

**PLAYING WITH GENDER CONVENTIONS  
IN LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY'S  
*THE QUARANTINE AT ALEXANDER ABRAHAM'S*:  
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

*UDC 821.111(71)-32.09*

**Vesna Lopičić, Milena Kostić**

University of Niš – Faculty of Philosophy, Serbia

**Abstract.** *The inspiration for the essay was Nelson Goodman's claim that the dualism of nature and culture is still academically relevant. Our goal was to extend it to the concept of convention and relate it to the currently very hot issue of marriage. We would like to argue that the institution of marriage belongs in an indeterminate category between nature and convention, which allows for playing with the gender conventions which constitute a marriage. The arguments are taken from anthropology, and the text used for illustrations is a short story, *The Quarantine at Alexander Abraham's* by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery. The conclusion is that the emergence of an evolutionarily more stable society and consequent survival of Homo hinged on marriage as a foundation block of culture, enforcing social behavioural constancy governed by convention. At the end of the essay, we briefly refer to the post-postmodern need for the revision of values, and problematize marriage as a salvational space and a keeper of meaning in the post-cynical age. The essay consists of three sections: 1. Introduction: Marriage between Nature and Convention; 2. Playing with Gender Conventions; 3. Conclusion: Form as a Keeper of Meaning.*

**Key words:** *nature, culture, marriage, convention, gender*

1. INTRODUCTION: MARRIAGE BETWEEN NATURE AND CONVENTION

Not pertaining to any involvement in the philosophical discussion of representation, we would still like to start with contemplating the words of Nelson Goodman expressed in his *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*: "Although many philosophical dualisms have been debunked, the dualism of nature and convention continues to haunt

---

Submitted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, accepted for publication in June 2014

**Corresponding author:** Vesna Lopičić

Faculty of Philosophy, English Department, Serbia

E-mail: lovevuk@gmail.com

discussions of representation” (Goodman, Elgin 1989: 101).<sup>1</sup> The dualism of nature and convention seems to be, in other words, the dualism of nature and culture if the definition of culture as the imposition of arbitrary form upon the environment proposed by Ralph Holloway (1969) is adopted. Deji (143-144) explains that according to Holloway there is no basic difference between tool-making, using language and abstract thinking since they are all similar cognitive processes. Further, arbitrary symbols make it possible for social relationships to be standardized and manipulated through symbols, thus enforcing the constancy of social behaviour, which must be the foundation of culture. This explains the interdependence of culture and convention as an arbitrary form in which both are at the other end of the spectrum from nature.

Goodman also points out the difficulty of delineating between natural and conventional symbols. Sometimes they are self-evident as in the case of pictorial representation, while at other times they are purely arbitrary as in the case of linguistic representation. There are also a number of symbols which are intermediary cases (Goodman, Elgin 1989: 101) since it is not easy to classify them as natural or conventional. He lists some examples such as Chinese pictographs or star charts where there is a resemblance between image and object but the image is of course a man-made convention accepted by the community in question. We would like to argue, hoping for some elastic imagination, that the concept of marriage belongs in this indeterminate category between nature and convention, allowing for different handling in different periods of time, and for playing with the gender conventions which constitute a marriage.

In his article “The Human Adaptation for Culture”, Michael Tomasello (Tomasello 1999) outlines the evolution of modern humans, suggesting three distinctive features that humanity evolved:

- (a) the creation and use of conventional symbols, including linguistic symbols and their derivatives, such as written language and mathematical symbols and notations;
- (b) the creation and use of complex tools and other instrumental technologies; and
- (c) the creation and participation in complex social organization and institutions.

These features evolved simultaneously though at a different rate giving rise to what is commonly known as culture. Marriage as a fundamental social institution was part of it from the very beginning of civilization, but its transition from the state of nature to an elaborate set of conventions built into the foundation of culture was gradual and slow. Primates as our closest evolutionary "cousins" are known to have developed different gender relationships ranging from promiscuous mating among chimpanzees to monogamous pair bonding among gibbons (see Stone 1997). Their behaviour in this respect resembles the patterns of relationship among modern humans without normative social controls, and contributes to the Darwinian evolutionary theory. There is a long step from this purely natural uncensored and unregulated behaviour to the institution of marriage. To explain it, Linda Stone in her study of kinship and gender relies on the theory of Robin Fox (1975, 1980) that the combination of ‘descent’ with adult male-female ‘alliances’ in one system essentially distinguishes humanity from other primates.

---

<sup>1</sup> The quote further illustrates this dualism: “Pictorial representation is taught to be natural – a matter of resemblance between image and object. This resemblance, moreover, is taken to be an objective matter, visible to the human eye and evident to all who look. Linguistic representation, on the other hand, is considered conventional – working by rules and stipulations that secure the connection between words and the world.”

Namely, "some primates exhibit 'alliance,' others 'descent'; but the two patterns never occur together in the same primate system," quotes Stone. Fox also explains how this uniquely human r/evolutionary step might have happened, believing that the control of mate allocation was of crucial significance. It was a consequence of the division of labour, by which the 'hunting hypothesis' and the 'gathering hypothesis' as theories of what moved human evolution were brought together. Men were good at hunting, women at gathering, but both men and women needed meat and vegetables, proteins and vitamins. Therefore, there was a good reason, besides sex, that men and women develop lasting alliances similar to matrimony. For getting and sharing food, cooperation becomes most important and since sexual rivalry among the males over females was adverse to it, mate allocation had to be regulated. Fox forwards a daring idea:

As with the control of sex among non-human primates, the control of mate allocation in Homo is in the hands of the dominant males (at least overtly), and again, they either monopolize or share on their own terms with initiated juniors. But the primary aim by now is not monopoly of intercourse necessarily, although this is expected to correspond roughly with power[;] it is the economic and political control of women (and for women the domestic exploitation of men) (Fox 1980: 152).

This in fact means that while older males have the power to allocate females, younger males get them if they obey the rules set by the dominant males and not through overt competition. These are evidently the rudiments of marriage rules. The consequent emergence of an evolutionarily more stable society contributes to the survival of Homo coinciding with this transition from the state of nature to the state of culture with regard to marriage. It might be that the use of language and tools emphasised by Tomasello as distinctively human characteristics preceded the development of marriage patterns but the creation and participation in marriage as a social institution likewise marks the difference between nonhuman primates and humans. It achieves the same goal, the peripheralisation and subordination of young males (and females for that matter) to the benefit of the dominant ones, but in a different way. Instead of superior strength, the alpha males impose human rule-bound ways to regulate the relationships in the community. In many modern societies this situation remains almost unchanged, the young still depending on their elders for at least approval in the choice of the spouse. The point is that there is a set of rules defining the behaviour of those who want to get access to sex and food. That is how finally marriage emerges as a foundation block of culture enforcing social behavioural constancy governed by convention, and leaves the field of nature ruled by competition and survival of the fittest as its main principles.

However, this departure from nature can never be complete due to the biological fabric of marriage. On the one hand, marriage is a social construction and its rules or conventions differ and change from culture to culture in the course of time. On the other hand, marriage stands for family and family is prior to culture. The most essential, if not the sole, purpose of family is biological reproduction in the interest of the community or, more precisely, of the survival of the species. Without children, a culture has no future, and whether this truth is voiced by anthropologists, sociologists or religious zealots, there is no denying it. Gregory Koukl, one of those who oppose same-sex marriages for religious reasons primarily, still identifies a crucial point. He challenges columnist Dennis Prager's traditionally accepted (till the Istanbul Convention) definition of marriage, "Every higher

civilization has defined marriage as an institution joining members of the opposite sex” (Prager 2004) by saying that cultures do not define, but describe marriage. “If marriage is defined by culture, then it is merely a construction that culture is free to change when it desires” (Koukl 2005). The absurdity of such a prescriptive approach to marriage is self-evident,<sup>2</sup> and the public outcry against same-sex marriages only confirms that this change of marriage conventions regulated by law should follow rather than prescribe the dominant bonding patterns identified in society. The biological aspect of marriage will probably for ever keep it in the limbo close to Goodman’s dualism of nature and convention.

Going back to Goodman: he also stresses the intricate ambiguity of the term ‘convention’, claiming that there are two uses for it. It may mean the ordinary, the usual, the traditional, the orthodox; or it may mean the artificial, the invented, the optional (Goodman 1988: 93). He further states that for this reason we can have unconventional conventions (unusual artifices) and conventional nonconventions (familiar facts). Goodman thus opens the door wide to playing with convention, which can be converted into its opposite or subverted out of necessity. Deliberate spinsterhood or old bachelorship may serve as examples in the context of marriage conventions. Lucy Maud Montgomery’s short story *The Quarantine at Alexander Abraham’s* illustrates these ideas since it indirectly questions the conventions related to gender and marriage, and foregrounds the significance of food (and implicitly sex) in establishing (marital) relationships.

## 2. PLAYING WITH GENDER CONVENTIONS

The story generously offers itself for symbolic interpretation in terms of gender conventions. The main character is a middle-aged spinster by the name of Peter Angelina MacPherson who insists on being addressed as Peter. In 1906 when the story was published in the collection *Chronicles of Avonlea* there were definitely no disputes over the issue of gender as a social construct. However, Montgomery allows her heroine to choose her social role. Though called Angelina as a child, she decided to be called Peter when she grew old enough. This seems to be a subversion of the social conventions characteristic of the Victorian system of values which implied strictly defined roles for men and women. The notorious convention of the woman being the angel in the house, formulated and elaborated by Patmore (Patmore 2004) on 144 pages includes the lines: “Man must be pleased; but him to please / Is woman's pleasure.” Ironically, these words

---

<sup>2</sup> Linda Stone, elaborating on the difference between the problem-solving skills of chimps and humans provides the following example which illustrates the impossibility of prescribing marriage patterns even if to the benefit of both parties: “Or, for a human example, consider the bitter war between Muslims and Serbs in the former Yugoslavia. Outsiders have been unable to end this conflict. But it might stop if the Muslims and Serbs merely instituted one simple rule: All Muslim males could marry only Serbian women, and all Muslim women could take only Serbian husbands. Conflict would likely cease, then, not just because young people of enemy groups would be forced to intermarry but also because, over time, all the people in the predominantly Serbian areas would have sisters, daughters, and grandchildren among the Muslims, and all the people in the Muslim areas would have sisters, daughters, and grandchildren among the Serbians. Unfortunately, these two groups are unlikely to adopt such a marriage rule, so deep is the discord between them; but the example certainly shows how a rule of intermarriage could help deter intergroup conflict.” Koukl would argue that such rules are not adopted, but acknowledged: “Society then enacts laws not to create marriage and families according to arbitrary convention, but to protect that which already exists, being essential to the whole.”

are found in the part titled "The Wife's Tragedy" which was not a hindrance to their wide popularity. The patriarchal mores subordinated women physically and emotionally, so it seems that Peter Angelina disapproved of this practice when she got to understand its implications. Laws and customs subjected women to men resulting in the complete dependence of women upon men, be they their fathers, brothers, or husbands. Peter Angelina allegedly refuses the role of the angel in the house and assumes male identity by name and manner. By being Peter, she appropriates the masculine role, also clearly defined in Victorian Canada, and leads an independent self-sufficient life. Though undoubtedly a woman by constitution, she adopts life-principles traditionally characteristic of men: determination, discipline, straightforwardness, sense of duty, frankness, responsibility, intolerance of tardiness etc. She is also very proud of how she created herself, and repeats many times in the story that she is noted for her characteristics. It is not surprising that she lives alone with a few cats, the favourite of which is William Adolphus, and by definition hates men and dogs.

Playing with this gender convention, Montgomery seems to be telling the readers at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century what advocates of the concept of gender as a social construct are doing right now through the Istanbul Convention<sup>3</sup>, trying to have at least eight members of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers ratify it. Article 3 (c) of this convention reads: "'gender' shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men." This definition is radically different from the previous one, given in the Rome Statute, art. 7(3), and traditionally applied in European societies: "For the purposes of this Statute, it is understood that the term 'gender' refers to the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society. The term 'gender' does not indicate any meaning different from the above." Whether the Istanbul Convention will be fully ratified to the satisfaction of radical feminists or not remains to be seen, but further development of the story shows that Montgomery did not really promote non-conventional gender roles. It is rather the opposite.

The other main character in the story is Mr. Alexander Abraham Bennett, known as a woman hater, and fully fitting this gender stereotype. An avowed bachelor, he lives alone on his farm, unkempt in a neglected house close to a well-kept barn. His best friend is a mean dog by the name of Mr. Riley. When these two persons are, due to an outbreak of small pox, quarantined in the house of Mr. Bennett for a few weeks, the animosity they initially show towards each other is represented through the first encounter of the dog with the cat. Since William Adolphus is an intruder, and a cat at that, in the territory of Mr. Riley, the dog charges at him only to be brutally attacked and clawed by the cat. Mr. Riley, Mr. Bennett's dog, is defeated and humiliated by William Adolphus, Miss McPherson's cat, which anticipates the unconventional relationship between the two pet owners. Gender roles will be inverted in the sense that Peter's masculine approach drives Alexander into unwilling almost woman-like submission. Peter takes over the house and runs the household according to her principles, thus establishing a non-standard order where

---

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. It was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 7 April 2011. It opened for signature on 11 May 2011 on the occasion of the 121st Session of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul. It will enter into force following 10 ratifications, 8 of which must be member states of the Council of Europe. As of September 2012, the convention had been signed by 21 states, followed by ratification by one: Turkey.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention\\_on\\_preventing\\_and\\_combating\\_violence\\_against\\_women\\_and\\_domestic\\_violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_preventing_and_combating_violence_against_women_and_domestic_violence)

woman rules man, and cat rules dog. Gender and, shall we say, biological roles are inverted, and conventions completely destroyed, as many modern feminists would have desired.

However, Lucy Maud Montgomery, also the author of *Anne of Green Gables*, did not turn her story into a farce, though it does often make one laugh. Keeping true to the complexity of life, she creates a more realistic plot in which socially constructed gender roles are discarded in favour of genuine individual needs. Mr. Bennett falls sick with small pox, and Miss MacPherson does her best to nurse him back to health. That is an excuse for both of them to show their true selves: Peter is caring and tender, Alexander grateful and gentle. They need each other as incomplete and imperfect human beings who reach integrity through interaction.

The names of the main characters as arbitrary linguistic representations of these persons are not arbitrarily chosen at all. They are carefully selected symbols of the duality between nature and convention as well as of the intricate complexity of human personality. Etymologically, Peter stands for 'stone' and that is what Miss MacPherson emotionally becomes, driven by social expectations. Needing to remove the stereotype of a failed maid from her name, and the stigma that accompanies it, she survives in the world of men by acting as a man which empowers her. Yet, when she can relax in the enclosed safety of a home, she manifests her own angelic side represented by her other name, Angelina. On the other hand, Alexander etymologically means 'defender of men' which is how he behaves at first. He believes that his role is to defend the stereotype of the bachelor, and be true to what society expects of him as an unmarried man. When he gets sick and the mask is dropped, his other name, Abraham, meaning 'father of the multitude,' takes over and he becomes a lover, which is what he originally was, having loved his late sister dearly. Imposed or uncritically accepted social conventions transform these two fine human beings into a misanthrope (spinster) and a misogynist (bachelor), reducing them to stereotypes and wasting their human potential. However, they are not one or the other aspect of their dual names: rather they are both. Peter is seen, Angelina hidden, but Miss MacPherson is both strong and unrelenting as well as sympathising and considerate. Alexander is seen, Abraham hidden, but he is both at the same time, a successful farmer and a man who could father children. Society assigns them irreconcilable roles: she is a cat, he is a dog, but they prove that they are man and woman, different but compatible. The socially constructed gender gap is bridged through marriage so in a way biology/nature wins against convention.

Resuming the idea of free access to food and sex as the anthropological basis of marriage: in Victorian times, even an allusion to a sexual relationship between a man and a woman, married or not, was considered highly inappropriate. When Miss MacPherson is caught alone in the house of Mr. Abraham by her doctor, she feels the need to protest:

"There is no loud call for sorrow, doctor," I said loftily. "If a woman, forty-eight years of age, a member of the Presbyterian church in good and regular standing, cannot call upon one of her Sunday School scholars without wrecking all the proprieties, how old must she be before she can?" (Montgomery, in Sullivan 1999: 47).

However true her words may be, they still indicate the strength of social conventions and her discomfort at unintentionally breaking them. It is only in the state of a health emergency that any intimacy between two persons of the opposite sex could be tolerated. Sexual intercourse is acceptable within marriage, though not talked of, as in the context of

the story many details show that the main protagonists like each other and that they will become intimate in marriage. Since this sphere of exclusive sexual access has to be screened from the eye of the reader, it is fully compensated by the frequent mention of food.

Miss MacPherson lives alone but she loves cooking and is noted for getting up suppers (latent sexual desire). When she is quarantined at Mr. Bennett's, she finds his house well-stocked with food (latent sexual potential), and she immediately starts preparing it. He is a sarcastic chauvinist, but they enjoy the meals together, and even secretly start feeding each other's pets (substitute for sexual play). This proves that her evolutionarily ingrained tactic of using delicious food as a natural substitute for seduction works really well because Mr. Bennett in the end proposes to Miss MacPherson. The chemical and psychological similarity between consuming food and sex is well-explained today, when even the phrase 'food-porn' is entering into use. Having introduced it in her book *Female Desire*, Rosalind Coward describes the possible motifs behind the behaviour of Miss MacPherson and many other women:

Cooking food and presenting it beautifully is an act of servitude. It is a way of expressing affection through a gift... That we should aspire to produce perfectly finished and presented food is a symbol of a willing and enjoyable participation in servicing others. Food pornography exactly sustains these meanings relating to the preparation of food. The kinds of picture used always repress the process of production of a meal. They are always beautifully lit, often touched up" (Coward 1984: 103).

Putting aside the feminist criticism implied in this quote, Rosalind Coward seems to be right in saying that offering food means offering affection, and that it often brings joy to the person who serves it. It is definitely the case with Miss MacPherson, whose spirits are up when she manages to mellow Mr. Abraham with her imaginative meals. Her submissiveness throws some more light on the above quote of Robin Fox: "But the primary aim by now is not monopoly of intercourse necessarily, although this is expected to correspond roughly with power[;] it is the economic and political control of women (and for women the domestic exploitation of men) (Fox 1980: 152). Willing and enjoyable participation in servicing others is the pinnacle of the patriarchal subordination of women, which means that Miss MacPherson will be politically and economically subordinated in marriage to Mr. Bennett, gladly assuming her role of the angel in the house.

Linda Stone, quoting Fox, contemplates his words in the brackets:

Domestic exploitation of men? If women in this system end up processing food, cooking, and taking on the considerably larger share of child care, it would seem that they, not the men, are being domestically exploited. Is Fox suggesting that, to maintain the vegetable/sex/meat trade, men were "forced" to hang around more in domestic units (as opposed to spending more time in male-bonded hunting groups)? Or does he mean that men were conned into "Investing" more heavily in children? (Stone 1997).

Stone hits the right points: instead of being only hunters, men become husbands and fathers, increasingly aware of the value of women (daughters) as potential wives of others, and therefore a source of political power, along with all the in-laws acquired in this fashion. Finally, women produce offspring and men's interest in investing in them is well explained by Richard Dawkins in his *The Selfish Gene* (1976). Therefore, it is not all that surprising that men powerful in public often prostrate themselves in front of their wives in

the privacy of their homes. At the very beginning of the story, intimidating Mr. Bennett finds himself by accident sprawled on the floor before Miss MacPherson, symbolically allowing her to 'domestically exploit' him. Besides, by becoming Mrs. Bennett in the Victorian age, she is literally provided for by her husband. Further, marriage or matrimony is foremost about children. The etymology of 'matrimony' directly points to this fact in its combination of the words 'mother' and 'condition', implying sexual intercourse, without which a woman could not get in 'an interesting condition' and become a mother. Miss MacPherson is most likely past the breeding age, but her interest in children is manifested through her teaching in Sunday School. It is in fact because of one of her pupils, who worked for Mr. Bennett, that the two of them got in touch and stayed together. All in all, they get married for the anthropologically right reasons: food, sex, children, safety.

### 3. CONCLUSION: FORM AS A KEEPER OF MEANING

The story opens with an unexpected inversion of gender roles, smacking of the subversion of conventional patriarchal values and almost anticipating "the definition of manhood and womanhood relative and independent of biological facts" (Wróbel, see Baklinski). Still, the unusual behaviour of the main characters may be easily explained, not as much as a revolt against the dominant gender and other conventions constituting patriarchal relationships, but rather as a defence mechanism they employ. Miss MacPherson and Mr. Bennett are acutely aware of their own failure to comply with the Victorian conventions which oblige them to get married and have large families. Since they have not managed to attract the opposite sex, they decide to repel it by becoming man/woman haters, and suppressing their biological and social needs. The identity masks of self-complacency and self-sufficiency they begin to wear in public dehumanise them by turning them into caricatures of humanity, worried only about their public image. Their mental state assumes the characteristics of disease, symbolically represented through the outbreak of small-pox. Montgomery ingeniously puts the two of them in quarantine, as if to give them a chance to get cured by resuming and embracing their private selves they have refused for the sake of coping with public expectations.

Quarantine, as an institution designed for the protection of society against those who threaten it by being diseased, places Miss MacPherson and Mr. Bennett in the category of social outcasts who need to be isolated until reformed. The speed and the thoroughness of their transformation reveal the extent of their suffering in the previous single condition. Peter Angelina readily assumes the role of housekeeper, cook and nurse, while Alexander Abraham allows her to clean, feed and heal him, leading to their conversion into husband and wife. The convention of the opposite sexes finding fulfillment through marriage is thus achieved, and the author leaves no room for doubt as to their becoming better human beings. Mr. and Mrs. Bennett are more tolerant, more considerate, and more loving than they were before, confirming the meaningfulness of convention.

In our modern times of post-postmodern revision of values, the story *Quarantine at Alexander Abraham's*, taking us one hundred years back, may stand as a road sign directing the modern reader which way to take. The twentieth century meandered through various cultural movements and critical schools constituting modernism and post-modernism, only to arrive at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the feeling of failure.



Alan Kirby's pseudo-modernism marks the death of post-modernism and the need for a critical approach to "contemporary texts which are alternately violent, pornographic, unreal, trite, vapid, conformist, consumerist, meaningless and brainless" (Kirby 2006). Post-postmodernism, maybe under the name of Eshelman's Performatism, demands love, belief, beauty, and transcendence:

I would also suggest that it is not evil which determines the post-postmodern condition (even if evil is still active and present as a residual phenomenon), but rather love, for love, as *the* optimal condition of innovation, enables *any* subject to be loved - that is, to enter with another, alien subject into a whole, salvational space or frame. This perspective, which is that of a sacralizing metaphysical optimism, means the end of postmodernism and not its continuation by other means (Eshelman 2000).

Miss MacPherson and Mr. Bennett are definitely two alien subjects at the beginning of the story, who by its end enter marriage, made alluring by its promise of food, sex, love. Marriage as a salvational space for the Victorian people is perhaps not the right frame for contemporary times, but a form giving sustainable shape to gender relationships seems to be necessary as a keeper of meaning in the post-cynical age. Thus gender conventions in their playfulness need not be devoid of their natural content, and beauty may lie in embracing them.

#### REFERENCES

1. Baklinski, Thaddeus. "European convention defining gender as social construct condemned as "rape" of Polish society." Wed Jul 18, 2012. <<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/european-convention-defining-gender-as-social-construct-condemned-as-rape-o>>.
2. "Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence: Explanatory Report." 2011.
3. Coward, Rosalind. *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*. Boulder, Colorado: Paladin, 1984.
4. Dawkins, Richard. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford : Oxford University Press., First published 1976; 1989 edition.
5. Deji, Olanike and Olanike F. Deji. *Gender and Rural Development: Introduction, Volume 1*. Münster: LIT Verlag Münster, 2011.
6. Eshelman, Raoul. "Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism." *Anthropoetics - The Electronic Journal of Generative Anthropology* Volume VI, number 2 (Fall 2000/Winter 2001).
7. Europe, Council of. "Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence." n.d. *Council of Europe* \_ 11 9 2012 <<https://wed.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1772191>, n.d.>.
8. Fox, Robin. *Primate Kin and Human Kinship*. Ed. Robin Fox. Vol. Biosocial Anthropology. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.
9. —. *The Red Lamp of Incest*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1980.
10. Goodman, Nelson, Catherine Z. Elgin. *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1988.
11. Holloway, Jr., Ralph L. *Culture: A Human Domain*. Vol. 10 (4). Current Anthropology October, 1969.
12. Kirby, Alan. *The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond*. Philosophy Now (58) (November/December 2006), n.d.
13. Koukl, Gregory. *Marriage Is a Social Construction*. 2005 Stand to Reason ARR, 2005.
14. *Matrimony*. "Online Etymology Dictionary". Etymonline.com., n.d.
15. Montgomery, Lucy Maud. "The Quarantine at Alexander Abraham's." *Oxford Book of Stories by Canadian Women in English*. Ed. Rosemary Sullivan. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1999. 43-56.
16. Patmore, Coventry. *The Angel in the House*. Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2004.
17. Prager, Dennis. *Probing the Massachusetts justices' minds*. Townhall.com, 2004.
18. "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court." 1998.
19. Stone, Linda. *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*. 3rd Edition. Boulder: Westview Press, 2005.
20. Tomasello, Michael. *The Human Adaptation for Culture*. Vol. 28. Annual Review of Anthropology, 1999.

**POIGRAVANJE SA KONVENCIJAMA RODA  
U KRATKOJ PRIČI LUSI MOD MONTGOMERI  
KARANTIN KOD ALEKSANDRA ABRAHAMA:  
ANTROPOLOŠKI PRISTUP**

*Inspiracija za rad potekla je od tvrdnje Nelsona Gudmena u kojoj se ističe da je ideja dualizma prirode i kulture još uvek akademski relevantna. Naš cilj jeste da na ovu ideju nadovežemo koncept konvencije i da ga potom dovedemo u vezu sa trenutno aktuelnim pitanjem braka. Stav koji zastupamo u radu je da institucija braka pripada nedefinisanoj kategoriji na granici između sfera prirode i konvencije, što joj omogućava poigravanje sa konvencijama roda koje konstituišu brak. Argumentacija potiče iz oblasti antropologije, a tekst koji koristimo za ilustraciju naših stavova je kratka priča Karantin kod Aleksandra Abrahama kanadske autorke Lusi Mod Montgomeri. Zaključak rada je da pojava evoluciono stabilnijeg društva i dalji opstanak čoveka zavise od braka kao temelja kulture kojim se osigurava društvena stabilnost, a regulisana je konvencijama. Na kraju rada nalazi se kratak osvrt na post-postmodernu potrebu za revizijom sistema vrednosti, kao i na problematizaciju braka kao institucije koja nudi spasenje i smisao u našem post-ciničnom dobu. Rad se sastoji iz tri odeljka: 1. Uvod: Brak na granici između prirode i konvencije; 2. Poigravanje sa konvencijama roda; 3. Zaključak: Forma kao čuvar smisla.*

Ključne reči: *priroda, kultura, brak, konvencija, rod.*