

"Holy Russia" In English Literature: Concept Development during the 1870S–1910S

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Abstract

The idea of Holy Russia is one of those most significant spiritual phenomena of Russian culture which are difficult to define. The issues addressed in the article are of particular relevance due to the growing scholarly interest in the identification of the concept of Holy Russia and its place in the national cultural identity. The study aims to reveal the content of the concept in the first half of the 19th century in different discourses of the Russian culture and to define the specific features of two early stages of its perception in the English literature. The methodology chosen by the author corresponds to the complexity of the research objectives: interdisciplinary in nature, it combines the method of comparative conceptology with the methods of comparative literary criticism and theoretical concepts of imagology.

The article demonstrates that the concept of Holy Russia receives new impulses for development within the framework of Russian culture in the 19th century. That was a period of intensive search for a national idea and ideology, a unique "Russian spirit" and the national character of the Russian people — search that was oriented in the direction set by the concept of Holy Russia. Reflections on Holy Russia for the first time became an integral part of Russian historical, political and philosophical discourses; in literary texts, they not only correlated with new motives of personal responsibility, prayer aspiration and the national ideal, but also partly lost their axiological uniqueness.

The article proves that the content of the Russian concept of Holy Russia was in stark contrast to the content of the concept of Holy Russia emerging in the British culture around the 1870s. Initial interpretation of the latter was largely determined by the nature of British-Russian political relations. In the context of Russophobic sentiments in Britain, the term "Holy Russia" was originally interpreted in English journalism and literature (Swinburne, 1884) as a smokescreen, hiding the murderous tyranny of the tsarist regime.

The article describes the significant changes that the concept of Holy Russia was undergoing by the end of the 19th century, which was partly due to the ideological pressure of the Russian political emigration on the English intellectual elite. Thus, for example, F. Adams in his poem 'Holy Russia' portrays the Russian people very sympathetically, in the allegorical image of a woman tormented by a powerful snake and, at the same time, illuminated with spiritual light and belief in the possibility of

liberation from terrible bonds. Each of the main versions of the Holy Russia concept, formed in the English culture by the 1910s, finds its reflection in the novel "Joan and Peter" by H.G. Wells. The materials analysed in the article can have practical implications for historical, literary and cultural research on the Russian culture and the Anglo-Russian cultural and literary ties.

Key-words: Holy Russia, Russian Culture, Russian Literature, English Literature, English Journalism, Anglo-Russian Relations, Concept, 19th Century.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of Holy Russia is interpreted in different ways by different scholars, however, in our study we treat it as a concept (in the interpretation of Yu.S. Stepanov (2001, p. 42). Numerous studies of the concept of Holy Russia address the following issues: a) its origin; b) main content; and c) forms of realisation in Russian culture.

Considering the first of these issues, the scholars mainly adhere to one of two views. The first (advocated in the works of M. Cherniavsky (1958), V.M. Zhivov (2004), K.Yu. Yerusalimsky (2008), I. Buseva-Davydova (2012) and other scholars) is based on the idea that the concept was constructed in the Old Russian written literature of the 16th century. "Holy Russia is <...> a theocratic space constructed by the authors of the 16th century <...> Left without a tsar, the theocratic space inevitably receives a different guardian and defender of orthodoxy. Hence the construct *narod* ('people') appears in various modifications of this vague category" (Zhivov, 2004, p. 19) The second view is based on the idea that the notion of Holy Russia did not just appear in the books of the 16th century but came to written literature "from epics or everyday language" as something "well-known" (Solovyev, 1927, p. 15) or that it at least emerged on the long-formed soil of the discourse "about the holiness of Russia" (Dmitriev, 2012, p. 322).

The second issue is no less controversial: the search for a proper interpretation has been going on for about two centuries and in a much wider range of directions. From a philosophical and historical perspective, the concept of Holy Russia is interpreted as a spiritual foundation of the peasant, folk life in the pre-revolutionary period (with emphasis on patience, humility and suffering) (Aksakov, 1864; Askoldov, 1990); as a historical-political and cultural-religious correspondence of Russia's past (and in the long run — its future) to the noumenal role of the centre of the Orthodox world and to the profound religious sentiment of the Russian people (Fedotov, 1991; Kartashev, 1956); or as a valuable cultural and historical heritage, which is a model and a precedent for our time (Kozyrev, 2014).

In the studies of Russian folklore by such scholars as S.S. Averintsev (1991) and M.V. Dmitriev (2012) and in the interpretation of Russian spiritual poems by G.P. Fedotov (1991), Holy Russia is understood as a complex of folk religious and mystical ideas about a timeless (metaphysical) space with flexible or blurred geographical boundaries, which corresponds to archaic beliefs in the sacredness of the fertile energy of the earth, with a special emphasis on "luminous" places on it, and to the religious ideas about the holiness of orthodoxy and the people adhering to it.

From the perspective of cultural history and semiotics, the concept is interpreted as a "moral and religious" ideal of the Russian people (Solovyev, 1927, p. 196; Toporov, 1995; Likhachev, 1992); as the most important value orientation of the Russian people and the Russian statehood (Perevezentsev, 2018); or as metaphysically true, "secret" being of Russia (Ivanov, 1979). A similar point of view is shared by V.V. Lepakhin (2005), who interprets Holy Russia as an "icon of Russia", "the prototype and archetype of visible Russia". Authors with a more radical religious position believe that Holy Russia is an Orthodox image of Russia (and not only Russia, but the entire Eastern Slavic Orthodox civilization), directly related to the teachings of the Church and the Orthodox ecclesiastical life (Kirill, 2019; (Gajda, 2013).

All different views on the content of the concept of Holy Russia partly converge in the pathos of restoring or implementing the ideal of holiness in the spiritual life and statehood of Russia. Such pathos marks the works of thinkers of different views and different eras: V. Ivanov (1987, pp. 480–481) writes about implementation of the ideal of Holy Russia in life as the establishment of a "new sobornost" in the Russian society and "hagiocracy" in the state government system; A.V. Kartashev (1956) pleads for the "re-creation of Holy Russia" in the spiritual and social life of the Russian people; and Patriarch Kirill calls for the "resurrection" of Holy Russia in religious, moral and socio-political relations (Kirill, 2010, p. 78).

2. Materials and Methods

The forms of existence of the concept of Holy Russia in the Russian culture are considered in the context of the all-embracing discourse of Holy Russia, which includes an historiosophical idea of "Moscow as the Third Rome", a utopian ideal of "Russia as an Orthodox kingdom" (Dmitriev, 2012, p. 331), and conceptions of holiness, holy foolishness (*jurodstvo*) and sacrilege. The scholars interested in these issues study the Old Russian written literature, including religious texts, Russian folklore, philosophical and historical works of Slavophile thinkers, and only some of them analyse Russian literary fiction of the 18th – 20th centuries.

V.N. Toporov describes the main types of holiness and their correlation with the historical stages of the existence of Russian culture; S.M. Klimova identifies distinctive features of the phenomenology of holiness in the Russian philosophy of culture; and G.P. Fedotov, D.S. Likhachev, E.V. Krushelnitskaya, L.A. Dmitriev, A.O. Lozhkina and authors of the magazine "Hermeneutics of Old Russian Literature" analyse the "hagiographic" literature and the theme of holiness in the Old Russian literature. Thorough scholarly studies by A.V. Solovyev, M. Chernyavsky, K.Yu. Yerusalimsky, V.M. Zhivov, M. Dmitriev, S.V. Perevezentsev and N.I. Tolstoy address various historical and — less often — philological aspects of the emergence of the Holy Russia idea in the Russian folklore and written literature in the 16th – 18th centuries. V.V. Lepakhin, A.P. Shishkin and M.N. Rozova analyse some texts of the Russian literature of the 18th – 20th centuries that portray images of holiness.

The most interesting works on the images of saints, holy fools and the blessed fools for Christ in the Russian literature of the 19th – 20th centuries are the articles by A.P. Shishkin (2013), M.N. Klimova (2009; 2013), E.P. Gurova (2012; 2014) and the thesis by K.A. Yanchevskaya (2004).

However, the treatment of holiness in the Russian literature in general and in its relation to the concept of Holy Russia has undoubtedly been studied only fragmentarily. And the reception of the Holy Russia concept in the Western European literature remains largely unexplored. Meanwhile, the study of the latter topic can clarify theoretical and historical aspects of the patterns, mechanisms and forms of reception of another culture, as well as highlight the essence of the original Russian concept in comparison with its reflections in Western European interpretations. In this regard, the main objectives of our study are defined as follows: a) to describe the main content of the concept of Holy Russia in the Russian literature of the first half of the 19th century; b) to describe the ways of its entry into the English culture; c) to determine the specific features of its development until the 1910s. The main research method of our study is comparative conceptology. In this article we use theoretical provisions of comparative literary studies and imagology.

3. Results and Discussion

In the Russian culture of the first half of the 19th century, the phenomenon of Holy Russia was the subject of profound reflections and comprehensive consideration. That was, in general, related to the formation of national self-awareness — or, as they would say now, with an intensive search for the foundation for national identity. The concept of Holy Russia occupies an important, almost central place in the dialogue of Russian thinkers, writers, poets and politicians about the

oppositions "our/their", the historical significance and path of Russia and the specific features of Russian culture.

In the historical and philosophical texts, the name "Holy Russia" is associated with a call to comprehend and follow the folk tradition of Orthodox faith and sacrificial service to "fatherly graves", Motherland and the sovereign. It was perhaps first formulated by N.M. Karamzin in "A Note on Old and New Russia in its Political and Civil Aspects" in 1811. He wrote about Holy Russia as an Orthodox Fatherland, in which "our grandfathers" believed with all the strength of their souls, with all their selflessness (Karamzin, 1991, p. 34) Much later, in 1845, at the unveiling of the monument to Karamzin and in the speech "For Russian Olden Times", M.P. Pogodin supported that call, urging all "compatriots" to feel the "Russian heart", to be faithful to the "Russian glory" and to love Holy Russia — the beloved Fatherland — and its "eternal beginning" — the metaphysical "Russian spirit" (Pogodin, 2011, pp. 765, 786).

In the Manifesto of Emperor Nicholas I of March 14 (26), 1848, which was an extremely important political document, the content of the concept of Holy Russia is not clear, but the term is used with explicit references to the Orthodox faith, folk traditions and the idea of serving the Fatherland. The Manifesto could not pass unnoticed by the European press — in particular, its part in which the tsar called for "following the cherished example of our Orthodox ancestors" and defending "the honour of the name of the Russian and the inviolability of our borders" "in indissoluble union with our Holy Russia" (*Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj imperii*, 1849, p. 182).

However, another manifesto, written and published in two languages (French and German) at the end of the same 1848, — "Appeal to the Slavs" by M. Bakunin — proved to be much more influential in the intellectual circles of Europe. It does not mention Holy Russia at all, but one of the central elements of its rhetoric ("Russian heart") refers to the same discourse. Bakunin explicitly states that he speaks "on behalf of the [Russian] people," and, contrasting "imperial Russia" with people's Russia, refers to the single source of the true aspirations and ideals of the Russian people: "our Russian heart". The "first" Russia has "troops", "power", "enslavement" (even of its own people) and "a policy worthy of damnation", but the other Russia — *Rus'* — has "primordial firmness" and "iron persistence" of the Russian spirit and the "Russian heart", bleeding of "shame and pain" (Bakunin, 1920, p. 56–58). The repeated reference to the "Russian heart" and the unique Russian spirit, of course, correlated with the search for national identity of the Russian culture and the "Russian idea" at that time — a search that was largely determined by the idea of Holy Russia. The opposition of the compassionate "Russian heart" to the despotic, iron-fisted Russian Empire, outlined in Bakunin's speech and actively supported (and expressed in their articles published in England) by

other Russian revolutionaries in emigration (Koroleva, 2014, pp. 136–140), had a strong influence on the development of the English concept of Holy Russia.

The theme of Holy Russia was very important for the *Slavophile views* on the originality of Russian culture that were emerging at that time. A.S. Khomyakov, in his article of 1849, formulates a religious and philosophical content of the phenomenon of Holy Russia, obviously entering into polemics with the established official use of the term. Bringing together its religious, social, ethnic and historical meanings, he claims that "the basis of Holy Orthodox Rus'" is "the identity of unity and freedom, manifested in the law of spiritual love"; that this is the foundation of Orthodoxy, the custodians of which "are the Slavic lands"; and that "our Rus'" is "at the head" of these lands, "perhaps, due to the communal principle by which it lived and lives, and without which it cannot live" (Khomyakov, 1900, pp. 151, 152, 173).

In the works of A.S. Khomyakov, the concept of Holy Russia is enriched with new philosophical and religious meanings associated with the idea of *sobornost* — a unique "principle of uniting" individuals into a whole (Khoruzhiy, 1994, p. 18). For him, the concept of *sobornost* (and thus the concept of Holy Russia) includes the meanings of unity and harmony, personal (inner) freedom, unity with God through faith and personal prayer and the grace associated with them, knowledge of the truth or approaching such knowledge, and the possibility of "overcoming the deep split in the social life" (Gorelov, 2017, pp. 88–89).

Already during the 1820s, the dialogue about Holy Russia was continued in *the Russian literature, losing its axiological and stylistic integrity*. In the poetic and dramatic works of A.S. Pushkin, the image of Holy Russia appears in two main versions: *ironic (profane or trivial) and serious (religious and philosophical)*.

He ridicules, ironically plays on the *ideological cliché* of Holy Russia in his humorous poem "Count Nulin" (1825). "He scolds Holy Russia and marvels / How one can live in its snows, / Regretting he left Paris," the narrator conveys the very beginning of the main character's conversation with Natalya Pavlovna (Pushkin, 1960, vol. 3, p. 185). It is noteworthy here that the "scolding" of the backward, ignorant, non-European Russia (these negative meanings of the ironically reversed concept can be traced in Nulin's dialogue with the heroine) is not so much related to the realities of Russian life as to Gallomania and frivolity of the character and the small talk etiquette. The character's ironic attitude to the name "Holy Russia" and the meanings behind it is defused by the ironic portrayal of the character himself by the author.

Pushkin also ironically plays on the pathos of Prince Kurbsky's appeal to his native land in "Boris Godunov" (1825): "Holy Russia! My Fatherland! I am thine!" the Prince exclaims, crossing

the Russian border together with the Pretender (Pushkin, 1960, vol. 4, p. 266). The pathos of these exclamations by Kurbsky (a son of the exiled boyar Kurbsky), with reverence for his native land, is ironically turned over in two contexts: the imposture of Otrepiev (False Dmitry), considered by Kurbsky to be the true heir to the Russian throne, and Kurbsky's presence in the Polish-Lithuanian retinue and regiments brought by the False Dmitry to Russia to seize power.

In the religious and philosophical terms, the theme of Holy Russia is developed in Pushkin's works through the themes of holiness and prophecy. Avoiding the ideological cliché of "Holy Russia", which he himself ridiculed, Pushkin speaks of holiness, prayer and spiritual transformation in the poems "The Prophet" (1826–1828) and "Hermit Fathers and Blameless Wives..." (1836, first published in 1841) and in the tragedy "Boris Godunov" (1825) (Nepomnyashchy, 2009).

These Pushkin's meanings, together with philosophical (Slavophil), historical and political connotations, are combined in the poem "Holy Russia" written by P.A. Vyazemsky in 1848 — the first explicit and full-fledged poetic reflection on this theme:

How dear you are to me, Holy Russia,
In the days of violent years,
How in those days I offer
My warm, sincere prayers for you!..

How I love your meaning
In earthly, universal existence,
Your high humility
And your pure sacrifices,

Your obedience to Providence,
Your fearlessness in the face of enemies
When you go to fight,
Blessed with a sign of the cross!...
(Vyazemsky, 1880).

Following the traditions of understanding the Holy Russia as a beloved Fatherland, which is worth dying for (Karamzin's theme), as an Orthodox kingdom, in which a unique Russian spirit is manifested (Pogodin's theme), as a common, conciliar spiritual foundation for the sacrifice and brotherhood of the Russian people (Khomyakov's theme) and as a personal spiritual and religious transformation (Pushkin's theme), the poem develops a new aspect of the concept interpretation: as

an ideal of value related to the *personal responsibility* for the prayerful, spiritual light in oneself and in the integral space of the Russian world.

The directions of the concept development outlined in the works of N.M. Karamzin and M.P. Pogodin, in the philosophical journalism and poetry of A.S. Khomyakov and in the poetry of A.S. Pushkin and P.A. Vyazemsky were further developed in the 19th century in the poetry of N.A. Nekrasov and F.I. Tyutchev, in the prose of I.S. Turgenev and N.S. Leskov, in the prose and poetry by F.M. Dostoevsky, and in numerous publications and speeches by historians, thinkers and critics. Anyway, by the middle of the 19th century, *in connection with the search for national identity*, a new layer of the concept of Holy Russia, with a semantic core of the key phrases "spirit of the people", "Russian heart", "sacrifice" and "unity", had been formed in the political, historical and philosophical discourses and in literary fiction.

This topical layer of the concept of Holy Russia, as well as the entire set of positive meanings associated with this name in the Russian intellectual culture of the first half of the 19th century, sharply contrast with the core of the concept of Holy Russia, formed in the English journalism around the 1870s.

Direct evidence supporting the theory that the name "Holy Russia" in all its equivalents was brought to European languages through Russian intellectual sources of the first half of the 19th century can be found in the content and the title of the book "The Picturesque, Dramatic and Caricature History of Holy Russia according to the Writings of the Authors of Chronicles and Historians: Nestor, Nikon, Sylvester, Karamzin, Segur and Others" by Gustave Doré, a famous French engraver and cartoonist of that time (Doré, 1854). The title is remarkable in many respects: it includes the names of the ancient Russian chroniclers, which, of course, could have been known to Gustave Doré only from the French translation of the "History of the Russian State" by N.M. Karamzin¹, and the names of Karamzin and Louis Philippe, comte de Ségur — a French diplomat and historian, who described his impressions of Russia in his memoirs (*Mémoires ou souvenirs et anecdotes*, 1825), and, finally, the country is named "Holy Russia". It is noteworthy that, although Karamzin's "History" does not directly mention Holy Russia, it says a lot about the Holy Fatherland and Holy Faith, about the sanctity of love for the motherland and the shrines of the Russian land (see, in particular, volume 12, chapters 3–5).

Doré's book, ambiguously satirical in content, could have been known to English intellectuals, since his work was followed in England. A large exhibition of his prints was organized in London in

¹ A complete translation of Karamzin's work under the title *Histoire de l'empire de Russie* was published between 1819 and 1826, and had rather wide circulation in England.

1867, and in 1872, after five years of his hard work, his book "London: A Pilgrimage", containing 180 engravings depicting contemporary London, was published.

Penetration of the Russian concept into European consciousness was complicated by the historical and political circumstances of that time. From the perspective of Russian-British relations, that was, first of all, a direct conflict between Britain and Russia during the Crimean War of 1853–1856, as well as Britain's participation in the latest Russian–Turkish war in 1877–1878.

Under those historical and political circumstances, a wave of anti-Russian sentiments was growing in Britain, which was a secret ally of the Ottoman Empire and an open opponent of Russia's expansion to the east. In that context, the name "Holy Russia" was understandably perceived as a smokescreen, hiding the "murderous despotism" of the tsarist regime. In other words, the name "Holy Russia" in British culture (according to the principle of an ironic shift of meanings) is initially associated with something demonic and with an aggressive political regime — first of all, with the external expansion of the Russian Empire.

This interpretation is grotesquely manifested in two pamphlets published in London in 1878 — "England's Honour" and "Holy Russia and Christian Europe". In the first pamphlet, the author accuses Russia of hypocrisy, as it calls itself "a Christian empire" and at the same time reduces its "holy mission" to cruel wars ("carrying out a Christian and a holy mission in her cruel wars of aggression") (Appleby, 1878, p. 6).

In the second pamphlet, the Russian tsar and soldiers are ironically called "the Christian crusaders of Holy Russia". Their main actions are "butchery", "murder" and "desolation". Extremely harsh in his assessments, the author applies to exaggerated sarcasm and proposes to make a new idol out of the Russian tsar — a symbol of Satan's power ("the worship of Satanism and god of hell, incarnate in Russia") (Appleby, 1878, pp. 24–32).

In English literature, this ironic opposition of the name "Holy Russia" to the essence of the designated phenomenon is vividly embodied in the poem "The White Czar" (1877) by famous decadent poet A.Ch. Swinburne. Holy Russia is not mentioned in the poem, however, the direct borrowing of a Russian name to designate a Russian phenomenon and its use for satirical irony, a leitmotif of hypocrisy, depiction of the Russian world exclusively from a military-political perspective and characterization of the Russian autocracy as a literally diabolical regime — all these features relate the text to the English discourse on Holy Russia.

The main theme of Swinburne's poem is a hypocritical inconsistency between the image of good and fair Russian sovereign referred to as "White Czar" and his policy of violence and

oppression pursued both within the borders of the Russian Empire and beyond. This discrepancy grows to enormous proportions:

Whence all earth's waters cannot wash the brand
That signs thy soul a manslayer's though thou speak
All Christ, with lips most murderous and most meek <...>
(Swinburne, 1884, p. 555)

The Russian tsar is portrayed as not only a cynical murderer with a rotten soul ("a leper white as snow"), but a hypocrite and tyrant whose "presence put the snow and stars to shame". He is Pilate, constantly betraying Christ, who is destined only to gnash his teeth in the evangelic "outer darkness" — he definitely is not capable of crying ("gnash thy teeth <...>/ Ere the outer darkness take thee round"). Moreover, his betrayal, hypocrisy, deceit and cruelty are not actually human or socio-political characteristics. These are signs of the devil, consecrated by a curse and born by hell itself ("Curse-consecrated, crowned with crime and flame / To them that bare thee like them shalt thou go"). The poem ends with a contrast of colours, sharply denouncing the cruelty and violence under the guise of holiness: The "white name" is contrasted with "red" (i.e. blood-stained) hands.

The satirical and demonic content of the core of the Holy Russia concept can be still found in the English literature and journalism of the early 20th century — in particular, in the essay "Tolstoy's Place in European Literature" by writer and journalist Edward Garnett (1903). E. Garnett writes, "And Tolstoy must be finally looked on, not merely as the conscience of the Russian world revolting against the too heavy burden which the Russian people have now to bear on Holy Russia's onward march towards the building-up of her great Asiatic Empire, but also as the soul of the modern world seeking to replace in its love of humanity the life of those old religions which science is destroying day by day. In this sense Tolstoy will stand in European literature as the conscience of the modern world" (Garnett, 1903, p. 36) As we can see, Holy Russia is understood here quite unambiguously as a militarized empire striving for expansion. At the same time, we should pay attention to reduction in satirical sharpness: for Garnett, the Russian Empire as a state is not associated with anything demonic.

Already in the 1890s, fundamentally different elements started appearing in the semantic field of the emerging new layer of the Holy Russia concept. They were associated with the activities of Russian political emigrants in England and in Europe in general. In the last Swinburne's poem about Russia — his ode "Russia" (1890) — the images of the Russian state and the Russian people are separated: the empire is metaphorically likened to hell and, at the same time, the terrible underwater kingdom of monsters ("Out of hell a word comes hissing, dark as doom, / Fierce as fire, and foul as

plague-polluted gloom <...>"), but the people are innocent, though doomed and damned ("<...> where in the sinless damned endure/ More than ever sin conceived <...>") (Swinburne, 1891, pp. pp. 37–38).

In that context, the name "Holy Russia" becomes associated with the suffering Russian people. It is interpreted in this way in the poem "Holy Russia" by Anglo-Australian poet Francis Adams, which was published in the book "Songs of the Army of the Night" in London in 1894. Russia (Holy Rus') is portrayed in the poem in the allegorical image of a woman tormented by "the iron-scaled Snake" — the image symbolizes Russian people tormented by the state, saintly in their suffering and their high spiritual order:

Crouched in the terrible land,
The circle of pitiless ice,
With frozen bloody feet
And her pestilential summer's
Fever-throb in her brow
<...>
And she moves, and around her neck
She feels the iron-scaled Snake
Whose fangs suck at the heart
Hid by her tattered dress,
By her lean and hanging teat.
(Adams, 1894, p. 44).

The theme of suffering is developed in the first part of the poem. In addition to descriptions of the terrible bodily torment ("crouched, frozen bloody feet", "fever-throb in her brow", "lean and hanging teat", etc.), it includes images of a terrible cold natural space ("the terrible land", "the circle of pitiless ice"), which were typical for the traditional British myth of Russia, as well as new elements of this myth, emerging at the turn of the 20th century, — images of inner (spiritual) light ("in her deep slow eyes/ The mists of her sleep of faith/ Stir, and a gleam of light <...>"), and, certainly, the image of a torturer — the murderous tsarist regime, appearing in an allegorical image of "the iron-scaled Snake", squeezing a woman with its body, like in chains, and sucking blood from her heart.

The images of the Snake and the woman refer, of course, to the biblical myth of the Fall. At the same time, these images of Adams' poem bring associations of the Russian state and autocracy with military aggression (the snake is "iron-scaled", i.e. ready for attack or war; compare with

Bakunin's "imperial Russia") and the demonic principle, the kingdom of Satan, — such associations were typical for the first layer of the English concept of Holy Russia.

The second part of the poem further develops the motif of the moral light inherent in the Russian people, which is outlined in the first part of the poem. The motif is related to the images of "eternal belief" and "passionate faith" and to a call for liberation from the snake's "iron". The sufferings of the Russian woman are presented not only as painful and terrifying, but also unnatural, since they contradict her spiritual self, her light and faith ("Russia, O land of faith <...>!").

This motif should be correlated with the formation of a new layer of the British myth about Russia at the turn of the 20th centuries in the context of Anglo-Russian political rapprochement (Koroleva, 2014, pp. 142–144). The new layer of myth contains the ideas and images of "soul", "simplicity", "impulsiveness", "compassion" and "religiosity". The motif of mystical religiosity and metaphysical spirituality, first introduced into the British concept of Holy Russia at the end of the 19th century, was further developed in journalism, popular science and literary fiction of the 1910s, becoming the central semantic element of the myth layer.

In 1914 and 1915, respectively, two books about Russia — "The Mainsprings of Russia" by M. Baring and "Undiscovered Russia" by S. Graham — were published. The idea, which is expressed in the first book as a laconic conclusion about the inner sources of Russia's charm ("the Russian peasant is a mystic <...> he believes in God, and <...> he sees the will of God in all things <...> He is the most tolerant of human beings") (Baring, 1914, pp. 40, 162), is developed explicitly and emphatically, with polysemantic symbols, in the second book. For S. Graham, Holy Russia is the Russian motherland "submissive unto God", with praying Russian women, always loyal to Lord, and the entire humble Russia, serving the Lord and the people: peasants plowing the land, monks and priests performing their spiritual feat, saints, ascetics and miraculous icons² (Graham, 1915, p. 327). Holy Russia is assessed here extremely positively, and the concept is associated with a specific understanding of relations between Russia and the West in S. Graham's book: the former is allegorically portrayed as a woman praying for the whole world, the latter — as a man conquering earthly spaces, as a creator (Graham, 1915, p. 327).

The new and old meanings of the "Holy Russia" concept are combined and contrasted in the novel "Joan and Peter: The Story of an Education" (1919) by famous English writer H.G. Wells — the only Wells' literary work touching upon a Russian theme.

²Cf. "the holy peasants toiling in the fields, a hundred millions of them submissive unto God <...> the monks praying for the departed, the priests performing rites in empty churches, the hermits, the village saints, <...> the wonder-working Ikons <...>, the holy monks who kneel eternally in the presence of the Mystery".

The image of Holy Russia emerges already in the first episode related to the Russian theme — discussions at the Plantain club. Russia (Holy Rus') is mentioned by the Bishop of Pinner — an opponent of Oswald (the main character of the novel). The Bishop defends the idea that education is harmful for ordinary people, the masses must believe in simple things: head of the state and God. In the context of the central ideas of the novel and Oswald's statement that education "is at the heart of the whole business", the Bishop's idea is presented as false and unrelated to the pressing problems of that time and concern for the common good (Wells, 1919, p. 221).

The Bishop states, "There was much to admire in Russia". He appreciates "obedience and a sort of primitive contentment" of the Russian people, their "trust in the Little White Father", and "belief in God". Referring to the patriarchal values of the Russian world as an example to the British, the bishop quotes the book "The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary" (1916) by S. Graham and conveys its central idea in a simplified form, "Russia was the land of Mary, great-souled and blessed; ours alas! was the land of bustling Martha <...> Time after time I asked myself, 'Aren't we Westerners on the wrong track?' Here is something – Great. <...> Something simple. <...> Here Christianity lives indeed» (Wells, 1919, p. 221). As we can see, Holy Russia first appears in the novel as an ideological phantom. This phantom clearly and ironically correlates with the perception of Holy Russia as a unique spiritual and religious world, fraught with insights and Heavenly light, which was typical for Britain and Europe at the beginning of the 20th century.

The desire to learn more about Russian and to push his ward Peter to better understanding of the contemporary society brings Oswald to Saint Petersburg, Moscow and a village near Moscow. In the "Russian episode" of the novel, Russia is portrayed as an important part of Europe, a unique country, which is becoming closer to Britain in spirit and destiny.

In the context of conveying the concept of Holy Russia, it is noteworthy that the author's attitude to those religious objects that do not fit into his ideas about the beautiful, noble and appropriate is clearly disinterested and sometimes ironic. The verbal image of the "painted magnificence" of Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius is clearly ironic, and the description of St. Basil's Cathedral as a "barbaric caricature" is marked with poignant sarcasm. The disapproval, barely perceptible here in the description of "bearded" priests, is more obvious in the episode of the heroes' visit to the State Duma and in the depiction of golden crosses of Moscow churches as symbols of the ideology of state despotism and humility before the authorities (Wells, 1919, pp. 380–389).

The next round of the Holy Russia perception in Wells' novel takes place in the episode of Oswald's reasoning on the "Russian idea" (Wells, 1919, pp. 382–383). The notion of Holy Russia is equated here with the "Russian idea" and "Russian will" (Wells, 1919, pp. 382, 384). For the main

hero, it seems to be threefold contradictory. On the one hand, Holy Russia for him is an Asian (Mongol-Tatar) military camp, striving to swallow and conquer Europe. This first complex of meanings clearly reveals the satirical "core" of the British concept of Holy Russia, which was formed in the 1870s, interpreting the name as a deceitful mask of an aggressive empire.

On the other hand, Holy Russia here is "a sort of epileptic genius", a crusader people, "insisting on moral truth, holding up the cross to mankind". This complex combines the "old" and "new" meanings of the concept: tension and a certain threat of violence correlates with the initial core, while "moral truth" and "cross" — with a new, religious understanding of the concept.

Clarifying the "ethical truth" carried by Holy Russia, Oswald explains, "Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and their endless schools of dissent have a character in common. Christianity to a Russian means Brotherhood" (Wells, 1919, p. 383). The ease with which he brings Dostoevsky's "Russian idea" and Tolstoy's pathos of the Christian brotherhood of peoples to a common denominator is amazing. As Wells wrote his novel in 1918-1919, the subtext of "Russian Christianity" (i.e. Holy Russia) as a call for the brotherhood of all people inevitably includes the situation of the Russian revolution of 1917 and its call for the brotherhood of the working masses.

As we can see, in Oswald's attempts to define the essence of the "Russian idea", there is no personal assessment. Oswald just reproduces different versions of understanding Russian phenomena in accordance with the two layers of the English concept of Holy Russia that had been formed by that time, using them as starting points for his reflections. The artificiality of these attempts is obvious to young Peter, who accompanies him on his trip to Russia. Peter, in his turn, tries to define the essence of Holy Russia through the "national character", bypassing all religious connotations. In his understanding, the Russian national character is associated exclusively with the natural and geographical features of the Russian land, namely, with its vastness. Peter believes that that vastness gave rise to the instinct of roaming and made wandering the main feature of the Russian person, "Of course there is a Russian character. They're wanderers, body and brain. Men of an endless land. But <...> I don't believe a bit in all these crosses" (Wells, 1919, p. 383).

This original interpretation is based on the new semantic elements of the English concept of Holy Russia that were associated with the interpretation of the natural landscape as a source of folk character in the historical works of V.O. Klyuchevsky³, and the reception of this interpretation in the books by S. Graham and M. Baring (Klyuchevsky is mentioned in the book "The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary" (Graham, 1916, p. 91), and a significant reference to his "History" is obvious in

³ The multi-volume collected works of Klyuchevsky were published in English between 1911 and 1931.

"The Russian People" (Baring, 1911, p. xiii)), as well as with the theme of wondering — a path in "the search for God and for truth " (Baring, 1914/15, p. 198) — as a specific manifestation of the Russian character⁴.

This interpretation of the Holy Russia phenomenon, like all the others in the novel, looks dubious. Arguing that modern man is too small for big ideas, the heroes come to a prophecy about the only real truth — the truth of a great supranational idea, "We have Science, and out of Science comes a light <...> It won't be one of these national ideas. No Holy Russia — or Old England <...> They're just — human accumulations" (Wells, 1919, p. 386). Thus, the search for the content of the Holy Russia concept in Wells' novel stops at the point of denying the meaning of this search: in the face of a great goal and the need to create a single human civilization, any attempt to identify a people, nation or mentality turns out to be an illusion or deception.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that a very special concept of Holy Russia emerged in the English literature and journalism during the 1870s and further developed till the 1910s. The initial content of its core ironically reversed the meanings inherent in the name and in the layer of the Russian concept of that time, *which was primarily caused by the military and political tensions* between Russia and England. The core of that English concept of Holy Russia contained such verbal images as "empire", "aggression", "pseudo-Christian", "cursed". Swinburne's poem "The White Czar" is related to that initial content of the concept.

A new layer of the concept of Holy Russia was formed during the period of 1890s – 1910s — initially under the influence of opinions expressed by Russian revolutionaries in emigration, and later – as a result of the political and cultural rapprochement between England and Russia. The content of the layer was gradually changing from the contrast between the suffering people and the tyrant state to the image of the gold-hearted and spiritually rich Russian mystic people. The primary meanings of the new layer find their allegorical and symbolic expression in F. Adams's poem "Holy Russia". H. Wells' novel "Joan and Peter", through the heroes' reasoning on Holy Russia, actualizes and generalizes all the most essential elements of the concept, which had been formed or just outlined by that time in English culture.

⁴ The theme, most likely, was borrowed from Russian sources (N.A. Berdyaev, V. Rozanov, M. Voloshin, M. Gorky). Wells himself was well acquainted with Gorky and his works.

The research findings described in the article clarify the connection and substantive correlation between the Russian and the English concepts of Holy Russia and can have practical implications for historical, literary and cultural research on the Russian culture and the Anglo-Russian cultural and literary ties.

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