

LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE, PHILOLOGY

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**THE DECONSTRUCTION OF GENDER ROLES IN "THE GRAPES OF WRATH"
BY JOHN STEINBECK ON THE EXAMPLE OF MA JOAD****LIZAVETA BALSHTAKOVA, DZYANIS KANDAKOU**
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The Grapes of Wrath, has been read and reread by millions, pondered and set down in a thousand essays and books. Inside these writings, certain ideas and opinions have been agreed upon by nearly every fully literate author. But there are some topics within this writing that are still open to interpretation, when considered more carefully. So, in this article we are going to dwell on the gender roles in the novel, some feministic elements and the opposition of matriarchy and patriarchy.

John Steinbeck is a recognized author not only in the USA, but throughout the whole world. He gained his recognition due to the developed and sophisticated storylines, acute problems raised in the novels and philosophical aspect of all his fiction. He is also greatly esteemed for the allegorical, metaphorical and symbolic nature of his writing.

Steinbeck underwent hush periods, during which he was severely criticized, periods of fame and worship, oblivion and neglect. Today Steinbeck is a classic author, respected by any truly literate reader.

Many critics claim that his greatest work is "The Grapes of Wrath". This opinion is rather disputable; still we can't deny the significance of the novel. This work to some extent became a cult one. Its value is not only in the artistic beauty of the text itself, but also in the practical influence of the book on minds and perception of the reality of the whole generation.

The gender analysis will be focused on Ma Joad – the leading female character – who deconstructs the female and male roles according to the power of convincement. She uses the power of the word, of language and discourse that is supposed to belong to men. In the beginning of the narrative, Ma Joad is not allowed to expose her thoughts freely, she has to wait to be allowed to talk, but that old behavior starts to change, even because she is the kind of woman who always had her own independent mind, although she is under a patriarchal system and has to accommodate to it.

The first time Ma Joad is introduced to the reader, she is described as " ... heavy, but not fat; thick, with child-bearing and work" [1, p. 99] Her image is really strong. In her appearance there are universal symbols of womanhood, femininity, and mothering.

The attention the narrator devotes to Ma Joad's description is paramount if compared to the other characters; he tells the reader about her feet, hair, arms, hands, face and eyes. It is worth quoting the description at length about her position and influence over the family, for she seemed: "to know, to accept, to welcome her position, the citadel of the family, the strong place that could not be taken. And since old Tom and the children could not know hurt or fear unless she acknowledged hurt and fear, she had practice denying them in herself. And since then, a joyful thing happened, they looked to see whether joy was on her, it was her habit to build up laughter out of inadequate materials. But better than joy was calm. Imperturbability could be depended upon. And from her great and humble position in the family she had taken dignity and a clean calm beauty. From her position as healer, her hands had grown remote and faultless in judgment as a goddess" [1, p. 100].

Since the beginning of Ma's characterization, the reader become acquainted with her strong personality, and her discrete position of leadership. Her place is important, for she is The Mother, but she is humble enough to bow to the hierarchy of the family. Ma has an archetypal role, because her description stresses her superhuman qualities, which distances her from the ordinary mortals of the family, and because of that she becomes an ideal.

That Ma Joad has a strong importance in the family is stated early in the novel, in the first description. Her position is that of a healer and an arbiter, a citadel and a goddess. She is aware of her power over the family, however, her sense of tradition and respect for hierarchy prevents her overt expression of it except when it is necessary. Gladstein says that "...her characterization, both narrative and dramatic, is multidimensional. Her character rises from the pages of the book as much more than Mother Earth or serene and aloof goddess." [2,

p. 79]. For Ma Joad is simple and complex, a leader and a follower, a woman whose ignorance does not interfere with her wisdom.

Ma Joad's behavior might seem contradictory, because she is humble and follow the patriarchal hierarchy, but at the same time her discourse and attitude is of revolt. She indeed, does not break with the idea of tradition and hierarchy, because these elements keep the value of the patriarchal society that put up the value of the family. And also because the patriarchal tradition puts the mother in a pedestal, making the mother an element of union in the family.

In the beginning of the story, Ma Joad is living accommodation in action, for she obeys the patriarchal rules, although her discourse is always strong and decisive. Her first words reflect her hospitality. Without knowing who "the coupla fellas" were – for her son young Tom Joad was back from prison, together with the ex-preacher Casy – she is ready to share the little food that was left, and asks them to come inside her house. The Joads have just lost their homes, and piece of land, but she is responsible for a sense of community that will reflect upon their behavior towards people.

The Joad family is complete with Tom's arrival, but they have to decide if there is room enough in their truck for Casy, who first talks to young Tom and Ma about going with them to California: "Ma looked to Tom to speak, because he was a man, but Tom did not speak. She let him have the chance that was his right, and then she said, 'Why, we'd be proud to have you. 'Course I can't say right now; Pa says all men'll talk tonight ...I guess maybe we better not say till all the men come" [1, p. 127].

Ma Joad first respects the hierarchy and then speaks, and this is a sign of what would happen to the family through their exodus to California, for men's inability to act in that new decisive situation of dispossession, will make a woman the leader of the family.

When the men gather together to decide about taking Casy to California with them, Pa, without turning his head – for the women were out of the men's circle, which reveals the lack of understanding by men of the importance of the female's opinion – he asked "Kin we, Ma?" [1, p. 139], referring to the inclusion of Casy in the family truck, to what she answered pondering: "Ma cleared her throat. "It ain't kin we? It's will we?" She said firmly. "As far as 'kin,' we can't do nothin', not go to California or nothin'; but as far as 'will,' why, we'll do what we will. An' as far as 'will'-it's a long time our folks been here and east before an' I never heerd tell of no Joads or no Hazletts, neither, ever refusin' food an' shelter or a lift on the road to anybody that asked. They's been mean Joads, but never that mean' (...) Her tone had made him ashamed?" [1, p. 139].

Not noticing, old Tom Joad consulted his wife, and gave her the opportunity to speak, and to decide which represents an evolution in his behavior. However, he did not expect the powerful tone of her opinion. Her words quoted above shook her husband and the rest of the family because of its assertiveness.

For the first time in the narrative, the men of the family seem to perceive Ma Joad's importance, especially after her powerful words, because "...they waited for her to come back across the darkening yard, for Ma was powerful in the group?" [1, p. 140]. Gender relations are deconstructed throughout the narrative process, for example, the former powerful male leader (Pa) becomes submissive to the will of a woman (Ma Joad) who takes the control of the family, and Casy does 'female activities.' Another important sign of this process is when Ma Joad leaves the meeting about the final decisions in relation to the family's moving to California and the men wait for her return, which is the first sign of respect for her. This is a symbol that there is going to be a great change of roles, and a recognition of her value.

Ma Joad changes from passivity to an active behavior, and this process reflects Beauvoir's argument that nobody is born a woman, but becomes one. As long as Ma Joad is conscious of the family unit, and that her family is going to fall apart, she perceives that it should be her role to agglutinate the group. It is this belief that makes her stronger, and courageous enough to break her role of passivity to action.

Ma Joad is an example of Beauvoir's belief that destiny: biological, psychic, or economic define the way a female behaves in society. It is civilization that shapes this intermediate product between male and the castrated being that is called "female". Thus, women's passivity is a trace she develops inside her since infancy. So, it is a mistake to believe that women's passivity is a biological process, indeed it is a cultural one.

In *The Grapes of Wrath* gender relations are very tense. There is a relation between the geographic moving and the psychological one, which brings a conception of the gender relations in mutation, for women get stronger while moving, but men start a process of weakness. Both men and women throughout the geographic move, experience things that make their psychological aspect come to the understanding of women's importance and power.

The father figure loses its power to the family in the moment old Tom Joad succumbs to the female power. There is no source of strength anymore for him: his former piece of land is gone, what is left of his family lives under tents in dirty migrant camps, and there is not either enough food nor job for them, besides, he

has lost his position of leader and master. However, for the good of the group, he falls into obscurity and leaves the official control of the family to his wife. He abdicates his position of master and protector for the good of the group.

Steinbeck's characterization of Ma Joad is a complete and positive characterization of a woman. She embodies the myth of the pioneer woman, and she is a symbol for positive motherhood. She is strong, but is never allowed to pursue what might seem to be the implications of a female character: fragility. She becomes a leader, but does not transcend what Steinbeck wanted to praise: her role of mother and wife.

In "The Grapes of Wrath", Steinbeck establishes a break in the pattern of naturalistic writers who tend to be pessimistic, because they generally can not "...believe that things can work out well if the characters cannot discipline themselves and exercise some control over the world around them" [3, p. 72] Some critics state that "The Grapes of Wrath" is a pessimistic novel, indeed it is from the economic point of view, but concerning people's improvement as human beings, it is doubtless, an optimistic novel, for while men's essential quest is for economic recovery, they acquire what French called 'the education of the heart' and a profound sense of community and brotherhood. Steinbeck's point of view was quite modern, for he chooses an illiterate woman as symbols of renewal and strength.

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COMPOSITION TYPES OF CRITICAL REMARKS IN RESEARCH ARTICLES IN ENGLISH

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The article introduces and analyses composition types of critical remarks in the research article – the main genre of English-language scientific discourse.

For several decades great effort has been devoted to the study of discourse, discourse types in particular. So far as science plays a vital role in the life of present-day society, scientific discourse draws much attention of linguistics scholars [1, 2]. Therefore scientists analyze genres of scientific discourse, inter alia, the research article (RA), which is its gargantuan genre [3, p. 95]. Experts study the RA both integrally, and by components [4 – 6].

Criticism is an important part of scientific work as well as that of a RA because realization of imperfection in scientific knowledge is a motive power of science and provides its advancement.

In the last few years there has been a growing interest in academic criticism [7 – 9]. However, to the author's best knowledge, very few publications are available in the literature that addresses the issue of composition characteristics of critical remarks (CRs) in RAs in English.

The purpose of the paper is to describe and analyze composition types of CRs in RAs in English on the basis of their location in the RA text. This problem has been studied in a corpus of 350 English-language RAs from ten disciplines (Anthropology, Economics, Education, History, Law, Linguistics, Literature, Political science, Psychology and Sociology). The RAs were published in scientific journals of the UK and the USA from 2009 to 2011. 1027 CRs, which contain 2268 critical utterances, CRs were recorded from the RAs.

Criticism, viewed as a negative evaluation judgement, is a discursive phenomenon – a scholar's mental activity and its verbal realization based on the corresponding fragment of knowledge (a stereotypical scenario)