imposed by other parties^[26].

2. *Behavioral stereotype*. Each ethnos is internally heterogeneous, a melting pot of ideas, thoughts, behaviors in different degrees. Inside the ethnos, it is possible to differentiate sub-ethnoses that can arise and disintegrate, while the sense of the unity of the ethnos as a whole among their members remains. A group of closely related ethnoses is called a super-ethnos. The behavioral stereotype is seen as the basis of the ethnic tradition and includes cultural and philosophical practices and views, mutually accepted norms of coexistence in the community, and ways of conducting business among members of the community. These all have specific and distinctive ethnic features.

Titov argues that the concept of ethnos formulated by Gumilev differs from those that existed before:

In December 1974, V. I. Kozlov, an associate of Iu. Bromlei, published in the leading Soviet history periodical *Voprosy istorii* an article that was highly critical of Gumilev's theory. Kozlov claimed that Gumilev's theory was based on a 'biologism' which 'prevented a true scientific understanding' of important issues in ethnography and 'justified cruel conquests and bloody interethnic conflicts'.^[27]

Bassin^[28] and Medved^[29] assert that 'Gumilev took Vernadsky's theory one step further' as Gumilev views the ethnos as a natural unity different from any other type of people's formations. Vernadsky's theory consist of three concepts: 'The first was Vernadsky's contention about the logical inseparability of man and nature. The second concerned the importance of biochemical energy for the functioning of living organisms. The third was the special role of humans in the biosphere. Within this framework, Gumilev attempted to explain how ethnic collectives operated^[30]'. Gumilev breaks the tradition of analyzing the ethnos as a purely social phenomenon, submissive only to the laws of social development. Gumilev at his 'Etnogenezis' warns against studying the ethnos as a biological population: the phenomenon of ethnos lies in the behavioral sphere^[31] the sociobiological condition of ethnic life; that is, the institution of endogamy where ethnic tradition regulates cross marriages within the designated group

Gumilev argues about the emergence of the new ethnoses through mutations in the human's nervous system, which caused changes in behavior that led to the formation of new ethnic groups. He describes passionarity in the following passage in 'Etnogenez'.^[32]:

The formation of a new ethnos is always linked with the existence among some individuals of an uncontrollable internal drive towards something which is always related to changes in either the social or natural environment, while the attainment of their chosen goal, which is often illusory or fatal for the subject himself, is perceived by the ethnos as being more valuable than even the preservation of one's life. A diversion from the norm rarely takes place, and it has an opposite sign to the instinct of self-preservation ... This phenomenon is at the basis of non-selfish ethics when the interests of the collective, even misconceived, prevail over personal interests including the care for one's life and that of one's offspring. People with this character in the circumstances favourable to them act (and cannot help acting) in such a way that the sum of their actions break the inertia of the tradition and initiate new ethnoses.

Gumilev suggests that the level of passionarity, or the drive, in the ethnos does not remain stable. Once emerged, the ethnos passes through some significant phases of development, which in some way resemble the different ages of a human being. As a rule, the ethnos can survive for approximately 1,500 years if it is not interrupted by wars with other ethnoses. Gumilev's critics always question why the scholar talks about this number; however, Gumilev provides no further

explanation of this timeframe. The first phase of ethnogenesis is the passionary rise of the ethnos. The second phase is an acme phase when the maximum passionarity of an ethnos is revealed. At this time, the highest number of people are capable of sacrifice and strive to achieve victory or other goals. Gumilev suggests passionarity is infectious. It happens when impulsive people come into direct contact with people with qualities of passionarity. They then start to behave as if they also have an impulsive drive. However, as soon as they leave people with the drive, they return to their natural psychological state.

The third phase is described as a 'breakdown'. The drive of the ethnos decreases, and a massive amount of energy is dissipated, crystallizing in the monuments of culture and art. The fourth phase is inertial. At this time, the ethnos lives in the moment of inertia and produces nothing but instead consumes the energy of previous generations. The formation of large states and accumulation of material wealth takes place at this phase. Obscuration comes with the fifth phase. Passionarity almost vanishes and the predominant position in the society is taken over by sub-passionary people; that is, people with low passionarity who are languid and selfish. The decay is irreversible. The last phase of ethnogenesis is memorial, the period when sub-passionaries exhaust all wealth accumulated by previous generations, allowing only memories and inherited traditions to remain, which gradually vanish as well.

For Gumilev, connections between a human being, an ethnos and a landscape are paramount. The landscape (relief, similar flora and fauna) determines a unique behavioral stereotype. Following this, it can be assumed that primary social relations, the language^[33], the outbreak of ethnic consciousness, give birth to new ideas and new forms of activity, which leads to its diversification. Consequently, the development begins to obey the laws of technological development, which eventually come to the fore. The influence of the geographical factor is reduced; although, it does not come to nothing. In some ways, Gumilev's ideas cross over and interact with cultural geographer Jared Diamond's^[34] argument in 'Guns, Germs and Steel'. Recalling a historical phenomenon, Diamond argues that geographical causes create differences in societal development; that is, the fertility of the Eurasian landscape has played a particular role in the development of the continent. This goes in line with Gumilev and his main work, 'Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere', where Gumilev argues that an ethnos discourse should be considered within three disciplines—history, geography and biology—and draws a line between ethnos and ethnonym:

When one is studying the general patterns of ethnology one must remember above all that a real ethnos and an ethnonym, i.e. ethnic name, are not the same thing. We often encounter several different ethnos bearing the same name; conversely, one ethnos may be called differently.^[35]

Gumilev examines the concept of race as a matter of difference in appearance but not in abilities. Further on he depicts the ethnos as:

not just a crowd of people with similar certain features to one another, but a system of individuals with difference in taste and capabilities, production, traditions, the geographical environment, ethnic surroundings, and tendencies to increase or diminish. The trend of development is particularly important because the general, for all cases, is the property of elements to possess all forms of activity that lead to the formation of static or dynamic structures.

Gumilev's view on the ethnic contacts, i.e., the ways in which ethnoses coexist and interact with one another [through] assimilation (*assimiliatsiia*), miscegenation or mixing (*metisatsiia*), fusion (*sliianie*), and symbiosis (*simbios*)^[36] - as various forms of communication and interaction between ethnic group. According to Gumilev, 'pure forms of ethnos are not observed in the real historic process, but rather various variants of ethnic contacts arising in territories inhabited by

different ethnos, united politically in a polyethnic state'. The scholar suggests four of those variants can be considered:

- (a) coexistence, in which the ethnoes do not merge and do not imitate each other, borrowing only technical innovations;
- (b) assimilation, i.e. the swallowing-up of one ethnos by another with the complete forgetting of origin and old traditions;
- (c) crossbreeding, in which traditions of the preceding ethnos and a memory of the ancestors are retained and combined (these variants are usually unstable, and exist through the replenishment by new metises); and
- (d) merging, in which the traditions of the original components are forgotten and a third, new ethnos arises alongside the two precursors, or in place of them.^[37]

Debates around the academic legacy of Gumilev

The academic legacy of Gumilev is a subject of hot debate in Russian academia and the neglect of his ideas is evident in Western academia. As Titov notes^[38], there is 'little literature specifically on Gumilev; even in Russian there is only a single monograph and a handful of conference proceedings ... In English, Naarden is the only scholar to date (2018) who has published an article exclusively about Gumilev'. Further, written on the US-hosted website of the Institute of Modern Russia, which is backed by the Russian oligarch in exile Mikhail Khodorkovsky is: 'A mixture of megalomania, scientific-sounding terminology, and "patriotic" voluntarism ... Gumilev paid a high price for his fateful Soviet split. In this sense, he is just another victim of Soviet isolation from the world'. In 'The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia' (2016), Mark Bassin undertakes a detailed analysis of Gumilev's theory; however, he says little about his legacy. Some of Bassin's conclusions are relevant to this paper, such as the heavy politicisation of ethnos-related scholarly discourse. He notes:

Writing on the centenary of Gumilev's birth in 2012, the journalist Mikhail Leontiev observed that 'all of the concepts presented [in Gumilev's writings] are political instruments (*politicheskoe instrumentarie*). They are a political evaluation ... they are in fact ideology, but it is the ideology of Gumilev. It doesn't fit into any other ideology because it is deeply individual'.^[39]

Although Leontiev's is accurate in his identification of the political instrumentalism as pervasive throughout all of Gumilev's work, his conclusion about Gumilev not fitting into 'any other ideology' is not. Very much to the contrary. Certainly, Gumilev's lack of empirical data and geographical determinism has become the object of criticism from scholars. Not many academics, either in Russia or in the West, recognise the validity of his ideas and consider everything written by him no more than science fiction. Some of Gumilev's opponents go even further in their rhetoric. Lev Klein notes:^[40]

I think that everything that is spread across Russia under the name of Gumilev's theory of ethnogenesis has nothing to do with science. These are myths created in *the sick mind of an extremely gifted person* under the influence of the monstrous circumstances of his tragic life. The unscholarly nature of these talented works is absolutely clear to all professionals; however, he did not see and did not understand that.

Yet, in the same publication, he acknowledges Gumilev's contribution to scholarship:

Meanwhile, in some of his works, he was a really remarkable scholar who made great discoveries—this work is about the cyclical changes in the ways of cyclones and the impact of these changes on the life and history of the population of Eurasia. If he had focused on these phenomena, perhaps he would have been much less visible in the mass consciousness,

but much more authoritative in the scholarly world.^[41]

Nevertheless, I suggest, Gumilev made a feasible contribution to the development of Russian and world ethnology, and provided another, much-needed step towards understanding the entity of the ethnos and ethnic culture. A better understanding of his academic legacy can lead to a better understanding of the issues relating to the ethnic histories, particularly the nations of Eurasia which Gumilev had studied a lot. Taking into account all the possible controversies surrounding Gumilev's thoughts, I believe international academia should not neglect his legacy on the concepts of ethnos, ethnic group and culture, and compare his thoughts with those of other scholars working in the cultural studies discipline. Despite critiques from other scholars, one can identify the logic in Gumilev's conclusions and the more we might think about culture, belonging and self-identity, the more we might be drawn to the idea of seeking answers in the writings of Gumilev, a scholar and father of the theory of ethnogenesis: the study of the historical analysis of ethnic factors and behaviorist explanation of humankind's history.

According to Titov^[42], Gumilev's ideas have been labelled as 'Russophobe' or rightist. Often, Russian and Western scholarly debate fails to see Gumilev's ideas as 'an independent intellectual paradigm but used as a "scientific" justification for neo-Eurasian ideology' (Titov 2005: 229). Laruelle^[43] believes his ideas give credence to a rise of Russian nationalism and even rightist discourse in contemporary Russia. Today, Gumilev's works are heavily criticized (Titov 2005: 11) or little known in Russia, and even less noticed in Western academia.^[44] The work of some heavily controversial Russian scholars, such as Dugin, notorious for a plethora of European and American studies that posted at one time a sort of philosopher or central ideologist of the Putin administration^[45], does not contribute to the discourse but adds more negative speculations about Gumilev's legacy. The founder of the school of historical, ethnographic, socio-anthropological and cultural scholarship is not recognised as a man of science because many believe there is no evidence supporting his ideas; hence, his ideas are not scientific. In this regard, what also should be mentioned, that many of the conclusions made by Gumilev find their roots^[46] in the works of Vernadsky,^[47] 'who believed that scientific and artistic creativity is not divisible; rather, artistic inspiration can serve as a stimulus to great scientific discoveries'.

Criticism of Gumilev proceeds in three directions: criticism of the theory of passionarity of ethnogenesis, criticism of his political views and criticism of his interpretation of historical facts. As illustrated above, only the latter can be called 'justified scientific criticism'. Many scholars and journalists working in the field of ethnic relations believe Gumilev's passionarity concept of ethnogenesis should be excluded from any discourse due to its failure. *Passionarnost'*, or passionarity, as an historical concept has been rejected, with many scholars emphasising facts that supposedly contradict Gumilev's theory.^[48] The following passage is found in the foreword to Bassin's 'The Gumilev Mystique':

Despite his highly controversial (and often contradictory) views about the meaning of Russian history, the nature of ethnicity, and the dynamics of interethnic relations, Gumilev now enjoys a degree of admiration and adulation matched by few if any other public intellectual figures in the former Soviet Union. He is freely compared to Albert Einstein and Karl Marx, and his works today sell millions of copies and have been adopted as official textbooks in Russian high schools. Universities and mountain peaks alike are named in his honor, and a statue of him adorns a prominent thoroughfare in a major city. Leading politicians, President Vladimir Putin very much included, are unstinting in their deep appreciation for his legacy, and one of the most important foreign-policy projects of the Russian government today is clearly inspired by his particular vision of how the Eurasian peoples formed a historical community.

However, as argued in this paper, the ideas of the scholar are neither well regarded by many Russian scholars nor referred to by politicians. I attempted to track down any available citation of Gumilev by Russian politicians but was unable to find any, apart from mentioning of Gumilev's idea of *passionarnost*' in 2012 speech of Vladimir Putin.^[49] The online scholarly journal *Sovremennye Problemy Nauki i Obrazovaniya* (*Contemporary Issues of Science and Education* 2014), provides an article titled 'Main Ideas of Classic Eurasianism in Scholarly and Geopolitical Context of the Modern Day' with no mention of Gumilev's name. Further, in 2012 the Crimea Tatar website published an essay by history schoolteacher Dmitry Bykov, titled 'Lev Gumilev-100: On uchit nakhodit' istinu' or 'Lev Gumilev-100: He Teaches to Find the Truth'. In his essay, Bykov^[50] regrets that Gumilev's ideas are neither covered in the school curriculum nor presented in university programmes. There is only one university named after Gumilev, and it is based in Kazakhstan, not in Russia.

This leads to understanding the political core of debates around Gumilev. In this regards Anderson^[51] suggests:

ethnos thinking deserves to be taken seriously because it offers a mode of understanding the social world that, regardless of the views of scholars, is compelling to large numbers of individuals and communities throughout the world. However, much we may wish the world to be otherwise, *ethnos*, particular for minority populations who face the threat of assimilation, is a reality that cannot be sacrificed. Like the related concepts of nation, tribe, and ethnicity, *ethnos* engenders a sense of connectedness that gives rise to social meaning.

Conclusion

I suggest that Gumilev's ethnogenesis theory as more than just an historical theory. It is as a paradigm through which at least some scholars study humanity and ethnoses can better and more thoroughly understand their cultures. The behaviorist—that is, not rational, but emotional—views of Gumilev have never been available for broader discussion. For many, Gumilev is just another exotic figure often firmly labelled a 'pseudo-scholar' or sometimes a 'racist' (Korenjako 2012). Academics, such as Aron Brudny (1996) from the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan, mainly focus on the role of Gumilev in the revitalization of Turkic and chauvinist journalism in the 1970s and 1980s. Laruelle was interested in the correlation of Gumilev's ideas with Eurasianism in the 1920s–1930s and neo-Eurasian ideas. As Anderson et al. (2019: 50) observe, Bassin points out that 'Gumilev ... deliberately cultivated his image as an independent-thinking dissident—a move that made his unorthodox ideas highly popular among the intelligentsia'. Chris Harman^[52] points out that understanding how ideas change history comes with understanding where those ideas come from and why people accept them. As shown above, Gumilev's ideas triggered a range of debates in the very controversial post-Soviet period of Russian history but failed to gain traction and further scholarly discourse in contemporary Russia. Yet, in my opinion, Gumilev's ideas could open the doors to understanding what is happening in the former USSR today between different people and different cultures and encourage the further development of theoretical knowledge about ethnoses and cultures. The author of this paper agrees with a Russian publicist Aysin^[53] who notes that the Eurasian ideas of prominent Russian intellectuals and scholars, including Gumilev, were ideas of symbiosis between Slavic and Turkic peoples. However, as Aysin further argues, today Russian authorities and other concerned parties manipulate such ideas: Eurasianism, in the interpretation of authorities, is nothing but a corporate regime ruled by the government that can direct the people who live under the and further manipulate the discourse.

^[1]Marxists Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ph/phprefac.htm>

^[2]Bromley, Y. and Kozlov, V. (1989) “The Theory of Ethnos and Ethnic Processes in Soviet Social Sciences”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 31, no. 3, July 1989. pp. 425-438.

^[3]Spelling of the term may vary from *ethnos* to *etnos*, depending on the source. Often, scholars working with Russian sources tend to use the Russian way of spelling.

^[4]Anderson, Alymov, & Arzyutov, D. “Grounding Ethnos Theory: An Introduction. Life Histories of Ethnos Theory in Russia and Beyond”. Edited by David G. Anderson, Dmitry V. Arzyutov, and Sergei S. Alymov. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0150.01>. 2019

^[5]Fenton, S. (2003) *Ethnicity*. Cambridge; Malden, MA, USA : Polity, p. 13

^[6]‘[S]lavery has existed in all nations since the beginning of the world. All that modern nations have achieved is to disguise slavery at home and import it openly into the New World’ (Letter to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov, 28 December 1846).

^[7]See Anderson et al, 2019, pp. 65-66.

^[8]Shirokogoroff, S. M. “Ethnos: An outline of theory”. — Peiping: Catholic University Press. 1934. p.73

^[9] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, February 1). Sir Arthur Keith. Encyclopedia Britannica.
See <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arthur-Keith>

^[10]Anderson et al. 2019. p. 278

^[11]Zhang, Guangsheng.” Fei Xiaotong xingfu shiguang”. Online newspaper Shenzhen Shangbao.
See <http://finance.sina.com.cn/leadership/crz/20050427/06211553907.shtml> . 2005

^[12]Rong, Ma, “Fei Xiaotong Xiansheng de Minzu Wenti Yanjiu”. N.W. Journal of Ethnology, Xi Bei Minzu Yanjiu. 2016.

^[13]Arkush, R. “Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China”. Cambridge (Massachusetts); London: Harvard University Asia Center. doi: 10.2307/j.ctt1tfjcs4. 1981. p.38

^[14]Postnauka.ru, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaDSZdo1R3w> ,
Postnauka.ru is a modern fundamental science and scholarship website, highlighting the current

theories, ideas, concepts in the modern fields of knowledge.

[15]Mogilyanskiy first published his etnos concept in 1908. Shirokogoroff started developing his etnos concept between 1912 and 1914 (Anderson, Arzyutov & Alymov, 2019, p. 38).

[16]‘Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere’, chapter One. See the online version of the work, published at Gumilevica website,
<http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/English/ebe0.htm>

[17]Runivers is an independent, non-for-profit organisation for the creation, support and development of historical and cultural electronic encyclopedia and internet library,
see <https://runivers.ru/philosophy/chronograph/428281/>

[18]Bassin, M.” The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia”. Cornell University Press. 2016, pp. 146-176,
see <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt18kr63n>

[19]Bassin, M. “Nurture Is Nature: Lev Gumilev and the Ecology of Ethnicity”. *Slavic Review*. 68. 10.2307/25593793. 2009, p. 880.
See https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285769015_Nurture_Is_Nature_Lev_Gumilev_and_the_Ecology_of_Ethnicity

[20]Gumilev L. N. “Etnos kak javlenie”. *Doklady Geograficheskogo obshhestva SSSR*. vyp.3, pp. 90-107. 1966.

[21]Gumilev, L. N. “Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli”. Leningrad., 1990, p. 163.

[22]Leoussi, A. “Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism”. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2006, p.145.

[23]See Bassin, 2016, p. 34.

[24]Pushkin, S. N. “Problema Mezhetnicheskikh Kontaktov v Tvorchestve L.N. Gumileva”. Federal Educational Portal. See p. 95,
<http://ecsocman.hse.ru/data/2012/11/12/1251376148/Pushkin.pdf>. 2012

[25]See Pushkin, 2012, p. 95.

[26]Oliver Stone's documentary *Revealing Ukraine* (2019) provides a more precise description of the issue,
see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvjf36kram0>

[27]Titov, A.S. “Lev Gumilev, ethnogenesis and Eurasianism”. Doctoral thesis, University of London.
<http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1446515/>. 2005, p.38.

[28]Bassin, 2009, p. 887

[29]Medved, A.N. “Idei V. I. Vernadskogo i nauchnoe tvorchestvo L. N. Gumileva. “

Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniya i tekhniki. 1994, № 3, pp. 119–121.

[30]See Titov, 2005, p. 47.

[31]See Pushkin, 2012, p. 91.

[32]See Gumilev 1990, p. 252.

[33]In fact, Gumilev denies the importance of the language in the formation of the ethnos. Gumilev argues that: The general element [of the ethnos formation] became unity not even of culture, but of historical fate, instead of the unity of origin and language ... [and] there is no one real attribute for defining an ethnos applicable to all the cases known to us. Language, origin, customs, material culture, and ideology are sometimes determinant elements, but sometimes not. *Ethnogenesis, Chapter Two, The Ethnic Stereotype of Behavior*, see <http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/English/ebe2b.htm>)

[34]Diamond, J. M. “Guns, germs, and steel: The fates of human societies”. New York: Norton. 1999.

[35]See Gumilev, 1989, Chapter Two, web.

[36]See Bassin, 2016, pp. 60-80.

[37]See Gumilev 1989, web.

[38]See Titov, 2005, p. 9

[39]See Bassin, 2016, pp. 306–316.

[40]As cited in Troitsky, 2011, ‘Trezvo o L've Gumiljove: otvet kritikam’, See <https://trv-science.ru/2011/05/trezvo-o-lve-gumilyove-otvet-kritikam/>

[41]Klein, as cited in Troitsky, 2011

[42]See Titov, 2005, p.14

[43]Laruelle, M. “The two faces of contemporary Eurasianism: an imperial version of Russian nationalism”. Nationalities Papers, The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity, volume 32, 2004, Issue 1, p. 115.

[44]A new book, ‘Life Histories of Etnos Theory in Russia and Beyond’ (2019) by Anderson, Arzyutov and Alymov, contributes to discourse about Gumilev’s legacy; however, Gumilev’s ideas are not a core discussion in the publication.

[45]See Laruelle, 2004, web.

[46]Bukina, L. *Kniga Mongolii. Al'manah bibliofila. Vypusk 24. Moskva.*, 1988, pp. 341–351.

[47]Bassin (2009, p.877) notes that ‘Vernadsky described the biosphere as the aggregate total of the

earth's *zhivoe veshchestvo*, that is, its living matter or biomass. This matter was organized into a single organic system, and the human race formed a vital natural component of this system. Thus, humankind was subject to the same natural laws as the rest of the biosphere's *zhivoe veshchestvo* and participated fully in its various natural processes'.

[48]Lavrov, S. B. "Lev Gumilev: Sud'ba i idei".

https://www.e-reading.club/chapter.php/140084/50/Lavrov_-_Lev_Gumilev_Sud%27ba_i_idei.html. 2007.

and Yanov, Aleksandr. "Uchenie Lva Gumileva. «Svobodnaya Mysl'», №17, p.104-116. 1992.

[49]Source: Clover, Charles & *Lev Gumilev: passionarnost', Putin i vlast.* Translated from English, <https://www.inopressa.ru/article/14mar2016/ft/pass.html>

[50]An independent publication website Milli Firka, <http://milli-firka.org>

[51]Anderson et al, 2019, pp. 391–392.

[52]Harman, C. (1979) *How Marxism Works*, Bookmarks Publications, London, May Sixth edition published July 2000

[53]Ruslan Aysin is a Tatar activist, journalist, political analyst, poet and chief editor of the website Tatpolit.com. Also see his YouTube interview (22:32) with Russian journalist and political activist Maksim Shevchenko, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Etqq0ixbStU&t=128s>

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