

**SCTMG 2021**  
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of**  
**Modern Globalism»**

**REMINISCENCES AND ANTICIPATIONS IN LITERATURE: THE**  
**ISSUE OF CORRELATION**

Sergey V. Syzranov (a)\*, Natalia B. Abgaryan (b)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Togliatti State University, 14, Belorusskaya str., Togliatti, Russia, sergej\_syzranov@mail.ru,

(b) Institute of Linguistics and Intercultural Communication of First Moscow State Medical University named after  
I.V. Sechenov, 3-1, Sadovo-Kudrinskaya str., Moscow, Russia, natali.abgaryan@mail.ru

**Abstract**

The paper considers the problem of the relationship between reminiscences and anticipations in literature on the basis of the understanding of dialectical nature of artistic consciousness: the creative activity of great artists includes not only the moment of cultural heritage assimilation, but also the moment of direction to the future. The authors of the paper were guided by the hypothesis of V.N. Toporov on the “resonant space” of literature, which is a single semantic field in which the “century-old prototypes” of the cultural experience of mankind vary in many ways. The modifications of these prototypes in the art practice of writers carry the “genetic memory” of their previous embodiments and at the same time actualize the potential of anticipation contained in them. The research was carried out on the material of the works of Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Exupéry. Numerous variations of this type in Chekhov texts retained a genetic link with Dostoevsky and Cervantes, as well as with the Gospel archetype. On the other hand, in the minds of Chekhov's “Don Quixotes” certain features typical of the worldview of the era of modernism were anticipated. For Dostoevsky and Exupéry, the concept of Sacrifice, embodied in the images of “Christlike” heroes, was recognized as the connecting principle. The paper traces the overlap of motives and images of Dostoevsky's story “The Little Hero” and his novel “The Idiot” with the corresponding motives and images of Exupéry's story “The Little Prince” and his story “The Military Pilot”.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

*Keywords:* Reminiscences, anticipations, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Exupéry



## **1. Introduction**

The term reminiscence (from Latin “reminiscentia”) is used by literary scholars to characterize the “genetic memory of literature” (Bocharov, 2007). Reminiscences are references to the works of previous literature that arise in the text at the level of issues, images, motives and plot. They are introduced into texts (consciously or unconsciously) in the form of quotations, allusions, mentions of individual characters and works. Reminiscence is one of the key concepts that determine the specifics of intertextual relations in literature. Bem (2001) was one of the first to address the phenomenon of literary “reminiscences” back in the 1930s. Literary scholars still tend to focus on the problem of reminiscences. However, at the same time, it is recognized that the creative activity of artist includes flash forward – anticipation. This concept has not yet acquired a stable terminological status in literary criticism. The methodology for the study of literary anticipations has not been developed either. In our paper we are trying to outline an approach to this problem based on the works of F.M. Dostoevsky, A.P. Chekhov and A. de Saint-Exupery.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Researchers often draw their attention to the inherent ability of literary artists to predict and express the hidden laws of life. This gift is commonly called prophetic. However, these general concepts are not enough to understand the specific laws of literary process. Literary critics more often place an emphasis on the activity of “recalling”. The problem is that the creative activity of an artist includes a simultaneous appeal to both the past and the future. This appeal is reflected in the artistic form of the works, expressed in specific reminiscences and anticipations. It is important not only to find “reminiscences” and “anticipations” in the text of a writer and then somehow systematize them, but also to trace their interconnection. This is possible only when taking into account the connection between poetics and the general principles of artistic consciousness.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the paper is the dialectical principles of poetics, revealing the relationship between reminiscences and anticipations in a literary text. The authors consider the connection between poetics and the dialectical structure of artistic consciousness, as well as the issue of the functions of intertextual connections in the actualization of the supertext semantic field of literature. The research is carried out on the basis of the works of F.M. Dostoevsky, A.P. Chekhov and A. de Saint-Exupery.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research is to reveal the laws of poetics that determine the ratio of reminiscences and anticipations in the works of F.M. Dostoevsky, A.P. Chekhov and A. de Saint-Exupery. At the same time, a general purpose is as follows: to trace the connection of these laws with the general principles of artistic thinking, as well as to supplement the ideas about the role and meaning of “reminiscences” and “anticipations” in the deployment of a single semantic field of literature.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodology of this paper is based on the dialectical teachings of A.F. Losev on the artistic form. In addition, we used the elements of a number of existing scientific methods that of modern literary criticism, first of all, the elements of comparative-historical, cultural-historical, structural-analytical and hermeneutic approaches. The opinions and studies of of A.L. Bem, S.G. Bocharov on the “genetic memory of literature”, as well as the hypothesis of V.N. Toporov on the “resonant space” of literary works are the basis of this research.

## 6. Findings

Dostoevsky (1990) characterized his modernity as the era of the deepest spiritual crisis, the total “disorder” and the loss of the “connecting idea”. He saw the task of the future artist in the need to express “the laws of destruction and new creation”. This idea is expressed in the epilogue of the novel “Teenager” (1875): “the future artist will find beautiful forms even for depicting the past disorder and chaos”. In our opinion, the novel “Teenager” captures the most important transitional moment in the development of Russian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it already anticipates the contours of the artistic world of A.P. Chekhov. We believe that this turned out to be possible because Dostoevsky discovered in his work the general law of cultural and historical development – the alternation of the phases of ups and downs in the life of culture. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the famous culture expert Pitirim Sorokin proposed the term *fluctuation* to denote this law. Dostoevsky saw the reasons for the fluctuations of the Russian intelligentsia's consciousness in its isolation from the “soil” and the national spiritual tradition in its one-sided Europeanism. In these conclusions, the writer relies on the experience of previous literature. This explains the appearance of reminiscences from “Woe from Wit” by A.S. Griboyedov in the novel “Teenager”: it is mentioned that Versilov, one of the main characters of the novel, a “Russian European”, in his youth played the role of Chatsky in a home play. However, it is also important to take into account the Gospel reminiscences presented in this work. The hero-narrator, the son of Versilov, applies the words of the parable of the prodigal son to his father, paraphrasing them to some extent: “this man was dead and came to life” (Dostoevsky, 1990). The traits that go back to the archetype of the Prodigal Son were repeatedly noted by researchers in the images of Dostoevsky's intellectual heroes, as well as in the images of Chekhov's heroes. Here we find one of the confirmations of the hypothesis of Toporov (1998) on the “resonant space” of literature: there is a single semantic field of literature, in which certain “century-old prototypes”, paradigms, and prototypes of the cultural experience of mankind vary in different ways. The modifications of these prototypes in the art practice of writers carry the memory of their previous embodiments and at the same time actualize the potential of anticipation contained in them. The spiritual strain of Versilov in the ending of the novel “Teenager” captures the moment of the descending phase of cultural and historical fluctuations. In the epilogue of the novel, the future hero of Russian literature is portrayed as a spiritual bankrupt: This descendant of his ancestors could no longer be depicted in his modern type otherwise than in a somewhat misanthropic, secluded and undoubtedly sad form. He even has to appear as some kind of eccentric, whom the reader could recognize as one gone off the field and make sure that the field is not left behind him (Dostoevsky, 1990). The hero-intellectual appears in

Chekhov's work in this very form of such a “gone off the field”, overstrained spiritual bankrupt. In his anthropology, Chekhov studied the same patterns that were discovered by Dostoevsky before him. We wrote about this in more detail in our special work (Syzranov, 2020). Within the framework of the topic of this paper, it is necessary to note that from the side of Dostoevsky's work, these general moments can be presented as anticipations of a number of motives, images and plot situations of Chekhov's works. From the side of Chekhov's work, they look like reminiscences of the corresponding motives of Dostoevsky.

Let us turn to specific examples. A number of Dostoevsky's heroes reflect the features of such an “century-old prototype” of European literature as Don Quixote. It is known, that the writer highly appreciated this image. Recently, it was pointed out that Dostoevsky has a special “aesthetics of illusion” associated with this image (Djermanovic, 2015). The high idealism of the quixotic type became one of the components of the image of the “positively beautiful man” of Knyaz Myshkin in the novel “The Idiot” (1868). In other cases, this idealism appears in a significantly reduced and even parodic form. This is observed in the images of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky in the novel “The Demons” (1872) and Versilov in “The Teenager”. It is said about Versilov that in his youth he was inclined to extreme idealism, wanted to marry a sick girl and received the nickname “the woman's prophet”. Stepan Trofimovich can also be attributed to the type of “the woman's prophet”. In the ending of the novel “The Demons”, he has a journey and in one of the final episodes he delivers pathetic speeches to a random fellow traveler about his admiration for a woman. This plot situation is reproduced by Chekhov in the story “On the Way” (1886). Grigory Likharev, a typical “woman's prophet”, in the heat of the highest enthusiasm expounds his new credo to a random interlocutor at the guesthouse – “faith is in a woman”, in the ideal principles of feminine nature. A hero of the same type is depicted in Chekhov's story “The Neighbors” (1892). It mentions his strange marriage “in the taste of Dostoevsky” – his marriage to a public woman. The images of Chekhov's “eternal students” Sasha (“The Bride”) and Petya Trofimov (“The Cherry Orchard”) are also marked with the features of the “woman's prophets”. Thus, Dostoevsky and Chekhov create the modifications of the archetype of Don Quixote, who lives eternal life in the “resonant space” of literature. The images of the idealistic heroes of Dostoevsky in relation to Cervantes are reminiscences and in relation to Chekhov they are anticipations. Heroes of the same type in Chekhov works are covered with reminiscences that go back to Dostoevsky, Cervantes, and to Gospel parable. On the other hand, the outlook of these Chekhovian heroes anticipates the features of modernist consciousness, in particular, the future cult of Eternal femininity in the literature of symbolism.

In the text of “The Teenager” there are separate semantic concentrates, in which Chekhov's anticipations are presented with particular clarity. One of Kraft's monologues reveals a strikingly precise anticipation of a number of future motifs of Chekhov's work: “Today Russia is degraded, the soil is depleted in it, turned into a steppe and prepared for the Kalmyks. <...> On the other hand, those who wish good things talk about what will happen in a thousand years. The connecting idea is completely gone. All people are at the guesthouse and tomorrow they will leave Russia <...>” (Dostoevsky, 1972–1990). Doctor Astrov is concerned about the problem of deforestation in his play “The Uncle Vanya” (1897). The heroes of the play “Three Sisters” (1901) talk about a wonderful life which will be “in two, three hundred years”. Staying “at a guesthouse” is a metaphor for the spiritual groundlessness of the Russian

intellectual of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is quite applicable to the heroes of Chekhov. In a number of key scenes in Chekhov's works, the action takes place in a guesthouse, in a hotel. Ranevskaya rushes out of Russia in the finale of *The Cherry Orchard* (1904). The common motive for both writers of spiritual “homelessness” undoubtedly goes back to the parable of the prodigal son. Sasha is called “the prodigal son” in the story “*The Bride*”.

We can conclude that the overlap of reminiscences and anticipations in the works of Dostoevsky and Chekhov indicates the presence of a single semantic field of literature – its “resonant space”, which stores “century-old prototypes” of culture. The creative consciousness of great artists, being included in this unified field, acquires the ability to recreate a picture of life in the light of metahistory. The images, plots, motives reflecting modernity reveal the potential of metahistorical or transhistorical content – the potential of archetypes, paradigms and generating models. The expression of such content also activates, on the one hand, the reminiscences of the previous experience of its development, on the other hand, the anticipation of its subsequent modifications.

The study of the relationship between reminiscences and anticipations in cases where the genetic relationship between the studied works is rather problematic is of particular interest. In this regard, the overlap of the motives of the works of Dostoevsky and Antoine de Saint-Exupery is indicative. As it is known Exupery more than once spoke of Dostoevsky with great reverence. In the research literature there are statement on the typological relationship of Knyaz Myshkin, the central character of Dostoevsky's novel “*The Idiot*”, and “*The Little Prince*” of Exupery. However, the genetic links between the works of writers have not been studied. We will trace some overlaps between the motives and images of Dostoevsky's story “*The Little Hero*” (1849) and his novel “*The Idiot*” (1868) and the corresponding content components of Exupery's fairy tale “*The Little Prince*” (1943) and the story “*Military Pilot*” (1942).

In “*The Little Hero*”, which had the original name “*Children's Tale*”, it is possible to specify a number of motives that were developed in “*The Idiot*” and were then reflected in “*The Little Prince*”. This is the motive of the ideal knightly service to Beauty, the motive of sacrificial deeds and the associated motive of initiation. The symbolism of the Rose and her thorns, which is so significant for the author of *The Little Prince*, is also presented in *The Little Hero*. It also is presented in Dostoevsky's likeness of the beauty “to the morning rose, which has just managed to open, with the first ray of the sun, its scarlet, fragrant bud” (Dostoevsky, 1990). It directly responds to the text of Exupery: “Once a morning, as soon as the sun rose, the petals opened” (de Saint-Exupery, 2020). The image of thorns, presented by Exupery in a literal and symbolic form, is present in Dostoevsky's figurative meaning – these are the innumerable ridicule, taunts and persecutions with which the blonde beauty showered the Little Hero. In a softened form, this line of behavior manifests itself in Aglaya's attitude to Knyaz Myshkin.

Here, the image of the thorns will be evident – in the form of the thorns of a hedgehog, presented by Aglaya to the prince. A child-knight in a difficult relationship with a beautiful, but prickly creature – this collision, outlined in Dostoevsky's story, develops in the novel “*The Idiot*” and is further included in the plot of “*The Little Prince*”. Knightly adoration of the ideal Beauty, manifested in the image of the “heavenly Rose” as a traditional Catholic motif was typical of the French writer and, in addition to its

refractions, to Pushkin and Dostoevsky. There were also biographical reasons for this: being a descendant of an old aristocratic family, Exupery deliberately cultivated a knightly principle in his behavior and work. However, in “The Little Prince” a combination of chivalry and childishness that was specific for Dostoevsky turned out to be necessary for him. For Exupery and Dostoevsky, “childishness” is a category of artistic anthropology and, at the same time, the most important characteristic of creative consciousness.

This is the “vigilance of the heart”, capable to see the “most important thing”, which “you can not see with your eyes”, as Exupery says. This ability allows artists to “recall” “century-old prototypes”, to saturate their images with their mythopoetic and symbolic meanings. These meanings are embodied in the names Little Prince and Knyaz Lev Myshkin. Both names carry an ambivalent combination of the semantics of “smallness”, “insignificance” and “greatness”, “royalty”. It is also necessary to take into account the connection between the word prince and the word principle, which gives way to the first word of the Bible in the Romanic languages: “In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram” (Latin beginning of the Bible) – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The context of the absolute ontological principle for Exupery's anthropology is as significant as for Dostoevsky's anthropology: for both writers, a man is placed at the center of the universe connecting “heaven” and “earth”, like a knyaz and a prince called to inherit the Kingdom. However, this royal dignity of the heroes is realized through their sacrificial service.

The image of a donkey becomes a symbol characterizing the sacrificial aspiration of Knyaz Myshkin: “But I still stand for the donkey: the donkey is a kind and useful person” (Dostoevsky, 1990). The surname of *Barashkova* of Nastasya Filippovna, according to a number of researchers, actualizes the Gospel symbol of the Lamb. There is the reason to believe that this gospel symbolism accompanies the image of a lamb in Exupery's tale. When he first appears, the little prince repeats three times: “Please ... draw me a lamb!” (De Saint-Exupery, 2020). At the same time, he is not satisfied with every lamb, namely the “lamb in the box”, that is, the one that is contemplated not with the eyes, but with the heart – the ideal, noumenal Lamb, the existential prototype of his life self-realization. The path of self-sacrifice becomes for the Little Prince the initiation and self-invention, a return to his heavenly homeland. It is possible to note the important point when Knyaz Myshkin and the Little Prince enter into a direct dialogue. “It happened here, and it used to call everyone somewhere, and it all seemed to me that if we straight <...> and go beyond this line, where the sky meets the ground, then there is the whole solution and immediately we will see a new life <...>” (Dostoevsky, 1990), Little Prince answers to these words of Knyaz Myshkin by the meaningful dictum: “If you go straight and straight, you won't get far...” (de Saint-Exupery, 2020) what does this polemical note mean? Little Prince is not satisfied with movement only in the horizontal plane; his sacrificial impulse is directed to the transcendental dimension. In contrast, Knyaz Myshkin remains in a certain intermediate area. Here we can find the arguments for an approach that puts the “existential-ontological” plan of Dostoevsky's picture of the world into the spotlight (Siddiqi, 2019).

For Dostoevsky, sacrifice is the only way to overcome world antinomianism and tragedy. He deeply considers the “law of sacrifice” in a famous note dated April 16, 1864: “Meanwhile, after the appearance of Christ as the ideal of man in the flesh, it became clear as day that the completeness of the development of one's self is to give it entirely to everyone, completely and selflessly” (Dostoevsky, 1990). We find similar reflections in the last chapters of Exupery's story “The Military Pilot” (1942):

“The most important action has received its name and the name is a victim <...>. This is the surrender of oneself to the Essence, when you consider yourself inseparable <...> while my spiritual culture relied on God, it could save this concept of sacrifice, which created God in the heart of man” (de Saint-Exupéry, 2020). The artistic embodiment of the concept of Sacrifice was realized by Dostoevsky and Exupéry in the images of “Christ-like” heroes oriented towards the Christian archetype of the God-man. In our opinion, the presence of common points at the level of the perception of the world, the orientation towards a single “century-old Prototype” gave rise to the described overlaps of the texts of these two writers.

## 7. Conclusion

During the course of this research we relied on the hypothesis of V.N. Toporov on the “resonant space” of literature, which is a single semantic field where there are varying “century-old prototypes” that generate models of the cultural experience of mankind. The modifications of these models in the artistic practice of writers carry the “genetic memory” of their previous embodiments and at the same time actualize the potential of anticipation contained in them. We revealed the epistemological possibilities of this hypothesis on the basis of the works of Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Exupéry. In our opinion, the common topic of all three writers is the topic of the global crisis of modern European culture, caused by the secularization of consciousness. This crisis is interpreted by them in the light of prototypes dating back to the Christian tradition. For Dostoevsky and Chekhov, such common “century-old prototypes” are the archetype of the Prodigal Son and the archetype of Don Quixote. For Dostoevsky and Exupéry, the connecting principle is the concept of the Sacrifice, embodied in the images of “Christ-like” heroes. We propose the approach which makes it possible to significantly clarify the problem of the relationship between reminiscences and anticipations in literature.

## References

- Bem, A. L. (2001). *Research. Literature Letters*. Languages of Slavic cultures.
- Bocharov, S. G. (2007). *Philological plots*. Languages of Slavic cultures.
- de Saint-Exupéry (2020). *Small Collection of Works*. Azbuka-Atticus.
- Djermanovic, T. (2015). Dostoyevski y Don Quijote: poética y estética de una ilusión. *Anales Cervantinos*, XLVII, 9–24.
- Dostoevsky, F. M. (1990). *Complete works and letters: in 30 volumes*. Science.
- Siddiqi, B. (2019). Existentialism, Epiphany, and Polyphony in Dostoevsky's Post-Siberian Novels. *Religions*, 10(10), 1–15.
- Syzranov, S. V., & Abgaryan, N. B. (2020). Artistic Attitude as a Factor of Literary Relations. *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, XCII, 1057–1064.
- Toporov, V. N. (1998). *Holiness and Saints in Russian Spiritual Culture* (Vol. II). Languages of Russian culture.