

РАЗДЕЛ III. ЛИТЕРАТУРА НАРОДОВ СТРАН ЗАРУБЕЖЬЯ
SECTION III. FOREIGN LITERATURE

УДК 821.111

DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2019-5-4-0-9

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“This is a man’s world”: gender issues of leadership
in literature

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Received 15 November; accepted 15 December 2019; published 30 December 2019

Abstract. The potential of language in depicting objective reality is unquestionable today. Some authors refer to language as “the currency of knowing”. Much information about the world and people is recorded in works of literature, and it is of value even if it is shown from the author’s perspective. Works of literature have always been a source of knowledge for readers, characters becoming role models for some people. The article is focused on gender specifics of leadership as revealed in characters of some novels and fairy-tales published in English. The goal of the research is to identify features displayed by leaders in the literary works under study. Some of these features are traditionally considered to be masculine or feminine. Many sources show that women leaders have to develop masculine characteristics, which affects the way they are perceived by other people. The theoretical basis of the study was the work of modern psychologists and philosophers on the relationship between language and knowledge, as well as leadership styles. The paper also attempts to attribute specific leadership styles to the characters under study. The contexts for analysis were taken from the novels by M. Puzo and L. Weisberger, as well as P. Bazhov’s tales published in English.

Key words: “objective reality”, leadership style, professional behavior, autocratic, transformational leadership, task-oriented leader

How to cite: Danilova, E. S. (2019). “This is a man’s world”: gender issues of leadership in literature. *Research Result. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, V.5 (4), 106-114, DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2019-5-4-0-9

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**«Мужчины правят миром»:
гендерные аспекты управления в литературных произведениях**

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Статья поступила 15 ноября 2019 г.; принята 15 декабря 2019 г.;
опубликована 30 декабря 2019 г.

Аннотация. Потенциал языка как средства отображения объективной реальности не вызывает сомнений. Некоторые авторы называют язык «валютой познания». Литература хранит большой объем информации об окружающей действительности, и она представляет ценность несмотря на то, что преподносится через призму авторских убеждений. Литературные произведения служили и служат источником знаний для читателей, а персонажи становятся ролевыми моделями. Работа посвящена изучению гендерных особенностей управленческих стилей, которые продемонстрированы в выбранных для анализа литературных произведениях, опубликованных на английском языке, в частности, романах и сказаниях. Целью исследования является выявление характерных черт лидеров на примере персонажей литературных работ. Эти черты считаются традиционно присущими мужчинам или женщинам. Источники показывают, что женщины-руководители вырабатывают мужские черты характера, в результате чего отношение к ним со стороны других может изменяться. Теоретической основой исследования послужили работы современных психологов и философов, посвященные соотношению языка и знания, а также стилям лидерства. В качестве источников фактического материала были выбраны англоязычные произведения М. Пьюзо, Л. Вайсбергер, а также сказы П.П.Бажова, опубликованные в переводе носителя английского языка.

Ключевые слова: объективная реальность; стиль лидерства; профессиональное поведение; авторитарный; трансформационный лидер; лидер, ориентированный на задания.

Для цитирования: Данилова Е.С. «Мужчины правят миром»: гендерные аспекты управления в литературных произведениях // Научный результат. Вопросы теоретической и прикладной лингвистики. 2019. Т.5, N4. С. 106-114. DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2019-5-4-0-9

Introduction. Works of literature have always been a source of knowledge for readers, summarizing the author's observations and experience. Apart from linguistic means used to describe book characters, there is always a background containing the writer's ideas and values which

may be expressed indirectly. Facts, actions, reflections and appearances described with the help of mere words altogether form an integral image of lifestyles, values and feelings of the main characters.

The potential of language in depicting objective reality is unquestionable today. This

issue was researched by Wilhelm von Humboldt and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and it still arouses interest of contemporary linguists and philosophers. According to Wittgenstein, "the logical picture of the facts is the thought" (Wittgenstein, 1921, 1961). This opinion is shared by philosophers and linguists today. Philosopher Jeff Carreira stresses that "reality (or at least a great deal of it) is an affair of language because it is language that ultimately defines what counts as real" (Carreira, 2011). Moreover, this author considers language to be "the currency of knowing" (ib.). Thus, language is an indispensable means of recording and preserving the information we obtain while perceiving the reality.

V. Zvegintsev stresses that "language, being a "monument" of a nation, a specific period in development, a particular epoch, a social entity, a local dialect, a literary school, a particular writer etc., is naturally in the same line with other "monuments": those of culture, literature, history and so on" (Zvegintsev, 2007: 150).

Works of art, including literature, are frequently perceived as objects designed to admire, and probably as something which helps the viewer abstract from reality, or even as an entertainment. Besides, inspiration is really necessary in order to begin a long and elaborate process of creating, correcting and editing. What triggers this process? To some extent, inspiration is an urge which emerges in a writer after something has impressed him or her so much that it needs to be shared. In fact, an author writes a new book with a view to depicting the political or cultural events he or she has witnessed, or to describe someone who makes a difference, someone who deserves to remain in history. Therefore, many of literary characters are based on real-life prototypes, or at least become collective images of prominent representatives of the times described. In fact, writers frequently depict "heroes of our time", as Mikhail Lermontov put it, which is "indeed a portrait, but not of one man" (Wisdom, Murray, 2008).

"Heroes of our time" are also in the focus of contemporary literature, though their lifestyles and views may have changed. In this respect, novels by a former fashion industry insider, Lauren Weisberger, present an important source of information on people, manners, values and careers. Miranda Priestly's character in the famous "Devil wears Prada" novel is based on a prototype, a true professional. This character may be an ambiguous personality, but it is certainly a product of our objective reality. Besides, a woman leader and a workaholic may well be considered a typical representative of professional life today.

This paper attempts to analyze the leadership styles described in works of literature of different time periods, including linguistic and extralinguistic means used by the authors.

Main part.

Materials and methods. Given the focus on gender equality, a correlation between gender characteristics and leadership potential are increasingly addressed by contemporary scholars in linguistics, psychology and sociology. Thus, Kaiser and Wallace (2016) speak on gender issues in management, while Holmes (2006) studies gender identity in workplace discourse. Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014) refer to leadership styles as pre-requisites for advances in management (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2014). Strong leaders described in fiction arouse an intense interest in managers and psychologists as potential role models. For instance, Miranda's leadership style in L. Weisberger's "Devil Wears Prada" has been analyzed by Indian and Hong Kong scholars (Ayyappan, 2018), (Lui, 2009), while Mohan Gopinath focuses on leadership features developing in Michael Corleone (Gopinath, 2018). Research by the above-mentioned authors makes the theoretical basis of the study.

The sources of linguistic material included a novel by L. Weisberger, "The Devil Wears Prada" (2006), "The Godfather"

by M. Puzo (first published in 1969) and the English version of P. Bazhov's tales (1965). Continuous sampling method and methods of contextual and semantic analysis have been used in this research.

Results and discussion. Researchers are interested in women's efficiency in administrative spheres, as well as in character changes that such jobs entail. Globally, it is closely connected with gender issues which are on the agenda today.

J. Holmes, and furtherly Jennifer Lui, describe the differences in feminine and masculine leadership styles, stating that women tend to use relational behavior, fewer directives, build relationship, use interrogatives and paralinguistic features like hesitation and pauses and to use transactional behavior, while men use directives and instructions, imperatives and need statement, they are authoritarian, task and goal oriented (Holmes, J. 2006.), (Lui, 2009).

This is a traditional approach to management. However, the specifics of our age, business competition, industry requirements, tight deadlines and virtually the need to survive result in women developing some masculine features.

Tough business competition is an integral part of our objective reality. Some authors even refer to our time as the Age of competition (Snow, 2015: 433-442) and global competitive environment (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2014). Its influence on people's characters, values and attitudes induces researchers to study the correlation between competition and aggression. Considering the dependence of aggressive behavior on competition, Alfie Cohn states that "competition of any kind is a sort of battle", and "competition is a kind of aggression". (Cohn, 1986: 43). As a team's competitive ability usually depends on the leader, it is an indirect evidence of the need to develop masculine characteristics in leaders of both genders, requiring that they apply tactics and strategy like military commanders do.

The role of a leader in a team's success should never be diminished. Suffice it to recall the famous idea by Alexander the Great saying that an army of sheep led by a lion will defeat an army of lions led by a sheep.

There are several leader types in business, including positive leaders placing emphasis on rewards, negative ones relying on threats and fear. Based on management styles, Sharanya Ayyappan specifies autocratic leaders who "centralize power, make decisions on their own and exercise full authority and full responsibility of their own decisions", as well as consultative leaders and participative ones. Another criterion enables leadership styles to be divided into considerate (concerned about human needs and teamwork) and structured task-oriented ones "getting tasks done by keeping people busy" (Ayyappan, 2018: 482-483).

An analysis of Miranda Priestly's professional behavior reveals her authoritarian character, laconism, her ability to work hard and to put business above all, readiness to sacrifice others and requirement of professionalism in her employees. This may be illustrated with some facts and contexts from the novel. For instance, her assistants use causative structures in rendering her instructions: "*she wants the Thursday hair and makeup confirmed*" (Weisberger, 2006: 222). It reveals her habit of "having things done", where people are just a nut in a mechanism performing a specific function.

An indirect indication to Miranda's straightforwardness may be found in the following context:

"Miranda thought Cara might be happier working for someone else," Emily said in what I'm sure was much more diplomatic phrasing than Miranda herself had used" (Weisberger, 2006: 222).

Postures and gestures typical of this character contribute to the image. An impression of an aggressive person is built with the help of a simile "appearing ready to strike": "*She was hovering over me,*

appearing ready to strike" (Weisberger, 2006: 199).

Generally, it is not direct descriptions and epithets, but rather references to Miranda's behavior and manner of communication that shape her whole image in the novel. Still, examples of epithets may also be found, for instance, "discriminative": "*They know how discriminating Miranda is*" (Weisberger, 2006: 223).

Evidently, this woman leader is shown to be autocratic and task-oriented, paying no attention to human needs and even sacrificing her marriage. She plays people like chess, easily sacrificing Nigel who had been promised a promotion.

On the other hand, Nanjundeswaraswamy specifies transformational and transactional leadership styles, where "managers with transformational leadership style concentrate on the growth and development of value system of employees, their inspirational level and moralities" (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2014) and transactional leadership style is understood to be "the exchange of rewards and targets between employees and management". Rewards, though rarely, are practiced by Miranda (for instance, a trip to Paris Fashion week offered to her assistant). Despite the fact that she seldom praises her staff, their progress does not remain unnoticed (example). "Fine. This is fine. Certainly nothing groundbreaking, but fine" (Weisberger, 2006: 335). Though her manner of communication reveals a trend towards diminishing people's achievements, it is still a praise, which is hard to deserve from her.

Besides, she is the one who respects true professionalism and accept critics, though rarely: "I'd walked by the closet just in time to hear Nigel shouting: 'MIRANDA PRIESTLY! TAKE THAT RAG OFF THIS SECOND!' and "a quiet murmur of agreement" (Weisberger, 2006: 238).

Miranda does not seem to promote corporate culture directly, but the "inspirational level" and "value system" of

employees develop naturally. The personnel definitely "worships the magazine". This effect will take place irrespective of whether it is fashion industry or any other sphere, as to some extent Miranda leads by example. She is worshipped by many, working with her is prestigious, and "millions of girls would kill for this job". It was through hard work that she made her way to the top, becoming an icon of style, a professional whose opinion is the last resort, one with a pure taste. It is a controversial character who arouses in her staff fear and respect at the same time, sympathy at times and even admiration at her professionalism.

Evidently, this woman leader is shown to be autocratic and task-oriented, paying no attention to human needs and even sacrificing her marriage. The realia she faced early in her career and even those she faces later are quite similar to those any manager lives in. These include the need to organize the work of a big team, to ensure the company remains the best in its field, to stay updated and to anticipate developments, to take power decisions, and to look good. Actually, what she does inspires people. The other side of the story is a husband who lacks attention and may even feel jealous of his wife's professional success. Do we see a typical "hero of our time"? Many employed women today come across the same controversies, even if they are not high-fliers as Miranda Priestly.

Another stereotype of a woman leader found in literature is the Mistress of the Copper Mountain (or the Malachite Maid) described by P. Bazhov in his "Malachite Casket" tales. It should be stressed that Malachite Maid is a rather complicated and multi-faceted character which may be analyzed in terms of culture, ethnics, history and even religion. In this paper she is considered as another female leader type.

Analyzing this character, E. Kulikova says that "the mysterious image of the Malachite Maid makes people panic" (Kulikova, 2012: 161-164). It is similar to the effect that Miranda produces. The character is

shown to be extremely energetic: *"she is a real fidget, could not sit still a minute"* (Bazhov, 1965: 19) *Had ye though of them. It is also someone who appreciates professionalism and independent decisions in others. In the meeting with Danila the Craftsman (The Flower of Stone) she refuses to give him the stone suitable for carving exquisite flowers as he hasn't thought of the design himself: "yourself, I would have given you the stone, but now I cannot"* (Bazhov, 1965: 66).

For many workaholics and true professionals, elements of their vocation may be present in everyday situations, they actually "live in what they do", "their jobs are closely connected with their lifestyles", with the profession "aura" transferred into real life, involvement of the social environment (Danilova, 2019: 99). In the case with the Malachite Maid, this effect is achieved with lexemes denoting gems both in the description of her appearance (*"a robe of malachite"*, *"thin leaves of copper"* in her hair) and interiors of the Mountain.

Another feature common with Miranda is the urge to strive for perfection. She inspires workers to rely on themselves: *"Maybe you'll try once more with your own powers"* (Bazhov, 1965: 65). The very pursuit of the Flower of Stone undertaken by some characters in Bazhov's tales reveals their desire to "expand the envelope" and create a perfect product.

This female character refers to lizzards as "soldiers": *"don't you step on my soldiers"* (Bazhov, 1965: 13). Thus, we can see a variant of a team organized in an autocratic, military style.

Another important detail in Malachite Maid's influence on people is involving them in the activities, giving inspiration which is again a sign of transformative leadership style: *"Ye won't let me leave the mountain? - Why not? the way is open. But they always come back to me"* (Bazhov, 1965: 65). Besides, this woman type is also hard-working and devoid of private life, or lacking

time for it as is the case with Miranda: *"Now fare ye well, Stepan Petrovich, and see ye don't remember me"*. *And there she was in tears"* (Bazhov, 1965: 17).

A comparison of the two women leaders, though described in different genres and at different times, reveals similar issues. Thus, women are faced with a controversy, either to pursue a career and forsake family and develop masculine characters, or to remain feminine and fail to survive in a business competition. Successful management is still associated in many with masculine behavior: "Think manager, think male" (Warrel, 2018). Margie Warrel says "when we think of leadership strengths, we tend to think of male leadership strengths" (ib.), which is the reason they "hold back from pursuing leadership positions".

According to Blake's managerial grid, Miranda is rather concerned about the production than people-oriented. In terms of this grid, Sharanya Ayyappan (2018) identifies her style as "produce-or-perish", which enables her to achieve high efficiency. But then a question emerges: given that our competitive environment makes us put efficiency above all, will it result in a values shift, whereby human value will keep falling and business objectives will become more of a priority?

While Miranda priestly lacks human skills, another leader represented in literature, Mario Puzo's Michael Corleone, developed the following leadership traits which brought him to success, namely: realization of the value of relationships, the importance of taking ruthless decisions quickly and without fear, and the importance of personality change in leadership development (Gopinath, 2018). The scholar chooses this character as a vivid example of a true leader who was not a born one, but rather developed gradually to become what he is. It is not by accident that Godfather values used for illustrating leadership style: "true leadership, is building relationships and building on these relationships (Gopinath, 2018: 6). Mohan Gopinath focuses on

business ethics and "treating employees fairly" stating that this credo is "a recipe of business success" (Gopinath, 2018: 5).

On the other hand, the value of relationships may be realized after some challenging experience: "the potential leader has to be tried and tested in the furnace" (Gopinath, 2018: 6). This aspect corresponds to the requirement to withstand competition mentioned above.

Analyzing transformations in Michael's character, Mohan Gopinath stresses that "unsentimental decision making is a trademark of a good leader" (Gopinath, 2018: 8). Referring to gender differences in managerial styles, we can say that this is another evidence of masculine features prevalence in successful leadership.

This paper title quotes the famous song lyrics by James Brown, "This Is A Man's World", which also addresses gender roles. Again, the traditional approach is that men are responsible for production and bread-winning: "*man made the car to take us over the road, man made the train to carry heavy loads, man made electric light to take us out of the dark, man made the boat for the water, like Noah made the ark*", "*man makes money to buy from other man*" (Brown, 1966). It is comparable to the ideas contained in the proverb "Men make houses, women make homes".

The perception of women's leadership found in literature resonates with ideas of many mass media. Gender equality being in the focus of attention, journalists stress that women in power "should expect to be scrutinized no matter how they behave" and they "don't get the same chance as men to show their leadership talents" (Hymowitz, 2010). Carol Hymowitz refers to the example of Hillary Clinton who was "attacked for being too tough" during her presidential campaign (Hymowitz, 2010). Kaiser and Wallace believe that "corporate leaders do not, and cannot, fit common popular stereotypes of femininity if they wish to successfully lead", and that women in

leadership roles that are thought to require characteristics such as assertiveness, dominance, ambition, and confidence (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016).

The cases analyzed herein belong to different time periods, genres and nations. However, they all appear to share the same opinion: men traditionally rule the world, as it requires strength and tough competition. Masculine characteristics, therefore, need to be developed in anyone who intends to become a leader. While such features are considered normal in men, they may affect women's image and relationships. Remarkably, this perception of traditional role models has not changed much, even though some of the sources analyzed date back to 1930s, when Bazhov created his tales, and 1960s (James Brown, Mario Puzo), while L. Wesberger's novel was written in our time (2003) and it still positions a woman leader as a "devil", though a very efficient and charismatic one. Probably women's role in the world should be seen as something deeper than a business function. It is the role of a mother, compared to "mother nature", like in Bazhov's tales, or a muse to inspire men for achievements, with management being just one of her many capacities.

Conclusion. Books and other works of art being a source of knowledge, fiction characters may become role models for readers. It activates the link between objective reality and literature: first, literature records information about objective reality and stores it with the help of linguistic units, and then, readers inspired by some characters follow their example.

The objective reality described by Lauren Weisberger based on specific professional environment poses several challenges which require consideration. First, it is the gender issue in management. There is a strong stereotype that top management is more suitable for men, or at least it requires that women should develop some masculine characteristics and learn to "think like a man". Second, it is hostility or even aggression that

inevitably develops in people in a competitive environment. This is closely connected with the third aspect, that is, striving for efficiency. Should the latter be a priority, a values shift is inevitable. Further multidisciplinary research of these issues is therefore possible, accompanied with real-life measures aimed at preserving basic values and keeping a gender balance.

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Conflicts of Interest: the author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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