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COGNITIVE FUNCTION OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN “THE RAW SHARK TEXTS” BY STEVEN HALL

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Abstract. From the perspective of modern cognitive science the conceptual metaphor reflects the mental aspect of cognition and creation of a new conception of the world. Therefore, numerous researchers in the area of conceptual metaphor explored it as the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another, paying little attention to the role of fiction diegesis. Thus, the objective of the article is to gain a better understanding of conceptual metaphor perception in the diegesis of Steven Hall's fiction. In “The Raw Shark Texts” the conceptual worldview helps the protagonist to recreate the chronicle of his self-identification after the posttraumatic loss of memory. Human knowledge, experience and communication as well as his individual mind, ideas and thoughts are perceived by the protagonist's split personality as an aquatic space inhabited by conceptual fish. His fear of the conceptual shark, feeding on his memory, generates distinctive psychedelic hydro-text in the form of specific narrative structures. The state of fear also extends to increased human dependence on technology, digital databases (on-line memory storage and loss). The discreteness of narrative diegesis emphasizes the protagonist's frustrations and is used by the author as a literary imitation of dissociative amnesia.

Besides peculiar metaphorical expressions, in the author's visual metaphors, owing to the simultaneous implementation of the first and second planes of the metaphor content, a third plane (a new reality) arises. Comprehension of conceptual metaphors as intimately interconnected in the narrative diegesis reveals the way of creating layered, intertwined conceptual reality exemplified by the First / the

Second Eric Sanderson's narrative structures. Consequently, metaphorical expressions and visual metaphors in Steven Hall's novel are merely a manifestation of the conceptual metaphors underlying them. Reproducing the features of perception mechanisms in their interaction with psychological, the author was able to catch the common between tangible things and abstract concepts, matter and idea, to compare the incomparable. This approach allows us to consider the conceptual metaphor as a structural component of meta-fiction and to emphasize the cognition specificity of metaphor in creation of new realities in it.

Keywords: Steven Hall, cognition, conceptual metaphor, diegesis, narrative structures, visual metaphor.

Contemporary perception of metaphor as a special type of the worldview legitimizes the change in the research paradigm caused by the mental coherence of metaphors, which allows the use of different associative variations of the basic component (domain). From the perspective of modern cognitive science the conceptual metaphor reflects the mental aspect of cognition and creation of a new conception of the world. Numerous researchers in the area of cognitive or conceptual metaphor (Earl R. MacCormac (MacCormac 1985), G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), Gerard J. Steen (Gibbs and Steen 1999; Steen 2002), Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. (Gibbs 2008; Gibbs and Steen 1999), M. W. Madsen (Madsen 2016) and others) explored the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another.

Specifically in "Metaphors that we live in" (1980) George Lakoff and Mark Johnson revealed the significance of metaphor in the process of conceptualizing the reality. According to the theory of conceptual metaphor, such metaphors do not only reflect the experience of a particular cultural community, they shape it (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). New metaphors have the ability to create a new reality. When a new metaphor becomes part of the conceptual system that underlies the reality, it changes the system and its conceptions.

Since the types of metaphorization are mainly based on associative relations, the conceptual metaphor juxtaposes different domains, forming a new epistemological series, synthesizing in it the features of heterogeneous domains. This is the way of reality metaphorization that is traced in Steven Hall's (b. 1975) work of immersive meta-fiction "The

Raw Shark Texts" (2007). Thus, the primary objective of the article is to gain a better understanding of conceptual metaphor perception in the diegesis of Steven Hall's fiction.

Adapting to contemporary technoscientific knowledge and being a part of "techno-artistic hybridization" in the spirit of post-humanism, the human body and consciousness are becoming increasingly involved in various experiments, namely with human memory, which affects the modification of the form and content of the literary work. As D. V. Galkin points out, "artists often deliberately set the task of finding and creating a new configuration of human somatics and psyche living in the super-technological world" (Галкин 2008: p. 76). Therefore, new literary forms emerge against the background of current literary trends, including a peculiar combination of fiction with psychedelia (from Greek words: "psyche" (mind) and "delos" (manifesting)). In it, the metaphor gives rise to the concept of worldview as the basis of reality, which is more incomprehensible when the tangible world seems to be expanding, becoming something vague and elusive; it generates a number of associations and images. Such a literary manner with the characteristic influence of a technogenic society and a plethora of literary and cinematic allusions is peculiar to Steven Hall's immersive novel.

Primarily, the reader's attention is drawn to the title. For a cognizant reader "The Raw Shark Texts" indicates the author's transparent hints at the inkblot tests of Hermann Rorschach used to examine the psychological construct (cognitive ability, aptitude, emotional functioning, personality, etc.) of an individual. The link between the eponymous tests (The Raw Shark Texts – Rorschach Tests) and the content of the novel is quite apparent. The amnesiac protagonist Eric Sanderson suffering from dissociative disorder after a psychological trauma, caused by tragic accidental death of his beloved Clio Aames, and communicating with his therapist Dr. Randle, and with his previous self by means of letters and strange excerpts, tries to recollect the chronicle of his personal reality and to comprehend what happened in the past. As other dissociative disorders, amnesia is the "disassociative condition" that involves disruptions of memory, awareness, perception and personal identity; and is characterized by fugue states or multiple personality.

But Steven Hall evolves the theme of the protagonist's authenticity reconstruction after memory loss. In search of himself, the character has

to contend against the conceptual shark Ludovician, which floats in thoughts, words and ideas of his conscious and subconscious mind and feeds on his memories, dreams, and intrinsic sense of himself, gradually negating each of his further selves.

The discreteness of the narrative reproduces the protagonist's damaged consciousness and is used by the author as a method of literary imitation of the character's mental instability and post-traumatic hallucinations (paranoid fiction). It is also a direct association with Alzheimer's (Pressman 2009), which causes a fear comparable with a real shark encounter. As for the author's allusions to Alzheimer's in the characterization of the Ludovician, we can find some textual support. Thus, the novel tells us the Ludovician chooses as a victim a person who can be persecuted and eaten for years: "The Ludovician might select an individual human being as its prey animal and pursue and feed on that individual over the course of years, until that victim's memory and identity have been completely consumed" (Hall 2007: p. 65). Some other important factors of conceptual prey choice are unstable psyche and age-specific characteristics: "Any frail mind kicking and struggling in the world, if they're [the sharks] passing they'll take a chunk out of it. Especially out of old people" (Hall 2007: p. 135).

Hall's peculiar literary manner, the insistency of his metaphorical associative images, give rise to the original psychedelic hydro-text in which the water element predominates: the wet weather that accompanies Eric Sanderson in his real life (rain, fog, flood), brims over the protagonist's mind and flows into the conceptual aquatic space (predacious "conceptual streams" full of "conceptual fish"; "the conceptual shark Ludovician" as a "mnemonic predator"; "the fish of mind, word and invention"; waves of emotions; splashes of memories; floating against the flow of time – meaning the protagonist's attempts to recollect the lost past, etc.).

Besides, information space is also denoted as a water element: "The streams, currents and rivers of human knowledge, experience and communication which have grown throughout our short history are now a vast, rich and bountiful environment" (Hall 2007: p. 65). In its turn, this "space" (involving "wide, warm pools of society and culture" along with "flows of human interaction and the tides of cause and effect") extends to the labyrinths of the collective consciousness through the

streams of interaction by means of literature, art, music, memories, communication:

All those linking streams flowing in and between people, through texts, pictures, spoken words and TV commentaries, streams through shared memories, casual relations, witnessed events, touching pasts and futures, cause and effect <...> This waterway paradise of all information and identities and societies and selves (Hall 2007: pp. 54–55).

Eventually, the circle of the narrative hydro-space closes, covering the reader with generous waves of associations and allusions.

The narrative begins with the words of a completely perplexed person as the protagonist awakens in a room with no idea of who and where he is: “I was unconscious. I’d stopped breathing” (Hall 2007: p. 10). Anxiety and other fears renew and deepen when he is attacked by a conceptual shark (Hall 2007: p. 9). Having survived several such attacks, and not relying anymore on the protection of the conceptual loop created by his former self, the Second Eric Sanderson dares to challenge his miserable static existence. He starts his quest, he journeys in search of Dr. Trey Fidorous “crypto-conceptual oceanologist” and a printed word enthusiast. That one who, in the belief of the First Eric, will be able to defeat the conceptual memory-eater until it finally destroys his successor’s self.

The text demonstrates how the process of conceptualizing the reality is going:

Imagine you’re in a rowing boat on a lake <...> A low clinging breeze comes and goes, racing ripples across the water and gently rocking you and your boat as you float in yin-yang slices of morning <...> you close your eyes and feel the tiny physics of gravity and resistance as the liquid finds routes across your skin, builds itself into droplets of the required weight, then falls, each drop ending with an audible tap.

Now, right on that tap–stop. Stop imagining. Here’s the real game. Here’s what’s obvious and wonderful and terrible all at the same time: the lake in my head, the lake I was imagining, has just become the lake in your head (Hall 2007: p. 56).

Thus, the immersive novel (like a computer display or system) generates a three-dimensional image which appears to surround the reader. The

analogous images spring up with the description of “a shark-hunting boat *the Orpheus*” (Hall 2007: pp. 279–281) and in the case when the protagonist had to drink a glass of conceptual water (full of strips of paper with the word “water” written on each): “Right,” I said to myself and to the glass, trying to kick-start my brain. I geared up for another shot at the concept of water. Something changed. The physical me vanished (Hall 2007: pp. 284–288). Here, the verb ‘to immerse’ indicates both to submerge in a liquid and involve oneself deeply in a particular activity.

Katherine Hayles also draws attention to the overlapping of semantic layers in the narrative:

As the Second Eric Sanderson journeys to discover more about his past, the text explores what it would mean to transport a (post)human subjectivity into a database, at the same time it enacts the performative power of imaginative fiction conveyed through written language (Hayles 2012: p. 200).

Defining this novel as an “innovative digital production”, the researcher emphasizes such of its main problems as “danger of database structures”, which threatens not only the most narrative forms, but is also becoming more global as many kinds of our “knowledge structures are moving away from narrative models into database configurations” (Hayles 2012: p. 199), which is fully consistent with the problems of increased human dependence on digital age technology.

Hence, apart from the aforementioned mnemonic shark, even more dangerous villain and the antagonist in Hall's novel is Mycroft Ward (clear association with Microsoft Word) a “gentleman scientist” who has managed to reproduce a mental copy of his identity and turn it into a huge online database of self with dozens of permanently connected node bodies protecting against system damage and virus attacks. Ward became a pure mind, a “gigantic over-thing” rather than a person, who via the Internet took over the bodies and infested the minds of millions (Hall 2007: pp. 199–204), including Sanderson’s beloved. Jessica Pressman determines Ward as “a transcendental ego in an age of transcendental data” (Pressman 2009). Therefore, the technology in the novel is at the same time a metaphor for the total power that transforms the human

lifeworld affecting mind (Mr. Nobody embodies the Legion of its numerous copies) and the cancerous tumour that kills.

The protagonist hears about Mycroft Ward from his rescuer and companion –an extraordinary girl Scout. This Ward's victim by chance remained an autonomous person; she is alive only because she fled her former life and lives underground exploring the "un-space". However, a bit of the database left in her brain (tumour cell) is a deadly danger to her. After all, the system, programmed for self-protection, must destroy the unsafe data carriers, one of which is Scout; therefore, helping Eric the girl helps herself. She has the idea to direct one evil (Ludovician) against the other (Ward), and by destroying both, survive and help others. This well-known in literature and film plot tacking takes a new meaning in S. Hall's interpretation. The Scout's narrative is one of the segments, along with the narratives of the First Eric Sanderson (letters, diary, postcards, workbook with cipher codes), and the Second Eric (story of real life events and memories of the past) which gradually make up the inclusive comprehensive narrative, comprising some printing features of the immersive fiction.

Thus, it creates a presence effect, simultaneously stimulating the reader's imagination through several channels of perception. Jessica Pressman describes this trend as "the aesthetic of bookishness," wherein "novels exploit the power of the print page in ways that draw attention to the book as a multimedia format, one informed by and connected to digital technologies" (Pressman 2009: p. 465). The author takes full advantage of textual graphic possibilities in his meta-fictional work, experimenting with drawings, photographs, scanned newspaper clippings, postcards, film still, close-ups and other visuals, extending the scope of the narrative to a form that combines image and movement. Altogether Hall's novel contains more than forty pages of visuals, comprising a flip-book section in which the eponymous shark, made of words, approaches the reader and attacks. To enhance the impression the author turns visual images into interactive ones. When flipped the images of the attacking shark change from a tiny spot to a close-up with an open-mouthed predator, and finally ends with its wide-open eye as the main focus (Hall 2007: p. 320).

So, the sense of a visual metaphor is to simplify key ideas. This kind of metaphor is built through the correlation of some visual images

(shark's jaws, eye) that act as iconic signs. With their flipping combination, the emerging meaning is interpreted as a symbol of a phenomenon that may have no direct relationship to each of the images presented. Visual images are visualizations of thoughts and feelings and the reader as a recipient himself builds a visual metaphor in mind, combining the meanings of the images seen. Owing to the simultaneous implementation of the first and second planes of the metaphor content, a third plane arises, i.e. a new reality. In the context of Hall's close-up (the open-mouthed predator with its wide-open eye) the eye is being conceptualized as the ability to know what is hidden behind the reality, to transcend beyond it and to gain power over self and time; it symbolizes insight and absolute intellect. But grasped as the whole image of the conceptual shark, it is a reminder that you can turn any weakness into one of your strengths. You can handle even the most severe problems and threats. But transcending beyond the reality you take a risk never to return and it is somewhat horrifying.

Thus, manipulating the "graphic surface", the interactive technique plays psychological and philosophical role and at the same time provides explicit intertextual cinematic links, in particular to "Jaws", "The Matrix", "Memento" and "Casablanca". However, the idea itself is quite different. Another important concern is related to virtual and material dimensions of information loss and storage, as memory loss may be relevant both to a person and a computer system as well as its storage medium can be a printed book or a database (Hayles 2012; Panko 2011).

The word written or printed in a book and then perceived by human mind has an ambivalent role in the novel. Eric Sanderson calls such texts "live and extremely dangerous" (Hall 2007: p. 69). On the one hand, they are able to help the protagonist regain memory, but when inappropriately used can provoke the attack of the conceptual shark. Such texts can open the portal to another reality that will allow the protagonist to recall his lost love and the former happy life. As the pictures in a flip-book appear to animate by simulating motion, as the author creates the immersive space – a model of reality simulation, some conceptual aquatic space perceived as an ordinary tangible world that makes double-ending of Eric Sanderson's story possible.

The ambiguity of the narrative as eponymous pun on Rorschach Tests (inkblots with symmetrical sides mirroring each other across

a vertical axis) highlights “the ability to remain poised between two alternatives without needing to resolve the ambiguity” (Hayles 2012: p. 218). Comprehension of conceptual metaphors as intimately interconnected in the narrative diegesis reveals the way of creating layered, intertwined conceptual reality exemplified by the First / the Second Eric Sanderson’s narrative structures.

Thus, metaphorical expressions and visual metaphors in Steven Hall's novel are merely a manifestation of the conceptual metaphors underlying them. Reproducing the features of perception mechanisms in their interaction with the psychological, the author was able to catch the common between tangible things and abstract concepts, matter and idea, to compare the incomparable. This approach allows us to consider the conceptual metaphor as a structural component of meta-fiction and to emphasize the cognition specificity of metaphor in creation of new realities in it.

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КОГНІТИВНА ФУНКЦІЯ КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНИХ МЕТАФОР В РОМАНІ СТВЕНА ХОЛЛА “THE RAW SHARK TEXTS”

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Анотація. З позиції сучасної когнітології концептуальна метафора відображає ментальний аспект процесу пізнання та створення нової картини світу. Дослідники концептуальної метафори розглядали її переважно як спосіб розуміння однієї концептуальної сфери за властивостями іншої. Проте роль дієгезису в цьому аспекті потребує окремої уваги. Отже, головна мета статті – проаналізувати когнітивний механізм сприйняття концептуальної метафори у дієгезисі імерсивного роману Стівена Холла “The Raw Shark Texts”.

Концептуальний світогляд допомагає головному герою відтворити хроніку його самоідентифікації після посттравматичної втрати пам'яті. Людські знання, досвід і спілкування, а також особисті ідеї, думки та спогади сприймаються ушкодженою свідомістю протагоніста як водний простір, населений концептуальними рибами. Страх перед концептуальною акулою, що живиться його пам'яттю, породжує виразний психоделічний гідротекст у вигляді специфічних наративних структур. Стан тривоги шириться й на посилення залежності сучасної людини від цифрових технологій, баз даних (втрата оперативної пам'яті). Дискретність наративного дієгезису підкреслюється фрустраціями головного героя і використовується автором як літературна імітація дисоціативної амнезії.

Крім оригінальних метафоричних виразів, у візуальних метафорах роману, завдяки одночасній реалізації кількох площин вмісту, виникає третя площина (нова реальність). Осягнення концептуальних метафор, як взаємопов'язаних у наративному дієгезисі, розкриває спосіб створення переплетеної концептуальної реальності, прикладом якої є нашарування наративних структур Першого та Другого Еріка Сандерсона. Відповідно, метафоричні вислови в романі Холла є лише поверхневим вираженням концептуальних метафор, що лежать в їх основі. Відтворюючи особливості сенсорних механізмів та їх взаємодію із психікою, автору вдалося вловити спільне між конкретними речами і абстрактними поняттями, матерією і духом, зіставити непорівнюване. Такий підхід дозволяє розглядати концептуальну метафору як структурну складову художнього метатвору, акцентувати увагу на специфіці метафоричного конструювання нових реальностей.

Ключові слова: Стівен Холл, концептуальна метафора, когнітивний механізм, дієгезис, наративні структури, візуальна метафора.

КОГНИТИВНАЯ ФУНКЦИЯ КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНЫХ МЕТАФОР В РОМАНЕ СТИВЕНА ХОЛЛА “THE RAW SHARK TEXTS”

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Аннотация. С позиции современной когнитологии концептуальная метафора отображает ментальный аспект процесса познания и создания новой картины мира. Исследователи концептуальной метафоры рассматривали ее преимущественно как способ понимания одной концептуальной сферы благодаря свойствам другой. Однако роль диегезиса в этом аспекте требует отдельного внимания. Соответственно, цель статьи – проанализировать когнитивный механизм восприятия концептуальной метафоры в диегезисе иммерсивного романа Стивена Холла “The Raw Shark Texts”.

Концептуальное мировоззрение помогает протагонисту романа воссоздать хронику его самоидентификации после посттравматической потери памяти. Человеческие знания, опыт и общение, а также идеи, мысли и воспоминания воспринимаются поврежденным сознанием героя как водное пространство с обитаемыми концептуальными рыбами. Страх перед концептуальной акулой, пожирающей его память, порождает выразительный психоделический гидротекст в виде специфических нарративных структур. Состояние тревоги распространяется и на усиление зависимости современного человека от цифровых технологий, баз данных (потеря оперативной памяти). Дискретность нарративного диегезиса подчеркивается фрустрациями главного героя и используется автором в качестве литературной имитации диссоциативной амнезии.

Кроме оригинальных метафорических высказываний, в визуальных метафорах романа, благодаря одновременной реализации нескольких плоскостей содержания, возникает третья плоскость (новая реальность). Понимание концептуальных метафор, как взаимосвязанных в нарративном диегезисе, раскрывает способ создания переплетенной концептуальной реальности, примером которой предстает наложение нарративных структур Первого и Второго Эрика Сандерсона. Соответственно, метафорические высказывания в романе Холла являются лишь поверхностным выражением концептуальных метафор, лежащих в их основе. Воспроизводя особенности сенсорных механизмов и их взаимодействие с психикой, писателю удалось уловить общее между конкретными вещами и абстрактными понятиями, материей и духом, сопоставить несравнимое. Эта ситуация позволяет рассматривать концептуальную метафору как структурную составляющую художественного метаромана, акцентировать внимание на специфике метафорического конструирования новых реальностей.

Ключевые слова: Стивен Холл, концептуальная метафора, когнитивный механизм, диегезис, нарративные структуры, визуальная метафора.

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