The concept of FATE in the fantastic stories by A.E. Van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull

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Abstract:

The primary focus of the recent investigations in the sphere of cognitive linguistics is concentrated on the study of concepts. Taking into account the fact that the meaning of the concept is closely dependent on the context, subtext and individual cultural experience of the person, we decided to investigate concepts in linguistic pictures of the world.

The main purpose of our research is to study the concept sphere of FATE in the American picture of the world. The material of the research is the fantastic stories by A. E. van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull. It must be emphasized that we associate these fantastic stories as the quintessence of American science-fiction literature.

The tasks of the investigation are to outline the main specific approaches to the problem, to make analyses of the synonymous line of the concept of FATE and to form the concept sphere of FATE in terms of their characteristics. The synonymous line of the concept FATE is presented by such words as *destiny, doom, lot* and *future*. The meaning of the synonyms has polar connotations. It should be noted that the aforesaid synonymous line is limited by the material of the investigation and can be lengthened within the context of other works of American science fiction literature.

Keywords: concept; fate; destiny; doom; lot; picture of the world; synonymous line.

Over the last decades, much research has been concerned with the questions of concepts analysis in various pictures of the world. It should be noted here that the spring of cognitive field was started with the ideas of cognitive psychology by G. Miller (1951), and early research in the field was dominated by the limited number of scholars. At various times the ideas of cognitive linguistics were developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (1980), Ch. Fillmore (1985), R. Langacker (1991). However, the birth of cognitive linguistics was associated with the foundation of the International Cognitive Linguistics Society in 1989 – 1990 years (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 3).

The purpose of our research is to have a look into the concept sphere of FATE in American science-fiction literature.

The actuality of the work could be proved by the fact that the central interest of recent research in the sphere of cognitive linguistics is concentrated on the study of concepts. Different types of concepts are widely investigated by A. Wierzbicka (1992), S.A. Ascoldov (1997), V.I. Karasik (2001), I.S. Shevchenko (2015) and others.

The material of the analysis is the fantastic stories by A.E. van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull (Vogt & Hull, 2002) as the presenters of the genre in American literature.

The tasks of the investigation are to outline the main specific approaches to the problem, to analyse synonymous lines of the concept of FATE and to form the concept sphere of FATE in terms of their characteristics.

The novelty of our research is the fact that the investigation of the FATE in American picture of the world was done on the basis of the fantastic stories of A.E. van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull (Vogt & Hull, 2002) which we associate as the quintessence of American science-fiction literature.

The concept of FATE is in the raw of the basic concepts in literature. One of the first linguistic investigations of the concept of FATE was carried out by A. Wierzbicka (1992) and N.D. Arutjunova (1994). A. Wierzbicka (1992) proposed the comparative analysis of the Polish concept Los and Russian concept Sud'ba. There were also the parallel studies of the FATE synonymous lines in French, German and English pictures of the world. The scientist came to the conclusion that the meaning of the concept of FATE depends on the specific peculiarities in the national context, philosophy of life and cultural history of the nation. N.D. Arutjunova (1994) contrasted FATE and TRUTH and considered FATE as a group of terms that are the interpretation of the people's life (p. 302).

According to the preliminary statistical study on the basis of English lexicographical and literary sources, it was formed the synonymous line of the FATE in the English picture of the world (FATE → CHANCE → DESTINY → DOOM → LUCK → LOT → PROVIDENCE).

Every element has a special shade of meaning which is dependent as from the dictionary's definition as from the context. For example, fate forces could be good (fortune, fate) or evil (fortune, destiny, fate, doom, lot). FATE could express risk (fortune, luck, fate, chance); predestination, inevitability (fate, destiny, doom);

opportunity, fortuitous event or fortuitous combination of circumstances (chance, fate, fortune, lot, luck); foresight, force predetermining the development of life (providence, the stars, lot); unhappy, cruel fate (luck, lot) (Gryshchenko, 2014, p. 624).

In English literature from the second part of the 20th century understanding of the FATE was various in different genres of literature. According to the Corpus of global web-based English (GloWbE, 2012-2013), the majority of the FATE entrances are concentrated in the American (8080 items) and British (7765 items) discourse. Since the American corpus is a leader we deem it expedient to focus on it. In the light of the Corpus of contemporary American English (COCA, 1990-2015) the most numerous usage of the FATE is in the area of fiction (3398 items). Science fiction literature as sub-genre of the fiction one is the source of 789 fate items. Thus, science fiction literature is the favourable material for the concept of FATE studying.

Some of the prominent writers in the field of science fiction American literature of the 20th century are A.E. van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull (Vogt & Hull, 2002). Such their stories as *The Timed Clock, The Ghost, The Wishes we make, The Ultimate Wish* are the quintessence of the FATE literary functioning. The works of the authors are notable for the place of the FATE in the stories composition. The stories are stands out for their ingenuity of the plot, exact psychological development of the heroes' characters, richness and expressiveness of the language.

Despite on the definite plots' unreality in all stories, real life situations with their eternal struggle of opinions, wishes and goals are noticeable. The concept of FATE is found in each of their works, but not always it is possible to see it on the surface of the story. For the matter of that, the differences in the stories of A.E. van Vogt and his wife are obvious.

If the concept of FATE in A.E. van Vogt works can be mainly detected at the level of subtext, in the work of E. Mayne Hull we have an opportunity to find this concept almost on every page.

Taking into account all the analysis of the science fiction stories by A.E. van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull along with the data of the preliminary statistical analysis in lexicographical sources we came to the conclusion that the most widespread, comprehensive and appropriate for the analysis of such kind are fate, destiny, doom and lot. It should be noted that the synonyms differ due to the additional characteristics that they share.

1). Fate has the widest meaning and covers all that a person’s experience in life.

2). Destiny is associated with the life journey that befalls a person or caused by the circumstances, laws of society and nature.

3). Doom has strictly negative connotation and means the unfortunate end of people’s life.

4). Lot is the future road that the person ought to pass.

So, the concept of FATE can be shown not only on the surface of the composition when it verbalized in the line of synonyms but also among the lines. This assertion entirely corresponds to the characteristic features of the concept and

the essence of the concept of FATE that were mentioned at the beginning of the article.

The stories by A.E. van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull as the samples of the American science fiction literature are the illustrations for the two models of the FATE: 1) universal model of the FATE based on the stories by E. Mayne Hull (BIRTH → LIFE → DEATH); 2) individual model of the FATE based on the stories by A.E. van Vogt (LIFE JOURNEY).

Thus, the future investigations of the FATE in the field of American science fiction literature ought to be based on the two distinguished models together with the definite synonymous line (FATE → DESTINY → DOOM → LOT). The perspective of the further research is in the broadening of the material of the analysis and pursuance of the comparative study of the concept of FATE in different genres and discourses.

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