

Gender Metaphors in Modern American Prose

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Abstract – *The research paper presents analysis of gender metaphors in the works by modern American authors – Jay Asher, Nicholas Sparks, Laurie Halse Anderson and Lorrie Moore. In this paper the metaphors with the donor zones of man and woman are analysed. Age parameters and relationships are taken into account.*

Key words – gender, metaphor, donor zone, recipient zone, male, female.

I. Introduction

The modern world is interested in gender issues. The notion of gender is new and it has not to be confused with the notion of sex.

Sex refers to the biological differences between women and men. Gender is a socio-economic and cultural construct for differentiating between roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women and men in a given context [3].

Four American novels are the sources of metaphors (Jay Asher *13 Reasons Why*, Nicholas Sparks *The Best of Me*, Laurie Halse Anderson *Twisted*, Lorrie Moore *A Gate at the Stairs*).

The research includes descriptive (used for metaphors determining and their division), stylo-statistical (in order to count and compare metaphors) and taxonomic (for metaphors classification) methods.

The aim of the paper is to define gender metaphors among the whole sample of metaphors and to analyse their usage.

II. Definition of Gender Metaphor

Gender metaphors are part of our daily life. They are often used in advertising, politics, literature and culture.

Gender metaphor is comparatively a new notion, which on the one part is a particular case of corporal metaphor, on the other part it denotes transferring not only physical, but also all mental qualities and virtues combined by words *femininity* and *masculinity* on the objects that are not directly connected to gender [2].

Gender metaphor is the main method of comprehension for sociocultural reality. This metaphor has ontological status as it is connected not only with reality perception, but also with a way of human existence in the world [1].

III. Types of Gender Metaphors

There are two types of gender metaphors. In the first type qualities of femininity and masculinity are the basis for comparison. The second type is metaphors denoting men and women, which are the means of marking for “typically male” and “typically female” qualities.

IV. Results and Analysis of Gender Metaphors

Four novels are analysed and the whole sample of the metaphors is organised in Microsoft Excel 2010. The attention is paid on gender metaphors of the second type. During the research, the gender metaphors are classified, depending on the donor zones. Age parameters are determined according to “school” criterion: children under school age (little boy and little girl), teenagers of school age (boy and girl), grown-up persons (man and woman). “Couple” zones are based on a type of the relationship (married couple, homosexuals).

The writers use gender metaphors unevenly: the male authors (3%) and the female authors (16%).

Jay Asher applies 2 gender metaphors, when Nicholas Sparks – 6. Their gender metaphors are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. The frequency (more than 1) of metaphors is mentioned in brackets.

TABLE 1

13 REASONS WHY

Boy	Zach's not the only one with a slow boil .
Man	a teacher moonlighting as a counselor.

Jay Asher uses only male donor zones, but Nicholas Sparks describes men and women metaphorically.

TABLE 2

THE BEST OF ME

Man	Tuck Hostetler's still a wizard with cars; grace of an athlete (2); guy was practically green .
Woman	Amanda had always been a mystery ; I was somehow able to soldier .

In Laurie Halse Anderson's work 34 gender metaphors are determined and they are provided in Table 3.

TABLE 3

TWISTED

1	2
Boy	This guy's made of steel ; I'm the biggest bag of sh- ; I'm the biggest bag of manure ; Chip's an ass ; I am your servant ; I was a walnut or a pecan ; I was turning into a wolfman ; I was not a rude, disgusting pig ; you pig ; I was Wolfman, the Hulk, Casanova ; I was a train wreck ; I was a piece of garbage ; I sit silent, a rock ; you're hosed ; I'd be a legend ; I became an armed beast ; Tyler Miller, Lord of the Universe .
Man	my father's Hell level; he was a dragon ; to face the dragon ; his yellow dragon eyes; you're a real success story .

1	2
Girl	angels with ponytails; tennis- angel butts; my fairy angel ; the body of my angel ; a goddess rose up; Holy Goddess of Hotness; Goddess Bethany; the queen bee ; Which way, Your Highness ?
Woman	society queen ; my sainted , blessed mother.

Laurie Halse Anderson uses metaphors denoting **Boy** and **Man**, **Girl** and **Woman**. The recipients zones of gender metaphors describing **Boy**: *material, part of body, fruit, history, animal, cloth*. The author gives for **Man** the following zones: *computer game, animal, story*. The common male recipient zone is *animal*. The quantity and diversity of zones for **Boy** may be explained: these zones provide information about the personality of the teenager. The recipients zones for **Girl** are *christianity, mythology* and *history* and for **Woman** are *history* and *christianity*. These zones for female characters may denote author's respect to women, as two common zones (*christianity* and *history*) are determined.

Lorrie Moore uses 36 gender metaphors, which are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

A GATE AT THE STAIRS

1	2
Little boy	Gabriel became the flying golden angel after which he was named
Man	honey (2); his aquiline profile; Noel, Noel, the toilet bowl (2); he's a horse's patoot ; Thank you, holy warrior ; What if I am the plant ?; What if I am the scheme ?; He's translucent ; Gunny! " and " Gunny, got your gun ?"
Homo-sexuals	we two could be the downstairs ; we would be the back stairs .
Little girl	little Emmie's a doll ; Hey, sweetie ; she is Rapunzel .
Woman	I was a shiftless bum ; Mom's a little emo ; Thanks, honey ; lady's not the sharpest tool in the shed; to be instead her happy maidservant ; the more you were the servant ; a struggling drag queen ; I was also the train ; a state trooper with earrings; the witch who has adopted her; I am a hawk ; my hawk outfit; my bird outfit;

1	2
	there I was a bass-faced bird ; I would be the daughter of storm; end up a gorgon ; a sci-fi tragic mulatto .
Married couple	Edward and I are not good at being canaries .

In Lorrie Moore's novel the age difference is determined with the marker *little*: **Man** – **Little boy**, **Woman** – **Little girl**. The recipient zones for **Man** are *food, animal, furniture, history, material, building, weapon* and for **Little Boy** is *christianity*. The zones for **Woman**: *part of body, subculture, food, item, history, transport, occupation, fairytale, animal, element, mythology* and *race*. The recipient zones for **Little Girl**: *toy, food* and *fairytale*. The common recipient zone *fairytale* reflects connection between the mother and the adopted child.

Conclusion

Male authors use fewer gender metaphors than female authors (Jay Asher 2%, Nickolas Sparks 4%, Laurie Halse Anderson 17%, Lorrie Moore 16%). Due to the age and relationship of male and female characters different donor zones are analysed: *little boy, little girl, boy, girl, man, woman, couple, homosexuals*. Three authors use gender metaphors, depending on the age parameter. Jay Asher's novel does not contain metaphors denoting female characters. Lorrie Moore takes into metaphorical consideration couple relationships.

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