



## THE THEME OF THE HOMELAND IN THE WORKS OF I. A. ILYIN

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of one of the central categories of the philosophical heritage of I. A. Ilyin — the concept of Homeland. The peculiarities of its interpretation in the philosopher's works are considered, with special attention given to the spiritual nature of Homeland, its distinction from material and state definitions, and its role in shaping national identity and patriotism. Ilyin's critique of the Marxist approach to Homeland is highlighted, and his own understanding of it as the spiritual unity of a people, embodying their system of values, moral order, and creative achievements, is revealed. It is emphasized that the concept of Homeland in Ilyin's philosophy has both ontological and axiological dimensions, allowing it to be viewed as a universal category significant for both the individual and society as a whole.

**Keywords:** I. A. Ilyin; Homeland; spiritual reality; sacred value; patriotism.

### Introduction

The philosophical legacy of Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin occupies a significant place not only in the history of Russian thought but also in the broader context of world intellectual culture. His works, rich in moral, spiritual, and socio-political reflections, address many universal questions that remain relevant regardless of time and place. Among the wide range of issues explored by Ilyin, the **theme of Homeland (Rodina)** stands out as one of the central and most emotionally charged motifs. This theme is inseparable from the dramatic circumstances of the philosopher's own life: decades spent in exile, separation from Russia, and the experience of being an "outsider" profoundly shaped his worldview and

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intensified his reflections on national identity, culture, history, and the spiritual foundations of statehood.

For Ilyin, Homeland is a **multidimensional category**, far exceeding the boundaries of geographical territory or formal citizenship. While acknowledging the importance of the State as an institution, Ilyin firmly distinguishes it from Homeland, arguing that the latter cannot be reduced to administrative structures, ethnic belonging, economic unity, or legal arrangements. **Homeland, in his understanding, is a spiritual and existential reality**—a living bond between the individual and the cultural world that formed him. It encompasses memory, language, traditions, faith, and a sense of moral responsibility before one’s people. Thus, Ilyin interprets Homeland as a source of inner strength and inspiration, a moral ideal that nurtures the individual’s dignity and creative potential.

The relevance of studying Ilyin’s concept of Homeland has become even more evident in the contemporary globalized world, characterized by instability, shifting identities, and growing cultural fragmentation. In such conditions, the philosopher’s reflections offer a valuable framework for understanding the profound spiritual ties connecting a person with their national culture, historical roots, and collective destiny. His ideas raise essential questions about the responsibility of citizens toward their Homeland, the ethical foundations of patriotism, and the role of cultural heritage in the formation of a stable social order.

Thus, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the theme of Homeland in the works of I. A. Ilyin, exploring its philosophical, cultural, and ethical dimensions and highlighting its continuing relevance for modern society.

### Literature Review

The problem of Homeland and patriotism occupies a significant place in Russian philosophical thought and literary scholarship. In the works of I. A. Ilyin—particularly in *The Path of Spiritual Renewal and Homeland and Us*—this theme is foregrounded as a fundamental category for comprehending the spiritual nature of the nation and the moral foundations of its existence [Ilyin, 1995; 2006]. Ilyin’s

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reflections reveal Homeland not merely as a geographical or political concept but as a profound spiritual bond that shapes the identity, worldview, and moral consciousness of the individual.

Contemporary scholarship continues to treat the concept of Homeland as an important object of philosophical, cultural, and literary analysis. In her works, **Y. L. Kuldasheva** examines the distinctive features of Russian-language literature in Uzbekistan, demonstrating how the issues of national identity, cultural memory, and the individual’s emotional ties to Homeland manifest in transnational and multicultural contexts [Kuldasheva, 2022]. Her research highlights how literary texts produced outside the metropole reinterpret traditional images of Homeland, adapting them to new social, linguistic, and cultural environments.

In another study, Kuldasheva explores the aesthetic and philosophical embodiment of such themes as friendship, love, nature, and Homeland in Ilyin’s works, showing that this conceptual cluster plays a central role in articulating the moral-philosophical foundations of his worldview [Kuldasheva, 2023]. Through close textual analysis, she demonstrates how Ilyin uses lyrical, symbolic, and essayistic forms to convey the inner experience of belonging and responsibility toward Homeland, emphasizing its ethical and metaphysical dimensions.

Additionally, the joint research of **Kuldasheva and K. N. Vasilieva** addresses broader literary tendencies, specifically the development of “new realism” in 21st-century Russian literature [Kuldasheva & Vasilieva, 2021]. Their findings are particularly valuable because they show how philosophical categories associated with Homeland—such as memory, place, cultural tradition, and historical destiny—undergo reinterpretation within contemporary artistic discourse. This reveals the continuity and transformation of the concept of Homeland across different historical and cultural epochs, demonstrating its enduring relevance.

Taken together, these studies form a solid scholarly foundation for further analysis of Ilyin’s understanding of Homeland as a complex philosophical and cultural phenomenon. They underscore the importance of examining not only the historical and biographical factors that influenced Ilyin’s thinking but also the




broader intellectual context within which his ideas continue to evolve. Thus, the existing research justifies the need for a comprehensive and multifaceted investigation into the category of Homeland in Ilyin's works, including its ethical, metaphysical, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions.

## Analysis and Results

I. A. Ilyin consistently rejects any definition of Homeland that limits it to external or material categories—such as territory, ancestry, nationality, domestic economy, or a shared legal system. While acknowledging that these factors constitute necessary conditions of collective life, he emphasizes that they do not embody the true essence of Homeland. For Ilyin, to equate Homeland with its physical attributes is to mistake the form for the substance, overlooking the deeper spiritual bond that unites individuals with their historical and cultural community.

In critiquing the Marxist assertion that “the workers have no fatherland,” Ilyin exposes what he sees as the reductionist nature of materialist ideology. According to him, such a view interprets Homeland purely through the prism of socio-economic relations, thereby depriving it of its spiritual depth and existential significance. In contrast, Ilyin insists that Homeland is fundamentally a **spiritual reality**, an “inner dwelling” of the nation, where its intellectual, moral, and cultural characteristics converge. It is the expression of a people's spiritual structure—its worldview, values, creative potential, and historical destiny.

Central to Ilyin's understanding is the idea that Homeland possesses a transcendent orientation. He repeatedly underlines that true patriotism cannot be rooted solely in political loyalty or material interest; rather, it arises from a profound, almost sacred connection to the spiritual essence of one's nation. Patriotism, in his philosophy, resembles the instinctive love of a child for its mother: it is immediate, heartfelt, and revealed most vividly in moments of trial and national crisis. In such circumstances, individuals rise to defend their Homeland not out of compulsion but from a deeply internalized sense of duty, gratitude, and spiritual belonging.

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Modern research supports and further develops Ilyin’s conception. As Y. L. Kuldasheva observes, Russian-language literature in Uzbekistan presents the theme of Homeland not only through attachment to geographical space but also through spiritual and cultural self-identification [Kuldasheva, 2022]. This perspective reflects Ilyin’s emphasis on the metaphysical and value-based dimensions of Homeland, showing that the experience of belonging can persist—even intensify—outside the native territory. In another study, Kuldasheva demonstrates that Homeland in Ilyin’s philosophy serves as a foundational category for understanding personality formation: it shapes the individual’s system of values, moral orientation, and cultural consciousness [Kuldasheva, 2023]. Such interpretations highlight the relevance of Ilyin’s ideas in contemporary multicultural societies, where identity is increasingly shaped by cultural hybridity and transnational experiences.

Thus, the analytical evidence reveals that Ilyin’s concept of Homeland is both **universal and multidimensional**. It integrates personal and collective experience, intertwines spiritual and cultural elements, and bridges historical continuity with modern realities. Homeland, in this sense, becomes a dynamic category that connects the individual with the living cultural organism of the nation—its memory, creativity, traditions, and aspirations. Ilyin’s approach enables a deeper understanding of the ethical foundations of patriotism and offers a valuable interpretive framework for examining national identity in the contemporary world, where questions of belonging, cultural preservation, and spiritual orientation have acquired renewed urgency.

## Conclusion

The study of the concept of Homeland in the philosophical legacy of I. A. Ilyin reveals the depth and complexity of his spiritual and moral approach to questions of national identity and cultural self-consciousness. For Ilyin, Homeland is not a material or political construct but a **spiritual reality**, a living unity of people connected by common values, historical memory, faith, cultural tradition, and moral order. It is rooted not in external attributes but in the internal experience of belonging that shapes a nation’s worldview and ethical foundations. In this sense,



Homeland reflects the spiritual essence of a people and functions as an inner source of strength, renewal, and continuity.

A careful analysis of Ilyin's texts, together with insights from contemporary scholarship (particularly the works of Y. L. Kuldasheva and others), demonstrates that Homeland is not only a philosophical category but also an active and dynamic concept essential for interpreting modern cultural and social processes. In the context of increasingly globalized and multicultural societies, this category acquires renewed relevance. The synthesis of Ilyin's ideas and modern research allows us to identify several key conclusions:

**Homeland as a spiritual dwelling:** Ilyin views Homeland as a sacred and value-oriented space formed through the collective spiritual experience of a people. Its foundations lie in the Divine order, which shapes the moral and cultural development of the nation.

**Patriotism as spiritual responsibility:** In Ilyin's philosophy, patriotism is not based on material interests, political loyalty, or territorial sentiment. Rather, it is a form of spiritual love expressed through responsibility, service, and the desire to preserve and nurture the cultural and moral essence of the nation.

**Constructive and non-idealized love for Homeland:** Genuine patriotism, according to Ilyin, does not imply blind admiration or idealization of one's Homeland. Instead, it requires the capacity for critical reflection, moral judgment, and a commitment to improving national life while remaining loyal to its spiritual foundations.

These insights reaffirm the enduring significance of Ilyin's thought for the contemporary world, which is marked by tensions between globalization, cultural homogenization, and the search for authentic identity. His philosophy makes it possible to distinguish between **authentic patriotism**—grounded in moral values, personal responsibility, and respect for cultural heritage—and its distorted forms, such as aggressive nationalism or ideological manipulation.

Therefore, Ilyin's concept of Homeland can be understood as a holistic socio-philosophical doctrine. It provides a conceptual framework for examining issues of national identity, cultural continuity, and ethical citizenship. Moreover, it offers valuable guidance for developing modern humanitarian studies, shaping educational approaches, and strengthening the moral foundations of contemporary society. In the broader intellectual context, Ilyin's ideas invite further interdisciplinary reflection on the relationship between the individual, the nation, and the universal values that sustain human civilization.

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