



National Precedent Phenomena of Russian Artistic Discourse

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Abstract: The article explores national precedent phenomena as key components of Russian artistic discourse. These phenomena serve as culturally marked units that function as carriers of collective memory and conceptual identity. Drawing on linguistic, cultural, and discourse analysis, the article outlines the typology, features, and functions of precedent phenomena in Russian literature, cinema, and media art. Special attention is paid to the interaction between precedent texts, names, and situations with the sociocultural context of Russian-speaking society.

Keywords: Linguistic, cultural, and discourse analysis, the article outlines the typology, features.

Introduction: In linguistic and cultural studies, the notion of precedent phenomena (термин В.Н.Телия, 1993) has gained significance as a means of analyzing the cultural-semantic space of national discourse. These are linguistic or cultural units — names, texts, statements, situations — that are widely recognized within a particular linguistic and cultural community and evoke a shared associative background.

Russian artistic discourse — which includes literature, theater, cinema, visual arts, and digital media — heavily relies on precedent phenomena to convey complex cultural meanings, reinforce ideological narratives, and establish intertextual connections. This paper focuses on the specific role of national precedent phenomena in the construction and perception of meaning within Russian artistic discourse.

Theoretical Background

Precedent phenomena are defined by several criteria (Telia, 1993; Krasnykh, 2002):

- Cultural recognizability within a national community;
- Cognitive anchoring in the collective

consciousness;

- Textual or situational origin (e.g., a famous novel, phrase, historical episode);
- Frequent usage as condensed semantic units.

They are typically divided into several types:

- Precedent texts (e.g., *War and Peace* by L.N. Tolstoy);
- Precedent names (e.g., Pushkin, Lenin, Natasha Rostova);
- Precedent statements (“Жить — Родине служить”);
- Precedent situations (e.g., the duel between Onegin and Lensky).

These elements are interwoven into the artistic discourse as tools for evoking emotional response, cultural identification, and ideological resonance.

Functions of Precedent Phenomena in Artistic Discourse

• Cognitive and Cultural Function

Precedent phenomena act as markers of cultural memory. Referencing Pushkin, Dostoevsky, or the Siege of Leningrad immediately invokes layers of historical and emotional meaning that are culturally embedded. These references allow creators and audiences to share implicit meanings without lengthy explanations.

• Intertextual Function

Artistic texts often draw on previous works — sometimes directly, sometimes ironically. For instance, postmodern Russian literature frequently reworks canonical texts (e.g., Ulitskaya’s dialog with Chekhov; Sorokin’s grotesque echoes of socialist realism). The use of precedent material establishes intertextual ties that signal belonging to a broader cultural dialogue.

• Evaluative and Ideological Function

Precedent phenomena carry evaluative potential. For example, invoking the “hero of the Soviet Union” figure or “Pavlik Morozov” immediately positions a character or situation ideologically. Artistic discourse uses these cues to align or challenge dominant narratives.

Typology of Precedent Phenomena in Russian Art

○ Literary Precedents

- Classic texts (Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekhov) act as “cultural constants.”
- Recurring archetypes (e.g., the лишний человек or the маленький человек) form symbolic frameworks for understanding modern characters.

○ Historical and Political Precedents

- Events such as the October Revolution, WWII, or perestroika function as cultural reference points.

- These events are artistically reinterpreted in films (e.g., *Burnt by the Sun*, *The Cranes Are Flying*) and visual art.

4.3. Mythological and Religious Precedents

- Russian Orthodoxy, folk tales, and Slavic mythological motifs are foundational in many works of Russian visual and performative art.

○ Media and Pop-Culture Precedents

- Soviet cinema, iconic songs, and slogans (e.g., “Я шагаю по Москве”) have entered the precedent sphere due to mass cultural influence.

Precedent Phenomena in Contemporary Russian Discourse

In the 21st century, digital media and new platforms (social networks, memes, video art) have transformed the usage and scope of precedent phenomena. Hybrid forms emerge — combining Pushkin’s texts with digital remixing, or recontextualizing Soviet slogans in ironic meme-culture.

This process reflects both the continuity of cultural memory and the dynamism of artistic reinterpretation.

CONCLUSION

National precedent phenomena function as cognitive-cultural markers in Russian artistic discourse, serving to encode shared values, reference cultural archetypes, and provoke reflection. Their intertextual and ideological functions make them indispensable tools for artists, writers, and performers working within or in dialogue with Russian cultural heritage.

Understanding these phenomena is crucial for scholars of language, literature, semiotics, and cultural studies, as it reveals how meaning is constructed, transmitted, and transformed within the cultural space.

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