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ROMANTIC LOVE

This article analyzes three concepts of romantic love. The feminist approach considers romantic love, as it is recognized and evaluated today, as a product of the West. Feminists consider that Western culture, with its capitalist discourse and coding, turns emotional love into a desirable form of love behavior and speech. In that sense the representation of romantic love is yet another kind of control over women and their emotional needs. The second approach, represented by Anthony Giddens, considers romantic love as liberating, for women in the first place. The democratism of romantic love which is propagated with this approach, is subject to a particular critique regarding Giddens's stated argumentation. Finally, the author presents the third concept advocated by anthropologists, which is outlined in the question: Is romantic love a product of the West or is it a universal phenomenon, and how is that problem explored in ethnographic materials?

Keywords: romantic love, commodification of love, universal romance



Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman in the movie *Casablanca*, 1942.

In an opinion poll by *The American Film Institute*, the classic from 1942, *Casablanca*, was declared the most romantic American movie of all times. The poll was conducted among film directors, scriptwriters, actors and

many other employees of the film industry. We could say among those who understand movies. Let's recall the film's story, it's about the encounter of two ex lovers. He is the owner of the most famous nightclub, and she is married to the leader of the Resistance Movement who is wanted by the Germans. To save her husband she needs the help of her ex lover, whom she still loves. The story unfolds during The Second World War in Casablanca. Their love is impossible, fettered by personal, social and historical chains which will, by the end of the movie, result in the separation of the two main characters. The movie is filled with pathos, unfulfilled longing, rational resolutions, and the ending which is anything but a "happy ending". Regarding the poll's results we can consider it also as a prototype of "true love".¹ The question comes to our mind: is indeed true love painful, unattainable, sometimes even deadly? Namely, why is such love in the human value system the most appreciated? Or is it a case of the idealized film story that is hard to resist since it idealizes love for which we only need packets of paper tissues, but not self sacrifice as well. A possible answer is that such love, thank God, after all happens rarely and almost always to someone else. But it is worth asking: is not such a concept of romantic love in fact a Western idea of what is love and how to best artificially represent it (and to make money). Exactly that last question will be the axis of this article. Is romantic love a product of the West or is it perhaps a universal phenomenon? Is it possible to separate love and sex? These are only some of the questions that will help us in reflections, which will predominantly be tinged with the feminist approach to this problem.

Inventing romanticness

A concept of romantic love starts appearing more prominently in the 17th century, and if we accept Niklas Luhmann's thesis about the simultaneous beginning of the idea of individuality, we could draw the line and say that romantic love, as we know it today, is a product of the modernistic concept of individuality. Eva Illouz declares that romantic love is a continuous

¹ It's interesting that in the mentioned opinion poll not a single movie filmed in the last 40 years entered among the first five, and merely two movies from the seventies entered among the first ten (*The Way We Were* and *Love Story*). Behind *Casablanca* ranked the hit *Gone With The Wind* from the year 1939, and ranked third is *West Side Story* from the year 1961. In the first seven movies the love couple does not stay together, and in all ten movies film camera recorded merely 260 scenes of kissing, while there were 187 scenes of fighting. The recipe by which current movies are guided includes a good proportion of love, humour (classics preferred irony) and action. Among modern love movies the best ranked as the 21st on the top list, is *Pretty Woman* from the year 1990. The prostitute who alongside a rich man becomes a lady is in fact a contemporary fairy tale of Cinderella, whose wicked stepsisters and stepmother are nowadays the society that drove her out on the street, but also the high society that she is preparing to enter. With consideration of the more complex plots of the first three movies on the top list. Considering the more complex plots of the first three movies on the list, we could conclude that the modern taste has been trivialized to the level of banality of kitsch psychology (www.iskon.hr).

product of capitalism, i.e. a fertile ground for social differences and cultural contradictions which favor the development of a capitalist economy and politics (1997:2). Though at first glance quite different and hardly a match, capitalism and the idea of romantic love are tightly intertwined. On the economic level capitalism includes: two clearly interested parties which want to gain profit; the changeability of trading partners; dependence of relationships upon economic situations, and finally rationality, publicness and profitability of economic capitalism. On the other side, romantic love includes: two persons who are developing mutual empathy; and a relationship in which the partners are considered unique and unexchangeable. Romantic love is more irrational than rational, "gratuitous" in the sense of monetary profit, and private (ibid.:2). However, Illouz warns us, emotions, culture and economy are connected through cultural tools like norms, language, stereotypes, metaphors and symbols. By means of all that is woven a subtle veil which hides the re-layering of emotions by daily political and economic logic. Besides that, not a single emotion enters into public and general usage if it is not appropriately named. For all that we have to keep in mind that a process of naming is always a political act, most often associated with profit. In a cultural coding of the sentiment of love, Illouz further states, culture has played a key role of the name-giver. Designating, i.e. naming, hides in itself regulation or society's prohibition of personal emotions or sexual preferences. Society's attitude in respect to some phenomenon can be decoded by means of the syntagm it uses for the same phenomenon, as well as according to a naming of the sexuality related to it. Romantic love, considering a cultural tradition it belongs to, can be described as desire, inspiration or passion.

The evolution of romantic love itself is determined by stages like "dating", long lasting joint appearing in society and even longer marriage. To make sure that the sequence unrolls according to a well tried recipe, "culture provides symbols, artefacts, stories, and images – symbolic 'snapshot' – in which romantic feelings can be recapitulated and communicated" (ibid.:4). The whole arsenal of the cultural tool-box in fact hides "the utopia of transgression", so Illouz intensifies her polemic about romantic love. She warns that those who think that the concept of romantic love is in fact a subversive force in society which has shaken the legal and moral order are mistaken. The assumption that the appearance of romantic love affirmed the possibility of an independent choice of partners, and in that way articulated the utopian model of the sovereignty of the individual against the group's rules, according to Illouz, can be linked with capitalism for at least two reasons. A certain form of romantic love appears also in pre-modern Western societies, as a happy framework of a marriage in which economic security will be realized with an independently chosen partner. So, change is only in additional emphasis on personal choice, but not in conditions which a chosen one has to satisfy. The point in question is the leitmotiv which will later become a key ideological direction of

capitalism – choosing the most suitable business partner regardless of a group's attitude, the most important is that cooperation brings profit. The second element that both romantic love and capitalism possess is the openness to all possibilities of alternative social order – that order which will, opposite the patrimonial model, disseminate its choice of partners and market far outside of endogamous group also (*ibid.*:9). Transgression was in fact carried out by capitalism which in the concept of romantic love has found the perfect partner for the projection of a better world, a ticket for which, of course, one has to pay. Cultural, social and economic changes brought on by different phases of capitalism, with the help of a mass market and mass media, have transformed the meaning of love. Love becomes a new religion which, besides being an ideal still from Victorian times, becomes public, visible, widely accepted. The indication of our happiness and self-affirmation.

In the 20th century the glorification of love is carried out through the narrative contents of such as books and movies, visual contents by way of advertisements and movies, music genres and prescriptive forms like advice columns in magazines or self-help books. But if in buying a movie ticket or a magazine we are buying personal love happiness, that is still not a high price to pay. The real love market is in every day consumption. We are talking about the image of love happiness realized while shopping together for unromantic products like motor oil, dish washing liquid or subscriptions to services of phone companies which will enable you to have long and low-charge chats with the loved person. At least that is what the advertisements are teaching us. In action is the reciprocal process of the "romanticizing of trade goods" and the "commodification of love". Perhaps the most interesting thesis is the one in which Illouz unfolds the idea of how romantic love, from initial inclination towards marriage, is nowadays shaped into a hedonistic search for a challenge, adventure and a unique experience, regardless of how long it lasts. Here is how she perceives this transition of love's locus. From the beginning of the 20th century until 1940 advertisements and movies, at that time the most powerful cultural industries, have been developing the vision of love as utopia "wherein marriage should be eternally exciting and romancing and could be if the couple participated in the realm of leisure" (*ibid.*:41). Following that, new industries are producing the new ideal, a fusion of hedonistic fervour and still required marital stability, a rather neurotic post-modern love condition where "that which is romantic" is subjected to a whole array of trendy messages.² The most important is to "live the present time to the max". Illouz will intensify her exposition to the point to say that today's concept of romantic love is turned against work. Namely,

² Eva Illouz had analyzed 80 advertising photographs published in different American magazines in the period from 1989 until 1991, that have targeted the middle and upper middle class. Three categories of products were most often linked with romance: image-building (perfumes, dresses and makeup), leisure (hotels, travel and drinks) and gift-giving (diamonds) (1997:83).

if romanticness is really linked with leisure time that is spent searching for an expected adventure or that special atmosphere, which can be corroborated with always sought-after "love destinations" like Paris and Venice, than romantic is indeed in opposition to working hours, i.e. work itself (ibid.:88-90). The question which forces itself upon us is concerned with the money required for, perchance romantically, spending leisure time. Apart from the yuppie culture of fast living, the economy-wise dominant culture of the post-modern age, on the one side adopts the hedonistic concept, but on the other side is totally dedicated to a twenty-hour workday. That leaves just enough leisure time to successfully realize one-off or short-lived intimate encounters which are offering an image of romanticism, which Illouz criticizes, with hardly time to consummate it.

The theory of democratic love

Anthony Giddens starts from a completely different supposition than Eva Illouz. He has a much more optimistic attitude towards romantic love. Moreover, he declares it democratic and emancipatory. According to Giddens, before the invention of romantic love, Western society has for the first time merged passion and love – *amour passion*, as an expression of the generic connectedness of love and sex, and for that it is similar to other civilizations. Although up to then a range of expressions which link love with weakness or strength has been recorded in the history of literature, for the first time passionate love was indicated as an opposition to the everyday, as one which forces persons to ignore their usual responsibilities. Passionate love is disruptive, it uproots us from the world and therefore is dangerous for the world order. It is hardly ever associated with marriage, and it is even resistant to it. In that sense it is opposite to romantic love, claims Giddens (1997:38). Marriages in pre-modern Europe are mainly the consequences of economic agreements and not of sexual attractions. Only shell aristocracy, freed from reproductive demands and work routine, enjoy an independent sexuality. But, such freedom generally is not connected with marriage, i.e. it is mainly extramarital, namely adulterous. If we draw the logical conclusion from Giddens's opinions, it means that only extramarital love has a chance of becoming passionate, dangerous and so much desired. Furthermore, arranged marriages were unlikely to bring a sexual spark between spouses to the same extent that a forbidden fire of sinful love could blaze up. Explaining distinctions between the two loves, Giddens claims that, as opposed to passionate love, romantic love has interrupted the stipulated relationship with sexuality, giving an advantage to the "virtual" erotic relationship. He probably means a relationship in which both sides become interested partners "for something more", namely a marriage, if possible sprung up from platonic love which yet awaits its consummation. In that sense the eighteenth century has started creating a new array of codes, instructions on how to behave, that is, how to get and keep affection of a certain gentleman or a lady. The author leads us to the

conclusion that passionate love as a universal cultural phenomenon preceded romantic love, with some of its aspects has announced it, and partly reshaped itself in it, but the two of them have never completely merged together. Though today's image of romantic includes passion, through its historical and discursive development these two loves are using different code, differently relate towards intimacy and marriage, just as society had differently related towards them.

Jack Goody in his book *Food and Love* (1998) harshly attacks "certain sociological explanations of modernism", calling them ego- and ethnocentric. He dedicates special attention to Giddens' interpretation of modernism and romantic love. In the very introduction to the critique he defines what he understands as romantic love. That is love which includes a sexual relationship and is linked with intimacy, and as such he finds it in diverse parts of the world (1998:97). In that definition is deposited the main counterargument to Giddens's theory. So neither is romantic love liberated from sexuality in the sense of a conventional break, nor is it specifically European. He resents Giddens for separating *amour passion* and romantic love, and states that it is impossible to mark one as universal and the other as "culturally specific" because ultimately it would mean that "romantic love is modern, modernism is European, therefore love is European" (ibid.:98). Some anthropologists agree with Goody's critique and state that it is a case of an ethnocentric understanding of human emotions, according to which love and romantics belong to the Westerners and to the *Others* desire and yearning (Jankowiak (1995:2). Goody himself calls Giddens' exposition of love extremely ethnocentric because he also separates passion as world-spread from romance as a European creation (1998:102). Persisting with the distinction passion/romance, Giddens actually perpetuates the Western myth of modernization as a proper cultural invention, like Denis de Rougemont does when linking the beginning of romantic love with troubadours' love poetry, while ignoring the Arabic influence and the fact that it is an elite practice and not a phenomenon widespread across social layers (ibid.:105).

Romantic love – Giddens dates its appearance to the later part of the 18th century – joins the Christian ideal of marital unity and fidelity with elements of passionate love (ibid.:39). That is the mixture inaugurated by the novel, and Giddens explains it in this way: "Romantic love introduced the idea of a narrative into an individual's life – a formula which radically extended the reflexivity of sublime love. The telling of a story is one of the meanings of 'romance', but this story now became individualized, inserting self and other into personal narrative which had no particular reference to wider social processes. The rise of romantic love more or less coincided with the emergence of the novel: the connection was one of newly discovered narrative form." (ibid.:40). Once again we are perplexed with Giddens theses, because almost the majority of traditional communities which took over Christianity combines ideals of their confession with elements of passionate love and for that does not use the

described code of romantic love. And least of all uses "the new narrative form" while combining, since the majority of rural inhabitants of Europe of that time, let us narrow our scope, was illiterate. The eighteenth century novels indeed have their axis in experiences connected with private life, a civic one. "The modern novel around year 1740 (...) retreats to the area which then was called the 'small world', as opposed to the 'big world', that is the world of feudal representation and political events" (Žmegač 1987:62). In the novel, on the way from a feudal ethic to a civic ethic, are still existing certain ideologems of group morals, but supplemented with individual decisions. In such a contradiction originates the love novel as a kind of bending point for moralistic abstractness and erotica. "In pursuit of *sincerity* (sincerity as a model of behaviour worthy of literary shaping in a modern novel, note by the author) the novel becomes in unprecedented measure the love novel, i.e. a narration about a central individual emotion – without any additions of miraculous or magic such as in parts of stories about great love passions in Middle Ages' novels." (ibid.:63). Love is a means of discovering every day dynamics of human relationships. This somewhat confirms Giddens' thesis about the importance of the novel and its connection with romantic love, but it should not be considered as the only connection – lyrics have a much longer tradition in that – and neither as specifically European. The Japanese novel *Pillow Book* by Sei Shonagon from the 10th century reveals the everyday life of the court and love intrigues in a manner which the West "discovered" almost ten centuries later.

There is another novelty Giddens warns us of, and that is the connection between romance and women. As loyal readers, but also as writers of romantic literature, they will play a key role in the social changes of that age, considers the author. There are three key social phenomena related to the flowering of the concept of romantic love. Those are: new relationships inside a household, changed relationships of parents and children, and the invention of motherhood. The ever growing absence of husbands and fathers because they work opens a space for woman's creative shaping of everyday life inside the house. That everyday life includes spousal duties, but also the freer planning of leisure time. Besides that, matrimonial partners in the context of a growing appreciation of individuality are becoming partners in agreeing upon, planning and realizing their own marriage and life. It still does not mean that men have surrendered part of their "power" to women, but their participation in bringing joint decisions is definitely greater. Fathers' power over children also "softens", because of a more modern approach to upbringing which demands a more emotional relationship of parents with children. "Women's control over child-rearing grew as families became smaller and children came to be identified as vulnerable and needing long-term emotional

training. As Mary Ryan³ has put it, the centre of the household moved 'from patriarchal authority to maternal affection'" (ibid.:42).

The idealization of the mother, states Giddens, is a component of the modern conception of motherhood which doubtlessly had an influence on the values that romantic love propagates. Connecting femininity and motherhood gives a new quality to women. We would like to add, that quality which today is considered a stereotype of the gender – tenderness, sweetness, self-denial. Yet these qualities are bound to desirable female sexuality, namely non-aggressive but responsible and sensible. Giddens finds similarities between these characteristics and those which adorn romantic love, so accordingly such a love would be essentially feminized. Feminized for its expectations of shared responsibilities between partners, a sort of cooperation in marriage (ibid.:43).

His interpretations of the female role in the above depicted context are acceptable to us, though we are puzzled why he does not emphasize that it is a case of the creation of a new literary discourse intended for women, and not the real position of women in society. Although the woman is still separated from public life, the idea of romantic love, particularly in sentimental novels, promotes specific female power in a domain of intimacy. The creation and realization of intimacy in the sense of partnership is not always like novels depict it, but it is a potential instruction from which standpoint women could ask questions about their own destiny. It is not a question of global woman's social destiny, but certainly it is the question of individual destiny in matrimony. Novels from that period are a framework for calling into question personal position in matrimony, offering strategies for choosing partners and enabling the imagining of proper happiness in one's own hands. Although romantic novels will from one side be "testimony of female passivity", because command of one's own happiness essentially means finding a strong man who will know how to lead his family through life. On the other side these novels give hope that kindred souls can find each other, but also that unhappy loves can be triggers for choosing independence and emancipation. The heroine of a romantic novel is always active and therefore subversive because she herself is exploring ways of her personality. A very similar mechanism functions today also. The idealized little image, to be sure with obligatory sex, of the search for eternal love continues to have an effect on women through love novels, but also through films. The female audience is the target audience when writing a script for some love movie, a story is always the same: they meet, quarrel, fall in love and get married. Dissenting relationship with the woman still remains. She is encouraged to rightfully choose and love, but is only to be given that right if she walks the well trodden path – to ultimately choose a man for marriage. What Giddens does not mention, but which seems

³ Ryan, Mary. 1981. *The Cradle of the Middle Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

exceptionally important for literature as well as for history, is the fact that in the modern novel women are becoming bearers of action, protagonists who by the way of literature are entering history and so building into it their specific points of view. During almost two centuries, by means of literature's idea of romantic love, there is a widening of the circle of women who are, by reading and fantasizing, implicitly creating an unusual social force as a prerequisite for changes which will later, in the second half of the 20th century, be recognized as feminist. Feminists themselves, as we have seen in the example of Eva Illouz, have contradictory opinions about the progressive force ascribed to the concept of romantic love. Continuing his reflections about the transformation of intimacy in modern societies, Giddens states how today vis-à-vis romantic love we talk about *confluent love*. That is active, contingent love in conflict with the romantic concept of "eternal love with one and only one man". "The 'separating and divorcing society' of today here appears as an effect of the emergence of confluent love rather than its cause" (1997:61). While gender relations in romantic love are unequal, confluent love aims at equality in emotional giving and receiving. Love will be developing in dependence on how much both partners are prepared to care about the other one. In his explications of confluent love Giddens will once again return to the relation of romantic love and sexuality, this time stating that "romantic love is sexual love, but it brackets off the *ars erotica*. Sexual satisfaction and happiness, especially in the fantasy form of romance, are supposedly guaranteed by the very erotic force which romantic love provokes" (ibid.:62). Let us remind ourselves how this author tried exactly through sexuality to deduce a distinction between passionate and romantic love, denying to the latter one conditioned relations with sexuality and giving the advantage to "a virtual erotic relationship". No less confounding is the sentence on how confluent love for the first time introduces *ars erotica* "into the core of the conjugal relationship and makes the achievement of reciprocal sexual pleasure a key element in whether the relationship is sustained or dissolved" (ibid.:62). Neither *ars erotica* appears for the first time in marital relationships (rather unmotivated and suddenly in the text he links confluent love and marriage), nor does the love relationship today depend exclusively on the reciprocity of love's pleasure. Additionally he writes how in non-Western societies *ars erotica* is a speciality of women which is almost always connected with specific groups: concubines, prostitutes or members of minority religious communities (ibid.:63). Perhaps Giddens understands *ars erotica* as special orgiastic or at least more skilful sexual acts from those which can be found in one's own bed. Even if he thinks so, then what about highly educated European courtesans who certainly knew more about philosophy and the practice of *ars erotica* than their clients, already since the Old Greece until today?

Giddens teaches us about a few more qualities of confluent love which we all should know since they happen now and to everyone. We find out how confluent love develops an ideal where everyone has a chance of

becoming sexually competent. Besides that, such love is not monogamous in the sense of sexual exclusivism and it is not especially linked to heterosexuality, but it is still focused on diversity and the central role of the other. It means, for example, that auto-erotica today, despite the huge pornography business, does not enter the corpus of confluent love. Perhaps Giddens thinks how today's love, as well as earlier love, can include persons of the same sex, but always only two persons. One, three or more is no longer love, but what else?

In an effort to include a gender perspective into the analysis, Giddens takes into consideration man's position in the contemporary concept of love. Men of the Western culture today for the first time are questioning their masculinity, which again reflects also on their understanding of love. While in the past they believed that their activity is determined by "history", and experienced romantic love as a situation in which they will build their life "around one woman" and not get too much carried away in developing intimacy, today in that sense their construction of identity is much more unstable. Referring to Sharon Thomson's research about the values, attitudes and sexual behaviour of 150 American adolescents in 1980, Giddens writes how a loss of virginity for boys is always a gain, a bonus in the social sense. That will influence them and later on to publicly understand love as *amour passion* (ibid.:51). Any different behaviour is socially unacceptable and romantic man gets labelled as a weakling under his wife's influence. So it was at an earlier time and so it is still today. Male insecurity is a result of dissenting messages reaching him. On the one side he is expected to support equality of rights for sexes in all aspects of life, and again on the other side he is still prevented from expressing forms of behaviour which are most befitting his emotional character. Women have to help men in finding their proper place in society, is Giddens' implicit message (ibid.:192). They can help their male partners to develop satisfactory relationships by creating together a "rolling contract" which "does not deal in ethical absolutes. This one derives from a specific 'relationship problem list' where there were previously 'negatives'" (ibid.:194). Following that comes free and open communication. All this can help both of them to develop a sense of autonomy without compulsiveness and an open dialog to express their personal needs and expectations from the love relation. Giddens call such a relationship a *pure relationship* which he defines as a "situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it" (ibid.:58). By all means it would be a praiseworthy handling of the promotion of activist models of cooperation in a scientific text if its expectations were not paradoxical. Namely, if the pure relationship implies complete equality also, then it is not clear why women have to help their partners to attain the ideal Giddens talks about. It would mean that women have already discovered it, only it is

not clear with whom? Indeed, Giddens suggests that today men are trying to attain what women have already adopted – but they have not succeeded in it yet because of accumulating love adventures. The irony of his recommendation lies in the fact that the woman once again has to play the social role of helper and peacemaker, of the one who will take care of her man so he could take care of her. Historically a rather well known story. At first glance it seems that men are unequal to women for not yet finding themselves in vast expanses of emotions. So, is that really a pure relationship? Not quite, concludes Giddens some eighty pages later, there are certain contradictions in a pure relationship. A pure relationship implies the openness of the partners, but it still does not exclude the influences of the surroundings they live in, particularly if the partners are of homosexual orientation. Furthermore, one partner can be inferior or superior regardless of the sex but based on one's own insecurities or sense of power. Economic independence is still not equal for women and men. Women mostly belong to the poorer layer so that economic dependence often reflects on the emotional one, which again leads to unequal participation in the building of intimacy. However, significant women's emancipation in the modern times, according to Giddens, produces a larger number of cases of men's violence against women in the sense of sexual control. Men's violence today, he considers, is more a reflection of man's insecurity and "inadequacy" and less a continuation of patriarchal dominance (ibid.:122).

Chains of love

Chains of love is a metaphor which points out that someone is so much in love to have become a slave of proper love, that one is ready to do everything for a loved person without complaints and recompense. Feminists understand that metaphor in the negative sense. They consider that the concept of romantic love puts woman in chains, taking away her right to independently decide her own destiny. Politicizing woman's personal experience of love, feminists will declare that love is slavery, but not freedom and contentment. Radical feminists claim that with the idea of *love* is actually shaped the power of male ego over female. "Love, in the context of an oppressive male-female relationship, becomes an emotional cement to justify the dominant-submissive relationship. The man 'loves' the woman who fulfils her submissive ego-boosting role. The woman 'loves' the man she is submitting to – that is, after all, why she 'lives for him'. LOVE, magical and systematically unanalyzed, became the emotional rationale for the submission of the one ego to the other" (New York Radical Feminists 1971 according to Langford 1999:7). Today already overcome concept of universal submission of women does not lessen the resistance of feminists against the discourse which shapes the idea of romantic love. Penny Mansfield and Jean Collard in a study of 65 just married couples (1988), find out how the majority of women experience

their marriage as a common life which includes everyday partnership and intimacy. Men though describe a marriage as a life in common, orientated more towards a home than a relationship. Thus the ideal of modern love is in fact contradictory to its realization because "her' marriage and 'his' marriage exist apart from 'their' marriage" (according to Langford 1999:20). What differentiates a marriage in a contemporary Western society from a traditional society is the regulation of love. While in the old times love had to be controlled before it appeared it was not surprising that love appeared during a marriage, today a marriage is the consequence of falling in love, that is, love precedes a marriage, moreover, a marriage does not have to happen (Langford 1999:16). But free relations and changing partners still does not release us from the social pressure to find a suitable partner and enter a marriage with the one. How influential is the model of romantic love changed into the colourful clothes of postmodernism is shown to us in the global enthusiasm for, to us irritating, books *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* of the Helen Fielding. The principal character of the novel keeps a diary in which she notes her body weight, amount of alcohol and cigarettes she consumed. On the first page of the novel Bridget Jones promises herself how she "will not sulk about having no boyfriend, but develop inner poise and authority and sense of self as woman of substance, complete *without* boyfriend, as best way to obtain boyfriend." (Fielding 2001:8). For the remainder of the novel that is exactly what she does, chases around the love of her life, first the one (dissolute Daniel Cleaver) then the other (austere Mark Darcy). Although apparently undermining counsels of women's magazines, the main media of contemporary romantic love, which can be reduced to the motto "a housewife in the kitchen, a whore in bed", the heroine actually strives to reach that "peak of woman's competence". Tight fitting chains.

The feminist concentration on the unequal love relationship of the two sexes is partly founded on the philosophical discussions of Simone de Beauvoir. "The word 'love' has not got the same meaning for the both sexes, and exactly that is the source of serious misunderstandings which separate them" (1982:505). Men make efforts to incorporate love into their own existence but do not drown their existence in love. Women are different, for them love is a total renunciation to the advantage of the "master", considers de Beauvoir. Women's love for men resembles love for God. Like believers who love God, and by doing so secure their own salvation, so a woman adoring a certain man in fact tries to extol her own ego. She wants to be loved and in that way become an essential being and so finally starts loving herself. That is the reason she continually gives herself, because "the more a man demands, the more a woman has the impression that she is showered with attention" (ibid.:515). But love should not be the salvation but a human relationship and when the initial rapture passes away, the woman discovers that her idol is just a man. Therefore she agrees to a kind of blindness so that the illusion of the perfect man lasts as long as possible. De Beauvoir notices the paradox of it: a woman

endeavouring to satisfy herself plays the role of a slave and so perhaps confines a man to herself. Initial freedom of love soon transforms into a fatal danger, a lifetime slavery to one's own illusion and social order. That is why feminists endeavour to develop models of emancipation in which women could find themselves and build their own ego without necessarily "a male mirror". From the end of the sixties of the 20th century until today efforts are made to deconstruct myths about love which feminists consider nothing more but repressive discourse that holds women in chains. In them most often are perpetuated gender roles of the mother, the child-bearing woman, the spouse. A strong influence have had lesbian feminists who are opening a chapter of women's history until then passed over in silence, the question of lesbian identity and to that related experiences of love and sexuality. The idea that lesbians and heterosexually oriented women have very similar love inclinations, apart from having different sexual preferences, is the vague field for political manipulation.⁴ Specificity of sexual orientation is not just one of the indicators of the idea of a woman, but its basic designation. Culture realized it perhaps even before feminists themselves did, because it developed special discursive forms for controlling this "deviation". As distinguished from male homosexuality, the female one is aestheticized and feminized for the purpose of man's pleasure. It is translated to the acceptable language of culture and in that way legitimized as an integral part of Western erotism. Lots of erotic Internet pages in their offer contain also lesbian couples. Contemporary pornography, destined in the first place for men, has obligatory scenes of lesbian sex. The male homosexual act is just a part of controversial art films and literature or pornography which is not broadcast after midnight on commercial televisions. We are witnesses of the general mania issued over a Russian pop duo *Tatoo*, two girls who owe a share of their media fame to alleged lesbianism and newspapers' titles asking are they or are they not "really" homosexuals.

Feminist efforts to kind of "unmask" cultural terrorizing of women in the name of love goes in different directions depending on prescribed or habitual norms of a certain community. They demand from "contemporary traditional societies"⁵ to stop with literally slave-owners' relations with women, sexual mutilations and violence. They consider that such patterns of behaviour have their roots in mythical images which are

⁴ Teresa de Lauretis asks herself: is it only a matter of different sexual orientation? If that issue is really only that specific, why is it possible to translate the word *lesbian* with the word *woman*, but not the other way around (2003:198).

⁵ By contemporary traditional societies we refer to societies that have inherited technological achievements of the modern age, but still insist upon the traditional values that are in direct conflict with the mindset brought about by scientific knowledge and technologies. The oxymoron that appears in this syntagm represents a paradox of the community in which it appears. The only difficulty in the application of this term is that it can be applied to all communities, because it seems to us that a certain disharmony of human rights and achievements on one hand and their legal or customary realizations on the other marks to all societies known to us.

actually characterized by the fear of female sexuality. According to that the Western idea of romantic love is just a sophisticated story of control over women. Strategies for realization of freedom of love go from the already mentioned existentialist theory of Simone de Beauvoir, according to which a woman has to love "in her strength and not in her weakness", to the essentialist messages of Luce Irigaray. According to this woman philosopher women must not renounce their nature and their personal uniqueness. People should love each other not because of belonging to a certain sex, but because of an array of qualities they have cultivated themselves or inherited. Therefore the feminist demand for equality with men, she considers, is really an ethical delusion because it "erases natural and spiritual reality in abstract universality which serves only one master: death" (1996:26). The human right to free love will be realized only when we accept the human uniqueness of every individual. The only supposition for this demand, but also its defect, is that human rights are universal and already adopted.

Universal romance

Cultures encourage or shape expressions of romantic passion in different ways. Some renounce it as a manifestation of evil, others tolerate but do not celebrate it, while to a third romantic passion is a supreme cultural ideal. The fact that in writings of historians and sociologists is almost exclusively described romantic love of the Western civilization, does not imply that it is nonexistent elsewhere. It is more likely the case of a scientific construction that romantic love, as we have already emphasized, is an invention of the West. Only to the cultural elites of non-Western societies is it allowed to be familiar with sophisticated forms of love, as romantic love is considered to be, or only they have time for developing cultural expressions that such a love supposedly demands. (Jankowiak 1995:1). Until some ten years ago ethnography had a very similar approach to the exploration of the emotions of visited cultures, generally implying that the personal life of non-Westerners is one-dimensional, inhibited by time and very dependant on social values. Only shall one of the series of crisis of ethnographic discourse – the one connected with "the extinction of publicly organized traditions" – inspire researchers to query conceptions of personality and emotions in other cultures. "Concentration on person, selfhood and emotion – all subjects that are hard to meditate upon inside traditional ethnographic frameworks – is the way for reaching a level where cultural differences have deepest roots: in feelings and in complex autochthonous considerations of persons' nature and social relations" (Marcus and Fischer 2003:62).

It is never possible to directly comprehend feelings and experience, because they are tightly interwoven with the social and cultural criteria of the communities they originate from. Therefore researchers of romanticness resort to diverse methodologies, wishing to "brush aside" the

Western context of romantic love and prove the universality of that idea. In their endeavours they mainly opt for one of two interpretative directions, the essentialist which explains love as naturally immanent to the human, or the constructivist which leans towards a cultural explanation that love as emotion is unimportant until it is culturally shaped. The third will create compromising bio-cultural explanations. So Jim Chisholm considers that romantic passion is a universal human phenomenon whose manifestation is influenced by socio-ecological or politico-economic forces. Their influence starts in early childhood, but effects people during their whole life, which means that manifestations of love can change as we grow old (1995:52). A key role in the acceptance of romantic love as universal was the article "A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love" (1992) by William Jankowiak and Edward Fischer. Researching the subjective and normative sphere of a certain community they wanted to establish if there is romantic love inside of it. They defined romantic love as "any intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other, within an erotic context, with the expectation of enduring for some time in the future" (1992:150). The research was based on 166 ethnographically depicted societies. They found 250 ethnographic and folkloristic studies dealing with these societies, but they found in none of them an explicit definition of romantic love. The studies explored folklore, survival systems, social structure and cosmological systems, i.e. a wide spectrum of human activities. The indicators they applied in finding out about romantic love were the following:

- a) accounts depicting personal anguish and longing
- b) the use of love songs or folklore that highlight the motivations behind romantic involvement
- c) elopement due to mutual affection
- d) native accounts affirming the existence of passionate love
- e) the ethnographer's affirmation that romantic love is present.

On the basis of these indicators each of 166 societies was marked in regard to the presence or absence of love. Jankowiak and Fischer's results are displayed in the following table:

Cultural territories and romantic love

	Love is present	Love is absent
Circum-Medit.	22 (95.7%)	1 (4.3%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	20 (76.9%)	6 (23.1%)
East Eurasia	32 (94.1%)	1 (5.9%)
Insular Pacific	27 (93.1%)	2 (6.9%)
North America	24 (82.8%)	5 (17.2%)
South and Central America	22 (84.6%)	4 (15.4%)

What were we supposed to learn about love from such statistically ordered data? The duo Jankowiak and Fischer think a lot, but we are not quite sure. Perhaps it is just our aversion to quantitative methods in anthropological research, or perhaps a resistance against controlling emotions with numbers. But let the authors expose awhile what they wanted to prove with this research. The large percentage of present romanticness (88.5%, namely, in 147 societies) in different cultures is the consequence of the methodological supposition that romanticness is not a basis for marriage but a part of intimacy regardless of its consequences. So their research of romantic activities was extended also to relations, customs and accounts which are broader than supposed activities of premarital contacts which will lead to marriage. Besides that, having criticized the thesis that personal emotionality is always in the web of dependence on others, they also enquired about personal fantasies about love partners or erotica (1992:149). But more interesting is their explanation of societies where romantic love is absent. In 18 research examples, from the total of 19 with absent romanticism, is noted the presence of sexual interactions, but they are not explained and so there is no data which would refer to the presence of romantic activities. Only in one example the ethnographer notes the difference between romantic love and desire and concludes that the romantic is absent. So, if romantic love is not written down as the motive it means that it is absent. However, Jankowiak and Fischer will face criticism for that assertion also. "Nonetheless, we believe that these negative cases arise from ethnographic oversight rather than any set of cultural norms that prevent an individual from experience of romantic affection" (ibid.:153). They support their assertion on the example of African territory which has a relatively high percentage of absent romanticism. They find the reason for that in the absence of folklore. Only in four African cases do they find some folkloristic material. As an even more important reason they consider the African expression of emotions with nonverbal signs which can deceive or disguise whether it is romantic or not. In any case, the authors are warning us that actually the absence of romantic love is not exactly confirmed. That should contribute to support their thesis that romantic love is universal or almost universal. A few years later Jankowiak corrects the number of societies with absent romanticism lessening it for two societies. Namely, by the additional research he established that in one Eskimo tribe and among Hurons after all there is romantic love, so the percentage of societies where romantic love is present grew by 0.5% (Jankowiak 1995:5). A question that occurs to us is of a methodological nature. Namely, we are under the impression that here are "mixed up apples and pears" of the researched subject. We maintain that Jankowiak and Fischer write about existing ethnographies and not about societies and even less about the fact of whether romantic love is present or not. By that we do not want to challenge the thesis about the universality of romantic love, but in this case it is not properly deduced, because the

authors can only assert if romantic love is present in ethnographies, and not in societies. Furthermore, the choice of cultures is not quite clear to us, apart from the sentence where they report that examples were taken from the SCCS (Standard Cross-Cultural Sample) and submitted to repeated examination, since in 1969 Murdock and White explored only the normative sphere of the manifestation of romantic love (1992:150). If we have successfully enough reconstructed this research, then the authors have actually repeated research and made efforts to find more ethnographic material in accordance to the five above mentioned criteria. On the basis of those materials they made the table with numbers and percentages and established the universality of human romanticness. This is useful to statisticians who might one day amuse themselves with ethnographic material, but for an ethnographer it is rather barren data because we still have no idea which societies and ethnographies are they talking about. Finally, perhaps their definition of romantic love is not at all in accordance with definitions of ethnographers whose researches they submitted to renewed critical reading. As we have seen, they include erotic context into their definition, and one of the rare researches for which they state the author's name and the year dates from 1931. Could it be expected that in the interval of 61 years something has changed in the ethnographic questioning of informants whom we hardly understand, even if they use nonverbal signs?

Following the trail of bio-cultural theory, Helen Harris, with the help of psychological researches, compiled a "list of seven mind-centred characteristics" specific for the majority of researched societies and came to the conclusion that in regard to romantic love they have the following things in common:

- a) desire for union or merger
- b) idealization of the beloved
- c) exclusivity – a focus of emotion and desire on one particular person and a desire for this exclusive focus to be returned
- d) intrusive thinking about the love object
- e) emotional dependency
- f) a reordering of motivational hierarchies or life priorities
- g) a powerful sense of empathy and concern for the beloved (1995:102-103).

The author considers that the psychological literature can become a foundation for anthropological inter-cultural evaluations of the phenomena of romantic love. Jankowiak will in that sense write how "we can find a stronger argument that romantic love is universal in the

widespread cross-cultural fear of rejection and love loss"⁶ (1995:5). Both of them, like many other bio-culturalists, persist with the comparative method of researching different cultures so as to delineate specificities of each of them.

Love and/or sex

According to Luhmann's theory of love as a medium, it is impossible to abstract the symbolization of the physical relationship, because people also participate physically in communicational models. Symbols which fulfil the function of specializing semantics of media Luhmann calls symbiotic symbols or symbiotic mechanisms. The symbiotic mechanism for love is sexuality (1996:25-26). Relation of love and sexually conceived intimacy is the ultimate proof of togetherness of two people, confirmation of one's own and someone else's desire. By all means, love without sex is possible, just as sex without love is possible. But, nonlinguistic communication of physical touch interweaving with lingual expression enables love as the communicational code to become independent as the medium, to develop itself and complement interpretations of lingual messages and codes. In that sense negation, exclusion of possible sexual relationship, also participate in the creation of the semantics of love. Postponing or refusal of a sexual relationship are integral parts of communication and communication's results.

Jankowiak from an anthropological perspective mentions that many cultures separate love from sexuality, but that platonic love as the supreme ideal of some society is very rare (1995:8). To the idea of separation have doubtlessly contributed ethnographers' misunderstanding or overlooking numerous forms of behaviour where love and sex, that is, love and sexual desire, are linked. The reason could be found in the ethnographic model of one's own culture against which is compared some other, as well as in the fact that people inside their own cultures behave according to individual and social rules which are not always public and visible. More so because "in industrial city and agricultural village alike, there is tension between sexual mores and proscriptions regarding the proper context for expressing love and sex" (Jankowiak 1999:49). Sexual drive and love are fundamental human motives. Although different as emotions, their strict separation in fact imposes a competitive relationship between individuals, as well as between individuals and society. For each single person such a relationship means governing proper emotions and rationalizing one's own experiences, and perhaps becoming a case for psychopathology. For a society it means regulating in fine details behaviours that fit in "sex drawer" or "love drawer". Now there is something to think about: has not

⁶ Unrequited love can be so painful to deserve its place in a national calendar of more important days. In India on 3rd May is commemorated *Broken Hearts Day*, when those disappointed in love or rejected lament to each other (Jankowiak 1995:5).

the huge effort, of the West in particular, to separate love and sex actually produced the immeasurable field of sexual commerce. Sex we can buy, but love never. Such love can be perverted, cynical, fickle, lascivious, but hardly bribable wherever and whenever. Interesting turn of events for a culture which is so afraid of sex when actually it can not control love. It is forced to dominate love by means of sex. Regardless of whether a culture is permissive or restrictive towards sexuality, it will exactly by regulating sexuality try to stop an unacceptable love relationship. Paradoxical, but sex in that case becomes more acceptable than love. A culture which endeavours to separate these two emotions in the end has no other choice than to intertwine them once again so to maintain its law and order. It appears that the liberal society of today is gentler when separating sex and love. Sexual revolution and the contraceptive pill have doubtlessly changed this world, but has the endeavour to separate love and sex lost its impetus or are there in fact efforts to institutionalize them through marriage?

Domination over sex and love inside cultures is accomplished by means of language, i.e. by the creation of acceptable speech about these emotions. Jankowiak distinguishes three discourses on love and sexual desire: de-erotic, poly-erotic and uni-romantic. De-erotic discourse aspires not to use explicit sexual metaphors in public communications, considering them vulgar and rough. Poly-erotic discourse emphasizes sexual fantasy in everyday speech by way of laughter, humour and touching, but it still does not mean that the communication is public. Uni-romantic discourse, vis-à-vis that, highly appreciates the public display of emotions and behaviour until it becomes explicitly sexual (1999:57-58).

The problem of such a division is their actual intermixing. We consider that inside the same culture are existing all three discourses. They equally existed in traditional community as well as in today's society. In the 19th century the Croatian village had a codified public speech, namely there was no talk about sexuality, but for example there was public singing about it. It had well-formed institutions where people could practice private speech in which poly-erotic discourse was active. Gatherings, fairs, yearly celebrations and church were places where expressing emotions was possible, to be sure hiding it from others, but enough so to say or show what was wanted. Today's Croatians have more opportunities to publicly show their emotions and announce to society if they are a love couple. But it still does not mean that sexuality is publicly spoken about, as well as that more intimate moments are not preferred. Jankowiak emphasizes that a dilemma about determining of discourses in today's America is conditioned by the fact that all three forms of speech are in use. However, he decides on a division according to cultural groups in society or social classes, so that "it is in common to all American minorities to openly use erotic metaphors, simultaneously talking about romantic attraction and sexual desire, but for the 'professional class' it is unacceptable to speak about the erotic in front of members of other sex in the work

environment" (1999:60). We would like to add that today it is hard to classify people in just one subculture or one class, we are dealing with multiple identities which are enabling us to simultaneously belong to different groups that prefer different discourses on love and sexuality.

That means we daily combine all three discourses depending on the place we are in and the occasion.⁷

Today's society certainly leaves more possibilities for ethnographic research of the intermixing of different speeches about love. Primarily because of the more open and more spontaneous relationship with sexuality. At the same time it is harder to discover methods of coding speech because that is vaguely and ambiguously regulated. Speech about sexuality and love today is so commercially materialized that it appears that freedom of speech is much more conditioned by market needs than by unbound expression of emotions. But anyhow, traditional societies are not as simplified in their discourse on love as can be concluded from Jankowiak's thesis. We have already mentioned that even in traditional surroundings it is possible to find all three discourses simultaneously, but their coding is clearer to each community's member, and materialization is not liable to changes at the same speed that contemporary societies show an inclination for. In our traditional societies the apple has been the sign of love for a long time. A gift which had an exactly determined meaning and to which members of society related to like to a recognizable code which could mean nothing else but a clear invitation to sex – to be sure in a marriage, but sex anyway.

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⁷ Ethical codex of professional behaviour today often includes prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace. Accordingly, sexual harassment becomes a coded word for the new normative order, which determines with whom, where and when we can conversation about the erotic. However, it's interesting how some researches show that the majority of love adventures begins exactly in the workplace, and counsels in women's magazines are often contradictory: from the recommendation that we absolutely should not start a relation with a colleague to advice on how such a relation increases creativity at work.

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ROMANTIČNA LJUBAV

SAŽETAK

U članku se analiziraju tri koncepta romantične ljubavi. Feministički pristup romantičnu ljubav, kakva se prepoznaje i vrednuje danas, smatra proizvodom Zapada. Feministkinje smatraju kako zapadna kultura svojim kapitalističkim diskursom i kodiranjem ljubavnu emociju pretvara u poželjan oblik ljubavnog ponašanja i govora. U tom je smislu prikazba romantične ljubavi još jedna vrsta kontrole nad ženama i njihovim emocionalnim potrebama. Drugi pristup, koji zastupa Anthony Giddens, romantičnu ljubav smatra oslobađajućom, u prvom redu za žene. Demokracija romantične ljubavi, koja se promiče ovim pristupom, mjesto je posebne kritike s obzirom na Giddensovu argumentaciju. Na koncu, autorica predstavlja i treći koncept, koji zagovaraju antropolozi, a ocrtava se u pitanju: Je li romantična ljubav proizvod Zapada ili je riječ o univerzalnoj pojavi te kako je taj problem ocrtan u etnografskoj građi?

Ključne riječi: romantična ljubav, komercijalizacija ljubavi, univerzalna romantika