

Title: Empire and Nation in the Imagination of Russian Modernism
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In the past twenty years, a number of studies have appeared that have demonstrated the relevance, both aesthetic and ideological, of nationalism to the artistic quest of Russian Modernism (Brumfield, Kirichenko, Taruskin, et al.). Most of these studies of aspects of Russian aesthetic nationalism do not make use of the analytical framework offered by theorists and historians of nationalism *per se*, such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, John Hutchinson, et al. In the meantime, as I will argue in my paper, the strategies used in the early 20th century for promoting nationalism in Russian modernist art, literature and music seem to call for an analytical approach that would rely on some of the concepts of theories of nationalism proposed by historians.

In my presentation, I will focus on the interrelationship of empire and nation as negotiated in the modernist critical discourse and artistic practice in the early 20th-century in Russia. First, I will look at the principal elements of the official self-presentation of the Russian Empire at the turn of the century, for which I will use Russia's participation in the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900 as a starting point for my discussion. Second, I will demonstrate that it is in response to the official doctrine of empire and the place of national element within it, that such Russian modernists as Alexander Benois, Ivan Bilibin, Valery Briusov, and Viacheslav Ivanov develop their stance on the interrelationship of empire and nation. I will further discuss the aesthetic consequences of diverse interpretations of the two concepts by these authors. Finally, I will suggest what difference this approach makes for our understanding of Russian Modernism in general.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London/New York, 1991.

Brumfield, William. *The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture*. Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1991.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*. Cambridge, 1990.

Hutchinson, John. *Modern Nationalism*. London, 1994.

Kirichenko, E. I. *Russkii stil'*. Moscow, 1997.

Taruskin, Richard. *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*. Vols. 1-2. Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1996.