Conceptual Information in G. Orwell's Novel "1984"

Zoya Asratyan
Foreign Languages School
Hulunbuir Institute
Hulunbuir, People's Republic of China
Naberezhnye Chelny State Pedagogical University
Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia
asratyan@mail.ru

Irina Kornilova
History and Methods of its Teaching Department
Naberezhnye Chelny State Pedagogical University
Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia
ivkornilova@list.ru

Ying Qi
Foreign Languages School
Hulunbuir Institute
Hulunbuir, People's Republic of China
qiying_fd@163.com

Sergey Dyrin
History and Methods of its Teaching Department
Naberezhnye Chelny State Pedagogical University
Naberezhnye Chelny, Russia
sdyrin@yandex.ru

Abstract—**The article deals with the definition of concept and conceptual information of artistic prose. It exams the ambiguity of the term "concept" in Russian and European linguistics. Conceptual information is looked upon as twofold: containing both ideological and aesthetic aspects. The aim of the article is to show how these aspects are represented in artistic prose. It is demonstrated that ideological concept is connected with the semantics of the text and its topic, which is conceptualized. The work analyses the novel "1984" by G. Orwell. Containing many characteristics, the concept of a totalitarian state comprises various features and is defined as manifold or radial. It is shown that the novel includes language peculiarities that prove its affiliation to the genre of science fiction and its branches anti-utopia or dystopia. It is demonstrated that the main language means of the scientific fiction genre in the novel are lexical ones. Science fiction is looked upon as a mixture of technical and language innovations (neologisms included) and archetypal narrative motifs.**

Keywords—concept, conceptual information, topic, science fiction, anti-utopia, narrative

I. INTRODUCTION

Conceptology in Russian linguistics began to develop in the second half of the last century and has achieved certain results by now. However, this direction in the form in which it exists in domestic linguistics has practically not been cultivated in foreign studies, with the exception of a number of works in Slavic languages (A. Vezhbitskaya). And there are good reasons for that.

The basic notion in cognitive linguistics is the notion of concept. According to D. S. Likhachev, the value of any language is determined not only by the richness of its vocabulary and its grammatical capabilities, but also by the "richness of the conceptual world, the conceptual sphere, which is reflected in the language of a person and his/her nation [1].

At the same time in many European languages the terms "concept" and "notion" mean the same thing and are considered by linguists as synonymous.

It is not the case with the Russian linguistics, where these terms do not coincide. Almost all the researchers dealing with this problem (N. D. Arutyunova [2], Yu. S. Stepanov [3], V. A. Maslova [4], etc.) write about their difference. According to S. G. Vorkachev, the term *'concept'* (kontzept) "in its most general form coincides with the term of *'notion'* (ponyatie) from the point of view of the set of essential features," but concept is immersed "in culture and language" [5].

The idea according to which concept, meaning and notion are different terms is shared by V. A. Maslova, who, as well as Yu. S. Stepanov considers that *'concept'* and *'notion"* are parallel terms. "*Concept* (kontzept) and *notion* (ponyatie), according to Yu. S. Stepanov, are terms of different sciences; the second is used mainly in logic and philosophy, while the first is a term in one branch of logic – in mathematical logic, and recently it has also been fixed in the science of culture, in Cultural studies..." [3, 42-43].

V. A. Maslova believes that *concept* and *notion* are similar in their internal form (IF) [4, p. 30]. However, *concept* in contrast to *notion*, can include figurative, metaphorical characteristics. In addition, *notion* is characterized by essential and necessary features, while c*oncepts* may include non-essential features as well [6]. V. A. Maslova also draws attention to these differences between *notion* and *concept:* "if

a *notion* is a set of cognized essential features of an object, then a *concept* is a mental national-specific formation, the plane of content of which is the entire set of knowledge about the given object, and the plane of expression is a set of linguistic means (lexical, phraseological, paremiological, etc.)" [4, 27].

According to Yu. S. Stepanov, "concepts are understood as notions, but notions of the most general character, which are the values of the given culture and the human culture in general ..., - they have an emotional and artistic component" [7].

D. S. Likhachev believed that for each meaning of a word there is its own concept [1, 150]. This approach to understanding concept is manifested by many researchers who see in it an undefined, intuitive basic category, which is a hyperonym for a notion, scenario, frame, scheme, gestalt, representation, etc. [8]; [9]; [10]; [11].

A number of researchers (M. Ya. Blokh [12], E. S. Kubryakova [13], etc.) describe concept as knowledge about a certain subject, highlighted by consciousness.

We by concept understand an ideologically conditioned representation of an object, phenomenon, event, etc.

The structure of concept, according to many researchers (Stepanov [3], Maslova [4], etc.), has a layered structure. "On the one hand, everything that belongs to the structure of notion belongs to it ...; on the other hand, the structure of concept includes what makes it a fact of culture - the original form (etymology); history compressed to the main features of its content; modern associations; assessments, etc. " [3, 43]. Yu. S. Stepanov reveals three layers in the structure of concept: "(1) the main, actual feature; (2) additional or several additional, "passive" features that are already irrelevant, "historical"; (3) an internal form, usually not at all conscious, captured in an external verbal form" [3, 46].

Associative sets of concepts are combined into spheres of concepts [4; 14]. Concepts and spheres of concepts form the basis of the linguistic picture of the world, which is defined by M. Ya. Blokh "as a metaphorically designated reflection of the world by consciousness ... as a set of concepts ... and conceptual spheres" [12].

Being formed on the basis of language, the picture of the world is language-mediated. This approach is based on ideas about conceptual categories (O. Jesperson [15], I. I. Meshchaninov [16], M. Ya. Blokh and V. A. Stepanenko [17], etc.), which in different languages are conveyed by different language means (lexical, grammatical). According to M. Ya. Blokh, linguistic means are ways of expressing consciousness, while the content of consciousness is represented by concepts that remain fundamentally common for multilingual people of the human race [12, 38].

Concept is broader than meaning, because it can generalize a number of meanings. It is also broader than notion, for it includes individual author's ideas about the world and comprises emotive meanings.

II. Materials and Methods

In spite the fact that a literary text uses concepts of various notions, its conceptual information is not reduced to a set of concepts used in the text, but is a kind of superstructure that is built above the denotative space of the text.

The main or basic concept of a work of fiction is not associated with the notion/s, but with the topic of a fiction text, and in literary criticism it is considered as the main idea of a work of art.

The main topic of a work of art is formed on the basis of topics (sub-topics) of a lower level. The hierarchy within thematization of a literary work is represented by macro themes - micro themes - dictemes[1]. Such a presentation of the theme of a work of art generates a similar hierarchy in the structure of the concept: a concept at the level of a dicteme - a micro concept - a macro concept – the main or basic concept of the whole work. The ladder from the smallest thematic units to the largest (main or basic) ones can include as many steps (subtopics) as it may be necessary, depending on the research goals. The same applies to the hierarchy of concept presentation.

In fiction, concepts, on the one hand, reflect linguo-cultural, as well as universal, and cognitive representations, and on the other, they create their own conceptual world, as a rule, figurative and emotional. As it was underlined by N. S. Valgina, in a work of art there is always a subtext, "secondary reality", a "small universe" into which the life material is transformed by the author [19].

At the same time, as Yu. M. Lotman admitted, a text not only contains and transmits the information embedded in it, but creates new meanings. The scientist saw the essence of this process "not only in deployment, but also, to a large extent, in the interaction of text structures" [20].

Conceptual information does not lie on the surface. It is implicit, woven into the fabric of the narrative, and needs to be deciphered.

We have already noted that "the phenomena and events of the real world reflected in a work of art are refracted through the individual author's perception of it, and thus are conceptualized" [21, 12]. This conceptualization is carried out according to a certain scheme, a kind of ideological or conceptual proposition.

In this secondary proposition "at the level of dicteme, the topic is predicated to its interpretation by the author according to the scheme: x is y, where x is the topic of an elementary unit of the text, and y is its understanding by the author" [21]. This is how a concept is formed.

In the basic or topical proposition of a work of art, the topic of the entire text is predicted to its axiological, author's interpretation, and thus the basic concept of a whole work is created.

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[1] The notion of a dicteme was introduced by M. Ya. Blokh as a minimal unit of thematization and styling of a text [18].

In other words, the concept (idea of a work of art), on the one hand, is inseparable from its topic at all the levels of its (topic) presentation. On the other hand, the topic of a work of art itself is always conceptualized, i.e. ideologically determined.

Defining the basic concept as a predication of a topic to its author's interpretation, we distinguish in this interpretation both ideological and aesthetic aspects [22].

A concept is not introduced into a work of art ready-made, but is formed in its denotative space, reflecting the author's subjective view on the described events and phenomena. It is directly related to the topic of an artwork. However, it is not limited to naming, to the nomination of this topic, but correlates it with the individual author's understanding of this topic.

One should, nevertheless, be aware that in a work of art an author's point of view is far from being always presented in the form of a rational, logically complete thought in a type of a nomination or a proposition, very often either x or y in this equation is an image or even a series of images, which express the author's emotional perception of the world reflected by him/her.

III. RESULTS

As we have already noted, the individual author's understanding, as well as the topic of a work itself, does not appear from nowhere, out of the blue, but is embedded in the semantic space of the text.

In the course of conceptual analysis, it was possible to identify a number of basic semantic concepts of a work of art. By quantitative criteria, we have singled out unambiguous, horizontal multiple, fan or radial and vertical multiple concepts; on a qualitative basis - antonymic, metonymic, metaphorical, causal-investigatory, figurative-emotive and attributive basic concepts.

The expounders and promoters of conceptual information in a text are, as a rule, the language personality of the author's image, the language personality of the narrator and the language personalities of the characters. With a plurality of concepts and/or their characteristics, it is possible that these functions are fulfilled by different language personalities. However, the plurality of characteristics of a concept is not always associated with the plurality of its exponents.

Let us consider the concept of an anti-utopian novel by G. Orwell [23]. The topic of the novel is the totalitarian state of Oceania. A. A. Gritsanov in the "World Encyclopedia" defines totalitarianism as "a system that exercises or seeks to exercise, for the sake of certain goals, absolute control over all spheres of public life and over the life of each person individually" [24].

In G. Orwell's novel, this idea is presented very clearly. From the very beginning of the work (a strong position), literally from the first page of it, "Big Brother" is watching the main character Winston Smith and other inhabitants of Oceania: "*On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER is WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran*" [23, 5]. And if here totalitarian surveillance is presented as a warning, a kind of metaphor, then the Police Patrol, Thought Police and constantly working and watching everyone TV ("The screen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it…") [23, 6] – are already the harsh reality of the life in Oceania. Any attempt to think independently is a crime: "*He had committed – would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper - the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thought crime, they called it*" [23, 19]. The idea of the need to fight against not only dissent, but in general with any attempt to think was expressed by Wilston's colleague, philologist, developer of the new language (Newspeak) Syme: "*Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought?*" [23, 46].

Totalitarian control pursues the hero everywhere: "*…the head of Big Brother. Even from the coin the eyes pursued you. On coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters, and on the wrapping of a cigarette packet – everywhere. Always the eyes watching you and the voice enveloping you. Asleep or awake, working or eating, indoors or out of doors, in the bath or in bed – no escape*" [23, 26].

The generally accepted concept of totalitarianism is associated with global disinformation, which is also reflected in the novel: "*Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct; nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place*" [23, 36].

Militarization of people's life in totalitarian states was also reproduced by G. Orwell: "*Winston could not definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war…*" [23, 30].

However, G. Orwell's concept of a totalitarian state is associated not only with total control. It is also characterized by miserable, disgusting living conditions:

"*The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats*" [23, 5];

"*It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours*" [23, 5];

"*... his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades…*" [23, 6];

"*...these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with balks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions*" [23, 7];

"... there was no food in the kitchen except a hunk of dark-colored bread which had got to be saved for tomorrow's breakfast" [23, 8];

"... a bottle of colorless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell... The stuff was like nitric acid..." [23, 8]);

"Victory Mansions were old flats, built in 1930 or thereabouts, and were falling to pieces" [23,21];

"...there had never been quite enough to eat, one had never had socks or underclothes that were not full of holes, furniture had always been battered and rickety, rooms underheated, tube trains crowded, houses falling to pieces, bread dark-colored, tea a rarity, coffee filthy-tasting, cigarettes insufficient – nothing cheap and plentiful except synthetic gin" [23, 52].

In addition, human attachments have practically disappeared in Oceania: *"You did not have friends nowadays, you had comrades..." [23, 43].* Human affection leaves even the family. Children watch their parents; parents are afraid of their children:

"With those children... that wretched woman must lead a life of terror. Another year, two years, and they would be watching her night and day for symptoms of unorthodoxy" [23, 24];

"It was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children. And with good reason, for hardly a week passed in which the Times did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak – "child hero" ...- had overheard some compromising remark and denounced his parents to the Thought Police" [23, 24].

This is how Winston' neighbor Parsons ends up in prison, having been reported by his seven-year-old daughter.

A specific feature that characterizes G. Orwell's novel is the immense cruelty of the society, which spills out during the minutes and weeks of hatred, as well as in relation to the so-called enemies, when people are delighted watching the deaths of enemies' children, when public executions become a favorite pastime of both children and adults.

And, finally, it is not enough for the totalitarian power of Oceania to physically destroy a person, they need to kill everything human in him/her, and in this they turn out to be extremely inventive.

Thus, the concept of a totalitarian state in G. Orwell's novel has a fan-shaped structure, which includes both generally accepted ideas about totalitarianism and individual, author's opinions. The thematic role of this concept can be schematically depicted as follows:
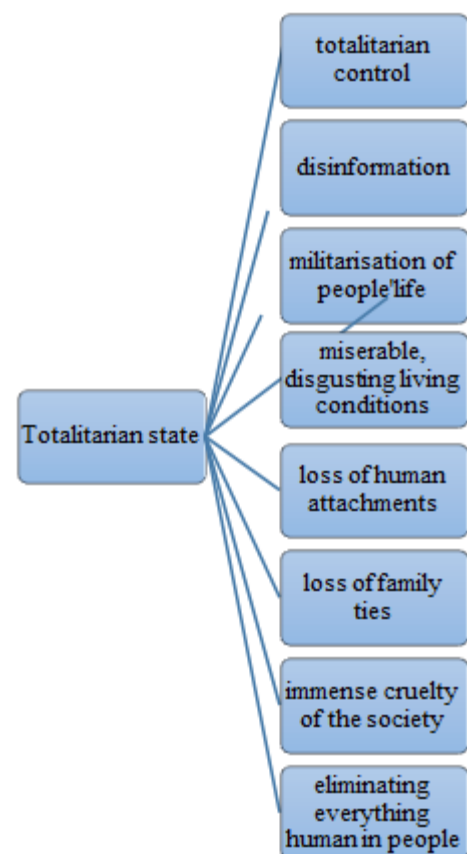

Fig. 1.

The bearer and exponent of this concept in the novel is the narrator.

The novel is written in the third person, but very often the narrator's speech and his thoughts are difficult to be separated from the thoughts of the main character of the work Winston Smith.

The aesthetic concept is based on the aesthetic information of the text, which is conditioned by the aesthetic ideal inherent in a particular time, the author's idio-style, and those literary trends and genres that the author adheres to.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Let's return to G. Orwell's novel. In the figurative expression of G. Claey, this is "the blackest of black books, which will drive even the most persistent reader into depression" [25].

From the point of view of genre features, G. Orwell's novel is an anti-utopia or dystopia, the difference between which, according to G. Morson, lies in the fact that anti-utopia is a myth about a wonderful future, while dystonia is the hell of contemporary life, the vices of which have only intensified in the future [26]. V. A. Chalikova sees in anti-utopia a caricature of a positive utopia, "a work that aims to ridicule and discredit the very idea of perfection, a utopian attitude in general" [27]. Anti-utopia appeared after the idea of utopia was discredited. Thus, N. Berdyaev admitted that utopias

looked much more feasible than it had been previously believed. And now we are faced with a question that torments us in a completely different way: how to avoid their final implementation [28]. G. Claey noted that the anti-utopian concept implies both satire and the inversion of the "ideal society"; he denies one of the forms of utopia, implicitly implying its excessiveness [25, 274].

In any case, both utopia and anti-utopia (dystopia) are varieties of science fiction literature, which, as a rule, are written in the past tense, despite the fact that in "the style of anti-utopia is dominated by the direction towards the future" [29]. However, this is not surprising. As D. Lodge rightly noted, "It is only SUPERFICIALLY paradoxical that most novels about the future are narrated in the past tense" [30], because it is the past tense that is characteristic of the narrative language. D. Orwell, according to D. Lodge, "used the narrative past tense to give the picture of the future a novelistic illusion of reality" [30, 135]. However, the realistic picture of ascetic post-war Britain in the novel acquires a grotesquely negative character, since in the novel, unlike other fantastic works, there are no new material conditions, "but much the same, only worse" [30, 135]. And in this sense, the novel, according to G. Morson's classification, is more a dystopia than an anti-utopia.

The question arises, what fantastic features there are in the novel. "Only in the two-way television screen (which keeps the viewer under permanent observation) does Orwell use the license of science-fiction to imagine a gadget that did not exist in his own time" [30, 136]. However, in addition to gadgets, there are introduced into the novel new concepts: Big Brother, Hate Week, Two Minute Hate, Newspeak, Thought Crime, Thought Police. Some of these concepts (Newspeak, Oldspeak, etc.) are represented with the help of neologisms. Thus, to create a picture of the future, the author uses new concepts that do not exist in the real world. In addition, a reference to an unreal, fantastic world is already present in the first sentence of the novel: "IT WAS A BRIGHT COLD DAY IN APRIL, AND THE CLOCKS were striking thirteen" (underlined by me – Z. A). Thus, we see that the author uses various lexical means to create a picture of the future.

According to D. Lodge, science fiction is a mixture of technical innovations and archetypal narrative motifs, borrowed from legends, fairy tales and Scripture. In the novel, such an allusion to the biblical story of Adam and Eve is the love affair of Winston and Julia.

Otherwise, the work is not much different from realistic literature. The same idea was emphasized by D. Lodge, noting that the techniques used by G. Orwell are characteristic of realist literature: "... his technique is indistinguishable from the traditional realistic novel, though his purpose was different: not to reflect contemporary social reality, but to paint a daunting picture of a possible future" [30, 137]. And this goal is achieved by Orwell with the help of the ideological conceptual information that we discussed above.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the conceptual information of the novel by G. Orwell confirmed the presence of two aspects in it:

ideological and aesthetic ones. The ideological aspect is represented by a fan-shaped (radial) interpretation of the topic of totalitarianism and the totalitarian state. The aesthetic concept or aesthetic information correlates this work with science fiction, the main difference of which from realistic literature is manifested in the presence in the text of new concepts associated with both technical progress (telescreen) and, to a much greater extent, with the moral degradation of society. The latter are represented with the help of lexical means, sometimes a kind of neologisms. Science fiction is looked upon as a mixture of technical and language innovations (neologisms included) and archetypal narrative motifs. Within the framework of science fiction, a novel is an anti-utopia, or rather a dystopia, since it is not a failed paradise of the future, but a completed hell of the present.

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