

DIVNA ZEČEVIĆ

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research

Zagreb, Zvonimirova 17

**TEACHING OF LOVE AND THE LITERARY  
IDEA ABOUT SUBLIME LOVE  
IN THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SAINTS  
DURING THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES  
IN CROATIAN LITERATURE.  
LAYING THE GROUND FOR ROMANTICISM**

In the biographies of the saints in 18th century the readers can find both religious lessons of God's love and lessons on literary models and ideas of secular love.

Literary descriptions of emotions, love, tears and repentance were the preparation and anticipation for Romanticism. Teaching about the sublime love for God during the 18th century lead from pious feelings, through sentimentalism, to the literary Romanticism of the 19th century, in which the intensive literary life of the neo-Platonic division into body and soul continued: the division into "pure", chaste, virginal love and base, sinful, carnal love.

Keywords: religious literature, biographies of the saints, literature

Teaching of the one and only, sublime love for God in the biographies of the saints and in sermons lead from 18th century religious fervour,<sup>1</sup> through sentimentalism into literary Romanticism. On the examples of the lives of the saints, it was taught that love makes all torment sweet:

For torment, no matter how great, is made sweet and favourable by love. (...) let all the devilish torments assail me, I fear not nor do I dread, because all will be sweet and pleasant to suffer for the love

<sup>1</sup> Zečević 1988:75-128; 1993; 1994:213-238.

of my God, because there is nothing on Earth, nor could human reason invent such opposition, which he would not happily suffer who has the fire of God's love burning in his heart (Zagrebec 1718:330, 334).

The lives of the saints — male and female — and of the apostles taught readers and listeners about ardent love. St. Peter as the incarnation of loving devotion is literally shown as a flame:

He was no less frequently seen all burning and as a flame ignited in love for his heavenly master, Jesus Christ.

Štefan Zagrebec (1688-1742) interpreted Peter's desire to walk on water in the light of inexpressible pious love:

Peter did not say to his Master: Order me to walk on water, rather he said: Order me to walk over the water to come to You! (Zagrebec 1718:245).

Love's path is depicted as the way to be travelled despite all its obstacles and the realistic possibilities of Man. Under the motto: nothing is stronger than love, this model of love continued to be nurtured in literature in the era of Romanticism — and later. Right up until the present day, this literary model has been used in the mass media and in popular songs: it is shown and taught that riches and honours, all the possessions of this world are nothing in comparison to love (both secular and religious).

There are countless examples to be found among all the preachers. In diverse variants in the lives of the saints and the sermons, Hilarion Gašparoti (1714-1762) teaches and constantly warns the "Serpent's breed" with threatening bitterness, that they be constant in their love of God, indivisible from the fear of God, which leads "to heavenly splendours": "O, passing pleasures, O, eternal the torment they bring!" (Gašparoti 1761:130).

Love was to remain the supreme requirement, while the manner of description would be interwoven with literary characteristics and the duality of pious and secular love. European culture owes the concept of the two loves to Plato and neo-Platonism. Early Christianity was strongly influenced by Platonism while love for an idea was replaced by love for God. During the Renaissance, there was a typical interweaving of divine and worldly love. During the 18th century, the way of describing divine love was closely connected and interwoven with literary signs of worldly love. Just as it was taught that two types of fire exist — natural and

supernatural — which tormented the sinner in Hell, but did not destroy the body so that the torture could be repeated eternally, so there were two types of love: the secular, the base, and the carnal as against the sublime love of God, liberated from the destructive desires of the body which is prone to sin, death and decay. St. Theresa (1515-1582) considered the body to be a temporary prison of the soul; for her, death was a liberation from the non-life of this world, while the greatest happiness to be found on this Earth was love for God. The idea of (secular) Platonic love and kindred (sacral), divine love endured until its resurgence during the era of Romanticism, and has continued right up until the present day. The duality, the schism between the soul and the body also arises as a consequence of the popularisation of Christian teachings, in opposition to the Christian theological teachings about the indivisibility of the soul and the body.

Antun Kanižlić (1699-1777) in *Sveta Rožalija* [Saint Rosalie] (Vienna 1780) writes about secular love which he identifies with sin: "Razbluda" [Debauchery] (over which he laments: "O, that you had never been known to the world!"), accompanied by her son, Ljubićak:

Ljubićak is his name, he wakens debauched love,  
Which traps the hearts of many people.  
This little soldier, a child always set for Evil,  
Wounds and sings hearts, firing fornication. (Kanižlić 1940:134)

Rosalie experiences a visitation from celestial love, the love of God in the form of a supernatural messenger of extraordinary beauty, Cupid in fact, who has a "Heart and two wings burning without smoke", and carries a bow and arrow. Rosalie feels as if she has been wounded:

for I am all confusion, my heart has been touched,  
as if I feel a sweet hot wound.

Ljubićak and the messenger of God's love, the celestial Cupid, represent two sides of the same popular literary medal. This was followed by the strong Baroque reaction in Rosalie's repentance for her former sinful life, a well of tears, a flood of tears as proof of the experiencing of God's sublime love:

with my nails, a woman's sword, I wound my face, and tear it,  
what I cannot cleanse with tears, I wash away with my blood.

In the biographies of the saints, descriptions and reflections on the nature of God's love and love for God are such that they do not exclude the

nature of love generally, but rather also comprehend the nature of the worldly state of being in love; the literary signs of being in love are held in common by both types of love:

And when Love looks at me  
Ah, how the fire burns me!  
I feel the one glance is enough  
To burn up my entire heart. (Kanižlić 1940:23)

A pale youth, withers, wilts,  
As if dying, the face fades away.  
Ah, these are not mortal wounds,  
He's not dying, but he's in love.

A very pale face he has;  
From love and it follows:  
Who love more deeply, their  
Faces wither and turn pale. (Kanižlić 1940:13, 15)

The Baroque climax is in the conclusion that the torments of Hell would become sweet and pleasant, if one could fall in love with Hell. Štefan Zagrebec (1688-1742) writing about the life of St. Laurence:

For love is of such a nature (says William of Paris) that the object which is loved, even if bitter and gloomy by its nature, love always makes it sweet and pleasant, so that if anyone could love the torments of Hell, they would seem sweet and pleasant to him, for *amore omnia tormenta dulcesunt*. [Love makes all torments sweet.] (...) the Holy Father Augustine added as confirmation of this truth: "Everything terrible and gloomy is made light and as if nothing by love (Zagrebec 1718:330, 331).

Belief in the power of love would remain a favourite motif in secular literature: nothing can separate us from love. Belief in the power of love and how to describe it were learned from religious literature and in sermons and the lives of the saints. Štefan Zagrebec and Ignac Kristijanović (1796-1884) refer to Paul's Epistle to the Romans (8, 35-37):

What could separate us from the love of Christ? Suffering, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or swords? (Zagrebec 1718:334).

What could separate us from the love of Christ? Could it be misfortune? Or anxiety? Or persecution? Or hunger? Or nakedness? Or peril? Or a sword? (...) But we overcome all of this through Him who loved us (first) (Kristijanović 1871:107).

Love is first and foremost — this is one of God's commandments. It is not one of the Ten Commandments but comes from the Gospels: "Love Thy neighbour as Thyself!" (Matthew 22, 37-40; Mark 12, 30-31); "This I command you, that you love one another!" (John 15, 17).

In the sermon: *On the day of the holy apostles Simon and Judas*, Štefan Zagrebec states how "industrious and happy hunters of souls were, and how many souls they caught in the net of love" (Zagrebec 1718:444). In the following century, the 19th — and later — the "net of love" appears in literary texts, mainly in the sensual sense when a "corrupt" woman hunts young men or other women's husbands, snaring them in her "net".

It was taught in the lives of the saints and in sermons and church songs, that man should be constant in his love of God just as literature, of course, taught about the nature of such ardent love and the fires of love. Bartol Kašić (1575-1650) wrote about Jesus as "being the Master of the heart" and "Beloved of the lover's soul" and "the flame fired up by love" (Kašić 1700:34, 45, 69).

Two parallel loves exist, as do two parallel worlds, which declaratively and mutually exclude each other.

For if the love of this world dwells within you, God's love has no way to enter; let the love of this world withdraw, and let the love of God dwell in your heart, O, baptised man! (Zagrebec 1718:335).

The literary practice of writing about two types of love, and the ways in which they are expressed, meld together, however, in the overall literary concept of love, in its irresistible power and stability.

In the text by Ignac Kristijanović, St. Agatha responds to all temptations with: "My heart (...) is founded on the rock which is the Christ" (Kristijanović 1871:13), so that Quintianus learns that: "Agatha is as constant as a rock"; we will follow the metaphor of the rock in the 19th century. When it believes, and also when it does not, the heart is compared with the hardness of a stone. The meaning of the metaphor can be extremely positive or completely negative, holy or damned.

I am considering this teaching not only as religious teaching, but at the same time as secular literary edification. In the sermons and lives of the saints they deal not only with the supreme love for God, but also with the love between people, the relationship between the male and female gender; however, constantly present is the literary division into the possibility of *pure* spiritual and *impure* carnal love, a division which indicates the way one should love and it is particularly in that aspect that

I see the instructions on the way to write about love. On the one hand, this is a comprehensive lesson for everyday life, but also shows signs of the process of secularisation of literature. The 19th century literary theme about "pure" and "impure" love is developed on a literary foundation and division taught in the sermons and lives of the saints. Štefan Zagrebec asks why people "of the present time" find it difficult to bear "the slightest difficulty" and answers: "there is no other reasons for this than that they do not have the fire of the love of God within them" (Zagrebec 1718:331).

The singing of church songs — which were diffused in the 19th century from the 18th century manuscripts and printed songbooks — was recommended as an effective remedy against the religious apathy of a "heart harder than stone":

Singing of religious songs is one of the most successful means of awakening devout feelings in the heart; and, indeed, where a hundred harmonious and, as a rule, artistically blended voices sing the sublime secrets of our holy faith, the heart would have to be harder than stone, and icier than ice, not to be shaken by some holy emotion (Stohl, Torbar 1858:3).

A sinner is a person without love for God, sunk in offences and immoral life. What sort of a heart can a sinner have, in contrast to the heart of a man filled with the warmth of God's love? The sinner's heart is a hard, petrified heart turned to ice!

Štefan Zagrebec in one of his sermons (*On the day of St. Michael the Archangel. St. Michael the Archangel under God and Mary is our greatest helper against all our enemies both carnal and spiritual*) describing the obdurate heart of a sinner who had been reached by God's word and the fear of God: "... that heart which had been harder than bronze and marble began to soften, to melt and to shed fat tears" (Zagrebec 1718:442).

In the same way, Filip Grabovac (1697-1749) writes about a sinner who is all of stone: "O, hardened and petrified sinner, listen to what the Holy Bible shouts (...)" (Grabovac 1951:70).

Comparing the hardness of a sinner's heart with living stone, Hilarion Gašparoti says: "... so strike our hearts harder than the quick of a stone so that we cry day and night"; the quick of the stone is immovable i.e. bound to its foundation; the sinner — petrified in sin — has to be "moved" from his immobility: "O, powerful tears, which have made no

lesser a saint from great female sinners". In order to cleanse the heart of sin, not only tears, but — in the popular Baroque image — a flood of tears is necessary: "It is always the time for washing away our sins with a flood of tears, before they (the sins, D. Z.) drown us in the depths of Hell" (Gašparoti 1760:219). Antun Kanizlić wrote:

Tears pour over me, may they always flow,  
Even if they issue out like a flooded river.  
Flow humbly, I say, without ceasing,  
Tireless rivers, to my dying day. (Kanizlić 1940:78)

When one is crying, literally "all the poison pours out of the heart through the drops from the eyes"(Gašparoti: 1760:208) so that one becomes literally empty i.e. purified from sin.

Washing the heart of sin, the motif of the cold heart which would in both oral and written literature produce a host of variations, introduced the exemplum about the Roman Emperor Germanicus (and the attempt made after his death to burn his body and to inter it) into popular Baroque Kajkavian literature. Štefan Zagrebec narrated and preached that the entire body burned, except for the heart which was thrown back into the fire a number of times. All the doctors of Rome were called in and they established that the Emperor's heart was full of poison:

... since the poison, cold by nature, did not allow the fire to consume it, they opened that heart and washed it a number of times in water, and threw it into the fire where it turned into ash like the entire body (Zagrebec 1718:335-336).

Rejection of the flames i.e. for the heart full of poison to catch fire, has at its root the motif of mediaeval ordeal by fire and water in order to establish the guilt or innocence of an accused person.

The temperamental Gašparoti's Baroque invocation of weeping and tears, strengthened their power and the need for purification, and was an invitation to dialogue with sinners:

In the meantime, O Tears, where do you hide? When we so rarely wipe them from our faces. We often swim in wine, eat well and turn our hearts in the world of voluptuousness to craziness, to enjoyment and to laughter, although our previous sins always provide good cause for weeping (Gašparoti 1760:219).

One should cry and show one's feelings, primarily the feeling of repentance; it is taught that there are many things which a man should

perform with tears i.e. with feelings. H. Gašparoti writes that St. Paul served God in tears, censured his neighbours with tears and called on people to cry; he prayed with tears and, what was particularly interesting and edifying: he wrote his epistles in tears (Gašparoti 1761:758). The literary model of writing letter in tears — the letters themselves were sometimes unreadable because of the tears — became a commonplace in the literature of Romanticism: this has remained part of popular literature right up until the present day: "I write with my right hand, wipe my tears with my left".

What were tears regarded as during the 18th century? Hilarion Gašparoti explained their characteristics and meanings:

What tears are is a fomes sponge, that fortunate water which erases and washes away all our debts, written on the table of divine accounts (Gašparoti 1761:757).

Go off to God for accounting is a saying still in use today. Tears wipe away and wash away old accounts; in the Age of Enlightenment an account was a reasonable expression for the need to approach the sphere of the supernatural: faith and belief. In *The Life of the Holy Abbot Hilarion*, H. Gašparoti writes in the introduction of a vision of the prophet Ezekiel who looked "with a pure eye" on the angel who had:

Tablets for writing, to be able to write down the sins of all people. He wrote down everything from the beginning of the world, from the first hour of Humankind's reason, all thoughts, speech and actions he diligently noted; every blinking of an eye, every step taken, movement of a hand, tongue and heart's desire, mendacity, worthlessness, sins, all this he put down on his tablets. Whatever was done in corners, in hidden places, on a closed balcony, in locked houses, in bedrooms, in vineyards, in the dark, he put everything down to the account of the hearts that ordered it (Gašparoti 1761:175).

This very need during the 18th century to register everything from the smallest tremor to great sins and events, to count everything, add and divide and present everything mathematically (Zečević 1993:35), characterised the text of sermons and the biographies of the saints.

In contrast to tears, laughter was most frequently judged to be a sign of lack of virtue; usually it was encountered among those with hearts of stone! In the literature of Romanticism and Realism, laughter belonged



to debauched, loose women; laughter was linked with carnality and pleasures. Laughter belongs to the Carnival.

As a rule, the saints have no knowledge of laughter and by this absence of laughter, or more precisely, immoderate laughter, they differ essentially from the sinner. Antun Kanizlić describes the model behaviour of the Virgin Mary when she was young, at the time of her stay in the temple "in the congregation of girls", an upbringing which expressly excluded immoderate laughter ("uproarious laughter"): "She was concerned about her comrades and kept a close eye on them, that they did not roar with laughter, that they did not venture into improper jokes, that none of them uttered words which were unseemly for virginal behaviour. Everything she said was full of gentleness, and concerned Divine matters" (Kanizlić 1759:496-497).

During the 19th century, poems about the cold, hard heart which does not respond to secular love — love for another person or the homeland — that nothing could move to love, were to become popular. The heart and ideals i.e. constancy in love, were compared with granite ("The Granite building of my ideals"), consequently with stones and rocks ("The rock cracks, the oak tree breaks), marble and cliffs ("We stand steadily, like cliffs"). Love and tears would remain indivisible; it was as though love had no knowledge of humour, while laughter would find its place in the dramatic genre — in comedy, and once a year — in Carnival. Niko Kuret (1984:101) drew attention to Bakhtin's division of early European culture:

One part was the culture of seriousness, the other the culture of laughter. Serious culture was represented and maintained by the state, the Church and the fuedal lords. The culture of laughter, in contrast, was the culture of the people, culture of the masses. The first was repressive, the second was Utopian and in opposition. (...) Shrove-tide, Carnival time is, according to Bakhtin, 'a certain type of living of the people, living based on the principle of laughter, living life in a holiday mood'.

During the 19th century, tears were compared with pearls, while in the 18th century, Hilarion Gašparoti, for example, in *The Life of Mary Magdalene* mentioned the exemplum in which the literarily valuable tears were miraculously transformed into precious stones:

Do you want to know how strong tears are? St. Patrick transformed into precious stones the tears shed by three young nobles because of the sins of their king who was a non-believer (Gašparoti 1761:219).

Not only tears, but also worms from a saint's body could be transformed into precious stones. When the heart has no knowledge of feelings, then it is of stone — the quick of the stone is immovable i.e. bound to its foundation — but when the heart is touched, moved, when it cries because of its feelings, then the tears are precious stones.

Literary descriptions of emotions, love, tears and repentance were the preparation and forerunner of Romanticism; it was from them that writers and the public learned about love and writing about love and strong emotions, all based on the model of the pure, firm and unique love of God.

Antun Kanizlić described the love of St. Aloisius towards God using all the recognisable stereotypical signs which were also common to secular lovers:

Whenever he heard someone speaking about God, his face would immediately become red and flushed. God was always before his eyes, always enthralled by God he would not even know if anyone was walking beside him. This love kindled his love for the Most Innocent Virgin Mary. (...) When he spoke about her, which he did very often, he would set all his heart upon Mary. Is not this love uncommon? (Kanizlić s.a.:452).

The love warm and burning could not be  
Hidden by your little soul,  
For at a word about God's matters  
Your face would be all flushed  
Just like a rose.

When a rose turns red  
It is a sign to me  
Of your holy love. (Kanizlić s.a.:37)

In the *Church Song Book* which was published during World War I, some of the stanzas about the Virgin Mary do not differ from secular verse:

Happy he must surely be // Who may embrace you // And love you  
Mary!; Do you know, Mary // Of my joy? // Do you know my  
desires? // I would kiss You! (Böhm 1915:17, 134).

A number of verses from an 18th century song *A Song of Yearning of the Humble Soul for Jesus*, published in Kanizlić's 1773 song book, can be counted among the most successful verses in popular love songs — religious and secular; it is encountered later, in the 19th century, in fact right up until World War I, when a number of verses were included in a religious song-book for schools. The love of the soul for Jesus is expressed according to the model of the so-called "fiancée mysticism" songs and as devotion for a loved one: fear of parting or not meeting is built in explicitly or in the context of love songs in popular religious and secular song-books, as well as in art literature songs:

7. O, Jesus, where are you, say  
My heart is searching for you,  
Searching night and day,  
My eyes want to see you.

8. From the blushing hills  
I see no sign of dawn desired,  
Until I have You first,  
Dawn is no dawn to me.

9. When the bright sun disappears,  
It's as though it says to me,  
Where is your desired treasure?  
Where is Jesus, your dear Sun?

10. When the dark night covers me,  
Because the heart can find you not,  
I suffer in the twofold gloom,  
'Cause my Jesus doesn't shine.

12. O, my life, both sweet and dear,  
Do not part away from me!  
My soul has no life to live,  
Deprived of delight in Thee. (Kanizlić 1773:202)

Štefan Zagrebec taught his flock about the power and nature of God's fiery love in a sermon devoted to the life of St. Laurence: *On the Day of St. Laurence the Martyr*. With the fire of God's love, St. Laurence subdued the material fire so that it could not injure his holy body.

The popular literary gradation in this teaching is interesting: the comparison with Moses's Old Testament vision of the burning bush, in Štefan Zagrebec's effort to show the burning bush as a lesser miracle than

the fire which burned in St. Laurence's heart, which overcame fire with fire:

For St. Laurence all burned inside and was alight with the fire of God's unutterable love (...) but without any damage, for not one of the smallest hairs on his head burned, and that is a much greater miracle than was that bush which Moses saw burning but not consumed (Zagrebec 1718:322-323).

It is strange that in a filmed version of the Bible story shown in TV episodes (1997) — despite the possibilities one would think were made possible by trick photography — the depiction of Moses's encounter with the burning bush was disappointingly inadequate: we were shown a fire burning behind the blackened and dried-out branches of a smallish tree — which had already been burned — with no leaves! Štefan Zagrebec gave an incomparably better description of the burning bush than the film referred to (there will be more on this point later).

The preacher describes the power of the fire of love, the fire of God's love, and offers affective edification about perfect love: "Perfect love drives out fear". The direct nature of the lesson to be learned is seen in Štefan Zagrebec's address to his congregation in a sermon which was dedicated in its entirety to St. Laurence:

Does anyone among you N.N. know what could the reason be that Peter suddenly become so very frightened because of one simple question from a young girl, when he had not been frightened before that by a whole company of soldiers? (Zagrebec 1718:326).

In fact, the example of Peter, who denied Christ three times before the dawn, is interpreted by the idiomatic phrase: *smrznut od straha* [frozen with fear]. Peter's love for Jesus deserted him — losing the warmth of love — "and all frozen from fear he sat by the fire with the Jewish servants (...) for he had been frozen by cold fear" (Zagrebec 1718:326).

Because he had first abandoned his love, so in his frozen state he abandoned Jesus. In contrast, filled with the fire of God's love, St. Laurence lying peacefully

naked on a burning grid-iron on top of the live coals, and it seemed to him as though he was lying on dew-covered grass. Oh, the power of the unspoken fire of God's love! (Zagrebec 1718:327).

Filled with the same fire of love, the love of God, St. George walked through the fire of this world in a furnace as though he was in the most

pleasant orchard. Here we have the parallel existence of two worlds and two realities; this is not "exaggeration" and fantasy, but the co-existence of the spiritual and the material world:

Finally at the end he ordered them to throw him into a burning white lime kiln, but here, too, he strolled happy singing as though in the most pleasant orchard praising the Lord, as was testified to by Lipomanus. And that for a whole three days and three nights he lived in that burning kiln among the burning flames, praying to God and praising him (Zagrebec 1718:156).

Štefan Zagrebec told the story of the life of St. George in a sermon, as can be seen in the note: *on today's day or today (on today's St. George the Saint, and our illustrious Knight George of today)*, and lead his congregation into the current co-existence of two worlds. Štefan Zagrebec advised anyone who doubted the veracity of seemingly fantastic events and the sober lesson to be learnt, to read the Life of St. George: "That this is in fact the real truth, read his holy life and you will find (...)" (Zagrebec 1718:154) or, "Nor is it necessary for any one among you N.N. to be surprised at that (...)" (Zagrebec 1718:152-153).

Thus in literature the fire of supernatural love competes with the material fire of this world — and the stronger, purer non-material love is the victor:

That is why St. Laurence spoke of his not fearing the fire, nor any torture, because he was himself full of the fire of God's love which burned more brightly in his heart than the pagan fire which burned below him and so with his inner fire he overcame the outer fire (Zagrebec 1718:324).

Instead of Cupid and his arrows, God's love is presented in the biography of St. Theresa, also with a pierced heart, but a piercing of the heart by a Seraphim, repeated a number of times, with the arrow refined, golden and burning at its head:

... burning with God's love, she suddenly noticed standing beside her a Seraphim sent by God, holding in his hands a golden arrow burning at its head, with which he pierced Theresa's chest and heart a number of times, from which she felt unspeakable pain, but together with it joy of the soul. These wounds were sweeter than all the delights of the world, and ignited the conflagration of unspeakable love in Theresa's heart (Gašparoti 1761:143).

Heavenly love appeared to Rosalie as a beautiful "shining young man" who was, in fact, Cupid with wings and a bow and arrow:

A heart and two wings burning without smoke  
He had, as though it was a golden fire,  
His bow at his shoulder, his arrow ready,  
I thought that he fired at me suddenly,  
Because I was all confused, my heart was moved,  
As though I felt a sweet hot wound. (Kaužlić 1940:76).

With the dissemination of printed matter, a flood of popular stories and volumes appeared during the 19th and particularly during the 20th century, with representatives of pure and impure (i.e. carnal) love in constant conflict.

The biographies of the saints offered readers not only pious edification about God's love, but also, indirectly, edification on the literary model and conceptions about secular love which would be shown in 19th century Croatian literature as pure "virginal" love or carnal, perverted love which cares only for "physical" satisfaction; there was a continuance of intensive literary work on presentation of Man's sublime and debased spheres — the soul and the body e.g. in the work of Janko Leskovar (*The Shadows of Love*, printed in 1898) who described a pure innocent girl who had just come out of a convent school (Leskovar 1963:8; Zečević 1995/1996:13-29).<sup>2</sup>

The ideal of virginity which was particularly glorified during the 19th century developed into the popular literary lessons about the rearing of female children for chastity. Adam Filipović Heldentalški (1792-1871) was a popular poet and author and publisher of the Slavonian almanac. Under the protection of the authority he invoked, he issued advice at the mid-19th century on the drastic punishments which should be applied in the upbringing of female children:

Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor (161 AD), prescribed to his Empress, Faustina, how her daughter was to be brought up. If, he said, the ladies of Rome wish to raise their daughters well, they have to pay attention to the following. If, he said, mothers consider

<sup>2</sup> Janko Leskovar: "And being near enough to place his arm around her waist, to put his lips on her lips, he though her pure, untouched, virginal (...) And he felt as if his heavy lips, warmed by so many kisses, had been put on a lily of the field, so soft, so light, cool, and fearful was the touch of her lips. 'A pure, virginal soul' was the unspoken thought on those innocent lips, and hi firmly pulled that pure female body to his and desired to pree more strongly his kiss on those untouched lips (...)"

that their daughters are running about all over the place, let them beat their knees; if their eyes wander, let them gouge out their eyes; if their ears itch to listen to all sorts of things, let them plug them; if their daughters make gifts or receive them, let them cut off their hands; if they chatter, let them sew up their mouths; if they become wanton, let them be buried alive. Let a wicked daughter have death as her gift, for her derision, worms, for her house, the grave. — Christian mothers, heed the heretic and the pagan, when you do not heed God (*Novi i Stari Kalendar...* 1884).

The harshness of the message through the emphasis on extreme punishment, even though it is not linked with literal implementation, indicates the social demand for submission to the ruling ideal. Following after parents, the burden of caring for female virtue was taken by husbands. During the 18th century, preachers such as Štefan Zagrebec provide information on the abuse of women whose husbands beat them "like stones" (Zečević 1993:71; 1993a:215-228) with oxen sinews which hung on the doors, and that their "husbands, malicious and inclined to all sins, without any reason hound them, curse them, beat and torment them so often that they barely remain alive" (Zagrebec 1727:107). At the end of the 19th century one could still find an illustration, a drawing in the *Osjek almanac*, which showed that everyone received for Christmas what they deserved: a husband holds a cane in his hand, while his wife stands crying in the corner of the room beside the decorated Christmas tree.

In 18th century sermons, one finds declarations of worldly love being blasphemously prepared for the fires of hell, because what is in question is always the fire of love, even if carnal and sinful! It is shown that it is difficult to harness the body, and in the biography of St. Jerome, H. Gašparoti quotes from a letter in which Jerome describes the struggle with his "rebellious body":

The lips paled from fasting, while the mind burned with desire in the cold body. My almost dead body still boiled with the fire of desire before my Lord. (...) Left without all succour, I lay before the feet of the crucified Jesus, covering them with tears, wiping them with my hair, and submitted the rebellious body to the soul by fasting for a whole week (Gašparoti 1760:947).

In contrast to the warm love of God, there also appeared in the 18th century a description of a similarly violent flame but that of — sinful love. The force of worldly, carnal, sinful "ruinous" love was taught on numerous examples describing the torrid, constant and unchanging

nature of love for God which was confirmed by the saints in their lives and actions. In Jeronim Filipović's sermon, the commandment — Thou shalt not commit adultery! — is accompanied by an exemplum with depictions similar to those in sentimental novels: a dying mistress reflects on a love stronger than Hell:

... but seeing her deceitful lover, she spreads her arms, lifts herself as much as she can, and then says: — Ah, my loved one, I always loved you with all my heart, I love you with the same love and now even more than ever. I can see that I am going to Hell because of you and that I am going to those eternal tortures. But, if so, you are the reason that I do not fear the torments of Hell, because that is what the love with which I love you wants. — Ah, ruinous love! Saying this, not able to say any more, but collapsing on her bed, she expired her unhappy soul. This was observed both by her confessor and that dishonest young man, who was beside himself and could not utter a word (Filipović 1759:328).

The vision of sin and sinful love indirectly offers a model of the literary description of secular love and its inexorable "laws" which lead to ruin, but ruin because of the fire of love: "because that is what the love with which I love you wants"! Love is learnt in the same way as everything else in social behaviour. On examples in the sermons and lives of the saints, it is taught that love may be only pure, one and only, just as there is only one God.

The social roots of possessiveness in love relationships derive partly from the Decalogue and religious teaching about God's uniqueness and exclusivity: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me!" The reader culture and literary model for sentimental and romantic descriptions of love in the future grew from the basis of religious texts.

Certain conceptions about love were excluded and even forbidden, particularly the one in which life is full of experiences of love which can exist not only successively but also parallelly, in a duration of from one day to an entire lifetime; and that love is spread out in a man's personal life like a geographical map with larger and smaller places and full of villages and hamlets which are not shown on the map, but are found only on precise military maps. Instead of that — particularly where women are concerned — one life has only one unusually deep love and, at the same time, one great experience of suffering for love, ending either in death or with a brood of children. After marriage, for a long time, the sole other theoretical possibility existing in literature was adultery —



— again, particularly as far as women are concerned — which was equivalent to transgression, meaning: sin and the nurturing of a feeling of guilt in relation to the one great — and only — permitted and edifying love of a lifetime.

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The biographies of the saints offered readers sublime examples for Christian moral teaching to be followed in everyday life:

... there is nothing which is so able to ignite the heart with torrid love for the dear Lord, for constancy in faith, for patience in adversity, torment, trouble and persecution, equal to reading those glorious struggles for the world of faith and the miraculous endurance of God's martyrs... (Kristijanović 1859).

Sublime examples stimulate sublime feelings. Research into Croatian popular writers of the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the biographies of the saints written during that period, shows efforts to depict in Christian teachings what is undepictable: celestial love, the love of God, Heaven and the joys of Heaven, Hell and the torments of Hell. The lives of the saints were an expression of the religious literary realisation of utilitarian description of the undepictable: eternity, eternal celestial love, infinity, and holiness.

Writing in a different context about postmodernism, Jean Francois Lyotard discussed the sublime feeling which results from suffering confronted with the difficulty of depicting the undepictable:

We can think in terms of the absolutely great, the absolutely powerful, however, each depiction of an object intended "to make visible" such greatness and such absolute power seems to us to be painfully unattainable. In other words, these are ideas which it is impossible to depict; these are ideas with whose help we do not comprehend anything which is real (which can be experienced); moreover, they forbid the free arrangement of characteristics which produce a feeling of the Beautiful, they prevent the formation and consolidation of taste. We can refer to them as being undepictable (Lyotard 1990:21-23).

The undepictability/inconceivability of God's love, heavenly love, is seen in the resort to descriptions with literary signs of profane, worldly love: flushed cheeks or pale faces, "dying" of happiness, warm "wounds", tears,

uneasiness, flowers, fragrances. The descriptions blend signs and symptoms of sublime, supernatural love and those of worldly, natural love.

Any assault by evil against the heavenly love which inspired the saints is a futile undertaking:

... let all the devilish torments assail me, I fear not nor do I dread,  
because all will be sweet and pleasant to suffer for the love of my  
God (Zagrebec 1718:334).

Their spiritual sublimity and the holiness of the path they have chosen openly to bear witness to their faith and to refuse to deny Jesus is measured by their bodily torment; what can be seen is what is described — physical torment, or, in fact, a literary dissection of the body into its component parts; this is how the undepictable, the unspeakable and the sublime is described: holiness, steadfastness in the faith, love of God. Consequently, transcendental, celestial love is shown in and described by physical signs which are common to worldly love.

Holiness and the emanation of holiness is as undepictable as God is; holiness is a mystery and a miracle which is confirmed with the aid of miracles which occur through God's intervention in the activities of the saints in their everyday lives. The most profound message in: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20, 4) also points to the impossibility of depicting the undepictable.

The biographies of the saints are given as an example for the lives of both so-called ordinary people and those from the upper and very highest social spheres. Examples for everyone!

... and those who stupidly wish, who have never even thought about the holiness of their lives, but have rather lived wrongly, regularly walk off to the bottom of Hell. And thus wandering far from Heaven, they foolishly hope to reach Heaven, without a holy life and without real penitence (Mulih 1746:73).

Thus, one could say in the literary sense, that living far from Heaven means to live far from imagination! All men have the right to this type of richness. All men!

In the 18th century, still part of the long and prolonged Middle Ages in the sense that it is defined by Jacques Le Goff (1993:16, 27-32),

the two worlds are very closely linked: the visible and invisible, the physical and metaphysical, the transient and the eternal. Eternal beatitude was promised as the wages and reward for suffering on earth, but the promise also held a threat, in the event that the reward was gambled away. Thus from the opposition between: mortal and immortal (physical and metaphysical), the lesson was taught that earthly love dies and is full of sadness, love is not constant (in the way a rock is), illness threatens health. It is only in eternal bliss that "health does not rot away"; the words *rot away* are not used by chance, because when speaking of the body and the sensual the most frequent words used in conjunction with them in 18th century sermons and lives of the saints were: pus and stench.

In the texts of the lives of the saints, the naturalistic and idealistic characteristics and features of people and phenomena were most closely mixed, so that the moral lesson of strong naturalism and idealistic abstraction of everything living which is observed under the sign of eternity emerges from the contrast between the two worldviews. The opposition between the naturalistic and the idealistic continues its intensive literary reproductive life in the era of Romanticism in the form of pure, chaste, virginal love and the carnal greed of base, *corrupt* literary characters.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

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## UČENJE LJUBAVI I KNJIŽEVNA PREDODŽBA O VELIKOJ LJUBAVI U ŽIVOTOPISIMA SVETACA 18. I 19. STOLJEĆA U HRVATSKOJ KNJIŽEVNOSTI. PRIPREME ZA ROMANTIZAM.

### SAŽETAK

U životopisima svetaca i svetica 18. stoljeća čitateljstvu nije ponudena samo vjerska pouka o Božjoj ljubavi, nego posredno i poučavanje o književnom modelu i predodžbama svjetovne ljubavi.

Književni opisi nabožnih emocija, ljubavi, suza i kajanja, bili su pripremom i prethodnicom romantizmu; na njima su se pisci i publika (auditorij) učili ljubavi i osobito pisanju o ljubavi i jakim emocijama, sve prema uzorku čiste, nepokolebljive i jedine ljubavi Božje kojom su bili ispunjeni i određeni životi svetaca. Koncept dviju ljubavi europska kultura duguje Platonu i neoplatonizmu.

Podvojenost, rascijep čovjeka na dušu i tijelo, javlja se i kao posljedica popularizacije kršćanskog naučavanja suprotno teološkom učenju o nedjeljivosti duše i tijela.

Opisi i razmišljanja o prirodi Božje ljubavi i ljubavi prema Bogu u životopisima svetaca su takvi da svojim izrazom ne isključuju prirodu ljubavi uopće, nego dapače, podrazumijevaju i prirodu ovozemaljske zaljubljenosti; književni znaci i opisi zaljubljenosti zajednički su jednoj i drugoj vrsti ljubavi.

Učenje o vrhunskoj ljubavi prema Bogu vodilo je iz 18. stoljeća, iz nabožne osjećajnosti, preko sentimentalizma, u književni romantizam 19. stoljeća u kojemu nastavlja intenzivni književni život neoplatonska podjela na dušu i tijelo: na "čistu", čednu, djevičansku ljubav i prizemnu, grešnu, karnalnu ljubav.

Ključne riječi: vjerska književnost, životopisi svetaca, književnost