HYBRIDITY IN KAMALA MARKANDAYA’S POSSESSION

Abstract: As a study of the meaning and different aspects of the notion of “hybridity” in postcolonial writing, this paper concentrates on Kamala Markanda's novel – Possession. Within the theoretical frame of cultural and postcolonial studies dealing with issues of identity, race, sex, culture, class, language, and power relations, as affected by hybridity, I have particularly elaborated on the relation between hybridity and identity, hybridity and difference, hybridity and desire, and, finally, hybridity and language, as depicted in Markanda's novel.

Key Words: hybridity, identity, sex, race, Possession.

Postcolonialism, Hybridity, Possession

“The West’s embrace of migrant writing represents a victory for the transformative contaminations that came with colonialism” (Bochmer 1995: 230).

In trying to narrow down what the broad concept of postcolonial literature means, I have decided to borrow Boehmer’s definition that “the postcolonial is almost invariably cosmopolitan. It is a literature that is necessarily transplanted, displaced, multilingual, and, simultaneously, conversant with the cultural codes of the West” (1995: 230).

In this paper I shall be focusing on various aspects of one particular topic developed in Markanda's post-colonial novel, Possession – the notion of “hybridity”. I have chosen a novel written in the English language by an Indian author, bearing in mind Robert Young’s view on the phenomenon of post-colonialism: that “[i]t was always India that received the greatest economic, cultural and historical attention from the British”, while all along being acutely aware that it is India that “retains
that position of pride of place, the jewel in the crown of colonial-discourse analysis” (1995: 166).

Let us first dwell on the concept of hybridity, and the aspects of it in Markandaya’s novel.

**Hybridity as a concept**

According to the definition proposed in *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies*, hybridity commonly refers to “the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation”, also embracing the concept of “mutuality of cultures” (expressions of *syncretic*, *cultural synergy* and *transculturalisation*) (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 118, 119), or, to put it simply as Young did, “hybridity is a making one of two distinct things” (Bolatagici 2004: 77).\(^1\) According to Robert J.C. Young, hybridity is the key issue of cultural and racial debate (particularly the indiscriminate use of this term within the colonial and imperial discourse “in negative accounts of the union of disparate races”) (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 120). Starting from the historical records of its first use in the nineteenth century, “to denote the crossing of people of different races”, in his study, *Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Robert Young emphasises the historical link between language and sex (where sexuality had been long regarded as a threatening force – “the spearhead of racial contact”), standing for the “threatening forms of perversion and degeneration” (1995: 5), in the British culture. Young also stresses other (ab) uses of the term, like *miscegenation* (invented in 1864), “conventionally used for the fertile fusion and merging of races” (Young 1995: 9). What his study focuses on is the so called “interbreeding”, that is, the outcomes of “racial mixing” – “the miscegenated offspring” – generating an ever increasing “hybrid progeny” (which goes hand in hand with the general fascination with “people having sex”, says Young, this “interminable, adulterating, aleatory, illicit, inter-racial sex”) (1995: 181).

The illicit sexual relationship between Valmiki (Val) and Caroline is one of the most problematic issues in *Possession*, a novel written in the 1960s, but it seems that even today inter-racial sex persistently continues to be a taboo.

*Hybridity* has always been a controversial, provocative and ambiguous notion. It is also important to recognise that hybridity, as the state of *in-betweenness*, largely means “going beyond dualism, binary thinking and Cartesian epistemology” of the

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West (Pieterse 2001: 238). According to Nederveen Pieterse, *hybridity* denotes “a wide register of multiple identities”, “intensive intercultural communication”, “everyday multiculturalism”, and so forth, but, most importantly, it represents the “erosion of boundaries” (2001: 221-223). This makes it impossible for us to put the meaning of *hybridity* in brackets. Rather, what I will be focusing on in this paper are the protagonists of Markandaya’s novel, Valmiki and Caroline, and the formation of their so-called *hybrid identities*, within the post-colonial culture.

**Hybridity in post-colonial writing**

More than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism [...] Literature offers one of the most important ways in which new perceptions are expressed and it is in their writing, and through other arts such as painting, sculpture, music, and dance that the day-to-day realities experienced by colonised peoples have been most powerfully encoded and so profoundly influential. (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 1)

The “cultural clash” between the East and the West has concerned and inspired the novelists of independent India for decades now. Herself being an Indian-born writer, living in England and writing in the English language, Kamala Markandaya was able to present the complexity of the relations between these two polarities, by firsthand experience. With the “East-West encounter as the major theme of her ten novels”, Markandaya successfully touches upon different levels of this encounter – the political, the social, the human, the cultural and the artistic – but at the same time keeping her distance by looking through the eyes of a “detached observer”, thus revealing her *neutrality* and *non-alignment*, and leaving the moral judgment to the reader, finds Bhatnagar (1995: 28). The clash of cultures is quite straight-forwardly depicted in her novel, *Possession*, dealing with “the perpetual conflict between the Indian spiritualism and the Western materialism” (Bhatnagar 1995: 35). Bhatnagar’s reading of the novel complies with Boehmer’s view of all “migrant postcolonial literatures” which are, according to this critic, “marked by the pull of conflicting ethics and philosophies”, always representing “a potential source of tragedy” (1995: 227). And, truly, *Possession* is a novel about the tragic outcome of the emotional conflict between (and within) the two protagonists, Valmiki and Ellie, ending in Ellie’s suicide and the tragic death of their “mecigenated”, yet unborn child.

According to Boehmer, all post-colonial texts are, in a way, *hybrid objects*, and, ultimately, the hybridity of a migrant’s art should signify “the freeing of voices, a
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technique of dismantling authority, a liberating polyphony”, aiming to shake off “the authoritarian yoke” (1995: 227).

Hybridity and identity

“It is striking that many novelists not only of today but also of the past write almost obsessively about the uncertain crossing and invasion of identities” says Young (1995: 2). This is precisely the issue in Markandaya’s novel – the crossing between, or the mixing of British and Indian identities (as represented by the main characters), and, even more importantly, the symbolic colonisation of the yet-uniformed, seemingly fragile identity of an Indian boy, by an English upper-middle class lady.

The effects of such inter-cultural and inter-racial mixing is what renders the question of national, cultural, and sexual identities of the protagonists problematic. In the “classical model of culture”, according to Friedman, “place dependency”\(^2\) is a threat to ego-stability, that is, a threat to one’s identity (Papastergiadis 2005: 50). Friedman thus finds that through displacement, hybrid cultures and identities do not only lack or lose authenticity, but become “the exemplars of […] rootless cosmopolitan subjectivities”, and “forces threatening to traditional and national cultures” (Papastergiadis 2005: 50). This is, I must say, an example of an extremely negative view, which I largely disagree with. However, it is true that the role of place, and, subsequently, the consequences of displacement, puts the narrative of exile and alienation in the center of the cultural discourse of the majority of post-colonial texts. “The special post-colonial crisis of identity” comes as a consequence of displacement, where “the valid and active sense of self” may be “eroded by dislocation”, say the authors of The Empire Writes Back, or it may even be “destroyed by cultural denigration”, that is to say, by the “conscious and unconscious oppression” of an “indigenous personality by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model” (Ascroft et al. 1989: 9).

Now, Possession does not strictly belong to the narrative of exile, but it is a narrative of displacement and, should we say, futile effects of it on the novel’s displaced subject – the protagonist, Valmiki. Displaced from his native village in India, at an early adolescence, and transferred to England to pursue his artistic career there, Valmiki goes through a sort of identity crisis, from the day he sets foot on

\(^2\) In trying to conceptualise an international culture based on the “inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity”, Homi Bhabha articulated a now popularly used term in postcolonial studies, the so-called “Third Space”. See more in: Ashcroft et al., Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 38.
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English soil. This crisis affects not only his artistic imagination and creative power, but also his artistic productivity, because, in England, he simply could not have fully developed – and used, or “cashed in” – the creative potential he had shown on his native ground. In this view, the positive concept of cultural hybridity fails, since Valmiki’s creativity is truly being “confined to closed forms of tradition”, as Papastergiadis would say (2005: 41) – it were Valmiki’s cave paintings of Indian deities that first fascinated Caroline with their authentic beauty. Papastergiadis’ view is that “cultural identity is rooted in a particular landscape and locked into atavistic values” (2005: 41); clearly, Valmiki’s failure to produce the likewise authentically beautiful paintings while staying in London, is an example of this. If we add the oppressive influence by a “supposedly superior” person, Caroline, on Valmiki’s personality (and creativity), the outcome is only negative – he simply could not live up neither to her expectations, nor to his own artistic potential. Only when Valmiki reconnects with his native soil in the “atavistic desire”, will he be able to create again.

However, the identity crisis in this novel is not one-sided. In his analysis of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, Homi Bhabha, for example, stresses “their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities” (Aschroft et al. 1998: 118). In this, say, more positive view, where hybridity is rather looked upon as a kind of “cross-cultural exchange” (Aschroft et al.1998: 119), than hindrance, which was, on the other hand, necessary for Valmiki’s maturation and the discovery of his real desire – to go back to India and pursue his artistic career there. Therefore, the change of soil may also be looked upon as “a necessary step towards emancipation”; as yet another critic in the field of postcolonial studies would say (Drichel 2008: 598). Also, it is worth noting that, finally, it is “the otherness of the colonised” – here Valmiki – that could end up “othering the coloniser” – Caroline – “in the service of deconstructing the metaphysics of the West” (Drichel 2008: 598, 603). Nevertheless, Markandaya seemed to have concentrated more on the development of the identity of the colonised, than of the coloniser, and we can see that the Western logocentrism is firmly rooted in Caroline’s character, by having the narrator “explain” that: “Caroline came of the breed that never admitted defeat”, with a somewhat ironical conclusion that “so radical a change of her imperious nature could only mean death to her” (Markandaya 1963: 232). However, we should also bear in mind what Young said of the phenomenon of Englishness. According to him, the English identity, too, has become heterogeneous in time, “an identity which is not identical with itself”, meaning that “it has never been
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successfully characterised by an essential, core identity from which the other is excluded” (Young 1995: 3).

Therefore, even if in her novel Markandaya had chosen to put forward the problematic issue of Val’s racial, cultural, sexual and professional identity, the underlying message could also be that, however Caroline may have been depicted from the very first to the very last pages as an exceptionally strong-willed and self-righteous woman, with not just “her English good looks [and] daring behaviour”, but also “with that clear forthrightness just the side of insolence that the English upper middle class use” (Markandaya 1963: 1, 2), there is something in her character that can also be perceived as vulnerability, a lack. Young discovered that the desire for the cultural other is actually a very common motif in colonial novels in the English language (1995: 3), and Caroline’s relentless pursuit of Valmiki is, perhaps, motivated by such a desire.

Markandaya does want to point out that the only way to become a mature, adult person is to have the essential freedom to do it, and it is precisely what Valmiki felt he lacked while under Caroline’s reign. Ultimately, that is, as the Swamy said, “a lesson we all in time have to learn” (Markandaya 1963: 232), a sentence adding up to the (I would say a rather unnecessary) didactic tone of the novel.

Hybridity and difference

If we concur with Young that “[t]he centre of the world has become inalienably mixed, suffused with the pulse of difference” (1995: 2), then we may as well agree that “hybridity as a point of view is meaningless without the prior assumption of difference” (Pieterson 2001: 226). Having already elaborated on the importance of place in the formation of one’s identity, and the fact that both “temporal deferment and spatial difference constitute a being” (Rivkin and Michael 2004: 258) – in Markandaya’s novel, indeed, great emphasis is placed on the influence of this difference on Valmiki’s inspiration, or lack of it, in different settings (England and India). When it comes to the issue of identity, we may as well refer to Derrida’s view that “there are no identities, only differences”, meaning that “no presence of an object or of an idea is complete in itself”, and that “each presence requires supplementation by something else to which it refers and from which it differs” (Rivkin and Michael 2004: 259).

First, Caroline and Valmiki are of different origin, race, sex, and even age, and second, the development of their identities does require their mutual supplementation – Caroline providing education and other “satisfactions”, which,
she says: “I have given and which he knows I can give. One day he will crave them again and then –”, then the Swamy finishes Caroline’s sentence, “then he will be free to go” (Markandaya 1963: 232). It is therefore true that Valmiki does to a certain extent fulfil, but also at the same time frustrates, to borrow Young’s terminology, both Caroline’s colonial and sexual desire.

There is also some kind of paradox in the unity, or, hybridity of “the cultural” (metaphorically embodied in Caroline) and “the natural” (embodied in Valmiki), if we, again, apply Young’s theory of a hybrid culture: “if culture has conventionally been opposed to nature, it has always also laid the claim to the natural and the organic” (1995: 29). Further, if culture, that is, civilisation is “defined through difference” between the “white skin [as a] marker of civilisation” (as represented in Caroline) and “the other”, brown-skinned, or “non-European” (Valmiki), then what we encounter may as well be a “gap opening between material civilisation and spiritual or moral values” (Young 1995: 34, 35). This ever widening gap in Markandaya’s novel becomes most obvious in the dialogue between Caroline – as the representative of the “material civilisation”, and Valmiki and the Swamy standing for “the spiritual”, in their discussion on Valmiki’s paintings:

[Caroline:] “Val, you bad boy,’ she cried, ‘You’ve been living on nothing! You haven’t cashed any of the cheques I sent, not a single one.’ […] ‘No,’ said Valmiki and smiled, the slow smile of unwilling admiration Caroline drew from the most diverse of her protagonists, ‘But they make, don’t you agree, excellent exhibits?’” (Markandaya 1963: 230). The gap further widens in Caroline and the Swamy’s different perspectives on the value of art: “‘They are seen,’ said Caroline, [referring to Valmiki’s works exhibited in London] ‘They are not buried in a hole in a hill in a country which has forgotten the meaning of art. Here Valmiki creates and there is only you to glory in it’”, to which the Swamy replies: “Not only me, I am the least: there is also a divine spirit,’ and the chasm between them widened, carrying them to different continents” (Markandaya 1963: 232).

Further, there is a difference in their perspectives on nature: [Valmiki:] “‘The wilderness is mine: it is no longer terrible as it used to be: it is nothing,’ ‘Nothing,’ she said. ‘Exactly nothing. A wilderness. A waste. All of it, waste’” (Markandaya 1963: 228).

If we look upon the post-colonial, “hybridised” world as one in which “destructive cultural encounter is changing to an acceptance of difference on equal terms” (Ashcroft et. al. 1989: 35), maybe it was that lesson that the Swamy had in
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mind. However, if hybridity entails “forcing together of any unlike living things”, and the relationship between Caroline and Valmiki does seem to be forced to a certain degree, hybridity might then become what Young calls “a bizarre binate operation” by making “difference into sameness and sameness into difference”, but, and this, I think, is crucial in the relationship between Caroline and Valmiki, “in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different” (1995: 26).

Hybridity and desire

Here is what one of the most influential theorists in the present postcolonial theory, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, says on desire, in her criticism of Kant’s philosophy⁴, as representative of the Western philosophy, in general:

“[O]ur thoughts of a purpose in nature, a purpose in human life [...] are shown to occupy the site of a desire” (1999: 20). What Spivak, actually, aims to do is criticise Kant’s teleology of desire: “[to] suppose [man] to be the final purpose of creation, in order to have a rational ground for holding that nature must harmonise with his happiness if it is [...] an absolute whole according to principles of purposes [...] is only the capacity of desire. [...] That is, a good will is that whereby alone his being can have an absolute worth and in reference to which the being of the world can have a final purpose” (1999: 21). In her attempt to deconstruct the basic concepts of the Western philosophy – the “double bind” of its “practical reason”⁵ as she calls it – Spivak exposes the vulnerability of Kant’s theory, by finding it to be inherently contradictory, because Kant, actually, defined freedom as something “compulsory” – a condition Spivak calls “free yet bound” (1999: 21-22). A condition, it seems, Valmiki strives to break loose from.

Robert J.C. Young defined the concept of desire in the post-colonial discourse as colonial desire: “a covert but insistent obsession with transgressive, inter-racial sex, hybridity and miscegenation” (1995: xii). The story seems to be of the novel Possession. Young finds the link between culture and race embodied in sexuality as “its third mediating term”, as a “deep connection between sexuality and racism” (1995: 97). Out of this connection arise all the “fears and anxieties, challenges to

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³ See above.
⁴ “The Critique of the Teleological Judgment”.
⁵ Represented by the European "ethico-political" source texts, which are, according to Spivak, "complicitous with what is today a self-styled post-colonial discourse"; the originators of these narratives are Kant, Hegel and Marx. See: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, A Critique of Postcolonial Reason, Toward a History of the Vanishing Present (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 8-9.
established orders”; these “concerns” make hybridity almost a “scandal [...] deemed inherently, automatically transgressive”, concur other authors (Schwartz and Ray 2000: 72, 78). Again, this theory can be applied to the analysis of Caroline and Valmiki’s “scandalous” and “transgressive” relationship. Even the narrator, at one point, says: “There was the fact of their anomalous association6, on which at the very beginning the society had imposed its sanctions. Few of Caroline’s class would have anything to say to him; and his kind would not approach while she was near” (Markandaya 1963: 75).

The anxiety and the fear arising from the “white supremacists discourse” relates, again, to identity, since the “hybridised new form of identity embodies the detestable consequence of interracial sexual taboo, as interracial sexuality threatens the borders of white identity, and mixed-raced people become the embodiment of that threat”, finds Bolatagici (2004: 77). This is precisely why the question of racial difference is concentrated on sex, or “its consequences, namely the degree of fertility of the union between different races”, says Young, explaining that “it is for this reason that we find the question of hybridity at the centre of racial theory, with its key question of whether the product of sexual unions between different races were, or were not fertile” (1995: 101). Young also finds that the theory of “differing degrees of fertility” is fundamental to the difference between the so-called “proximate” and “distant” races (1995: 18).

Now, with Young’s definition of the “scale of racial difference” in view, the tragic outcome in connection to it in Markandaya’s novel may relate to the following problematic issue: the three-way relationship between Valmiki, Caroline, and Ellie, who is a Jewish refugee. Ellie became pregnant with Valmiki, however, this sexual union turned out to be unsuccessful, too, seeing that their child had never been born because of the mother’s suicide, but also, in my opinion, due to Valmiki’s incapacity to prevent it from happening. Even Young comes to a somewhat paradoxical conclusion that, while on the one hand, “the only possibility of achieving civilisation lies in racial intermixture”, on the other hand the “miscegenation through commerce and colonialism” still causes its “decadence and decay” (1995: 114).

What this novel is also about is the moral decadence of the three characters: Caroline, Valmiki and Ellie. To a certain extent, the tragic outcome of their relationships may call for the negative criticism of hybridity, in general – the “denial of hybridity psychologically or culturally conceived”, becoming “the refusal of possibility to be mixed”, as viewed by certain postcolonial critics (Schwartz and Ray 2000: 80).

6 My emphasis.
On the other hand, “miscegenation” may have a completely opposite meaning to the theory proposing the ultimate failure and decline as the effect of mixing; in other words, hybridity could have “an altogether beneficial effect [...] increasing the fertility and vigour” (Young 1995: 144) of the human race. Looking from this angle, we may admit that it was Caroline’s desire to make Valmiki and his artistic work more “fertile” through “emancipation”, enabling him to attain, what Young calls, “the fullest result of civilisation” (1995: 144). However, I feel a strong need to emphasise that the meaning of the word “civilisation” is not exclusive, and should not, therefore, be narrowed down to the intended meaning in the novel, which is her, Western civilisation.

Further, we may say that the concept of hybridity also reflects dominant concerns “that the white or European-based purity, power and privilege would be polluted, and in being polluted diluted”, which is why “the concept of hybridity assumes the expression of anxiety [...] and paranoia, signaling the ultimate powerlessness of the powerful” (Schwartz and Ray, 2000:79). This shift of power⁷ happens in the book with Valmiki’s maturation and disillusionment, when he realizes that he wants to be set free, outgrowing the insecurity, resentment and anger he felt while being physically, mentally, sexually and financially dependent on, and, at the same time, dominated by Caroline. Overpowering her in one of their last conversations, when he tells her in a voice that “had lost its earlier mocking level”, Valmiki shows his ultimate maturity with the final concession that he does not accuse her of any other iniquity but one: “That you wanted to own me, and it is not an uncommon iniquity” (Markandaya 1963: 230). Here we can see the “potential of hybridity to reverse the structures of domination in the colonial situation”, that Young recognises (Ashcroft et al 1998:120). Similarly, Homi Bhabha, in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, finds “a display of difference producing a mode of authority that is agonistic” (Rivkin and Ryan 2004: 1171)⁸ – and I find that Caroline truly is agonised. If, as Bhabha says, “the effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridisation rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority”, and the outcome, actually, is the “ambivalence for positions of authority” (as “discrimination turns into the assertion of the hybrid”), then the “insignia of authority becomes a mask, a mockery” (Rivkin and Ryan 2004: 1175, 1181). This

unexpected turn happens in the novel when Caroline offers her hand to Valmiki, asking (almost begging): “Can you take it, darling? It’s only flesh you know, not a branding iron” (Markandaya 1963: 229). The “insignia” of her authority ultimately becomes a mockery, with Valmiki's reply: “My dear, I can take it. But can you? And if you can’t – do you think I can bear to watch?” (Markandaya 1963: 229).

The “antagonistic power relations of sexual and cultural diffusion”, make an “antagonistic narrative of desire” (Young 1995: 174; 182). Or, to borrow Spivak’s phrase,9 “free yet bound” may as well be the most appropriate definition of Valmiki’s state of mind while in Caroline’s possession.

Hybridity and language

Going back to the previous connections of hybridity to sex and power, we shall only continue in this vein of analysis by linking it to language10, as both sex and language produce what Young calls “hybrid forms”, becoming the “basis for endless metaphoric extension in the racial discourse of social commentary” (1995: 5).

Now, let us have a look at Bakhtin’s linguistic model of hybridity. For Bakhtin language is always “double-voiced”, and when it comes to hybridisation, he finds it to be a “a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter between two different linguistic consciousness, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor”, restates Young (1995: 20). From the very beginning of the novel, it is clear that the two different linguistic consciousnesses are Valmiki’s and Caroline’s. The situation with these characters is not only that they speak different languages, but that Caroline assumes the role of Valmiki’s language teacher, and only to the point where she decides it would be enough for him to learn the English language, which means never having taught him to read or write. This leads to the connection between language and power. From the very beginning of Val’s informal education in London, he constantly gets frustrated (for example, for not understanding the meaning of the word “crevice” that Caroline used for the cave where he used to

9 See above.
10 With the (more recent) example of Aborigines in Australia fighting for multilingual education, Gayatri Spivak elaborates on what she calls the “concept-metaphor language”, standing in for “that word which names the main instrument for the performance of the temporising that is called life”. The Aborigines wish to reclaim the language they “have lost” in the process of colonisation, which does not mean, explains Spivak, that these people have actually forgotten their mother tongue, but that they have “lost touch with their cultural base.” For more, see: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, _A Critique of Postcolonial Reason, Toward a History of the Vanishing Present_ (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 404.
paint, back in India). But, instead of submitting to Caroline’s unwillingness to provide an explanation, he would not give in, in this “contest of wills”, determined to find out the meaning of the word, on his own: “‘A small crack in rocks.’ He said the words as if they were brands on his thin-skinned back, monstrous on human hide. His anger flared, bright, violent. ‘No. I not crawl like lice […] She not find me in crevice – she beg me, I come. She not like, I go back to Swamy’” (Markandaya 1963: 54); which is where he eventually did go back to.

By moving to England – and I am tempted to say almost by being transferred to England – Valmiki started losing touch with *his* cultural base, his language. Thus, going back to India was a necessary step of reclaiming not only his national pride, but his language as a part of his identity, his selfhood.

Bakhtin introduced a further distinction between the “intentional hybridity” and the “unconscious organic hybridity”, where it is this intentional hybridity, which “enables a contestatory activity, a politicised setting of cultural differences against each-other dialogically” (Young 1995: 21-22). A good example of this, and we have already referred to parts of similar dialogue above, would be the final dialogue between Caroline, Valmiki, and the Swamy:

[The Swamy:] “Even this wasteland may have something to show, other than what you have seen.”

[Caroline:] “A waste’ […] Wasted beauty, wasted work, a wasted man.”

[The Swamy:] “Do not speak of it, it is blasphemy … Where is waste in the work a man does to glorify his god, it is blasphemy to say it”’ (Markandaya 1963: 230, 231).

Bakhtin’s doubled form of hybridity through this “double-voiced, hybridised discourse” not only serves a purpose, whereby “each voice can unmask the other”, but also makes a particular dialectical model for cultural interaction (Young 1995: 21, 22), bringing the authoritative discourse to the point where it is *being undone.*
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Hybrid possibilities

"Hybridity has become invested with impossible conceptual promise, hope bound to be dashed, faith destined to turn bad" (Schwarzand Ray. 2000: 72).¹¹

Hybridity, a widely disputed notion inside the post-colonial world (of theory), translated in literature becomes the story of class, culture, gender and race. As a representative of the post-colonial hybrid narrative, Possession is a novel that tells the story of a so called colonial desire, the story of intermixture that includes both “the creation of culture itself, [and] the world of art”, as Young would say (1995: 112). But, Possession is more than that. Borrowing phrases and definitions from a variety of critics in the truly vast field of postcolonial theory, we could also say that Markandaya’s novel is the story of the “corrupt conjunction of hybridised sexual and economic discourses” (Young 1995: 158), of the “decline of bourgeois hegemony” (Pieterse 2001: 226), of the “production of cultural differentiation as sign of authority [...] [and] the revaluation of the symbol of authority as the sign of colonial difference” (Rivkin and Ryan 2004: 1175, 1176)¹², of the “merging and of dialogisation of ethnic and cultural differences set critically against each other” (Young 1995: 24), undermining the very basis on which imperialist and colonialiszt discourses raise their “claims of superiority”, and, last but not least, it is the story of a certain “form of subversion” (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 118).

However dismal the outlook for Valmiki’s artistic career in a so called “hybrid” culture may have turned out to be, and however dismal the outlooks for Valmiki and Caroline’s relationship, in the end, a rather universal message, but still a message of hope, reads:

“Yet the end results were not uniformly dismal. Given courage they could rise beyond grotesquerie to become unique and splendid, like the British in India, like Caroline overcoming the worst of foreign temperament and terrain: and perhaps, I thought, one day like Valmiki too” (Markandaya 1963: 87).

¹² Bhabha, H.K., “Signs Taken for Wonders”, op. cit., 1167-1184.
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Bibliography

ХИБРИДНОСТ У РОМАНУ ПОСЈЕДОВАЊЕ КАМАЛЕ МАРКАНДАЈЕ

Резиме

Као једна од студија значења и различитих аспеката појма хибридности у постколонијалним текстовима, овај рад бави се романом Посједовање Камале Маркандаје. Имајући у виду
теоретски оквир културолошких и постколонијалних студија које се баве питањима попут идентитета, расе, пола, културе, класе, језика и односа моћи, помно смо размотрели однос између хибридности и идентитета, хибридности и разлике, хибридности и жеље те, најзад, хибридности и језика, онако како га Маркандаја представља у свом роману.

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