

The Philosophy of “Man”: Linguo-Cognitive Approach

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ABSTRACT

J. Fowles is an outstanding post-modern British writer. Most of his works have been translated into different languages. Even films were shot on the bases of his books at the time when the writer was alive. However, to understand and appreciate the author properly would be incomplete without thorough study of his philosophical essay "Aristos", which is a "self-portrait" in words. The article aims at studying the concept "man" taken from his philosophical essay. The concept is investigated in the article from linguo-cognitive perspectives which vividly demonstrates the author's individual world perception, his ideology, which partly reflects the ideology of the modern world.

Key words: *concept, linguo-cognitive approach, world perception.*

1. INTRODUCTION

At present linguistics is undergoing radical changes due to the appearance of a new discipline - Cognitive Linguistics, the object of which is a human mind, way of thinking and the mental processes connected with it. "Language is dealt as an integral cognitive mechanism, a cognitive instrument – a system of signs enacting in the representation (encoding) and transformation of the information" (Kubrykova, 1996:53). The core of Cognitive Linguistics is the concept. Concept is investigated on lexical, phrase, syntactical levels as well as on the text level. Undoubtedly the most productive means of describing any concept is the text. Hence, methodology of conceptual analysis of texts is being worked out. Conceptual analysis itself is revealing and interpreting the basic concepts of literary or non-literary texts. In this sphere great contributions have Russian linguists Ju. Babenko and V. Kazarin (2004). In "Philological Analysis of Texts" they systematically describe how to investigate concepts elicited from a literary work. Another method of conceptual analysis is a method of cognitive models which is applied in this paper – linguistic description of the concept via conceptual metaphor. This method can be applied in different genres of discourse.

2. CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR AS A TEXT ORGANIZER

Since its discovery conceptual metaphor (see: Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) has been in the centre of attention of researchers in diverse fields such as literary theory, legal studies, linguistics, the philosophy of science. The aim of the paper is to investigate the text via conceptual metaphor combining literary and linguistic approaches. In the framework of linguo-cognitive approaches to texts conceptual metaphor appears as a text organizer. Actually, the author's individual world perception is embedded in his/her conceptual metaphors.

Conceptual analysis of texts via conceptual metaphor helps to reveal the hidden message of the text, consequently, the author's intention.

3. LITERARY WORK FROM LINGUO-COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES

The literary work is viewed as the product of a cognitive activity – the output of the writer's mind which stores rich knowledge of the writer's individual world perception, his political and aesthetic viewpoints (Kubrykova & Demyankov, et al 1996). The linguo-cognitive approach to texts via conceptual metaphor reveals the hidden message of the text. It helps to understand the author's individual world perception. The idea of a view-point is crucial in dealing with a conceptual metaphor.

The interpretation of a figurative language is of paramount importance in understanding a literary work. However, B. Dasyngier and E. Sweetser argue that one has to be particularly open to the idea that different viewers/listeners/readers will interpret figurative forms differently and that is not because the meanings of creative expressions are more unpredictable or more vague than those of literal expressions, it is because a variety of inferences can be derived depending on the level of schematic structure and the framing chosen (Dasyngier & Sweetser, 2014).

4. THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN J. FOWLES' WORLD PERCEPTION

“Aristos” is a philosophical essay in which J. Fowles, an outstanding British writer, rather boldly expresses his viewpoints on actual universal issues. It should be noted that the work itself is a collection of original ideas, a kind of unique ideology reflecting ideas of different century philosophers combined with the author's unique vision of the world. Hence, the study of the book becomes both actual and crucial. The present article concentrates on conducting linguo-cognitive analysis of the concept of man. It reflects the author's individual understanding of a *man* who does not belong to any religion, country or nationality.

Seven men inhabit the raft. The pessimist, for whom the good things of life are no more than lures to prolong suffering; the egocentric, whose motto is Carpe diem – enjoy today – and who does his best to get the most comfortable part of the raft for himself; the optimist, always scanning the horizon for the promised land; the observer who finds it enough to write the logbook of the voyage and to note down the behavior of the sea, the raft and his fellow – victims; the altruist, who finds his reason for being in the need to deny himself and to help others; the stoic, who believes in nothing but his own refusal to jump overboard and end it all, and finally the child, the one born, as some with perfect pitch, with perfect ignorance – the pitifully ubiquitous child, who believes that all will be explained in the end, the nightmare fade and the green shore rise (The Aristos, p.15).

Within the framework of one paragraph the author manages to give the structural characteristics of a whole mankind. The first sentence occupies the strongest position in the whole context. It is expressed metaphorically *Seven men inhabit the raft*. Raft metaphorically means a world. Here we also deal with the allusion Noah's ark. Raft allusively refers to Noah's ark and metaphorically means world. So, J. Fowles divides people into seven categories: **a pessimist, an egocentric, an optimist, an observer, an altruist, a stoic and a child** who live altogether in one world. Seven categories of men comprise the world. The

whole paragraph bears implicit meaning based on a conceptual metaphor *The world is a raft*. The conceptual information is realized via the following expressions: *the most comfortable part of the raft, scan the horizon for the promised land, write the logbook of the voyage, note down the behavior of the sea, jump overboard, the green shore*. So, if we narrowed the huge world to the size of a plot and enlarged it to the size of the Earth, the mankind wouldn't change – still they would be divided into seven categories. However, notwithstanding which category man belongs to, he always seeks for an agent to be responsible for his actions. He always seeks for a mysterious power. In the following passage the idea is expressed via conceptual metaphor **Man is a seeker of the agent**.

Man is a seeker of the agent. We seek an agent for this being in a blind wind, this being on a raft; the mysterious power, the causator, the god, the face behind the mysterious mask of being and not being (ibid: 16).

The key word of the passage is the lexeme **agent**. Man always seeks for someone who can allot mysticism to human existence. Here the expression **being in a blind wind** has double metaphorical meaning. Man seeks a mysterious power to explain his actions. *Blind* here is a transferred epithet. Man blindly drifts on a raft. However, he strives to find someone who can be responsible for it. By means of gradation and via definite and indefinite articles the author's philosophical conception is expressed. At first it is only an agent (*We seek an agent*), then it is replaced by the *mysterious power* and it is already used with the definite article. Then it is followed by the author's literary coinage *the causator*, which is stronger than the expression *the mysterious power*. After it we come across the entity of god which is still stronger, but due to the fact that it is used with a small letter its meaning is diminished. The lexeme *face*, following god in its turn diminishes the meaning of God. The author's atheistic viewpoints are well seen in this paragraph. So, the lexemes agent, mysterious power, causator, god, face are identical in the author's world perception. All of them are the products of man's imagination and wish to allot mysticism to his being, even more to his being in a blind wind. The given philosophical conception coincides with a Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset's definition of the concept God: "What is called God in religious, in philosophy arises as a problem of seeking base for the world" (José Ortega y Gasset, 1991).

In the next part of the text the author speaks about man's dissatisfaction.

Man is an everlack, an infinite withoutness, a float on an apparently endless ocean of apparently endless indifference to an individual thing (Aristos:16).

Dissatisfaction is expressed via interrelated conceptual metaphors: **Man is an everlack**. **Man is an infinite withoutness**. **Man is a float**. The indicators of dissatisfaction are the negative lexemes. It is noteworthy to mention that J. Fowles achieves emotional effect due to implementation of several negative elements within the framework of one sentence: the noun **lack**, negative preposition **without**, an adjective with a negative prefix **infinite**, adjective with a negative suffix **endless**, a noun with a negative prefix **indifference**. In order to increase the emotional tension the author uses literary coinages **everlack** and **withoutness** which, in fact, express the same – everlasting lack of something. It is worth paying attention to the implicit use of synonymic group: **ever**, **infinite**, **endless** within one sentence. Implicitity is expressed in the following: the accumulation of identical lexemes express longitude to the utterance. Here we should also pay attention to another technique implicitly

used by the author – assonance. The assonance of vowels (**an everlack, an infinite afloat on an apparently endless ocean of apparently endless indifference to an individual**) create euphonic effect. Most likely the author implicitly indicates that man is an everlasting but at the same time pleasant dissatisfaction. The indefinite article is by no means unimportant in the actualization of conceptual information. On the one hand it is an integral part of the assonans, on the other hand it even more emphasizes the author's philosophical conception: Man is an endless, infinite dissatisfaction.

He lives in a survived yet always uncertainly surviving world. All that it has survived where it might not have survived. Every world is and will always be Noah's ark (Aristos:17).

In this part of the text the key word is the verb **survive**. The author plays on the word **survive** numerously implementing it in different forms within a very small part of the text. In the sentence **He lives in a survived yet always uncertainly surviving world**, using participle (present and past) forms of the verb **survive**, the author expresses opposite viewpoints. The sentence begins optimistically (**He lives in a survived world**), however at the end of the sentence the author "disrobes" the reader, reminding him/her, that future survival of man is uncertain (**...yet always uncertainly surviving world**). As to the second sentence the verb **survive** is used both in negative and affirmative forms **All that it has survived where it might not have survived**. The last sentence which is a conceptual metaphor generalizes the author's idea **Every world is and will always be Noah's ark**. The world will always be on the edge of survival.

4.CONCLUSION

Summing it up it is worth mentioning that J. Fowles has a unique vision of mankind and the world. The whole mankind is divided into seven categories: a pessimist, an egocentric, an optimist, an observer, an altruist, a stoic and a child. The author thinks that the most essential thing about man is that he never gets satisfied with what he has. He is an infinite dissatisfaction, moreover, he is a seeker of a mystic power, which can be responsible for what is happening to him. Man will always live with the idea that he has survived due to the mystic power and will always live in fear for his future. J. Fowles any civilization metonymically calls Noah's ark.

The whole philosophical conceptions can be expressed via the following conceptual metaphors:

- Man is a seeker of the agent.
- Man is an everlack.
- Man is an infinite withoutness.
- Man is a float.
- Every world is and will always be Noah's ark.

Thus, as a literary work is a reflection of cultural values grounded in the writer's experience, the study of a literary work from a linguo-cognitive approach will provide a deep understanding of cultural values from the prism of the author's individual world perception. Conceptual metaphor appears as a text organizer and becomes a special tool for the author to highlight those features of the concept that he considers most important ones hiding other features.

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