## Original Synthetic Report

# The Nature of Identity in "*The Grapes of Wrath*": A postmodern Study

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**Abstract - *Background:*** In modernism framework, identity is viewed as a fixed, essential and centered essence inside the mind of human and all his behaviors and characteristics are originated from this mental essence, while the post-structuralists see identity as multiple, contradictory, and changing over time. ***Aim:*** The purpose of the current study is to analyze the fragmented nature of the characters of "*The Grapes of Wrath*" on postmodern bedrock, where the nature of identity of all the characters is treated in singularity. The study further displays that as a text may have contradictory meanings, hence the characters of the text cannot be imprisoned within the domain of a single identity, but at each flow of the unrepeated time segment, the nature of identity keeps on changing. ***Method:*** The researchers aim at scrutinizing the selected novel through a postmodern outlook, where it opens texts up to alternative readings, i.e. to look for neglected and marginalized elements in texts especially the aporias. ***Results:*** The study wants to bring to picture that a text never achieves closure, but it is an open field of any possible learning with unpredicted interpretations. It shows that by challenging the tradition of the Metaphysics and resisting the imposed logos of life, all the biased and politicized stumbling blocks may be removed from the routine path of the natural growth of the characters of the novel, and the same thing may be applicable to the life itself.

**Keywords:** Identity, Post-structuralism framework, multiple meanings, metaphysics of presence, Social Identity Theory.

## Introduction

The study starts with the Literature Review followed by 'statement of the problem'. Then, the related research questions are presented. The importance of this study and its objectives are explained in the 'significance and purpose of the study'.

### *Literature Review*

Identity is an illusive concept. As it is viewed as an abstract concept, one cannot be satisfied with just a fixed definition of it. Indeed, this paper does not draw a borderline between personal and social identities. Personal identity may be the outcome of the interaction of the individual within a social domain. In fact, one may feel the sense of belonging where his both personal and social identities are given the due respect and importance. Hence, personal and social identities in this research supplement each other and are given equal credits.

Different scholars including philosophers, linguists, humanists, and scholars at other fields have defined identity almost in the same way: your identity is who you are, (Coupland, 2007; Takano, 2005; De Fina, 2003). According to Vlahos (2009, p.33)

> In short, our identity *is* the sacred. What we hold most dear, what we cherish even to the sacrifice of our own life, is this belonging. Hence Old Romans knew well when they called this existential feeling, in their Latin tongue, *religio* (to bind together). Think of identity as a kind of sacred river. In its full and eternal flow from past to future, identity is the foundation of all formalized institutions that we call *religion*.

When one hears the word identity, a number of questions come to his mind: What is its nature? Where is its location? Who can know it? What it looks like? How it could be manipulated? And so on.

Joseph (2004) believes that the answer to the question "who you are" is not simply your name but who are you really and who are you deep down? There are, then, two basic aspects to people's identity; their name, which stresses first of all to single them out from other people, and then that deeper intangible something that constitutes who one really is.

Pierce (1995) enters the role of society and social relations in defining identity. She defines identity as a person's sense of who she is and how she relates to the social world. But Ivanic (1998) propounds a problem with the word 'identity'. She points out that, although identity 'is the everyday word for people's sense of who they are'; the problem with it is that 'it does not automatically carry with it the connotations of social construction and constraints'.

The following researchers as well have dealt with the different facets of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath:* Shockley (1956) has worked on the Christian Symbolism in his Christian Symbolosm in *The Grapes of Wrath.* Sobchack (1979) has dealt with Thematic Emphasis Through Visual Style in *The Grapes of Wrath.* Henderson (1990) has worked on the John Steinbeck's Spatial Imagination in "The Grapes of Wrath. Marshall (2009) claims that Steinbeck portrayed landscapes in *The Grapes of Wrath* to show the impacts of swift industrialization within the American society of the 1930s, supporting a multifaceted economic system that led to both benefits and liabilities to those living in this period of change.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Identity within the tradition of Metaphysics of Presence, which is stuck in theological and anthropological logocentric authorities is considered a fixed, unchangeable, unique and coherent core that exists essentially inside the human being and the person has not any role in creating, holding or changing it In opposite of this view, poststructuralist scholars define identity as diverse, contradictory and dynamic; multiple rather than unitary, recentered rather than centered. In the postmodern view, a human identity does not exist as a whole but it is like a puzzle that is made up of different pieces that are the product of person's interaction with different people in different social situations. So, for a person, knowing his identity is not possible if he has not any interaction with other people, but being involved in different social relations leads to the identity construction. Identity recognition is very important in this field and that is achieved just in the person's interaction with others. A person has multiple identities. He is, for example, a teacher, a mother, a friend and… at a time. Each of these social roles demands a different kind of person's identity to manifest.

Postmodern theorists also believe that a person's identity changes over time. They believe that the situations that a person is located in, the events that happen for him, the feelings and the emotions that he experiences lead to inevitable undergoing of identity changes every now and then.

### Research Questions

To see the identicalness of postmodern theories of identity, the following questions are answered in this study:

1- How can the identity dimensions of the characters of "the Grapes of Wrath" be analyzed using postmodern framework?
2- What language tools have been used to show these dimensions of identity?
3- How can findings of this study be used in the field of language teaching?

As Derrida (1997) believes, life is not the product of the metaphysics of presence, but is the history. He asserts that history is made of different unattached episodes, which simply have the traces of one another. This research wants to focus on the fragmentation of various segments of life in its different modes. It tries to free man from the logocentric shackles of the imposed and inherited authoritarian centers, which are like fossilized red lights before his innovative and creative mind stream.

The researchers try to disentangle the characters of the play from the Tradition of the Metaphysics of Presence by bringing them within a postmodern bedrock.

### Significance and Purpose of the Study

Living in the chaotic era of the 21th century may inevitably lead us to the web of the postmodern theories to question the nature of identity. How can we investigate a person's identity in various places? How can we have access to a person's whole life experiences wanting to find that whether his/her identity changes or not? The "*Grapes of Wrath*" is the story of a group of ordinary people who lives go under some unwanted events. The researchers try to analyze the characters' identities to see the dimensions of postmodern identity: multiplicity, contradictions and changing over time.

Fictional characters are selected because as Joseph (2004) believes that the fictional characters can seem more 'real' than real people, because their identities are wholly contained. The writer of a novel should introduce the characters just by language. So, he uses language skillfully to reveal all the identity of the characters. Real characters are not so apparent for a viewer. Sometimes the mind and ideology of a person may wholly change, but that is just inside his mind and not evident for others, but if this happens for a fictional character, it will be fully described by the writer.

Meanwhile the role of language in presenting one's identity is emphasized by the postmodern theorists. Weedon (1997) emphasizes the central role of language in the analysis of the relationship between the individual and the social, as he asserts "language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed." (p.21). In this study language used by the characters is analyzed to understand the way it is used in a special way to show the special identity.

### Identity in Literature

Felemban (2011) views language not only as a means for communication and exchanging ideas but also as a tool for constructing and organizing person's identity and also it is a vehicle that carries one's membership to a whole group. Felemban tries to investigate the kind of language and strategies that Fadia Faquir, the writer of the novel "*My name is Salma*", has used to show the identity of her major character in this novel as an Arab Bedouin Muslim. This use of language is referred to as language appropriation and is considered a prominent feature of post-colonial literature. Post-colonial literature as defined by the author refers to the varied literatures of the many countries whose political existence has been shaped by the experience of colonialism.

Fadia Faqir (1956) is a Jordanian/ British writer independent scholar and activist in human rights. The central theme of her novel may be as follows:

This is the story of a young Bedouin unmarried woman, Salma, from an unnamed country in the Levant. Salma becomes pregnant and his brothers try to kill her to save family's honor. So she runs away. After some happenings, Salma is taken to England, by Miss Asher under name Sally Asher. There, she has to find a new identity compatible with the new environment while saving her own.

Now, the researchers classify the linguistic strategies that are used to construct and express identity through the main character into two major types: interlanguage and code-switching; each strategy, by turn, consists of a number of categories.

Interlanguage as first defined by Selinker (1972) is an intermediate system developed by language learner that is something similar to both the first and the second language and keeps on developing more and more until it becomes like the target language. Accordingly, Salma is developing her interlanguage and at first, her interlanguage is very similar to Arabic. Her interlanguage can be analyzed syntactically, semantically and phonetically. Fadia Faqir uses characteristics of Salma's interlanguage to show her Arab identity.

From the syntax point of view, the researchers gives some examples of Salma's interlanguage, and the prominent feature of this is the non-use of verbs *to be* and *to have* that have resulted from non-existence of these two verbs in Arabic.

Semantics is another criterion of interlanguage strategy; here the researchers try to review the situations in which Salma does not understand the meaning of certain words due to lack of knowledge or complex structures.

The third criterion of Salma's interlanguage strategy is concerned with phonology, Salma's pronunciation. The clear traces of Arabic pronunciation can be seen in Salma's utterances; for example she pronounces England as Heengland, world as word or let`s go as lits goo.

The second strategy Faqir applies is code-switching. The author defines code switching by Scotton and Wiliam Ury as the "use of two or more linguistic variation in some conversation or interaction".

The first type of code-switching is loan words, they are English words borrowed from Arabic language. These are some examples: sheikh, imam, falafel….

The second type is non-translated words: The Arabic words and sentences that have not been translated into English are clear devices to show Arabic identity.

The next group is terms of address; they show Salma's identity as one Arab Bedouin and Muslim. Some of these are: Sheikh, Imam, Yumma, Yubba….

The next type is items of clothing like madraqa, kufiyya, abaya….

The next type is food: it is a cultural maker by which individuals are identified. Here are some examples: falafel, kebab, sherbet.

Another type is the reference to religion that identifies Salma as a Muslim besides her Arab Bedouin ethnicity. Among these references is the performing of prayers by Salma. Another reference is supplication.

The last type is reference to songs, proverbs and wise sayings.

Therefore, we can see that how language and identity are inseparable things and how they can complement each other. It is seen that how language can be employed in a special way to reflect a special kind of identity. Another study that is going to be analyzed here is the work of Isabel Ermida (2006) on the novel of Georg Orwell "*Nineteen Eighty-Four*". Although there is no trace of identity concept or theories in this study, it is mentioned here because the method used in it is similar to the one used in the present study. The data of the study comes from the conversations between fictional characters of the novel. The dialogues between the characters are analyzed in a micro level and the conclusion is based on the relationship between the persons.

Ermida uses the theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to analyze the conversation exchanges in Orwell's novel: Nineteen Eighty- four.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the degree of politeness in a social relationship depends on three main factors: power, distance and ranking of the imposition. As power, distance or ranking of the imposition between two interlocutors increases the rate of politeness increases too.

The most basic issue in politeness theory is the concept of face. The individuals try to maintain their face by their various actions. The individuals' face is of two kinds: Positive face: the desire that one's self image be appreciated and negative face: the want not to be disturbed by others.

The author of this article selects two relationships in Orwell's novel: the first one is that between Winston and his lover, Julia that is an equal one. By finding some instances from the text, the author shows that because of the intimacy between two people there is no politeness strategies used by them.

The second social relationship is the one between Winston and O'Brien. Because of the hierarchical inequality, initially there is much degree of politeness but the relationship becomes less polite as intimacy between them increases.

## Method

The researchers have based their study on the postmodern approach. Postmodernism may be one of the best choices to save the individual from any imposed, dictated and presupposed prescriptions of life. Different postmodern writers have focused on the different layers of life. The researchers try to give a hint to the mental concern of some of the leading postmodern writers as follows:

Jacques Derrida's early writings complicate Saussure's linguistic twist. Derrida challenged the claim that the Western philosophical tradition privileges spoken (the sonic) over written language (the graphic).

Derrida believes that Saussure by supporting the Western tradition prioritizes speech over writing. Derrida also challenges Lévi-Strauss's introduction of binary oppositions. He believes that through binary opposition one must degrade one individual to upgrade another one. He believes that two seemingly opposing elements like black/white and short/tall… do not stand against each other but supplement each other.

The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard In *The postmodern condition*, defines postmodernism as "incredulity toward metanarratives". A metanarrative sets out the rules of narratives and language games" (1984, p. 24).

Jameson (1991) avers that postmodernism is a socio-economic artifact which has to be deemed a cultural phenomenon emerging out of capitalism. Jameson in his famous essay, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, argues that the aesthetic forms and techniques of modernism have been located at the service of consumerism in postmodern aesthetic:

> Theories of postmodern…bear a strong family resemblance to all those more ambitious sociological generation which brings us the news of the arrival and inauguration of a whole new type of society, most famously baptized 'post-industrial'…But often also designated consumer society (qtd. In Newton, 1997, p. 268).

Hutcheon asserts "whereas in modernist one sensed a kind of wishful call to continuity beneath the fragmented echoing, in postmodernism pastiche and fragmentariness are seen as liberating" (qtd. in Newman,1985, p. 266)

Baudrillard (1988) emphasizes that in the postmodern world reality is buried under the shadow of the hyperreality created by the media.

The first step in collecting data and conducting this study was reading the novel of " *The Grapes of the Wrath*" by John Steinbeck. This novel has about five hundred pages and is written so smoothly that invites the readers to a sound self-journey. "*The Grapes of Wrath*" is one of the masterpieces among world`s literary works. It is the story of an ordinary family forced to leave their home. The condition of their lives changes but what about their identities? Does it go under unwanted changes too? Are they more compatible with traditional theories of identity and are known as fixed ones or they have tendency to be more explainable using postmodern theories of identity? Do their new conditions of life demand characters to show their multiple, contradictory and changing over time identities? Does Steinbeck introduce his character identities in this way? But how? How a reader can find out these aspects of characters identities? Do the characters use language tools skillfully in their talks to reveal their identities? These questions are answered by scrutinizing the ontological layers of the novel.

Having the theoretical framework of postmodernism in viewing identity, the conversation between the characters are analyzed from the beginning of the book to the end because according to the postmodern framework, it is through interaction that one's identity is constructed. The researchers have concentrated on the language used by the characters to find the traces of their identity and signs of their personality. We may claim that the person`s identity is not just shown by his language and in the conversation, but the behavior and body gestures and movements can also be signs of a person's identity. So, we have focused on the descriptions of character's body gestures too. We want to know how the language used by a character in a situation is different from the one he uses with others. The guiding element in analyzing this point is the view of post-modern framework which claims that a person's identity is not a fixed, unitary and unchangeable one, but it is a kind of characteristic that changes over time and like a puzzle is made of many pieces. In this view, every person divulges different kinds of identity confronting different people. And this is the situation and the person's relationship with others that causes him to show that special kind of identity.

To answer the second question of this study the kind of language used by the characters is focused too. Whenever a sentence or a phrase, even a word has led the researchers to decide about the characters identity, that sentence, phrase or word is emphasized and written with a specified spelling. For example, in analyzing Ma's character identity, her identity changes are acknowledged by the family members:

> The change in Ma's behavior is strange and unbelievable for family members, because of their familiarity with her role and behavior in the family. One of the family boys asks Tom: Ever see Ma stand up to him (Pa) like she done today? Tom replies: Not I remember (Steinbeck, 1939, p.191-henceforth Steinbeck)

Somewhere else, Tom tells his mother "never heard you talk so much in my life" Ma answers: "wasn't never so much reason"(307). So she attributes her new behavior to the new conditions as most modern framework suggest this is the context that causes human's hidden identities manifest.

The researchers have focused on the analysis of the following selected characters:

1. **Pa:** the father of the family
2. **Ma:** the mother of the family
3. **Tom Joad:** The boy of the family and the main character of the novel
4. **Rose of Sharon:** the older girl of the family

It is worth mentioning that not all the characters are analyzed according to the three defining elements of identity in postmodern framework- multiplicity, contradictory and changing over time- but according to the dominant mood and mode of the story and the kinds of the interactions that characters have with others.

# The *Grapes of Wrath* and the Identity Crisis

**Identity as Changing over Time in the *Grapes of the Wrath***

The identity change that the four main characters undergo, are scrutinized through the ontological analysis of the text.

### *Pa and Ma: Identity as Changing over Time*

In Joad family like any other traditional one, Pa is the chairman of the family. He exhibits his role by being the main person in the family who makes the important decisions. Others can give their opinions but this is Pa who makes the final one. In fact he is the person who is responsible for the family. For example at the beginning of the novel when the family comes together to decide to go to California and to figure out the details of their journey Pa's position of chairmanship is outstanding:

> Pa walked around the truck, looking at it, and then he squatted down in the dust and found a stick to draw with….Pa squatted there, looking at the truck, his chin in his cupped fist. And Uncle John moved toward him and squatted down beside him. Grampa came out of the house and saw the two squatting together, and he jerked over and sat on the running board of the truck, facing them. That was the nucleus. Tom and Connie and Noah strolled in and squatted, and the line was a half circle with Grampa in the opening .And then Ma came out of the house and Granma with her, and Rose of Sharon behind, walking daintily. They took their places behind the squatting men; they stood up and their hands on their hips."(Steinbeck, 1939, p. 108)

In this piece of the story, the author tries to locate the characters in the place of the meeting according to their roles in the process of decision making. For example, Pa who is the main decision maker is squatted first and at the center of the semi-circle, but the women who have a little role or no role at all are outside of the circle as their presence can be ignored.

Although Ma in this family is the emotional base of the family but she does not have any role in guiding and directing the family, as we see in the following sentences: "Then Pa, speaking to no one, but to the group, made his report." Got skinned on the stuff we sold. The fella knowed we couldn't wait. Got eighteen dollars only. Ma Stirred restively, but she held her peace." (108-109)

She is dissatisfied with the low price the men have taken for the household furniture but she controls her discontent because it is none of her business and she should accept the decision made by the chair of the family so she becomes silent again.

As Burgess & Ivanic (2010) put it, specific events in the lifetime of a person could contribute to identity development and change. Many different events happen to this family. They are forced to leave their hometown, something that causes a sense of solidarity to them, which makes them have a firmer tie. This sense is felt more by Ma who is the emotional basis of the family, but she does not have enough power to do this, so she fights for the power of the chairman of the family. For example, when the car of Wilson family, the family that accompanies them in their journey, is broken down and the boys of the family with supervision of Pa decide to stop their journey, remain in that place, repair the car and then join to the family in California; Ma is afraid of this situation. She worries that they may never find each other. So she turns against this decision, something that she never does before. But the family does not take her serious and tries to mind her own work so that she becomes penitent. But now Ma is not the same Ma that everyone knew. The condition has changed now. Her role has changed too. So, her behavior should change in order to fulfill her role. Now she is responsible for the solitude of the family. She has evaluated the situation and boys' decision. She has found it threatening. So she should insist on her idea at any cost. This is the first time that Ma appears in her new role: the chairman of the family, the person who makes decision.

The changes in Ma`s behavior is strange and unbelievable for family members, because of their familiarity with her role and behavior in the family. One of the family boys asks Tom, ''Ever see Ma stand up to him (Pa) like she done today? Tom replies: Not I remember'' (Steinbeck, p.191).

Somewhere else tom tells his mother "never heard you talk so much in my life" Ma answers: "wasn't never so much reason" (307) So, she attribute her new behavior to the new conditions as most modern framework suggest; this is the context that causes human`s hidden identities manifest.

## *Tom: Identity as Changing over Time*

Tom is the eldest son of the family. He was far from his family for four years. He was in McAlester jail because of committing a murder in a fight. He joins his family just before they start their journey to California. His identity is just like that of any other young boys of his age. He is young and bold. He does not care about anything, especially future and whatever may come over.

His family and other have been forced to leave their home. It has made them unhappy. They feel nostalgic for their hometown, but Tom does not understand this. In an interaction between the preacher, Muley (one of the neighbors who hasn`t left his home) and he himself, this is apparent. When Muley and the preacher speak about their sorrow of leaving one`s home, Tom not only avoids participating in the conversation, he minds his own work happily, that is preparing the food.

Muley continued, "Well, sir, it`s a funny thing. Somepin went an' happened to me when they tol' me I had to get off the place. Fust I was gona go in an' kill a whole flock a people. Then all my folks all went away out west. An' I got wanderin'aroun'. Jus' walking aroun'. Never went far. Slep' where I was. I was gonna sleephere tonight. That's why I come. I'd tell myself, I'm lookin' after things so when all the folks come back it'll be all right. 'But I knowed that wan't true. There ain't nothin' to look after. The folks ain't never comin' back. I'm jus' wandering aroun' like a damn ol' graveyard ghos'." "Fella gets use' to a place, it's hard to go," said Casy. "Fella gets use' to a way a thinkin' it's hard to leave. I ain't a preacher no more, but all the time I find I'm prayin', not even thinkin' what I'm doin. (54-55)

The conversation between Casy and Muley continues in this way and Tom again interrupts them '' Joad Cleared his throut. "Think we better eat her now."(56) And also Joad cried nervously, "Jesus Christ, le's eat this meat 'fore it's smaller'n a cooked mouse! Look at her. Smell her." (page: 57)

### Rose of Sharon: Identity as Changing over Time

Rose of Sharon the older daughter of the family is a young girl who has recently got married to Connie, a nineteen year old boy. She is pregnant now. In describing her, the writer states "She thought only in terms of reproduction and of motherhood" (103). During the journey, the young rose of Sharon thinks of the good days in future. She just dreams of good things and having a good life. She is somehow an optimist.

As the story goes on, Rose of Sharon's perspective on life changes. She dreams about a good future no more but she has accepted the reality somehow, she has accepted that they are not a in a good condition. In such a situation, she cannot expect a dreamy future. But in this condition she is still a selfish girl who just thinks of her child and herself.

Tom lay still- and then a wave of sleep lifted him to the edge of unconsciousness and dropped him slowly back and lifted him again. "You- Tom!"

"Huh? Yeah!" He started awake. He looked over at Rose of Sharon. Her eys were blazing with resentment. "What you want?"

"You killed a fella!"

"Yeah. Not so loud! You wanta rouse somebody?"

"What da I care?" She cried. "That lady tol' me. She says what sin's gonna do. She tol' me. What chance I got to have a nice baby? Connie's gone, an' I ain't getting good food. I ain't getting' good food. I ain't getting' milk." Her voice rose hysterically. "an' now you kill a fella. What chance that baby got to get bore right? I know- gonna be a freak- a freak! I neverdone no dancin'."

Tom got up. "Sh!" he said. "You're gonna get folks in here."

"I don't care. I'll have a freak! I didn't dance no hug-dance."

He went near to her. "Be quite."

"You get away from me. It ain't the first fella you killed, neighter." Her face was growing red with hysteria. Her words blurred. "I don't wanta look at you." She covered her head with her blanket. Tom heard the chocked, smothered cries. (430)

Another symbol of Rose of Sharon's selfishness appears when Winfield, the little boy of the family is badly sick. They hardly buy some milk for him, but Rose of Sharon thinks that she has more right to eat milk because of her child:

Pa came back with one tall can of milk. "Leven cents," he said disgustedly.

"Here! " Ma took the can and stabbed it open. She let the thick stream out into a cup, and handed it to Tom. "Give that to Winfiel'."

Tom knelt beside the mattress. "Here, drink this."

"I can't. I'd sick it all up. Leave me be."

Tom stood up. "He can't take it now, Ma. Wait a little."

Ma took the cup and set it on the window ledge. "Don't none of you touch that," she warned. "That's for Winfiel'." "I ain't had no milk," Rose of Sharon said sullenly. "I oughta have some."

"I know, but you're still on your feet. This here little fella's down. (435)

### Tom: Identity as Multiple and Contradictory

Tom Joad in this novel encounters various people and takes part in so many interactions, in each, he accepts different roles. Somewhere he is an older brother, somewhere he is a friend and somewhere else he is a stranger in a relationship. One of the assumptions of post-structural trend is that person's social identity in each of these situations is different and causes him to behave differently. Samples from the text are sought to testify this claim.

At the beginning of this novel, Tom encounters a truck driver. The truck driver gives him a lift. They are strangers and do not know each other. Although the truck driver has done him a favor, Tom does not care to have a friendly relationship with him. The truck driver is happy to find a fellow that can be an interlocutor to him. But Tom does not like to speak much, listens impatiently, answers briefly to the long speech of the truck driver. This may cause the driver and the readers of the story think that Tom is a taciturn and self-

contained person. The truck driver gives a long speech about one of his coworkers, and Tom follows his words just by a word:

> I've knew guys tht done screwy things while they're drivin' trucks. I remember a guy use' to make poetry. It passed the time." He looked over secretly to see whether Joad was interested or amazed. Joad was silent, looking into the distance ahead, along the road, along the white road that waved gently, like a ground swell. The driver went on at last, "I remember a piece of poetry this here guy wrote down. It was about him an' a couple of other guys goin' all over the world drinkin' and raisin' hell and screwin' around. I wisht I could remember how that piece went. (11)

Then the driver continues his long speech although he receives little feedback from his interlocutor. Tom also is rude when he speaks about where he was and what he did four years ago. He impudently states that he was in jail and he had killed someone. He is proud of this. He does not care how that person thinks about him. Maybe he thinks that he will not see that truck driver again:

> You got me wrong, mister," he said. "I ain't keepin' quite about it. Sure I been in McAlester. Been there four years. Sure these is the clothes they give me when I come out. I don't give a damn who knows it. An' I'm goin' to my old man's place so I don't have to lie to get a job."
> The driver said, "Well- that ain't none of my business. I ain't a nosy guy.(14)

The second person Tom faces is the preacher, Jim Casy. They know each other well. There is no sign of that taciturn and uninterested Tom. He is glad to see an old acquaintance. When the preacher asks Tom about where he has been and what he has done he is not as rude as he was with the truck driver. It also seems that he is not proud of the crime he has done. He tries to give a mild explanation about it, the work that he does not deem necessary to do for the truck driver. He tries to give some introduction on the topic to make it mild rather than say it boldly and barely for the truck driver.

Been out travellin' around?" Casy asked.

> Joad regarded him suspiciously. "Didn't you hear about me? I was in all papers."
>
> "No- I never. What?" He jerked one leg over the other and settled lower against the tree. The afternoon was advancing rapidly, and a richer tone was growing on the sun.
>
> Joad said pleasantly, "Might's well tell you now an' get it over with. But if you was still preachin' I wouldn't tell. Fear you get prayin' over me. "He drained the last of the pint and flung it from him, and the flat brown bottle skidded lightly over the dust. "I been in McAlester them four years."
>
> Casy swung around to him, and his brows lowered so that his tall forehead seemed even taller. "Ain't wantin' to talk about it, huh? I won't ask you no questions, if you done something bad-" (Page 28)

And when the preacher asks **"**You ain't ashamed of nothin' then?" Although he answers "No", he tries to explain the reason: "I ain't. I got seven years, account of he had a knife in me. Got out in four-parole." (p. 28)

It seems that this is the kind of the relationship between the interlocutors in the two interactions that causes these two different sessions happen. In the first interaction, the one between Tom and the truck driver, the two persons do not know each other; this lets Tom make a dangerous identity of himself that can hurt to scare the driver. The subject position that Tom takes lets him speak so. He speaks from the subject position of a murderer and this is the reason to be rude and speak like a dangerous murderer. But in the second interaction, the one between Tom and the preacher, Tom cannot speak from the subject position of a dangerous murderer, because his identity is known to the preacher to some extent. The preacher knows that although he is a naughty boy, he is not a professional murderer and what he has done is the result of an accident. This is the reason that he exits from the subject position of a dangerous murderer, who does not suffer much from a guilt-stricken conscience. Hence, he tries to justify what has happened.

### Ma: Identity as Multiple and a Site of Struggle

Ma appears in different roles during this novel. These sometimes contradictory roles or according to Weedon 'subject positions' cause him to interact differently and act differently in every subject position. As it was reviewed at the beginning of the novel, Ma is just the mother of the family. She does not have any position in the process of decision making. In fact, she does not have the power to object. she is displeased with the money that Pa has taken for selling household furniture but her subject position as mother does not allow her to object: ''Then Pa, speaking to no one, but to the group, made his report." Got skinned on the stuff we sold. The fella knowed we couldn't wait. Got eighteen dollars only. Ma Stirred restively, but she held her peace."(109)

As the story goes on and the conditions change for the family, Ma tries to appear in a different role, the manager of the family to protect them. Her new subject position as the boss of the family causes her new rights for example the right to object; the right that she did not have in her previous subject position, the mother of the family, although there she was emotional basis of the family. The first example of Ma in his new subject position is when it has been decided that some members of the family separate from it to fix their car:

> Tom slowly made a cigarette, and inspected it and lighted it. He took off his ruined cap and wiped his forehead." I got no <u>idear</u>," he said. "May be nobody gonna like it, but here she is: The nearer to California our folks get, the quicker they's gonna be money rollin' in. Now this here car'll go twicet as fast as that truck. Now here's my idea. You took some a that stuff in the truck, an' then all you folks but me an' the preacher get in an' move on. Me an' Casy'll stop here an' fix this here car an' then we drive on, day an' night, an' we'll catch up, or if we don't meet on the road, you'll be a-workin' anyways…( 183)

Somewhere else in the novel, Ma appears in the role of the guard of the family. When they settle in the camp, a crazy woman comes to them and tries to hurt Rose of Sharon. Rose of Sharon is afraid. Ma feels responsible and tries to defend her daughter. She speaks and acts like a cruel and wild person and does what she has not done before and in relation to her own family, for her family Ma is a kind, mild mother but now the person present in the

interaction demands this kind of savagely behavior. As Blommeart (2005) believes the role of other people and social relations in the process of identification is outstanding.

## Conclusion

The study tried to show the multiciplity of the characters' identity in different contexts in Steinbeck's novel '*The Grapes of Wrath'*. It also focused on the undecidability of their actions. The researchers highlighted the importance of the singularity of any independent fragment of the identity of each and every character. The study further displayed that the characters cannot be imprisoned within the dark dungeon of a fossilized world of the metaphysics of presence, where *present* as a logocentric authority does not let the other *presents* to be born. The researchers made an attempt to show the open field of possibilities in the world of postmodernism, where each identity is repeated but still not repeated. Its repetition is merely followed by the natural traces, while each repetition has got its own birth and death.

The paper comes to its closing mode by challenging any aporetic decisions and judgments, which abort all the upcoming decisions and judgments that are the *absent* perspective of the *present*.

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