

## COMPARISON OF THE THEME OF RELIGION IN OLD RUSSIAN LITERATURE AND IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the problems of interaction between two fundamental spheres of human experience — religion and culture. Among the many religious practices that found some reflection in Russian literature of the 19th century, a special place is occupied by Christianity and, in particular, Orthodoxy. The author describes both the various "mechanisms" of the influence of Orthodoxy on Russian culture, and the reasons for the contradictions that divided the representatives of the Orthodox Church and the Russian educated class in the 19th century. The article describes four "models" of interaction between Russian literature and the Christian tradition that developed during the 19th century: religious, intermediary, realistic and artistic.

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The problem of the mutual relations of religion and culture - the two fundamental spheres of human experience, once united, but diverged on the main paths of their development in the era of modern times, constantly attracts the attention of philosophers, culturologists, and theologians. In certain eras, for a number of cultural and religious communities, this problem sounded with particular urgency, as, for example, in the circle of Russian Slavophiles, in the era of the Silver Age, for many representatives of the Russian emigration. The beginning of the 19th century was both a time of summing up and the time of the birth of new approaches in the process of building relations between religion and culture. Within the framework of this article, it is proposed to consider this problem on the basis of classical Russian literature of the 19th century.

The etymology of the Latin word religio is traced back to the verbs religare (to bind, connect) or relegere (regather, re-discuss, re-visit, peer, re-read, think carefully). In the first case, the emphasis in the concept of "religion" is on "the connection of man with that which is higher than man" [Bulgakov, Light, 12]; in the second - on "a person's ability to move away from the hustle and bustle, conscientiously and carefully think about what is truly serious" [Bibikhin, 273]. Under culture, within the framework of this article, we will understand "the totality of absolute values created and created by mankind and constituting its spiritual and social being" [Frank, 43].

On the territory of the multinational Russian Empire, there were many religious traditions, both pagan

and monotheistic. The dominant position belonged to the Orthodox Church, which, with the support of the state, not always exclusively by spiritual means, took care of maintaining national unity. Russian writers of the 19th century, both by virtue of their belonging to the Russian Empire, and under the influence of the spirit of “worldwide responsiveness”, which F. M. Dostoevsky spoke about in his “Pushkin Speech”, showed interest in depicting the religious experience of various peoples. Thus, for example, Islam was at the center of the poetic attention of A. S. Pushkin in the cycle of nine poems “Imitation of the Koran” (1824). The poet's interest in Islam is connected both with the tradition of the Enlightenment, which saw monotheism cleansed of European prejudices in idealized Islam, and with romanticism, which enthusiastically explored exotic national colors. Empire was reflected in his poems “Prisoner of the Caucasus” (1820-1821) and “The Fountain of Bakhchisaray” (1821-1823).

The fates of M. Yu. Lermontov and L. N. Tolstoy were connected with the Caucasus. The meeting with the Islamic world inspired the plot of the Turkish fairy tale by Lermontov “Ashik-Kerib” (1837) and the poetic motifs of wandering, the east, fate, books in his lyrical poems. The Demon Oath from The Demon (1839) is stylistically related to the lofty rhetoric and inner force of the early Meccan revelations:

Клянусь я первым днём творенья,

Клянусь его последним днём,

Клянусь позором преступления

И вечной правды торжеством [Лермонтов. Т. 4, 208].

The customs and manners of the Muslim highlanders were reflected in Tolstoy's autobiographical story The Cossacks (1852), the stories Raid (1852), Woodcutting (1853–1855), and also in the later story Hadji Murad » (1896–1904). Tolstoy was very interested in Buddhism. He was not only familiar with the works of prominent Buddhist scholars of his time, but he himself became the author of translations of more than a hundred Buddhist parables and legends. In 1905, a short essay on the life of the Buddha, Siddhardha Gautama, nicknamed the Buddha, was published by the writer. Features of the Buddhist worldview are inherent in the hero of the novel “War and Peace” (1863–1969) Platon Karataev: he is not attached to anything or anyone, does not experience any inconvenience or suffering in captivity, is free from rationalistic mental schemes: “He apparently never thought about what he said and what he would say ...”; “Often he said the exact opposite of what he had said before, but both were true” [Tolstoy. Т. 12, 49-50]. The heroes of Anna Karenina (1873–1877) either spin in the endless wheel of samsara, the image of which in the novel is a jump on the hippo-drome, or “stand on the very edge and clearly see life only from the fact that they look into nirvana, into infinity, the unknown, then into samsara, and this look into nirvana strengthens vision” [Tolstoy. Т. 62, 272].

Through the medium of Western European literatures, Russian writers were inoculated with the noble paganism of antiquity. Russian literature not only adopted the forms of ancient literature, but along with them absorbed some of the essentially religious ideas of the ancient world: the clash of personality with the forces of Rock, the dichotomy of Cosmos and Chaos, the Dionysian and Apollonian principles, the idea of harmony, measures, and numbers. With all the diversity of religious experience, one way or another included in the sphere of creative attention of Russian writers, the main culture-forming force for Russian literature of the 19th century, of course, remained Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The “mechanisms” of the influence of Orthodoxy on Russian culture are described by researchers in different ways. First of all, it should be noted that the Russian language itself, the main material of literature, did not arise without the participation of the Orthodox Church. When Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril and Methodius translated liturgical books from Greek into Slavonic, they not only created the written form of an already existing oral language, but formed “the whole field of abstract or cultural concepts that the Slavic languages did not yet possess” [Sedakova. Music, 339]. To translate complex theological concepts, Slavic words were used that had a substantive, material meaning. So, for example,

the coupling of the Slavic “spirit”, which has the semantics of “smell”, with the Greek πνεῦμα, which had a similar meaning in lower case, made it possible to put “into the Slavic word that semantic vertical, which took centuries of work of Greek culture” [Sedakova. Music, 339]. As a result of this process, Russian literature inherited not only the high stylistic register of the Church Slavonic language, but also a powerful semantic field, enriched primarily with Christian meanings.

In the poetics of the Russian novel, this feature of the artistic image is manifested in the fact that behind the artistic flesh of a freely and detailed realistic narrative, “something similar to a parable” is often revealed [Sedakova. Prose, 274] - the ultimate deep meaning, concerning the “last questions” of the existence of the world, man, God. Sometimes a “ready-made” parable can be used as an epigraph: the gospel parable about grain in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1878–1880), the episode with the pig herd in *Possessed* (1870–1871), the biblical epigraph in *Anna Karenina*; sometimes she reveals herself in details, plot situations that repeat from novel to novel. The Western Slavist Richard F. Gustafson proposed to use the term “emblematic realism” to describe this desire for transcendence in the poetics of Leo Tolstoy. “The reality depicted by Tolstoy,” the researcher noted, “includes the world in our usual understanding, in all its psychological, social, economic and historical complexity.” But at the same time, the Russian writer’s “concept of reality expands beyond the limits of the historical material world in order to reveal the Divine inside and outside” [Gustafson, 208]. Gustafson discovered the origins of this “emblematicity” in the Eastern Christian tradition, for which “every art is an icon, an image of Divine reality.” Both the characters, and plot episodes, and interior details, and objects of the material world turn out to be “icons”, “emblems” of spiritual meaning for Tolstoy.

Direct attempts to build a literary text, using the principles of constructing an icon-painting text, are found by researchers in N. S. Leskov’s story “The Sealed Angel” (1872). According to V. Lepakhin and O. V. Evdokimova, the icon of the “Guardian Angel” (or “Archangel Michael”) with stamps 8 turns out to be the innermost core of the story. “stigma”, but also affects almost all elements of the artistic whole: landscape, portrait characteristics of heroes, spatio-temporal relations, style, etc. word-spring icons” - a window into another world, accessible to the believing heart: “Everyone believes, so let him judge, but for us it is all the same in what ways the Lord will seek a person and from what vessel he will give to drink, if only he would seek and thirst for unanimity satisfied him with the fatherland” [Leskov, 456].

Finally, the underlying causes of the church’s mistrust of secular culture, and in particular literature, must be sought in understanding the very nature of art. The first Christian thinkers saw in God the great Artist who created the world as a huge work of art, and they perceived the beauty and orderliness of the world as the main evidence of its existence. Accordingly, artistic creativity was comprehended by them as an act consecrated and blessed, and aesthetic feeling as one of the ways of non-conceptual comprehension of God. -in a different way: the original beauty of the world was lost during the fall, evil disfigured the world and the human heart. Consequently, the only true “art” can only be asceticism, which allows a person to be cleansed of evil and draw closer to God, and all the rest of art is “a cloudy, morally not perfect imprint of our natural, not imbued with goodness.” a year of life” [Alexander, 761]. For their part, representatives of educated Russian society had their own reasons for not trusting the historical Orthodox Church with which they had to deal. Let’s put aside that, sometimes very primitive, criticism that the representatives of the materialistic worldview subjected the church and Christianity to, and turn to the spiritual needs of the religiously minded part of the intelligentsia.

In many respects, such an image of Christianity could arise due to the position that the church occupied in the Russian state. The idea of a symphony of church and state power, inherited by Russia from Byzantium, as a result of the reforms of Peter the Great, was embodied in the so-called synodal system. According to the “Spiritual Regulations” of 1721, the Russian Church became an integral part of the state structure, and the Holy Synod became a state institution. On May 11, 1722, Peter I issued a decree in which he ordered “to select a good person from the officers, who would have the courage and be able to know the management of the synod case, and be his chief prosecutor.” From that moment until 1917,

Sinod, and hence the entire Russian Church was headed not by a bishop appointed by the church, but by a state official. The Church was obliged to perform purely state functions, to monitor the trustworthiness of her spiritual children. Thus, according to the joint decree of the Senate and the Synod of July 16, 1722, “parish priests were obliged to keep lists of parishioners and to mark by name those who came to communion, as well as those who evaded confession,” and “the latter were subject to punishment” [Smolich, 105]. As a result, in the course of a long existence under the tutelage of the state, the Russian Church began to lose the qualities inherent in the church organism. The Church, partly performing police functions, justifying wars and executions for the sake of the state, could not but arouse sharp rejection among the Russian intelligentsia, for the most part anti-state minded. Thus, Tolstoy wrote in his “Confession”: “And not only these murders in the war, but during those troubles that followed the war, I saw members of the church, its teachers, monks, schemers, who approved of the murder of the errant helpless youths. And I paid attention to everything that is done by people who profess Christianity, and I was horrified” [Tolstoy. T. 23, 56].

If Dostoevsky’s merit lies in the fact that in his work he posed the problem of justifying God and justifying man in an extremely sharp and modern way, then Leskov created a special artistic system that allows the reader to see through the iconic written faces of the “Russian righteous”. Thus, the material of Russian literature of the 19th century allows us to assert that in the 19th century in Russia, with all the complexity and inconsistency of relations between the two fundamental traditions of the spiritual experience of mankind, a fruitful dialogue was possible between the two poles of the disintegrated Russian world, enriched both classical Russian culture and the Orthodox Christian religious tradition.

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