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Ana P. Mužar*
University of Belgrade
Faculty of Philology
English Department

REWRITING GENDER NARRATIVES IN KAMALA MARKANDAYA'S POSSESSION

Through the analysis of Kamala Markandaya's *Possession*, this paper delves into postcolonial gender narratives that question the colonial and patriarchal mode of thought traditionally shaping gender discourse and thus shows how social and cultural paradigms determine the postcolonial gender roles and power relations in the novel. The aim of the paper is to elucidate how the interconnectedness of race, class and gender redefines the very norms of gender identity, defying gender-stereotypical narratives. This paper discloses that gender roles are constructed by the social, cultural and historical context rather than biology itself. Therefore, femininity does not necessarily correlate only with female sex, just as masculinity is not inextricably linked only with male sex. Still, female energy is continually suppressed by the dominant masculine social framework. Furthermore, the analysis of the novel reveals that the Western vs. non-Western dichotomy can be likened to the male vs. female one – the colonizer assuming male identity, the colonized female one.

Keywords: gender identity, postcolonial gender roles and power relations, social constructivism, colonial gender paradigms, patriarchal gender paradigms, gender-stereotypical narratives

1. Introduction

Kamala Markandaya's *Possession* is of paramount importance for demystifying gender paradigms, redefining the very norms of gender identity and dismantling multiple systems of both male and female oppression. By shedding light on the social and cultural mores underpinning gender discourse, Markandaya successfully challenges the notions of male masculinity and female femininity, disclosing how social and cultural aspects of gender influence either one's masculation or effemination. As Butler (1999: 345–346) points out, "when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice". The opening sentences of *Possession* are indicative of the fact that not all ties with colonialism are cut in the postcolonial age, foreshadowing the interconnectedness of race, class and gender that is bound to determine the postcolonial gender roles and power relations in the novel. McClintock (1995: 5) highlights that "race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience…[r]ather, they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other – if in contradictory and conflictual ways". In the same vein, Butler (1999: 343) argues that "gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic,

* ana.muzar@hotmail.com

sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities". Moreover, in the context of imperialism, McClintock (1995: 6) rightly observes that "the rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided – if borrowed – power, not only over colonized women but also over colonized men" – as evidenced by Markandaya's *Possession*. Clearly, the aforementioned privileges speak volumes about the power of the rhetoric of race and its overwhelming influence on the crossings of gender. The plot of Markandaya's novel revolves around the Indo-British encounter in the post-independence period. The story is narrated by Anasuya, an Indian writer, who witnesses how Caroline Bell, an Englishwoman, brings Valmiki, a young Indian boy, from a small village in South India to London as her protégé – or better to say – an exotic oriental commodity. In time, patronage turns into possession as this English lady becomes extremely jealous of both Ellie and Annabel, Valmiki's potential love interest.

2. Gender Narratives Reconsidered

Caroline Bell's skin colour makes her stand out from the crowd at the party she is attending, not allowing her to blend in with the ex-colonized – race signifying a sense of superiority, owing to which she is perceived as more beautiful and sophisticated, "her English good looks being a rarity in India" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 3). Being of Indian descent, even the narrator herself is captivated by Caroline's beauty and grace. Yet, Caroline treats the narrator just as a means to an end, being condescending rather than amicable to Anasuya who has written a book about the village Caroline would like to visit. Caroline is extremely affluent and wellborn, being a descendant of the former Western colonizers. High social status and wealth contribute to Caroline's masculation, rendering her independent of male-dominated society. Caroline becomes impervious to patriarchal social dynamics owing to economic stability and her belonging to the upper English class, which gives her social power and makes her respectable in both Western and non-Western world. Patently, the category of class and material status enable women to break free from the constraints imposed on the category of gender. Friedman (2003: 101) explains that although the concept of autonomy appears to entail an antifemale bias, "autonomy is no longer straightforwardly male oriented or alien to women" – but only to those women of a privileged background, which is something Friedman fails to mention. The feeling of helplessness and dependency turns into self-reliance and women's ability to fend for themselves once they are financially independent and descended from a respectable rich family. Despite being divorced, Caroline enjoys high social status due to her family reputation and wealth. Coming from a long line of the former Western colonizers ruling over India during the age of colonialism, Caroline believes she is entitled to whatever her heart desires in the land of the Other – be that arak or an Indian boy – behaving as if it was her rightful position to get everything served on a silver platter.

On the other hand, our narrator Anasuya acts in defiance of the predefined social roles stemming from the colonial past, refusing any pet names given by the former colonizers and not being afraid to openly express her own opinion and stance towards the old colonial power dynamics. Anasuya is an independent young Indian woman who has created a world of her own making not marred by race, class or gender constraints. Neither conforming to colonial social roles dictated by race nor blindly complying with Caroline's

requests motivated by her higher status and class, Anasuya manages to overcome the limitations placed on her as an Indian woman that is otherwise supposed to be submissive and meek, adhering to traditional gender roles imposed by Indian patriarchal society. Nevertheless, Anasuya gives in to Caroline's request to bring her to the Indian village where Caroline could obtain arak only because Indian peasants living in utter poverty could financially benefit from this purchase of illegal spirits. Moreover, as a writer travelling and living abroad, Anasuya has gained freedom to act outside the patriarchal frame not bound by colonial legacy, which is another reason why Anasuya successfully resists racial and gender othering. However, her feeling of restlessness due to "the tar and macadam of cities" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 9) is indicative of the inevitable inner void ensuing from the trade-off between cosmopolitan aspirations and national roots.

Even though cut off from traditional Indian roots and thus more liberal in thought and action, Anasuya does not approve of Caroline's decision to separate Valmiki, a young Indian goatherd of remarkable artistic skills, from his family and homeland. Expressing disbelief, Anasuya (MARKANDAYA 1963: 12) maintains that it is unrealistic of Caroline to "[expect] [Valmiki] to simply get up and walk away from it all – all the life he [has] ever known – and into some new world she [is] shaping for him". Anasuya's line of thinking implies that she is well aware of how difficult and challenging it is to leave race, class and gender constraints behind, as well as all the social and identity constructs carved in stone and made immutable by the preconceived stereotypical images determining social roles and power relations. Racial, cultural and gender misconceptions can severely hamper one's identity formation and distort one's sense of belonging and selfhood, leading to a crippled vulnerable self that remains within the confines of the Other rather than transforming into a hybrid identity. Anasuya is cognizant of the fact that detachment from one's hearth and home is likely to create the feeling of unhomeliness that cannot be suppressed but only exacerbated by Caroline's forceful act of uprooting Valmiki and moulding him to fit the requirements of the Western world. Therefore, in spite of race and class distinctions rendering the East inferior to the West in the Western postcolonial mind, Anasuya unhesitatingly plucks up the courage to stand up to Caroline, defying the postcolonial East-West power structures and the ensuing patterns of cross-cultural social relations reducing the East to a subjugated voiceless race dominated by the West.

Anasuya is well aware that Caroline shows little regard for Valmiki's own choice and thus she readily opposes the objectification of the oppressed Other. In this very instance, the inferior place is reserved for the Other not only in terms of race and class but also, with gender dynamics reversed, Valmiki finds himself in the grip of the female oppressor. Just as the former colonizers used to justify the colonial project by the need to bring civilization to the Eastern world, Caroline sees her postcolonial artistic project as an altruistic act saving Valmiki from the harsh realities of the Other and helping him evolve into an established sophisticated artist prospering in life. Nevertheless, the oppressor disguised as a saviour promising better life conditions eventually suffocates the Other even more by violently severing almost all ties with the Eastern way of living and being that defines Valmiki's inner self. The Swami's observation that "the world offers its fruit in plenty, but they come in halves, the bitter and the sweet" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 33) serves as an illustrative example of the relationship dynamics between Caroline the colonizer and Valmiki the

colonized, as well as of the taste of Valmiki's new life being a blessing and a curse at the same time – coming at a price too high, that of "physical, spiritual isolation of an outcast" (ibid.).

Valmiki is convinced that he is just a project to Caroline, a mere creation giving her a sense of achievement. To his mind, what Caroline truly craves for is admiration and social recognition, his artistic work just being "one more diamond she can put on the necklace round her throat for her friends to admire" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 59). Otherwise, he is "no more than a small insect in a small crack in the ground" (ibid.) for her. Even though Valmiki has everything one could possibly need to create art, he feels suffocated by the stifling sterile atmosphere in the Western world which renders him static, simply fixed in time and space, leaving him with no inspiration and no room for progress. Caught in the social dynamics quite resembling traditional patriarchal and colonial power structures, Valmiki is made vulnerable and subjected to the state of subalternity. Young (2005: 104) reminds that "the orthodox hierarchy of gender is confirmed and reaffirmed at the level of race, which then in turn feminizes males and females alike in the black and yellow races". Feeling powerless and with gender dynamics reversed, Valmiki assumes feminine identity being possessed by Caroline, the patriarch and the colonizer at the same time, in whose hands his future lies. His occasional rebellion and resistance being characterized as hysteric is another attempt at pinpointing Valmiki's feminine role in the society dominated by male possessive energy. For the mere thought of being regarded unworthy and being treated with condescension and insolence on Caroline's behalf, Valmiki becomes erratic seething with rage. However, he cannot be happy at home as well due to being unable to fulfil gender expectations and take on the male role ascribed by history and society. Thus, Valmiki is automatically rendered the Other i.e., given feminine identity for not conforming to the prescribed social norms and for restructuring gender narratives. Undoubtedly, the means may change but some form of otherness still remains – either in colonial or gender terms. Unlike Valmiki's traditional Indian family, the Swami is not scornful of Valmiki because he is not plagued by racial, class and gender stereotypes. He is a free man not confined by restrictive social codes. On the other hand, Valmiki's father makes disparaging remarks about Valmiki's painting inasmuch as artistic endeavours are considered useless making his son just "[another] mouth to take from his fields [and] give nothing back" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 63).

Nevertheless, Anasuya's vision is not blurred by emotion. She is mindful of the fact that Caroline took care of Valmiki and his well-being, refusing to leave him out of her sight during their time in India. Caroline had faith in Valmiki's artistic skills and stood up for him even when both the East and the West recoiled from him and frowned upon her decision to seek custody of the boy. "On [Valmiki's] sparrow bones Caroline had put flesh…and for [him] she had with so little ado deliberately broken and recast the molds of her life" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 59), Anasuya recalls. Though it is questionable whether Caroline initially had good intentions or not, her efforts did not yield good results and she simply found herself on barren terrain. As Caroline's exasperation and despair for not being able to exert control grew stronger, she became even more possessive of Valmiki to the point of doing him more harm than good. Eventually hysteria got hold of Caroline as well, making it difficult for both of them to remain unscathed.

In a male Western-like fashion, apart from being racially biased towards Caroline calling her an erratic half-American, the Indian men in the novel express sexist prejudice against her as well spreading rumours that Caroline inherited wild blood from her mother. Apparently, a hysteric and erratic state of mind appears inextricably linked with female sex and for that reason the madness attributed to Caroline is deemed a characteristic intrinsic to women, not men. However, as our narrator points out, although men want to suppress the free spirit of women, they are attracted to the very madness they find alarming and alluring at the same time.

Even though Anasuya and Valmiki are both of Indian descent, they do not belong to the same class, which is exactly why Anasuya cannot fully comprehend Valmiki's world – his sense of identity being engendered by prescribed social norms and the weaker feminine role assigned to him by both Western and non-Western society. Indubitably, gender roles are not only determined by biological sex but also by race and class, as evidenced by Markandaya's *Possession*. For that reason, it is crucial to acknowledge Rowbotham's claim (1992) that "…factors *other* than sex may be more important than sex in identity formation" (as cited in ROSEWARNE 2021: 61). In a Western-like manner, Caroline thinks of the Other as submissive, compliant and weak radiating feminine energy that makes a marked distinction between the colonizer and the colonized – the colonized possessing all those meek characteristics its feminine identity hinges on. The fact that Caroline calls Anasuya "a typical timid little Indian baby" and "a gentle Hindu lamb" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 74, 113) due to her apprehension about Valmiki's well-being is indicative of the way the Westerners generally perceive the Indians – as "gentle member[s] of the gentle clans of the southern plains" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 79). The Western vs. non-Western dichotomy can be likened to the male vs. female one, which sheds light on the power structures and gender dynamics between Caroline and Valmiki as well. Anasuya describes the relationship between the East and the West as a forcible possessing that also accounts for the male vs. female power relations in a colonial sense – the colonizer assuming male identity, the colonized female one. Therefore, Young (2005: 89) is wise to note that "race [is] defined in terms of cultural, particularly gender, difference" as well. Similarly, Boehmer (1995) emphasizes that the Indians "[are] typically characterized as passive, soft…and generally effeminate when compared to the robustly male personae of the colonizers" (as cited in INNES 2007: 139). Markandaya's *Possession* clearly shows that gender is not biologically but socially constructed, substantiating Millett's (1969) observation that "while sex is fixed, gender is a mutable and argumentative entity" (as cited in MUKHERJEE 2015: 1). Thus, biological sex does not define feminine identity. Being a cultural construct, feminine identity can only be determined by the social context.

Unlike Caroline and Anasuya, Valmiki's mother feels imprisoned in Indian patriarchal society not being able to voice her opinion even when it comes to her own child. Deprived of any possibility to make her own decisions, she has no choice but to comply with her husband's agreement to let Caroline take care of Valmiki in return for financial compensation. The confining categories of race, class and gender ensnaring women in India strip them of their right to overtly express their viewpoints and take part in domestic affairs. The patriarch is the one to give final verdict on any private or public matter. Caught in the web of oppressive and exploitative practices, whether of colonial

or patriarchal nature, women in India cannot but assume the position of the subaltern that is reduced to a mute object of double colonization. Therefore, Spivak (1988: 82–83) underlines that "if, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow". Valmiki's mother feels free to give vent to her emotions, which she has kept pent-up for so long, only before Anasuya due to being of the same race and sex. Nonetheless, even though they may be of the same race and sex, they are not of the same class, which is why Anasuya perceives the world differently being able to resist the patriarchal confines of gender, as well as confront Caroline without fear or hesitation. Liberated and unfettered by colonial and patriarchal social structures, Anasuya is locked out of "the prison houses of the identities…assigned… by history and society" (JANI 2010: 82). Thus, she is capable of challenging colonial and patriarchal paradigms and dismantling both systems of oppression and subjugation, unweaving the threads connecting the means of double colonization.

Although difference in race and class cannot but affect the nature of Caroline and Anasuya's relationship leading to a clash they are dragged into by the invisible forces of colonial and imperial history, Anasuya is of the opinion that "[no] constriction can [ever] occur when one has moved from acrimony to admiration, shared a hut and an ashram together" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 43). Initially, Anasuya did not show support and look favourably upon Caroline's course of action, concealing animosity and bitterness towards Caroline's typically imperialist attitude and her brazen audacity to claim and control the Other making Valmiki the object of her desire and her possession. Nonetheless, it was only later that Anasuya felt admiration towards Caroline because of her strength, ferocity, resilience and courage to confound race, class and gender expectations shattering the historical narrative of traditional social roles, crushing stereotypes and pushing gender boundaries. Surely, it is not expected of a woman belonging to the upper English class to take a low-caste Indian boy as her ward and thus overstep the bounds of the established state of play regarding the East-West cross-class relations. Transgressing unwritten social codes and getting personally involved with a social misfit – the unwanted Other – is neither approved of by the Western society nor wholeheartedly welcomed by the Eastern one. Caroline assumes the authority equal to that of the male patriarch obliterating divisions between conventionally clear-cut gender domains and bringing the world of male domination closer to the female realm. Moreover, the fact that Caroline, Anasuya and Valmiki have shared a hut and an ashram together implies that they have crossed and redrawn racial and class boundaries. In other words, they have whitened and blackened their bones to the point of convergence and intersection, practically "defying the pull of orbits in space that [they] normally [occupy]" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 75).

It is important to note that Valmiki represents the Other not only in the Western but also in the non-Western world. He is not trusted by his own Eastern community due to belonging to a low Indian caste deemed unworthy. Therefore, one's social status and class or, in this very case, caste undoubtedly determine the social standing of that individual. Being prejudiced against Valmiki, the Indians of a higher caste do not consider him to be of the same clay and thus they are unwilling to take him in and give him lodging for the night. His existence is denied by both the East and the West, which makes Valmiki the subaltern in both societies. Similarly, Ellie stands for the European Other being subjected to ethnic

and sexual violence in her own Western world, suffering oppression and abuse at the hands of the Nazis due to being Jewish. When talking about Ellie, Anasuya mentions that this poor girl "…[has] no parents, no state, no passport, no papers – none of those hollow stacking blocks on which the acceptable social being is built" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 77). As the Other of the Western world, Ellie is considered to be of the inferior race, which indicates how deeply ingrained racial stereotypes are in the Western mind – the mind of the prototypically white male-dominated Western society abusing Ellie on the grounds of both race and sex. Ellie's only asset – that of being "a trained and fully experienced domestic help" (ibid.) – belongs to the female realm, the only one that could give her any sense of perspective for the time being. Interestingly enough, the female domestic realm being the hotbed of discrimination, exploitation and oppression may well at the same time serve as a sanctuary, the only way out for Ellie. However, although the female domestic realm could be Ellie's safe place where she may be able to find solace and acceptance working as a maid, this potentially comforting female world is at the same time out of her reach due to the very atrocities perpetrated at the hands of the Nazis. Left crippled, Ellie is almost rejected in the female domestic realm because of her inability to fulfil all the domestic obligations expected of her. She is made unable to perform her female domestic role by the Nazis who deprive women of the only path whose trajectory they have defined themselves. Therefore, the Nazis strip Ellie of the feminine identity assigned to her by their own establishment interrupting those female narratives they have constructed themselves – thus bringing Ellie to the state of disintegrating into nothingness. As the victim of the European crime committed at the concentration camp, Ellie is truly the subaltern since her existence is practically reduced to insignificance. Said (1994: 36) carefully observes that "lesser powers [mean] lesser peoples, with lesser rights, morals, claims". Besides, Anasuya perceives Ellie as sexless, which implies that what the Nazis did was to unwoman Ellie, change her feminine nature. Even Ellie herself says "after a few months we were not women any more…the flow stopped, we looked like men – no flesh, no hair…for some of us it never grew properly again" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 124). Evidently, some of them were not able to get over what happened at the camp of horror, remaining trapped in the excruciatingly painful past. Moreover, the cruelty at the concentration camp did not leave Ellie only physically but also emotionally crippled due to suffering both physical and sexual violence, which has resulted in Ellie being fraught with distrust and fear – "the only reaction left in her toward human beings" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 79).

As for Valmiki, he is also defenceless against the sexual advances made by Caroline due to her "terrible overpowering craving for possession" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 118) – the consummation of their relationship making her possession complete. Just as the Nazis, Caroline wants to overcome the Other in every possible respect, even sexually. In time, Valmiki becomes attentive to Ellie showing consideration, understanding and empathy towards her hardships and misfortune. Accordingly, it is only Valmiki who can feel her pain, identify with her wounded self and fully comprehend her position of the subaltern fixed in time and space, himself being subjected to the fixed notion of identity as well. Thus, there are some inner threads connecting the two of them on a deeper individual level – "the joined experience of a calculating, maiming, actively hostile and cruel world" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 122). Patently, both of them are the victims of the Western male-

dominated social order, discriminated on the basis of race, class and gender. As Said (1994: 80, 106) points out, "those peoples who geographically and morally inhabit the realm beyond Europe" are persistently considered to be inferior feminized beings.

Ellie resigns herself to the fact that her fate is out of her hand, silently accepting whatever comes her way, which is directly the consequence of the violence inflicted at the concentration camp. Ellie remains voiceless by her choice, showing no signs of rebellion. Even upon realising that Caroline and Valmiki had an intercourse, she continues to endure her pain silently. The reason why Valmiki gradually changes his behaviour towards Ellie is the fact that he gets under the immense influence of Caroline, which triggers a shift in his values. The stronger male-dominated Western world is bound to crush and transform weaker feminine energy into its masculine counterpart, which is exactly what happens to Valmiki who falls prey to Western influence, eventually showing blatant disregard for Ellie and abandoning her even though she is bearing his child. Friedman (2003: 101–102) underlines that Western culture "require[s] men to repudiate the feminine in order to consolidate their own masculine gender identity" insofar as masculine-defined character and behavioural traits allow for autonomy and agency. Valmiki was Ellie's only hope that made her believe in human kindness but his transformation towards the Western ways of living and being shattered her one last hope, making Ellie take her own life as the final act of her disappointment at the cruelness of this world.

Furthermore, even though the Jewish people have been part of the Western society for so long, they are still deemed the Other, a less worthy race. The same applies to the Indians who – although living in the Western world for quite some time – still have to cope with deeply entrenched stereotypical beliefs that cannot be easily dispelled by common reason in the postcolonial period as well. For instance, even though as a maid Mrs. Peabody does not belong to the upper English class, she looks down on Ellie and she naturally assumes a typically Western line of thinking, displaying racial bigotry and acting "as if the ways of the Jews were part of proven folklore" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 88). As for her attitude towards the Indians, bias creeps in once again making her believe that she is doing Valmiki the honour of inviting him for a meal at her home and therefore she deems his rejection a national insult. Similarly, Caroline gives in to dangerous racial stereotypes saying that "it's beyond [her] why Val should have thought [Ellie] worth putting on canvas" (MARKANDAYA 1963: 111). Mrs. Peabody thinks of Ellie as a depraved foreigner due to being Jewish. For the very same reason, Caroline calls Ellie emotional and unstable attributing feminine characteristics to her since Ellie is not part of dominating masculine social forces and thus she is automatically rendered the feminine Other. Mrs. Peabody and Caroline may be of different social standing but they are of the same ethnicity, both of them being scornful of the Jews, which implies that differences of race override those of class and gender. Besides, Caroline's stance towards Ellie supports Spivak's claim (1988: 82) that "the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves". Perceiving Ellie as her adversary, Caroline contributes further to Ellie's marginal presence.

Moreover, the fact that Ellie posed undressed for Valmiki is considered scandalous by Mrs. Peabody and presumably other women adhering to traditional gender stereotypes. However, while Ellie is seen as disgraceful and shameless for indecently exposing herself, Valmiki is deemed a respectable young artist by Mrs. Peabody – even though it was him

who insisted on Ellie posing without clothes. Clearly, it is the woman that is to blame, not the man – the woman always being the culprit, which indicates "the gendered nature of morality and social structure" (AZHAR 2022: 228). Thus, Ellie is the one that is allegedly treacherous, that is leading Valmiki on. Myles (2006) is wise to argue that "…woman is considered more as a product of cultural norms and restraints rather than as a creation of nature" (as cited in RAMESH 2009: 25). Indubitably, the patriarchal patterns of thinking are so deeply ingrained that women like Mrs. Peabody subconsciously assume those patterns, not being receptive to other less traditional interpretations. They are practically trapped in the invisible net of patriarchal values from which it is sometimes difficult to break free and find a way back to an independent mode of thought.

Conclusion

Challenging social and gender norms, both Caroline and Anasuya contribute to rereading and reinterpreting the women's narrative weaved by men. However, Caroline's efforts to cultivate, not to say civilize, Valmiki simply backfire. Instead of liberating him and making way for his artistic progress, Caroline's actions incarcerate Valmiki even more perpetuating the racial and gender stereotypes of the colonial past. Valmiki becomes cognizant of the fact that his transnational identity cannot be formed vehemently, in such a forceful manner. Undoubtedly, he has to break free from both Eastern and Western confines in order to truly discover his own identity – hybrid not necessarily in the sense of assuming quintessentially Western characteristics but transgressing Indian caste and gender boundaries and putting up resistance to colonial stereotyping. Consequently, a paradigm shift regarding the established race, class and gender narratives is much needed in both Western and non-Western world. The social codes laid down by the high-caste members of Indian patriarchal society have to be broken insofar as those codes confine the low-caste members not bound by traditional social roles to feminine identity, making them feel inadequate – as a social misfit bringing disgrace upon male-dominated Indian society. Similarly, colonial gender and power structures need to be deconstructed as well so that the Other would not always remain the weaker and thus ultimately the feminine one.

Moreover, the fact that Annabel left Valmiki upon finding out about Ellie's tragic end suggests Annabel's social conscience. She is not ruthless like others but righteous. She refuses to turn a blind eye to the injustice done to Ellie, representing hope for the better future, liberating women and making their voice heard. Owing to her privileged background of a high class white woman, she is not hopeless like Ellie left at the mercy of the male-dominated Western world, rather she is able to find her footing in life without dominating masculine forces intervening. However, unlike Caroline who is not touched by Ellie's fate, Annabel shows signs of social consciousness changing for the better, turning more inclusive and responsive to all women's suffering – including those being the object of both gender and racial othering. Annabel is the embodiment of the rebellious women's voice resurfacing but this time echoing the sound and the fury of women of colour as well. Hers is the voice that is not compliant, not muffled nor muted but that is about to cut through the age-long silence of the gentle lambs – either Hindu or Jewish by nature.

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Ana Mužar

PREKRAJANJE RODNIH NARATIVA U DELU KAMALE MARKANDAJE *POSSESSION*

Rezime

Kroz analizu dela *Possession* Kamale Markandaje, ovaj rad proučava postkolonijalne rodne narative koji preispituju kolonijalni i patrijarhalni način razmišljanja koji najčešće oblikuje rodni diskurs i stoga pokazuje kako društvene i kulturne paradigme određuju postkolonijalne rodne uloge i odnos moći u romanu. Cilj ovog rada je da prikaže kako međupovezanost rase, klase i roda redefiniše same norme rodnog identiteta, prkoseći rodno stereotipnim narativima. Ovaj rad takođe dodatno ilustruje na primeru analize romana da su rodne uloge pre svega društveni, kulturni i istorijski konstrukti. Stoga, feminitet se ne nalazi nužno u uzajamnoj vezi samo sa ženskim polom, kao što ni maskulinitet nije neizostavno povezan samo sa muškim polom. Ipak, dominantni društveni okviri maskuliniteta uporno potiskuju feminitet. Osim toga, analiza romana pokazuje da se dihotomija Istok – Zapad može poistovetiti sa dihotomijom feminitet – maskulinitet, pri čemu kolonizator poprima muški identitet, a kolonizovani ženski.

Ključne reči: rodni identitet, postkolonijalne rodne uloge i odnos moći, socijalni konstruktivizam, kolonijalne rodne paradigme, patrijarhalne rodne paradigme, rodno stereotipni narativi