Foucauldian Power and Identity in John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath

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ABSTRACT: Power relation and identity have always been the matter of debates in literature. Althusser, the Marxist critic and thinker, believes that power is possessed by the powerful; consequently, the less powerful are nothing but puppets that are doomed to accept the wills of the system and the institutions. Rejecting this theory, Michel Foucault, the French critic, asserts that power is not something to be held or possessed by the governments, systems and institutions since it is not something fixed and stable. On the contrary, power in power relation is dynamic and for this reason it can be productive. This view of power relation can neither be negative nor result in repression. In fact, it exists wherever there is resistance and it exists in every kind of relation, so it can be positive and productive. According to this theory each individual, in turn, would not have a fixed identity, for the power is volatile, an unstable element which can always be contested. To study John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath under the light of Foucauldian theory of power, firstly two characters, Tom Joad who is just released from prison and Jim Casy, the ex-preacher are selected. These two characters’ resistance against the system in the power relation is studied focusing on Foucault’s theory of power. In the next step, it is tried to show whether the Foucauldian concept of the resistance ultimately leads to productivity as he predicts or not, and finally the effects of the power relation on the two mentioned characters’ identity is studied.

Key words: Foucault’s Theory, Power, Identity, John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath.

INTRODUCTION

According to Michel Foucault, power is not something to be possessed only by the governments and institutions or a particular group against the individual; however, Louis Althusser, the outstanding Marxist critic and thinker, asserts that people are just like the puppets moved by the invisible wires of the system which desires to impose its wills and ideology from top downward. In fact, in such a system the people are oppressed by the state, and the institutions. For this reason, they lack freedom to live according to their wills. Rejecting Althusser’s claim; Foucault tries to move beyond the oppressive views of power. In his Historie de la Sexual, he rejects the idea that power is oppression, for him power even in its most radical form is not just repression and censorship, but it can be productive, causing new behaviors to emerge!

In order to understand Foucault’s concept of power better, it would be helpful to define the word power itself. In general, power is the ability of an agent which desires to impose its wills over the wills of the powerless. In this sense, power is understood as a possession. Foucault rejecting this idea asserts that power is dynamic rather than static:

It can act in a certain way more than a strategy—it must be analyzed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain-power is employed and exorcized through netlike organization-individuals are the vehicles of power, not the points of application.

From this point of view, power becomes a system, a network of relations including the whole society rather than the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Therefore, the individuals become not the objects of power, “but they are Locus where the power and the resistance to it are exerted”.

While Marxists regard power as a form of repression or oppression forcing the individuals to obey it, Foucault believes: “power is coextensive with resistance; productive, producing positive effects: ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relation”. Foucault in the first volume of Histories de la sexual—asserts that “where there is power,
there is resistance, it means, it is not a simple relationship between master and slave, but a productive relation; that is: where is power there is always someone who resists it, not someone who is doomed to obey it.

Regarding Foucault’s attitude toward the concept of the power and power relations which undermines the long accepted traditional master-slave model, the identity of the individuals according to this new view of power will also find a new meaning. It is, to some extent, related to social dominance theory which refers to “theory of intergroup relations that focuses on the maintenance and stability of group-based social hierarchies”.

When the relationship between the people from different segments of the society depends on the power relations and power turns out to be a subject to negotiation, each individual, in turn, does not have a fixed identity since power is volatile, an unstable element which can always be contested. How can we expect that the identity of the individual in such a flexible relationship will be stable and fixed? Are the individuals likely to move based on for example a pre-determined historical plan?

It is better to say that identity is an illusive concept, as an abstract one, it cannot have a fixed definition and form. In the other words, the personal identity of the individual will be the outcome of the interaction existing within a social domain; that is to say, identity under the impact of power relation will experience great changes.

**METHODOLOGY**

As far as Foucault’s theory of power is concerned when talking about identity, we often talk about people as if they have particular attributes as things inside themselves: they have an identity, and we believe that at the heart of a person there is a fixed and true identity or a character. We assume that people have an inner essence, qualities beneath the surface which determine who this person really was, is and will be. We also say that some people have (different levels of) power which means that they are more or less able to achieve what they want in their relationship with “other people and the society as a whole”. Rejecting this view, Foucault asserts that people do not have a real identity within themselves. Identity, in fact, is communicated to others in your interaction with them, and it is not a fixed entity within a person, it is a shifting temporary construction. However, lately, Williams stated that “identity should be viewed as a second-order relation, [which is vaster] than a relation between objects”.

For Michel Foucault, power is as “a complex strategic situation in a given social setting” involving both limitation and enablement. Related to social setting, “identity is as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group. […] It is thus best construed as being both relational and contextual, while the act of identification is best viewed as inherently processual”.

Furthermore, what Foucault wants is to “analyse the intersections between power and knowledge that are constituted by the role played by particular forms of expertise in discourses that exert their own form of identity normalization on all of us”.

Considering Foucault’s theory of power and identity, The Grapes of Wrath is a good case to study the power conflict and the identity arising out of this clash. This is the story of an ordinary American family made to leave home since the natural and following that the social conditions of living have changed. John Steinbeck focusing on the social and natural conditions in 1903’s America during the Great Depression employs some principles of Foucault’s theories concerning the power relations and identity.

Concerning the matter of power and identity in this novel, there are some questions which should be asked: first, do the farmers have the ability to resist against the power? Does the social power make them leave their homes and farms without any trouble? Do the people show their resistance and not become a single object? Or become puppets at the mercy of the forces of the dominant system?

To answer the above questions, this study focuses on the characters of Tom Joad and Jim Casy and their reactions to the power to test Foucault’s theory of power and identity to understand whether the institution and the state are essentially oppressive, permanent and solid as Althusser, the Marxist critic believes, or as Foucault asserts: “they are fragile and have a great potential of change and even they can become productive rather than destructive”. The second part of this study focuses on the relationality of power; that is the relation between people. In one hand, there is one who tries to impose his wills like the state, and on the other there is one who is supposed to receive the action. It is discussed to know whether the receiver is passive or not, and if he resists, his resistance is productive or not. The last part of this study focuses on two characters mentioned above in order to know whether they have a fixed identity or a flexible one.
Findings

Tom as the eldest son of the Joads has been far from his family for four years. He was in Mc Alester jail because of committing a murder. Now, he got parole and is free to join his family. In the beginning of the novel in his way to home, Tom asks a driver:

“Could ya give me a lift mister? the driver replied: ‘did n’t you see The No Rider sticker on the winshield?’ ‘sure I seen it, but sometimes a guy’ll be a good guy even if some rich bastard makes him carry a sticker’.12

If the driver refuses now, not only is he not a good guy, but he is forced to carry a sticker. If he takes in the hitch hiker, he is automatically a good guy and also he is not one whom any rich bastard could kick around. He knows he is being trapped, but he cannot see a way out and he wants to be a good guy, too. “He glanced again at the restaurant. The driver, getting slowly into the truck scrunch down on the running board till we get around the bend he said”13.

As Foucault asserts: “power is not something that can be owned, but rather it is something that acts and manifests itself in certain ways. It is more a strategy than being a possession”.14 We can say that it is wrong to assume that the subject is submissive to power, for power is a network of relations. It is evident here that the system has forced the driver not to lift the passenger, regarding Marxist theory of power, the system in doing so as an oppressor is successful since it has succeeded in imposing its wills upon the oppressed, or the object and the passive object here is the driver. However with the coming of Tom Joad, the Marxist theory of power is challenged. Regarding Foucauldian theory, power is not a group’s property, but it is “coextensive with resistance, productive, producing positive effects, ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relation”.15

In his conversation with the driver, Tom Joad proves that where power is, there is someone who resists it. Tom Joad seeing the No Rider sticker on the winshield of the truck makes the driver change his view and carry him by sophisticatedly saying that: “sometimes a guy’ll be a good guy even if some rich bastard makes him carry the sticker”.16 This is one example of the strategy which can be used by the individuals to resist against the state, the system or the institution to show that the individuals are not just the puppets moved by the invisible wires of industrialization or in general by the system.

It is significant that not only does Tom Joad resist actively against the system’s wills, but he also motivates the driver to play a role in his game and break the law created by the system. Tom challenges the idea that power is something fixed as Marxist believes, and to have one form running through one clear, well-defined path; instead Tom shows us that it is dynamic and productive rather than being static and passive. The driver, following Tom Joad’s motivating expressions now gives into the new power and he himself at the same time, resists against the system, a reaction that can be interpreted through the relationality of power.

Considering power relations, the identity of Tom Joad in the novel always changes. He accepts different roles. Somewhere he is a murderer, he committed a murder for personal matters to defend himself not for the sake of helping the poor, now here a stranger in this relationship, and somewhere in the future we will see him sacrificing himself for the sake of justice, finding a Christ-like role.

When Tom and his family are made to leave their land and migrate to California because of draught and the bank force, they are apparently forced to behave in the way the system or, in general, the government desires. Hence regarding Foucault’s theory of power men are expected to resist where power is exerted.

To survive, the Joad family and many other families having read the ads for job decide to migrate to California, to the paradise lost! In the course of their moving, they encounter with the cruel behaviors of the system which tries to exploit them, to use their tolls, and gives them only a piece of bread to survive. However, the oppression itself as Foucault says is not something destructive since it can be modified in order to be productive and positive. In a very crucial moment in the novel when Casy, Tom and some of their intimate friends are talking about how to stand against the injustice and the tyranny of the system, they hear that they are found and when Casy trying to say to the cops that they are helping the poor to starve, he is killed. Following this incident Tom killed the cove and escaped:

Tom looked down at the preacher. The light crossed the heavy man's legs and the white new pick handle. Tom leaped silently. He wrenched the club free. The first time he knew he had missed and struck a shoulder, but the second time his crushing blow found the head, and as the heavy man sank down, three more blows found his head. The lights danced about. There were shouts, the sound of running feet, crashing through brush. Tom stood over the prostrate man. And then a club reached his head, a glancing blow. He felt the stroke like an electric shock. And then he was running along the stream, bending low.”17
To interpret the identity of Tom in this situation which resulted in killing a cop, we can say that once he killed a man in a bar to defend himself not for a political matter and for which he was four years in prison, but now he kills a man for the sake of the others. Tom in this part is able to escape and save his life, but he stays and revenges Casey’s murder, this decision can be interpreted from this view point that the oppressed resist and the resistance creates a new relationship between two forces and also signifies that how fragile every moment this relationship is. Regarding identity, it is possible to add that Tom is no longer a selfish man as he is introduced at the beginning of the novel; Tom has undergone a great change. Through his resisting against the system, his new identity is flourishing. His new identity can be traced where he is talking about Casey and his influence on him:

Hmm, he said. Lookie, Ma. I been all day an’ all night hidin’ alone. Guess who I been thinkin’ about? Casey! He talked a lot. Used ta bother me. But now I been thinkin’ what he said, an’ I can remember—all of it. Says one time he went out in the wilderness to find his own soul, an’ he foun’ he didn’ have no soul that was his’n. Says he foun’ he jus’ got a little piece of a great big soul. Says a wilderness ain’t no good, ’cause his little piece of a soul wasn’t no good ‘less it was with the rest, an’ was whole. Funny how I remember. Didn’ think I was even listenin’. But I know now a fella ain’t no good alone.

Tom’s identity is vividly transforming, from an ordinary selfish man, a simple character to a wise, sophisticated one who under the influence of Casey’s philosophy of Emerson aims at uniting the people against the government. This part is another example of the productivity of the power resistance and fragility of that relation: Goes, ‘Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.’ ‘That’s part of her.” ‘Go on,’ Ma said. ‘Go on, Tom.’ ‘Go on,’ Ma said. ‘Go on, Tom.’ ‘Jus’ a little bit more. ‘Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

Here Tom focusing on the unification of the poor farmers against the tyranny signifies multidirectionality of power that is not always from the more to less powerful, that is, it can also come from the below to the top due to the dynamic nature of the power. By killing a cop, Steinbeck has tacitly emphasized on the fragility of the power assumed wrongly to be one in the hands of the governments, in fact this implies the great potential change since the states and the governments do not have the capability of the unification as the individuals have. His killing a cop is not rooted in Tom’s personal reasons; in fact it is for the sake of helping the poor children as Casey was killed for.

Regarding the dynamic function of power and productivity of this force, Tom finds more complete function and identity. In the end he talks like a philosopher, like Emerson, he preaches like a real preacher and discusses like a real philosopher:

‘Tom I don’t understand what you say. And when his Ma asked: what do you want to do? Tom replied:’”Then it don’ matter. Then I’ll be all aroun’ in the dark. I’ll be everwhere—wherever you look. Wherever they’s a fight so hungry people can eat, I’ll be there. Wherever they’s a cop beatin’ up a guy, I’ll be there. If Casey knewed, why, I’l be in the way guys yell when they’re mad an’—I’l be in the way kids laugh when they’re hungy an’ they know supper’s ready. An’ when our folks eat the stuff they raise an’ live in the houses they build—why, I’ll be there. See? God, I’m talkin’ like Casey. Comes of thinkin’ about him so much. Seems like I can see him sometimes. Mother asked: ‘No. I been thinkin’, long as I’m an outlaw anyways, maybe I could—Hell, I ain’t thought it out clear, Ma. Don’ worry me now. Don’ worry me.”

He emphasizes on no longer killing a guy but thinks about unifying the people against the system which he believes: “They gonna drive me anyways. They drivin’ all our people.”

This may signify the active role of the individual as an active subject not as a passive object in the hands of the powerful to impose their wills. On the other hand, it is a good example of the manner by which power is exerted and contested. The power as Foucault asserts has the potential of causing new behaviors, the positive ones, to emerge. What Tom Joad had done as he narrated in the beginning of the novel, killing a drunk, and what he believes, says and does in the last chapters of the novel are quite contradictory. In fact, by killing a drunk he defends himself, and by killing a cop he resists against the system to satisfy his own thirst for justice to help the poor.

This vividly contradicts Marxism, the critics of which always suppose a subjective oppressor trying to destroy the oppressed while the oppressed have no free will but accept their destiny as it comes along. According to Marxist critics, such kind of power is oppression and censorship; the oppressed do not resist since resistance is futile and not productive. In this system, power is imagined as possession and owned by the powerful, and power in fact is something like inheritance; that is, nobody else has the right to claim it or even is allowed to talk about it. However in The Grapes of Wrath, Tom, concerning the Foucauldian theory of power proves the contrary to be right, that is to
The productive power emerges out of the conflict between the more powerful and the less powerful. This sort of power becomes productive, and vital, rather than destructive and passive. In fact, it has the capability of transforming an ordinary man in a way that he becomes like a leader for the people's movement against the tyranny:

‘Preacher says two get a better reward for their work.’

‘Tom,’ she said. ‘What you aimin’ to do?’

He was quiet for a long time. ‘I been thinkin’ how it was in that gov’ment camp, how our folks took care a theirselves, an’ if they was a fight they fixed it theirselves; an’ they wasn’t no cops waggin’ their guns, but they was better order than them cops ever give. I been a-wonderin’ why we can’t do that all over. Throw out the cops that ain’t our people. All work together for our own thing—all farm our own lan’.’

‘Tom,’ Ma repeated, ‘what you gonna do?’

‘What Casy done,’ he said.

‘But they killed him.’

‘Yeah,’ said Tom. ‘He didn’ duck quick enough. He wasn’ doing nothin’ against the law, Ma. I been thinkin’ a hell of a lot, thinkin’ about our people livin’ like pigs, an’ the good rich lan’ layin’ fallow, or maybe one fella with a million acres, while a hundred thousan’ good farmers is starvin’. An’ I been wonderin’ if all our folks got together an’ yodeled, like them fellas yelled, only a few of ’em at the Hooper ranch.

In the above passage, Tom referring to the root of the tyranny and while giving the theory inspired by Casy, asks for the active role of the people to have an enjoyable mode of life.

The other character about whom the power relation can be studied is Jim Casy whose identity from the beginning to the end of the novel undergoes an amazing transformation like Tom. As mentioned before, one objective of this study is to show how the character’s identity is shaped by the power relations, that is, how the character views the world, the personal and institutional relationship, ideology, and politics under the influence of power relations. Foucault’s discourse analysis, like much of his critical theory is often used in politically oriented studies, which focuses on power relations in society as expressed through language and practice. Foucault looks at how figures in authority use language to express their dominance and requires obedience and respect from those subordinate to them, but the power and the resistance to power are inseparable according to him, we should expect out of this conflict repression arises, but surprisingly productivity is the outcome, where power is seen as more fluid relation. In the case of Jim Casy, we can see the mentioned theory, which is the dynamic role of the power reinforcing the theme of the story, a journey from I to we!

Jim Casy through his discourse reveals his thought of life and human nature. It is learned that before the start of the story, Casy had disappeared into the wilderness to think about himself, about the life, and also his role as a preacher. He begins to learn the true meaning of life and the human spirit. In isolation in the wilderness rather than among the people he was searching for his lost identity. At first, he appears to be experiencing doubts about his former mode of life and beliefs as a preacher. His thoughts seem to be more focused on himself than the condition of the migrants. Since he has internal conflict with himself, there is no external conflict yet for the power relation to act. The following excerpts best describes the internal conflict which torments Casy:

‘But you wasn’t a preacher,’ Casy insisted. ‘A girl was just a girl to you. They wasn’t nothing’ to you. But to me they was holy vessels. I was savin’ their souls. An’ here with all that responsibility on me I’d just get ’em frothin’ with the Holy Spirit, an’ then I’d take ’em out in the grass.’

‘Maybe I should of been a preacher,’ said Joad. He brought out his tobacco and papers and rolled a cigarette. He lighted it and squinted through the smoke at the preacher. ‘I been a long time without a girl,’ he said. ‘It’s gonna take some catchin’ up.’

Casy continued, ‘It worried me till I couldn’t get no sleep. Here I’d go to preachin’ and I’d say, ‘By God, this time I ain’t gonna do it.’ And right while I said it, I knewed I was.

This internal conflict considering Foucauldian theory is not something to be considered as productive or have positive meaning. However when he decides to come back to the people, to be among the company of the folks he once preached, the power relation acts and the productivity of this relation can flourish. To understand what attracts Jim Casy to the condition of the migrants and makes him join them, we should focus on Muley Graves’s narrating the story of his family. Muley Graves is a friend of the Joad family. Like the Joads, his family was forced to leave their house and their land, but Muley is too proud to follow them.

‘I been off a-askin’ questions,’ said Casy. ‘What happened here? Why they kickin’ folks off the lan’?’

Muley’s mouth snapped shut so tightly that a little parrot’s beak in the middle of his upper lip stuck down over his under lip. He scowled. ‘Them sons-a-bitches,’ he said. ‘Them dirty sons-a-bitches. I tell ya, men, I’m stayin’. They ain’t gettin’ rid a me. If they throw me off, I’ll come back, an’ if they figger I’ll be quiet underground,
why, I'll take couple-three of the sons-a-bitches along for company.' He patted a heavy weight in his side coat pocket. 'I ain't a-goin'. My pa come here fifty years ago. An' I ain't a-goin'.

'Well, the guy that comes aroun' talked nice as pie. 'You got to get off. It ain't my fault.' 'Well,' I says, 'whose fault is it? I'll go an' I'll nut the fella.' 'It's the Shawnee Lan' an' Cattle Company. I jus' got orders.' 'Who's the Shawnee Lan' an' Cattle Company?' 'It ain't nobody. It's a company.' Got a fella crazy. There wasn't nobody you could lay for. Lot a the folks jus' got tired out lookin' for somepin to be mad at—but not me. I'm mad at all of it. I'm stayin'.'

'My wife an' the kids an' her brother all took an' went to California. They wasn't nothin' to eat. They wasn't as mad as me, so they went. They wasn't nothin' to eat here.'

The preacher stirred nervously. 'You should of went too. You shouldn't of broke up the fambly.'

'I couldn','' said Muley Graves. 'Somepin jus' wouldn' let me.'

Through the narrated discourse by Muley, it is clear that the system or the government uses power to exploit the farmers to achieve its objectives, the power acts based on a strategy when trying to hide itself behind the ambiguous names and the institutions; under the masks of the companies the people don't know anything about them. What the system does here is to convince that the less powerful are unlikely to have a chance to stand against the more powerful. However, what happens in the future proves the contrary to be correct as it was in the case of Tom Joad. In the first look it seems that the system has been successful to impose its wills upon the poor farmers and they have given up into the opposing power except Muley Grave who does not leave his home land and lives like a wandering ghost. What is the outcome of his living like an animal in the holes in seclude?

According to Foucault, power does not function in isolation, it is not something to be owned, instead it is active and manifests itself in a certain way, and it is more strategy than a possession. In fact it circulates. Jim Casy following his isolation in the wilderness concerning the nature of sin and through the story of Muley Graves becomes aware of the tyranny against the poor farmers. He determines to join the migrants to be in the circle of the power relation. When he says: "I need to be where the people are" signifies the strategy in order not be considered a mule like Muley, but to resist against the powerful in a strategic way to make this resistant-relation, productive not destructive. The points where Casy's digression from passivity is evident can be seen at the camps where the Joads stop several times, and there Casy recognizes from his first hand experience after Muley's story of the situation of the migrants. He sees the low wages that the migrants are being paid as well as the police's aversion towards the now called Okies, and their desires to crush any chance they have of organizing a unity. The following discourse by the agent of the government helps Casy plan and move forward his strategy against the system:

The man said, 'You men want to work?' Still they looked quietly, suspiciously. And men from all over the camp moved near.

One of the squatting men spoke at last. Sure we wanna work. Where's at's work?'

'Tulare County. Fruit's opening up. Need a lot of pickers.'

Floyd spoke up. 'You don' the hiring?'

'Well, I'm contracting the land.'

The men were in a compact group now. An overalled man took off his black hat and combed back his long black hair with his fingers. 'What you payin'?' he asked.

'Well, can't tell exactly, yet. 'Bout thirty cents, I guess.'

'Why can't you tell? You took the contract, didn' you?'

'That's true,' the khaki man said. 'But it's keyed to the price. Might be a little more, might be a little less.'

The contractor turned to the Chevrolet and called, 'Joe!'

'Ever see this guy before, Joe?'

The deputy asked, 'Which one?'

'This fella.' The contractor pointed to Floyd.

'What'd he do? ' The deputy smiled at Floyd.

'He's talkin' red, agitating trouble.'

Casy beholding the power circulation between the contractor and a poor man gradually prepares himself to take an active role to help the poor people. When Floyd, the poor migrant, escapes by the help of Tom and Jim Casy, Casy shows his determination not to give into the opposing power. In the following extract, it is clear that Casy is willing to be sacrificed:

'You got to git out,' he said. 'You go down in the willas an' wait. He didn' see me kick 'im, but he seen you stick out your foot.'

'I don' want ta go,' Tom said.

Casy put his head close. He whispered, 'They'll fingerprint you. You broke parole. They'll send you back.'

Tom drew in his breath quietly. 'Jesus! I forgot.'
'Go quick,' Casy said. 'Fore he comes to.'

This is the first sign of the active performance of Casy where he decides to sacrifice himself for the sake of Tom Joad's family, and in general, to keep the unification between the migrants. He plans to make the individuals a family, and the families, one unified society to break the fragile power of the system and create a new form of dynamic relation, a reciprocal one whereby both sides can take benefits in a long time run:

Casy stared out the entrance, into the dark night. 'Lookie, Tom,' he said at last. 'We come to work there. They says it's gonna be fi' cents. They was a hell of a lot of us. We got there an' they says they're payin' two an' a half cents. A fella can't even eat on that, an' if he got kids—So we says we won't take it. So they druv us off. An' all the cops in the worl' come down on us. Now they're payin' you five. When they bust this here strike—ya think they'll pay five? payin' you five. When they bust this here strike—ya think they'll pay five?'

'I dunno,' Tom said. 'Payin' five now.'

'Lookie,' said Casy. 'We tried to camp together, an' they druv us like pigs. Scattered us. Beat the hell outa fellas. Druv us like pigs. They run you in like pigs, too. We can't las' much longer. Some people ain't et for two days.'

'Shut up, you red son-of-a-bitch.'

A short heavy man stepped into the light. He carried a new white pick handle.

Casy went on, 'You don' know what you're a-doin'.'

The heavy man swung with the pick handle. Casy dodged down into the swing. The heavy club crashed into the side of his head with a dull crunch of bone, and Casy fell sideways out of the light.

'Jesus, George. I think you killed him.'

He is apparently destroyed by the opposing power. If we accept Althusserian criticism this must be the great triumphant of the system over the opposing power since it has managed to destroy the leader of the poor people, if we take it this way. Marxist criticism, in fact, is a kind of one-sided way relation where the more powerful by omitting the less powerful can impose its wills upon them successfully. However, regarding Foucault's theory, power relation is not one-sided way always from the more powerful to the less powerful since this sort of theory of power permeates not only in the mind of Tom Joad but also in the mind of Ma and little by little circulates in the minds of all starving people when helping each other in the rest of the novel. This kind of visible unification proves the circulation of power where nobody is destined to be victim. In fact, through unification of the poor men when confronting the problems, we can see the more the system decides to control and oppress them, the more the migrants resist and find a new identity for themselves, not the identity of Okies given by the system to them. Power is not only in the hand of those owners, institutions and governments; it turns around and modifies itself through power relation in a circle.

CONCLUSION

As discussed before, the notions of power and identity are to be considered as the important and vital debates in literature especially the literature of America and the genre of novel. Althusser has confidence in the idea that the system has the power at its hands and controls and monitors the rest of the people who are doomed to be looked as puppets or it is to deal with "a few of the new social control techniques employed to displace certain individuals to the margins of society." But, Michel Foucault declares that power is not to be detained or obsessed by the governments, systems and institutions due to the fact that it is not being immobile and fixed; rather it is to be in a dynamic circle and to be considered fruitful which has nothing to do with being destructive or repressive. It is to say that it can be found in any places and spaces that resistance exists in various and novel forms. Consequently, going into each individual, it is deduced that each individual has no stable identity, for the power is instable and for this reason challenging. John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath based on Foucault's theory of power, is a novel in which two characters of Tom Joad—who is just released from prison—and Jim Casy—the ex-preacher—are of outstanding importance and can be viewed through the concepts of power and identity since they stand against the system and lead the process of unification between the migrants. In this novel, Foucault concept of the resistance
eventually leads to production and finally there are the effects of the power relation on the major characters’ identity as well. Therefore, the novel is about a system in which the power and identity are in close relationship with each other.

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