

Irena Weber

Univerza na Primorskem,  
Fakulteta za turistične študije – Turistica  
University of Primorska, Faculty of  
Tourism Studies – Turistica  
irena.weber@fts.upr.si

## Kolumb, bitje ženskega spola: refleksije o spolu v potovalnih zapisih Alme Karlin

Že v uvodu potopisa *Samotno potovanje* (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1969) se Alma Karlin vidi »v vlogi modernega Kolumba«, ko si zamišlja »odkrivanje novega sveta« in se pripravlja na »osvajalni pohod«. V nadaljevanju se z njim primerja ali identificira. Po eni strani ga razume kot navdihovalca in spremljevalca, po drugi sebe vidi kot neke vrste reinkarnacijo. Ker se je pogosto izrekala za »bitje ženskega spola« in ne za žensko brez pridržka, je njeno kolumbovsko identifikacijo možno interpretirati tudi kot preseganje izključne spolne identifikacije, ki je nedeljivo povezana s strukturo in z vlogo moči. Ne gre za to, da bi si želela biti moški, temveč tisto, kar je moškim pripisovala, namreč da njihovo delo »služi človeštvu nasploh« in ne posameznikom ter da »samozadovoljstvo dosežejo z večjo lahkoto in s popolnostjo«. Ženske je kolektivno označila za tiste, ki trpijo in se samoursničujejo le redko. Do žensk, ki jih je srečala na potovanju, je imela ambivalenten odnos v kontekstu etnične ali »rasne« pripadnosti, popotnice, ki so po istih poteh hodile pred njo, je zamolčala oz. jih je, tudi zaradi občutka kolumbovskega prvenstva, ignorirala. Iz njenih zapisov je mogoče utemeljeno sklepati, da si je določene etnografske opise »izposodila«. Ena od raziskovalk potopisov Alme Karlin se v analizi sprašuje »Ali je ženska lahko Kolumb?«, druga raziskovalka, ki se loteva antropološke in muzealske analize Alme Karlin, njeno identifikacijo s Kolumbom premesti v poimenovanje »Kolumbova hči«, čeprav se Alma Karlin sama, kolikor nam je znano, ni nikoli tako označila. To morda kaže na določeno nelagodje pri poimenovanju, kadar spolna identifikacija ni uvrščena v neprevprašujočo binarnost.

*Ključne besede:* Alma Karlin, Kolumb, potovanje

## Columbus, a Being of the Female Sex: Reflections on Gender in Alma Karlin's Travel Writings

In the introduction of her travelogue *The Odyssey of a Lonely Woman* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933) Alma Karlin casts herself 'in the role of a modern Columbus,' imagining 'discovering a new world' and preparing for a 'conquering expedition.' Later on she compares or identifies herself with him. On the one hand, she refers to Columbus as an inspirer and companion, on the other hand, she perceives herself as a form of his reincarnation. Since she often declared herself to be 'a being of the female sex' rather than unequivocally a woman, her identification with Columbus may be interpreted as transcending an exclusive gender identification that is inextricably linked to power structures and roles. It is not that she wanted to be a man, but rather what she attributed to men, namely that their work 'serves humanity in general' and not individuals, and that men 'achieve self-satisfaction with greater ease and perfection.' She collectively labelled women as those who suffer and rarely self-fulfil themselves. She had an ambivalent attitude towards the women she met on her journey, in the context of ethnic or 'racial' belonging, and she glossed over or ignored the women travellers who had walked the same paths before her, also out of a sense of Colombian primacy. From her writings, it can be reasonably inferred that she 'borrowed' certain ethnographic descriptions. In her analysis, one of the researchers of Alma Karlin's travelogues asks 'Can a woman be Columbus?' another researcher, who undertakes an anthropological and museological analysis of Alma Karlin, recasts her identification with Columbus as 'Daughter of Columbus,' although Karlin herself, as far as we know, never referred to herself in this way. This may indicate a certain discomfort with naming when gender identification is not placed in an unquestioning binary.

*Key words:* Alma Karlin, Columbus, travel

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