

Title: Seduction of a Woman in Slovenian Literature Within the European Literary Tradition

Author: Irena Avsenik Nabergoj, Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Email: irena.avsenik nabergoj@guest.arnes.si

This paper examines descriptions of seduction in Slovenian literature. Very popular examples of seduction of a woman are contained in the Slovenian literary motif of Fair Vida (Lepa Vida), which is based on various medieval Fair Vida folk motifs. In the Slovenian folk tradition, Fair Vida is violently abducted by a pagan sea merchant or pirate. Starting in 19th-century literature the motif changes: the “seducer” tempts Vida, a poor young woman who is unhappy in marriage, with promises of a better life. In the poet France Prešeren’s (1800-1849) romantic ballad “Of the Fair Vida” (1832), Vida is taken away across the seas to Spain; at home, her husband searches the seas for her, her young child dies and she, in despair, longs for home and her child. Almost all of the more than 50 later Slovenian literary incarnations pay heed to Prešeren’s version. In Josip Jurčič’s 1877 novel *Lepa Vida* the Italian Paoli entices Vida away from her husband, and Vida eventually goes mad; in Ivan Cankar’s symbolist play *Lepa Vida* (1912), Vida has a Faustian longing as she leaves her drunken husband for a wealthy man; in Miško Kranjec’s erotically-charged story *The Fair Vida of Prekmurje* (1972), the male seducer is reminiscent of Don Juan.

Portraits of seduction in these works will be compared, for the first time, with the archetypal images of seducers in Molière’s *Don Juan* (1664/65), Goethe’s *Faust* (1828–1829) and Pushkin’s *The Stone Guest* (1840), which all directly or indirectly influenced Slovenian seduction narratives. Despite the similar psychological procedure in all of these works, each individual writer describes seduction and the fates of seducers and victims in distinct ways. Thus, individual literary portraits from different times and historical situations demonstrate originality in dealing with motif of seduction as a universal phenomenon of human existence.