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How to Stay in Love Forever?

(BAKALÁRSKA PRÁCA)

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Prehlasujem, že som túto bakalársku prácu vypracovala samostatne a uviedla som úplný zoznam citovanej a použitej literatúry.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main aim of my thesis is a closer observation of the love relationship of the immortal couple from Tom Robbins's novel *Jitterbug Perfume*, Alobar and Kudra. I will try to explore features of romantic love in the novel and based on these results will present the final conclusion as to what are the features that enable a couple to stay in love forever.

Around the time I was supposed to be choosing the topic for my thesis, I had read a philosophical esoteric book about finding true love for life, including tips on how to keep this love alive. I began to look for certain actual literary sources devoted to this problem and only a small number were focused on closer observations of couples in love. They were either too romantic and could not be considered trustworthy, or they presented the couple as a flawless pair of individuals. Since Tom Robbins was then and still is one of my favorite authors, I decided to focus on *Jitterbug Perfume*, where one of the strongest love stories is being told. However, there is not much secondary literature dealing precisely with Robbins's novel *Jitterbug Perfume* except for a collection of his interviews and several essays.

I will begin my thesis with a short biography of Tom Robbins in the first chapter. He is an interesting and original figure in the field of novel writing and I wanted to take a more detailed look at the experiences that made him the author he is today. In this biography, I included personal information about his wives, since I find particularly interesting the fact that he was able to create such an extraordinary portrayal of a couple experiencing their undying love even though he was not successful in his love life while writing it.

The second chapter will consist of a series of brief cultural contexts. I will narrow down this information about one special decade in American history, which influenced and shaped Robbins's character. In the subchapters, I will also attempt to present information about the Sexual Revolution which occurred in the Sixties. The majority of the sources are contradictory, so I will gather substantial and meaningful parts in order to create an objective extract. At the end of this chapter, I will compile a list of the authors Robbins mentioned as his influences in various interviews so that a reader can create his or her own visualization of the author's background.

The major part of this thesis will introduce my list of features I have found in the novel and which I think are behind this couple's success in creating never-ending love. I will start with a brief description of the main characters. I will then divide these features found while reading the novel into six major categories. Within each of them I will also present examples of these features in the novel.

2. BIOGRAPHY

The primary sources in this chapter are Mark Siegel's book *Tom Robbins* (1980) and the chronology published in *Conversations with Tom Robbins* (2011) by the editors Liam O. Purdon and Beef Torrey.

Thomas Eugene Robbins was born on July 22 in Blowing Rock, North Carolina in 1932. He began to write short stories at the age of five by dictating them to his mother. In his adolescent years, he was allowed to perform odd jobs for a traveling circus, and after his family moved to Warsaw, Virginia, he continued in his circus hobby working for Hunt Bros. Circus. He kept his youth years fresh and interesting even in high school where he was voted the Most Mischievous Boy. His history reflects a number of interests and perspectives - after graduating from Hargrave Military Academy, Robbins entered Washington and Lee University, majoring in journalism and writing for the college newspaper along with Tom Wolfe. He remained in this role of trouble maker and was "drummed out of his college fraternity for throwing food at an officious housemother" (Siegel, 8).

In 1952, he began to hitchhike up and down the East coast and worked at various construction jobs to make money for food. His first marriage came about in 1953, when he married Peggy Waterfield, although in that same year he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and was trained in meteorology. After his son was born, he flew to South Korea and taught weather observation to the South Korean air force, but he "claims to have spent most of his time and energy operating a black market in cigarettes, soap and toothpaste" (Siegel, 7). He used his free time to fly frequently to Japan, where he developed a life-long interest in Asian culture and philosophy. After being honorably discharged from the Air Force, he divorced Peggy and two years later married Bunnie Roy - at the age of twenty-six.

He enrolled at art school, where he graduated in 1960 and divorced his second wife. Two years later, on a whim, Robbins married Susan Petway Bush, a young woman he had met only once and they left for Seattle, "which seemed to be the point in the continental United States farthest from Richmond (he later gave Richmond a verbal beating in *Cowgirls*), so Robbins set out for it" (Siegel, 8). He was hired by the daily *Seattle Times*, where he worked as a critic specializing in "reviewing everything

from painting and sculpture to operas and rodeos” (Siegel, 8). After meeting a pharmacology professor at the University of Washington, Robbins’s first “trip” after ingesting LSD was on July 16, 1963 and he described this day as “the single most rewarding day of his life” (Purdon, 23). His life appeared to radically change by this experience and he consequently quit his job for *Seattle Times*; he divorced his third wife after three years of marriage and moved back to New York. He was then thirty-three years old. One year later he returned to Seattle, where he would write art columns for *Seattle Magazine*. These columns attracted the attention of Doubleday’s Berkeley editor, Luther Nichols, who approached Robbins in 1968 about writing a book of creative criticism. According to Robbins, however, after a few drinks he suddenly discovered that he was more interested in writing a novel. Nichols was interested and Robbins left his job (Siegel, 9). Meanwhile, Robbins hosted a late-Sunday-night radio show “Notes from the Underground” on KRAB-107.7; covered the world’s first LSD Conference in San Francisco and in 1968 married Terrie Lunden. He turned thirty-eight and completed his first novel *Another Roadside Attraction* in 1970, described by Rolling Stone as a “quintessential Sixties novel”. He moved to La Corner, Washington, where he lives until the present.

He divorced his fourth wife in 1975. After publishing *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* in 1976, *Still Life with Woodpecker* followed in 1980 and reached #1 on the *New York Times* trade paper-back best-seller list. He appeared at *Esquire*’s 50th Anniversary celebration along with Norman Mailer and Ken Kesley. After the massive success of *Jitterbug Perfume* staying on the top of New York Times best sellers list for several months in 1984, he was identified as one of the figures who defined Sixties counterculture along with Norman Mailer, Hunter S. Thompson, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ken Kesey and Timothy Leary. He married his fifth and present wife Alexa Ann Beyers.

Alongside his fifth marriage came his fifth novel *Skinny Legs and All* in 1990, which became a national bestseller. While being a best-selling author, he enjoyed his success by travelling with his wife to Timbuktu, which he often mentions in his later novels. He also tried white-water rafting adventures all over the globe. He was referred by the legendary Italian critic Fernanda Pivano as “the most dangerous writer in the world” and had a short appearance in Alan Rudolph’s adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut’s *Breakfast*

of *Champions*. After an almost ten year break, his seventh novel *Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates* was published. The novel had an immense success, confirming the author's growing fame; he was named on *Writer's Digest* millennial list of "best writers of the 20th century." The following years were a period of various honors, prizes, biographies; in 2003 he completed writing his eighth novel *Villa Incognito*, a best-seller in Australia. A collection of his works throughout his writing career *Wild Ducks Flying Backward: The Short Writings of Tom Robbins* was published in 2005 and brought the author even more attention and made him a lifetime laureate in Seattle's prestigious Rainer Club; it also brought him a nomination for Dublin Prize; award to the best foreign translation of an English language novel, which was the Czech translation of *Villa Incognito*. His fame reached its height when a three-day festival was organized wholly around *Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates* in Mexico, where he gave keynote addresses and taught workshops. In 2009 his up until now latest novel *B Is for Beer* was published, described as "a children's book for grown-ups and grown-up book for children" (Purdon and Torrey, 28).

At the end of Robbins's biography, I include his own thought on his life. The excerpt is from an interview conducted by Tania Ahsan in 2009.

TA: *Do you have any regrets?*

TR: On a personal level, I've participated in a couple of ill-advised marriages. I should have known better but I couldn't help it. I was in a sex trance at the time. But, hey, romantic disasters are all part of life's rich pageantry. In my work, I suppose I regret having given such a favorable impression of cocaine in my early novel *Still Life With Woodpecker*. It took me more than a year of weekend tooting to finally realize that coke is a pharmaceutical jackhammer that punches holes in the soul. (Ahsan, 33)

This quote shows that Robbins seems to have finally found his peace and today, being almost eighty years old and living with his only son and wife can continue writing the bizarre and entertaining novels expected by fans all around the globe.

3. CULTURAL CONTEXT

This chapter explores concepts of freedom and revolutionary thoughts during “The Sixties”, followed by a brief introduction to the Sexual Revolution which outburst simultaneously with the Counterculture movement. The main sources used in this chapter were “I’m set free...”: The Velvet Underground, 1960s Counterculture, and Michel Foucault by Matthew Bannister published in *Popular Music and Society* Vol. 33.No. 2 (2010), an article published in *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* Vol 43 .No. 2 by Donald R. Wesson, M.D. called “Psychedelic Drugs, Hippie Counterculture, Speed and Phenobarbital Treatment of Sedative-Hypnotic Dependence: A Journey to the Haight Ashbury in the Sixties” (2011) and “The Post- Modernist Outlaw Intellectual” by Peter O. Whitmer published in *Aquarius Revisited: Seven Who Created the Sixties Counterculture That Changed America* (1987) and *The American People: Creating a Nation and Society* by Nash, Jeffrey et al. (1990).

The Counterculture

It is a cultural saying that if you remember the Sixties, you probably were not there. In the 1960s, many Americans, mainly young people, lost their faith in the logic and functionality of the American system. The emergent rock counterculture was deeply idealistic: truth, freedom, peace, love, and self-expression were all intrinsic to a cultural agenda that stressed liberation from straight society, repressive social orders, personal neurosis, and commercial fakery. A utopia was to be achieved through a combination of mind-altering drugs, communal lifestyles, protest, agitation for social justice, and, of course, rock music (Bannister, 163). As Joseph Heller, the author of *Catch 22* said, “there was a general feeling that the platitudes of Americanism were horseshit.”

Following the example of the Beats in the 1950s, charismatic figures such as Timothy Leary, Ken Kesey, Tom Wolfe, Stanley Owsley and many others that had rejected conventional means of expressing themselves, searched for new means of self-gratification and self-expression. During this search, “thousands of people migrated to the San Francisco Bay Area, settling in the North Beach District, Berkeley, or the Haight-Ashbury” (Wesson, 154). They were seeking a spiritual alternative to the religions of their parents and found books such as *The Psychedelic Experience* by Leary

and *Doors of Perception* by Huxley; they discovered new meanings in Eastern mysticism, Native Americans rituals and psychedelic drug use.

The 1960s were a potent time for Robbins. To quote Whitmer's interview with Robbins: "He is an artist irrevocably rooted in that decade, and he tracked the evolution of consciousness expansion like a dog lost and wandering in the forest, listening to his master's whistle" (Whitmer, 242).

I followed it all, and in a certain sense I participated in it right at a very core level, but I was never really a part of that scene. It was just not in my nature to be part of the scene. (Whitmer, 243)

He certainly was not a conformist, not in his way of life, nor in the matter of fashion. He claims to have developed his own style that has everything from every culture he loves and admires, unlike most people during the Sixties, who needed to show their beliefs more explicitly and changed their outer appearance. "The hippies" let their hair grow, sprouted beards, women and men wore jeans, muslin shirts for casual wear, they discarded ties and jackets, women embraced freer fashion styles wearing miniskirts or very long dresses and to older Americans most troubling - no bras. Wearing huge peace signs, they opposed the Vietnam War and the military draft, competitive materialism, and drug laws concerning marijuana and psychedelics (Wesson, 155). These drugs were an important component of the Counterculture used in many ways: recreation, self-exploration, as a method of achieving transcendental experiences or spiritual enlightenment. The most popular drug among women was the recently-introduced birth control pill.

To paraphrase Nash and Jeffrey, the arts reflected both the mood of mismatch and the urge to innovate apparent in the larger society. "Op" artists painted sharply defined geometric figures in clear, vibrant colors, "Pop" artists like Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jasper Johns made ironic comments on American materialism and drew representations of everyday objects such as soup cans, comic strips etc. A number of artists used spray guns and fluorescent paints to gain effect (Nash and Jeffrey, 1016).

Daily usage of hallucinogenic drugs also became a new form of lifestyle. Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert and their scientific research on drugs promoted the cause of

LSD nationally; Ken Kesey participated in medical experiments at a hospital where he was introduced to LSD, after publishing his novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, he used his profits to establish a commune of "Merry Pranksters" which headed East in 1964 in a converted school bus painted in psychedelic colors, but after their return to California, many were arrested. Drugs were no longer limited only to an urban subculture of musicians and artists; soldiers brought experience with drugs back from Vietnam. Taking a "tab" of LSD became part of the coming-of-age ritual for many college students. Marijuana became phenomenally popular in the 1960s in high schools, neighborhoods, and college parties like cans of beer in the previous generation (Nash and Jeffrey, 1017).

The music gave way to a new kind of rock that swept the country - and the world. The Beatles were the major influence, as they took first England, then the United States; commercial success of Rolling Stones with occasionally violent frontman Mick Jagger brought a new style of live performances showing his contempt for conventional sexual norms. Jim Morrison of The Doors conveyed a raw sexuality in his dialogue with the audience; Janis Joplin presented herself as a hard-driving, hard-drinking woman with roots in the blues. The music sensation was most important at a mid-August weekend in 1969, when around 400,000 people gathered in upstate New York for the Woodstock rock festival (Nash and Jeffrey, 1018).

The hippie movement was killed by TV and news media, commercial exploitation and meth. As they emphasized the "epidemic" use of psychedelics, they also promoted escalating drug control. Those who came to San Francisco in 1967 may have been less committed, just interested in having a good time rather than changing their lifestyles. By all means, the hippie movement was in decline (Wesson, 157). Wesson also quotes Don Lattin's article in *The Harvard Psychedelic Club* (2009):

"The sixties were such a divisive decade that, when we look back on it, we tend to forget that the 'counterculture' was not just against everything. The antiwar movement was for peace. The civil rights and feminist movements were for equality. The environmental movement was not just against pollution; it was for a new way of seeing the interdependence of all living things" (Wesson, 157).

Robbins says that those experiences during this unique era helped him to evolve his own voice. He explains that he was caught up in the whole psychedelic revolution, and the realization, that, in his opinion, no one was going to write about this era in an appropriate way helped him to decide, that he did not want to *describe* it, but to *evoke* it. He criticizes the quality of the novels and writing techniques of the authors, because they described the era in a reportorial, journalistic manner that was inadequate to reproduce the essence of what was going on. During that period, he was reading Alan Watts, Gary Snyder, Timothy Leary, Yogananda etc. (McCaffery and Gregory, 228).

When asked if he was attempting to make sense of the sixties, Robbins did not need time to think, he knew exactly, why and what he was writing:

“I based the book on a psychedelic model to re-create through style, as much as content, the mood of the ‘60s. Rolling Stone called *Another Roadside Attraction* the quintessential novel of the ‘60s. I think that’s because it looked at the ‘60s from the inside out; instead of trying to describe the era, it evoked it, in style as much as content” (O’Connell, 266).

Judging by the enormous popularity of *Another Roadside Attraction* amongst young people, the author managed to create something authentic, truthful, interesting and not report-like, which brought him deserved acknowledgment between critics and many new fans all around the world.

The Sexual Revolution

This thesis deals with romantic love, which is one of the reasons I included a part about the Sexual Revolution which occurred during the Sixties. Sex plays a major role in Robbins's novels and around that time there were not many authors using such descriptive language. This revolution certainly influenced Robbins when creating love relationships in his novels.

The major sources used in this chapter are Cas Wouters’ article “Balancing Sex and Love since the 1960s Sexual Revolution” published in *Theory, Culture & Society* 15 (1998) and “I’m set free...”: The Velvet Underground, 1960s Counterculture, and Michel Foucault by Matthew Bannister published in *Popular Music and Society* Vol. 33.No. 2 (2010).

It is well known, that people long for intimate relationships enriched with sexual gratification, but this was not common knowledge sixty years ago. The era that changed thoroughly the obsolete views of our ancestors is known as the 1960s Sexual Revolution. The word “revolution” usually implies some radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure. That is what happened during those years, with the Victorian ideal of love with controlling the place of sex in marriage by urging the desexualisation of love. The desensualization of sex reversed particularly from the 1920s onward in a “sexualisation of love” and an “erotisation of sex” (Wouters, 187).

Since Freud, sex has been the focus of a liberation project in Western thought – to be freed by analysis, the talking cure, the lifting of layers of repression that revealed its essential truth, liberating neurotics from their unspoken neuroses and secret shame (Bannister, 167). Freud then argues that this repression was being done by power, the bourgeoisie and capitalism. Freud’s way of freeing ourselves from this is by talking about it, displaying it, and of course doing it, thereby achieving both sexual and political liberation. Books such as Reuben’s *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)* in 1969, Comfort’s *The Joy of Sex* in 1972 and Michel Foucault’s writings testified to the increasing discursive prominence of sexuality in this period (Bannister, 167).

The central objective of 1960’s counterculture was without any doubt sexual liberation by changing lifestyles, outer appearances, religions and, sexual orientation. Many people saw rock and roll as the most powerful expression as a means by which sex could be spoken of. “Until the second half of the twentieth century, the dominant social code regarding the sexuality of women and men clearly continued to represent a lust-dominated sexuality for men and a complementary (romantic) love or relationship-dominated sexuality for women” (Wouters, 187). On closer inspection, a number of researchers concluded that men did not change all that much in their desires and attitudes, and their behavior only changed because they received more opportunities to do what men had always been wanting to do (Baumeister, 133).

With the appearance of birth control pills, women ceased to fear the risk of unwanted pregnancy and started to engage more in premarital sex. This was not only within the lower social classes but also became very popular among university students. They were not that concerned about their reputation, “more and more women deviated from these

social rules and this topic of female sexual pleasure and gratification gained considerable importance in sexual advice literature” (Wouters, 188). The Sixties opened the way to openly discuss and acknowledge sexual longings not only for married women but also for singles and women with a higher social status. Unfortunately, what drew most of the attention were topics of premarital sex, homosexuality, pornography, sexual variations, unmarried cohabitation, extramarital affairs, teenage sex, abortion, pedophilia, incest etc., and caused everyday confrontations with the traditional views of the public regarding the preservation of these social rules.

The sexual revolution and its novelties succeeded despite being criticized and rejected by religion institutions, public figures and the media. During this era, the collective emancipation of sexuality could be obtained by means of collective repression in fear of sexuality and its expression within increasingly less rigidly curtailed relationships. Sexual impulses and emotions were once again allowed into the centre of the personality and thus taken into account (Wouters, 189).

Influences

Every author is influenced by other authors and also wishes to become an influence for others. Robbins with his original and fresh style of writing has drawn the attention of critics and they have tried to find his influences. As a main source for this chapter, I used individual interviews from *Conversations with Tom Robbins* (2011) by editors Liam O. Purdon and Beef Torrey, where I located his remarks concerning this matter and cited the most interesting ones.

Robbins grew up in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. He explains now, from his perspective today that the juice of his fiction comes out of the South; even though he escaped the South because he felt oppression and up until the present argues that Virginia was a fairly repressive place in his youth years.

When asked about the authors whose works Robbins admires and returns to get motivated again, he thinks, that Norman Mailer can successfully activate his imagination, even though he disagrees with him on the psychological level, he admires his work with words. Alongside Blaise Cendrars, James Joyce, Anais Nin, Ishmael Reed, Gunter Grass, Claes Oldenburg, and (the creator of *Krazy Kat*) George Herriman,

Robbins lists among his influences the Coconut Monk, a Zen priest who buzzed around Saigon on a motorcycle during the Vietnam War (Coburn, 3).

His first and foremost influence would be Henry Miller, however, an author objected against by establishment critics. Robbins, however, sees his sublime and would like to present his own values in a similar way. He does not object against being linked to “pop reality” along with his favorite author Saul Bellow, because he thinks that every religious system in the modern world (with the exception of Tantric Hinduism) has denied and suppressed sensuality, yet this sensual energy is the most powerful energy we as individuals possess. We should explore food, drink, drugs, music, art, poetry, and especially sex to enjoy a rocket ride to enlightenment. Pop culture, in a somewhat similar way, as Tantric Hinduism, may be exploited for serious purposes (Strelow, 99).

Robbins is without doubt influenced by Oriental ways of thinking and living. It has been suggested that his penchant for writing episodically came from the influence of Kurt Vonnegut, but he had never read him until he wrote his first novel. He claims that this episodic style of writing came to him, in part, from Zen koan, through John Cage. “Later, out here, the Tibetan concept of Crazy Wisdom became fairly central to my way of thinking, and so did aspects of Taoism and Tantra” (McCaffery and Gregory, 230).

Like his biography, the list of his influences indicates his many hobbies and interests, which brought him to various places all around the world. All of these places and interesting people he met over the years enabled him to create original adventures using his own experiences. The examples are his lifelong interest in Asian culture that can be seen in his detailed knowledge of the everyday life of Indian women as described in *Jitterbug Perfume* or his descriptions of smuggling and comfortable life of deserters during the Vietnam War in *Villa Incognito*.

4. HOW TO STAY IN LOVE FOREVER?

This chapter is focused on the main theme of the thesis and that is where can a person find an answer to a question how to make love stay forever. I will focus on one couple from Robbins's novels, which managed to stay together for almost a six hundred years and their love continued to survive even after the parting of their ways - Alobar and Kudra from *Jitterbug Perfume* (1984). This novel represents also my primary source in this chapter. I will use my fictitious list of possible features and qualities that determine never-ending love. I will try to find those qualities in *Jitterbug Perfume* and prove my theory using actual examples from *Jitterbug Perfume* to show if Alobar and Kudra had those qualities in their relationship and thus could be said that they might work in real-world case of love.

What keeps love alive? A common belief could state that this problem is being studied by many institutions but it is surprising how little it is actually surveyed. Everyday findings about divorce statistics, couples breaking up and general cheating suggest that falling in love is relatively common, but staying in love is far more rare. I did not find a fully developed paradigm case formulation of romantic love in a prototypical or ideal case that embodies all of the relevant features a real-world case of love might exhibit. This is why I created my own list and consequently applied it to the novel, attempting to find an answer to the question asked in the title of this chapter.

First, I will briefly characterize the pair of main characters in the novel, focusing on their background and concentrate on their behavior in the relationship at a later point.

Alobar

At the beginning of the novel, King Alobar is described as a sovereign of a northern origin blond race situated in the Citadel in ancient Bohemia. His kingdom was a minute city-state or a tribe, with various traditions, one of them particularly disturbing: "A custom to put the king to death at the first sign of old age" (19). Even though Alobar had a harem filled with the best women from all around the world, he decided to cheat death and escape his sentence. One of his wives described him as a man "with smooth and tanned body, braided with muscle, supple, quick...his beard was shaggy and full...his eyes, bright as torches in an ice cave, were so blue they seemed on certain days to bleed into the sky" (24). He is brave warrior, foolish enough to start a war with

time and mortality willing to sacrifice everything to stay alive. He is a character larger than life, and although sometimes very stubborn and conceited, he finally succeeds.

Kudra

After their first meeting when she was eight years old, Alobar believed, that she was a reincarnation of his beloved wife Wren from his harem. He was then in India, living as a construction worker, and found her sobbing hysterically because of the view of a funeral, when a widow threw herself into the flames onto her husband's dead body. The assumption that Kudra was a reincarnation of Wren would lead to the conclusion, that all of his original feeling for Wren were transformed onto Kudra. She is described as "thick-thighed, broad-hipped, and heavy breasted, but slender in waist...she manifested the Indian ideal of the woman built for physical satisfaction" (98). She is very intelligent for a woman of her age and culture, she decided to escape her death sentence as a widow and pursued the only man she knew that cheated death. Her description is completed at the end of the book, when a minor character Claude LeFever met her when she returned from her visit to The Other Side. He said that "it proved to be a woman, a dark, Asian woman, quite beautiful," (333) which shows Kudra to be not only an Indian, but also Asian.

Characteristics of Romantic Love

Every person has different ideas and preferences about their ideal partner and relationship, but there are some universal truths told all over again in all medias surrounding an individual. In general, a love relationship is like any other one, but it also contains sexual relations, which are usually absent between friends and family. Based on my research, I will present a list of the features which should be present in this kind of well-functioning relationship.

i. INVESTMENT IN THE WELL-BEING OF THE BELOVED

In love, one takes care of the other, no matter if it is beneficiary to him or not. In a perfect scenario, a person in a couple is able to put the need of his beloved one before his own, which includes an act to prevent anything harmful from happening to the other one, even when risking their own safety or life. When an argument occurs and one leaves, it is perilous for the other one to be stubborn and not to follow his partner, since there is always a chance, that it will not be possible to find his love again or he can waste his chance to ever achieve reconciliation.

As was mentioned before, the author meant Kudra to be the reincarnation of Wren. This is the reason for me to also use her as an example in these sample situations from the book. Some might argue that these two women are different persons, but there can be found so many similarities in their behavior and actions that they could be considered one and the same, much like Alobar considered them to be.

The first act of a great significance of investment in the well-being of the beloved is shown at the beginning of the novel, when Wren helped Alobar keep his secret about getting old, risking her own life: “If survival through deception be your wish, then I shall endeavor to support the deceit... I will be your mirror” (25). She would also fake her lioness cries while they fake having sex. She was willing to continue this farce and prepared an egg without the poison, which she then gave him, they faked his death; she dug him up with her hands and then let him leave her. This was undoubtedly a perfect display of her unselfish interest in Alobar’s prosperity. After his fleeing, she was murdered by his descendant on the throne in an act of jealousy and thus could be reborn as Kudra.

Alobar was never a timid person and proved it when Kudra disappeared in the middle of the night after their first intimate relations. He packed his things and did not hesitate to leave the lamas after spending only one night with Kudra. He caught up with her in less than a day. “I knew you would follow me,” she said, with the kind of confidence some women exude when they sense that they have made a clean capture with the vaginal net” (104). Whether Alobar followed her because of her extensive knowledge of *Kama Sutra* or not, this was the beginning of their relationship and Alobar never regretted this decision to leave everything behind and run after what you think might be the love of your life.

ii. INTIMACY

The person in a couple usually becomes a permanent member in the center of his lover’s intimate world - he is given the position of his primary confidante and soul mate. This entitles confiding and sharing important matters, such as dreams, hopes, fears, failures, hurts and joys. This is, in an ideal situation, also followed with occasions when the couple experience problems. Discussions and generally communication about everything is the key to solve arguments or dispersing doubts about the partner.

The second time Alobar and Kudra met, she told him everything about her life, her late husband, children, her dreams to travel with his father, her failure as a mother, when she escaped and left them behind, because she feared death. They discussed every theme they could think of, and the theme of death and dying (more precisely not dying) was their favorite.

“What is a good way to die?” “In your sleep, I suppose. When you are old and your children are grown.” “Oh? Old and in your sleep? ... And how old is old? Is it ever old enough? You could have accepted the painful life of the widow and died unappreciated in your sleep...that option was open to you, but you ran away from that, as well” (89).

Alobar also told Kudra about his desire to become immortal, he described to her every place he went to and he shared with her his secret how to stay alive forever. This would seem to indicate that pure and one hundred percent intimacy is represented by open discussion regarding such delicate questions as dying, open criticism of cowardliness without the need to fear the anger of the other person.

iii. EXCLUSIVITY

Exclusivity implies that a person in a relationship is the only sexual partner for his or her other half, which is mutual. Cheating is considered a major violation of trust of the other person. Participants are also authentic—they do not pretend to be someone else, they do not wear any mask and withhold their true self from their actual attributes and qualities.

The reader of *Jitterbug Perfume* knows that Alobar was not used to live monogamous life. Being a king enabled him to have his own harem consisting of at least seven wives. However, after his escape from the kingdom, he met one of his wives—Frol and they eloped to a small Christian village where he learned the novelty of having just one wife. He was desperate and considered infidelity: “Frol has satisfied me plenty, but I confess that there are three or four skirts hereabout I would not mind lifting. Haw haw” (39). He did not succeed because he was forced to leave Frol and run away again. His unhappy and lonely life as a pilgrim was not changed until he met Pan, an old goat god. They became acquaintances and Pan even shared his own cave with Alobar, full of little nymphs eager to teach Alobar the secrets behind the divine ways of making love. This part of his demonstrates that even though he tried a monogamous relationship without achieving happiness, the orgies with the nymphs were also not to his taste being the reason why he left and became a monk trying life of celibacy. He never wanted to settle down with only one woman—until he actually tried it.

After meeting Kudra, Alobar never cheated on her and this situation was mutual. Kudra was married to her husband in India since she was fifteen years old and he was the only male she was ever intimate with. She followed this habit even when she was with Alobar for six hundred years. There is not a single remark in the entire novel about Kudra’s desire to leave or cuckold Alobar. There was, however, one occasion when they had sex with someone else and that being Pan, Alobar’s best friend and a god of fertility and sexual desire. It is not absolutely clear whether it could be considered true infidelity:

“The next thing she knew, she and Alobar were dancing up the hillside, following the Charmer’s pipes through thistle bushes...and while panic fear erupted with

a road from her deepest places and while she overheard Alobar plaintively asking, ‘Doesn’t it matter to you that she is my wife?’ she was incapable of turning back. ...but after all, she found that she and Alobar could face each one another without shame” (145).

Alobar’s last comment on this matter brushes away all doubts about the infidelity of this act: “I feel somehow that his lechery was secondary, although to what I cannot say” (145). The author’s opinion cannot be doubted in the case of both partners agreeing to participate in relations of this kind. There is a small chance of disturbing exclusivity, but it surely tightens the intimacy.

iv. ACCEPTANCE AND TRUST

Acceptance, in other words the art of tolerance towards the partner is another important rule to abide by. When facing problems the intimacy is shattered, sexual desire no longer exists, and many resort to violating their oath of exclusivity. Fight between couples are followed by ignorance and an overall lack of interest; the possibility of berating the partner for all of his or her mistakes grows stronger. To love only the positives and good sides of the partner implies that he or she should be an illusional ideal, not a real person. Robbins himself characterizes people in love in *Jitterbug Perfume* in this manner:

Person in a love relationship has a basic sense that they can trust each other - that they can count on each other not to betray or violate this relationship. They confidently believe, for example, that the other will not be sexually unfaithful, or lie about important matters, or reveal personal information they have shared, or exploit them (128).

Alobar, being quite an impressive fellow had some darker sides to him, such as stubbornness, cockiness and gabbiness. Kudra was somewhat suspicious and distrustful towards everything new that Alobar was saying at the beginning and sceptical about his achievement in the field of non-dying. The first conversation showing Kudra’s uncertainty about whether Alobar accepted her the way she was born was right after they met for the second time and were just about to start “an adventure far greater than the merchandise trip that she’d taken with her father” (101). She noticed that something

is not quite right with Alobar and she began to accuse herself of being unattractive to him.

“Something was wrong. ...and even now he was pulling away from her embrace.”
 ‘Is it my color? ... A horse cannot mate with a cow. Is it possible that a fair skinned man is incapable of intercourse with a dark-skinned woman?’ ...‘Is it my nose, then? Perhaps its size offends you.’ ...‘Then why do you spurn me?’” (102)

Kudra had slept with only one man in her life and had no experience with impotence or rejection. She automatically assumed that something must be wrong with her physically, only for Alobar to set things straight by saying: “To be absolutely frank, it is your smell,” (102) and thus they were able to find a solution. Prior to sex Kudra would wash off her oils and scents, but would continue to wear them the rest of the time. From their first intimate relations, until the very end, they spoke their minds and were able to come up with compromises without hurting each other’s feelings. Alobar accepted the fact that Kudra came from a different cultural background and had many unusual habits; she tolerated his alpha male behavior. Even when they fought, neither of them wished the other person to change or be different, i.e. they accepted one other as a person with faults.

v. RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

A mutual and happy relationship requires respect. The phrase “I respect you” can be heard from various media, although the actual meaning of this statement is often extremely vague. It is highly questionable whether the person understands all the aspects of respect. There is no universal explanation as to what respect for the other includes, but there seem to be certain intersections where most of the sources assent. A person respecting the other is represented by an attentive listener who does not insult and talk about the other behind their backs; he or she values their opinions and is considerate of their preferences and sensitive to other person’s feelings. From the social point of view it is easier to express respect for older people and persons of higher social rank. However, the question is, whether people are able to show respect towards their friends and lovers.

To understand someone implies a comprehension of his world view, values, interests, life goals, desires, sensitivities and vulnerabilities. It comes along with the knowledge

of why one should know about his partner at least as much as the partner knows about him or her. If the partner knows one's shoe size and the date of his mother's birthday, one tries to do something in return, so that the balance and reciprocity remain the same on both sides. Furthermore, the more one knows about his partner, it is much easier to determine the reason for his or her distress and worries.

Everyone has their own opinion regarding what respect towards others mean. For me, it is about a high regard towards the other person and I consider this person worthy of esteem. I would not, for whatever reason disregard, take lightly or discount this other person. When applying this to Robbins's novel, Alobar and Kudra seem to verify all criteria describing respectful behavior. There were no insults within the book, they listened to each other and valued each other's opinions they were considerate towards their likes and dislikes.

The only major wrangle they had in the entire novel happened after six hundred years of married life. After such a huge amount of time spent running and changing locations, Kudra was exhausted. She wanted to stay in Paris, open a shop and just enjoy every day without worrying that somebody somewhere could discover their secret, which was completely against Alobar's belief. However, he could not persuade her to change her mind and the frustration and fear of his love dying made him fairly sharp in his utterance: "Well, I can tell you one thing, you are not going to talk me into aging. If you want to risk it, go ahead, but you are stupid" (162). This statement hurt Kudra and she replied: "I may be stupid, but I am not a coward" (162). Alobar did not care about Kudra's feelings, he refused to listen to her explanations, he even insulted her and vice versa and suddenly they were reminiscent of the nonfunctional couple they both resented. They were forced to make a so-called compromise when both of them did what they wanted regardless of the other's needs. This solution did not prove to be effective since the couple reached the point where they seriously considered separation, but then again, they figured it out and were able to arrive at a real compromise.

vi. SEXUAL DESIRE AND ENJOYMENT

As was already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, there are not many authors, apart from Robbins, who explicitly describe the act of sex in their novels. His vivid and realistic descriptions of sexual acts are priceless elements which help the reader imagine what exactly is going on between the characters. He is not afraid of any expressions

including vulgarisms and politically incorrect language. The couple's conversations are never boring or too serious and usually analyze very unusual topics. In *Jitterbug Perfume*, Robbins mostly depicted the sexual adventures of Priscilla and Dr. Dannyboy, even though they were not the main characters. He implied that the sex is important in a relationship and Alobar and Kudra enjoyed a lot of it during six hundred years, but basing your relationship solely on sex will not create solid roots to survive the major thunderstorm which happened between Priscilla and Dr. Dannyboy. Their example was used by the author to demonstrate what a relationship should not be like.

Since Robbins thinks of sex as one of the means to achieve immortality, it is not surprising that his books are full of sexual scenes. The first tension between Kudra and Alobar arose when they met for the second time. Alobar tried to seduce her, but even though she was then a widow on the run, dressed up as a man, she managed to say "no" in a lofty and classy way:

"Alobar moved closer to her. [...] He slipped his arm around her and cupped her left breast. It was heavy and jiggled in his hand as if it were full of liquid. Melon water. Or beet juice. 'The grass is soft here, Kudra.' 'A mattress is softer. It is not my habit to copulate in a grass like an animal'" (90).

As quoted above, a rejection can be preserved as a hostile act and some people cannot handle it. However, it was not general knowledge then that living conditions in India are not always perfect and before Kudra actually described her life as a young wife very closely, Alobar was not able to fully understand what was happening. She explained that almost only one opportunity that a wife has to spend some time with her husband is in bed- where she is the boss; nobody except for her husband can criticize her and command her. This creates some special bond between a married couple and it explains Kudra's high demands concerning the place of the act. Unlike Alobar, she had only one sexual partner before him and was undoubtedly not the easiest to seduce. The word "desire", used in the title of this sub-chapter can be well observed in the following description, when they both could no longer suppress their feelings:

"Suddenly, he walked through the door, catching her unaware, not even dressed yet... At any rate, there was no denying that she was in his arms, that her tongue was sliding about in his mouth and that her hand was groping for something perpendicular-praise Kali-in the general vicinity of his groin" (101).

I described the problems they had before actually having sex, in the Acceptance section above. After those two figured this out, however, the enjoyment must have been an extraordinary one, although “the sounds in Alobar’s ears—dove, cuckoo, green pigeon, parrot, sparrow, flamingo, duck, and quail—destroyed any illusions he might harbor that he was on familiar ground” (102). After the act, she asked him about all his scars and the stories behind them, he asked her about more the *Kama Sutra*’s secrets, and because “she had had four orgasms and was feeling assured” (103), she asked him more personal things about his past and beliefs. Only an extraordinary couple can talk about Bandaloo monks after hours of sexual activity.

Further reading disclosed that their major discussions were almost always after sex, or an important discussion was ended with sex. After their house was burnt down by angry villagers who thought that Alobar and Kudra were “nonbelievers”, “supernatural” or “Agents of the Evil One” (138), they eloped with nothing but a teapot in their hands. And while they watched their home burning, Alobar said: “And on this entire world, which I know for fact to be as round as a beet, there is no other pair like you and me.” This utterance is proved to be right by all their adventures, they went through over the years.

As for the enjoyment part, frequent intercourse does not always imply enjoyment or fun. Outside the purely sexual view, Pan’s description of the couple, when he first saw them should serve as a proof, that this couple is having fun even when not having sex:

“Pan had to admit that they were as agreeable a pair of homers as he’d ever laid eyes upon...he admired the bounce in their steps, the fun in their voice, the way they paused every fifty yard or so to fondle one another” (140).

This initial love enchantment usually wears off after couple of months and it is perfectly natural, that those two had their problems as well. The only difference is that instead of six months, it took them six hundred years to stop having fun and be seriously mad at each other (see the chapter Acceptance).

The last part is focused on the last interesting aspect of their relationship and that is what exactly happened, when they split up. After a series of various arguments a decision was made—to travel to the New World not by boat, but by dematerializing in Paris and rematerializing in America. They did not have any money and Pan was

growing weaker every day so they did not have any other choice and Kudra was convinced that it would work. Unfortunately, when Alobar opened his eyes, Kudra was gone.

Dealing with a death of beloved ones is an extremely difficult matter; many people lose their reason to live. And how is one supposed to get over his lover's disappearance? Alobar was completely lost. He did not know if she crossed over to The Other Side or if she actually made it to America, and he was even considering doing the experiment again and risking his own life. However, his powerful fear of dying kept him terrified and he decided to wait for her return. "There was nothing Alobar could do but grieve" (187), but he did not surrender and he decided to create a perfume to lure her back to him.

Robbins has his own opinion as to how to answer this question. In an interview conducted in 2008, he was asked a question: "How would you define love?"

T.R.: Love is a carrot. No, no, it's a radish. Listen, better brains than mine have skidded off the road in pursuit of that elusive subject. I can say this much with confidence: genuine love, while it lasts, is a transformative emotional state that makes the loved one an irreplaceable being. There's something magical, magnificent, and very sweet about it. [...] I've learned that in asking how we can make love stay, I posed the wrong question. Romantic love moves around. That's what it does. [...] Perhaps it's both insulting and injurious to romance to try to hold on to it (155).

This was surely not the most obvious answer, but words magical, magnificent and sweet are perfect for describing Alobar and Kudra's love.

5. CONCLUSION

In my thesis, I focused on the question as how to make love stay forever. As an example from which I extracted possible answers to this question was a novel by Tom Robbins. *Jitterbug Perfume* is a suitable source, where to possibly find the answer. It represents a story, where one of the strongest love stories is being told and I tried to demonstrate this statement throughout this thesis.

The qualities and features a perfect relationship should contain according to my findings in *Jitterbug Perfume* are divided into six groups. The first quality I listed is investment in the well-being of the beloved, when one takes care of the other, no matter if it is beneficiary to him or not. Next is intimacy, when the person in a couple becomes a permanent member in the center of his lover's intimate world and his partner's confidante and soul mate. The open discussion and generally communication about everything, even unpleasant or hard topics is a key to solve any argument or disperse doubts about the partner, without the need to fear the anger of the other person.

The third feature of a perfect relationship describes exclusivity and thus the implication that a person in a relationship is the only sexual partner for his other half and this is mutual. As shown in the examples I have used, if a couple decides to participate in these kinds of sexual relations with other partners, both of them should agree. However, there might be a small chance of tightening intimacy, because of this shearing failure. Acceptance and trust, or in other words, the art of tolerance towards the partner is a fragile and very important feature I have also found in the novel. Loving only the positives and good sides of the partner creates an illusional ideal, not a real partner. From the first intimate relations, until the very end, speaking one's mind and the art of creating compromises without hurting each other's feelings are couple's strongest features and should not be taken lightly. Even when fighting, the acceptance of the other's faults should be present, or there will come an inevitable end. Constant suspiciousness and distrust towards the partner can cause slowing down of the natural flow of the relationship, when couples discuss the same matters all over again. Opening your mind and heart to new things is another important rule to abide by. While slowly growing trust in the partner, two other features that Alobar and Kudra nurtured were respect and understanding. As the last feature, I listed sexual desire and enjoyment. As I have shown in examples from the novel, the sexual act is a very fundamental part of any

relationship, but it is not the most important one. There is no immortal life without love, not even when one is surrounded with sexual partners.

To conclude my thesis, I would like state that the desire to keep love forever involves actually imagining and wanting to stay with the person forever. When a person starts a relationship with the fear of breaking up, or keeping an escape plan in mind, there will not be any immortality. Letting go of prejudices against a perfect case of love, setting one's mind free and always keeping in mind those six features I presented, there is a great chance of succeeding and creating something extraterrestrial which Alobar and Kudra shared.

6. ZHRNUTIE

Táto bakalárska práca podrobne analyzuje vzťah nesmrteľného páru z románu Toma Robbinsa s názvom *Jitterbug Perfume*, Alobara a Kudry. Mojou snahou bolo objaviť v tomto románe vlastnosti romantickej lásky, ktoré by zodpovedali presnému opisu, čo v skutočnosti „dokonalá láska“ znamená. V závere práce sú prezentované tie vlastnosti, ktoré by mali byť nevyhnutnou súčasťou vzťahu, ak v ňom aktéri majú v úmysle zotrvať navždy.

Jitterbug Perfume opisuje jeden z najsilnejších literárnych príbehov lásky. Pri hľadaní sekundárnej literatúry som však narazila na problém, pretože v literatúre definícia dokonalej lásky ako takej neexistuje. Preto som sa rozhodla vytvoriť si vlastný zoznam kvalít a charakteristík, ktoré by mali vystihovať dobre fungujúci vzťah a porovnala som ich s týmto románom. Pridala som tiež ďalšie vlastnosti, ktoré som aplikovala priamo z knihy. Pri pátraní po zdrojoch autorových nápadov mi pomáhala zbierka rozhovorov a niekoľko esejí, z ktorých sa však žiadna nezaoberala priamo pravidlami lásky.

Práca sa začína autorovým krátkym životopisom, v ktorom sa sústredila hlavne na jeho cesty do zahraničia a jeho mnohé manželstvá. Po sérii viacerých, často úplne odlišných zamestnaní sa autor konečne dostal k písaniu, i keď v relatívne vysokom veku tridsaťosem rokov. Neskôr som sa zamerala na opis kultúrneho kontextu, v ktorom autor vyrastal a v ktorom začal písať. Bolo to obdobie veľkých zmien spoločnosti a ľudského myslenia, u nás známe ako „šesťdesiate roky“, počas ktorého došlo k obrovskému odklonu od Eisenhowerových „ospalých rokov“ k prepuknutiu kultúry hippies. Mladí ľudia cestovali naprieč Spojenými štátmi, fajčili marihuanu a experimentovali s LSD a inými psychotropnými látkami. Toto obdobie neminulo ani Robbinsa, ktorý sa sám otvorene priznáva ku konzumácii LSD a halucinogénnych húb. Simultánne s érou Hippies prebiehala „sexuálna revolúcia“, keď ľudia začali otvorene rozprávať o svojich sexuálnych problémoch a túžbach, čo sa odzrkadlilo aj v tvorbe Robbinsa. Príkladmi toho sú i mnohé ukážky z knihy, ktoré som v práci použila. Hrdinovia nemajú žiaden stud ani problém hovoriť o svojich sexuálnych životoch, čo bolo v období publikovania tejto knihy takmer úplným tabu.

Na konci kapitoly zaoberajúcej sa kultúrnym pozadím som uviedla krátky zoznam autorov, ktorých Robbins sám vyhlasuje za svoje vzory, hlavne čo sa týka literárneho

diela. Ďalej som uviedla zmienky o jeho zahraničných dobrodružstvách, z ktorých mnohé pripomínajú zážitky hrdinov v jeho dielach.

V hlavnej časti práce sa zaoberám otázkou, ako si udržať lásku naveky. Vytvorila som šesť kategórií a v ich názvoch sa nachádza jedna alebo dve kvality, ktoré by mal správny vzťah mať a ktoré som taktiež našla v románe. Pri každej kategórii som uviedla moje vysvetlenie, čo ten pojem predstavuje a následne som použila priame príklady a situácie z knihy, ktoré podporovali moju teóriu.

Prvým kritériom, ktoré podľa knihy nesmie chýbať v žiadnom vzťahu, je záujem o to, aby sa mal druhý partner dobre, pričom nezáleží na tom, či je to pre dotyčného výhodné. Partnerove šťastie je rovnako dôležité ako to jeho. Druhým kritériom je dostatok intimity nie len po fyzickej, ale psychologickej stránke, keď sa obaja členovia vzťahu stanú navzájom dôverníkmi a začnú spolu komunikovať aj na neverbálnej úrovni. Delia sa tak o všetky problémy, aj tie najosobnejšie a najtajnejšie myšlienky. Otvorenie sa partnerovi môže predísť nedorozumeniam a pochybnostiam o jeho motívoch. Tretím faktorom je výlučnosť vo význame, že vo vzťahu by nemali figurovať žiadne ďalšie sexuálne zainteresované osoby, okrem partnerov. Nevera sa berie ako ťažká zrada a môže vyústiť až do ukončenia vzťahu, obaja partneri sa však môžu dohodnúť na vzájomnom vybočení. Prijatie partnera takého aký je, bez ružových okuliarov a bez potreby skrývať vlastnú identitu za maskou, je ďalším z dôležitých bodov, ktoré som našla v tomto diele. Dokresľovanie si fiktívnych vlastností, ktoré ten druhý nemá, má za následok milovanie ikony, nie skutočného človeka. Je potrebné akceptovať kultúru, rasu, krajinu z ktorej partner pochádza, aby neskôr nedochádzalo k nepochopeniu práve kvôli týmto odlišnostiam. Posledný prvok, ktorý som vymenovala v tejto práci, predstavuje sexuálna túžba a potešenie. Sex je súčasťou každého zdravého vzťahu a treba dbať na jeho včlenenie, pretože tvorí jeden zo základných koreňov dlhodobého a seriózneho vzťahu.

Vymenovaním týchto kategórií som poukázala na hlavné súčasti vzťahu Alobara a Kudry. Podľa ich príkladu by nemali teda chýbať v žiadnom vzťahu, ktorý aspiruje na večné trvanie. Keď človek túži po láske, ktorá bude trvať naveky, musí o nej tak aj uvažovať. Nechať voľný priebeh myšlienkam o rozchode alebo si držať otvorené zadné dvierka, keby niečo nešlo podľa jeho plánov, je zvyčajne predzvesťou konca. Je potrebné zahodiť predsudky o tom, že dokonalá, večná láska neexistuje a vždy mať na

pamäti týchto šesť princípov, ktoré majú tú moc vytvoriť niečo podobne úžasné, ako mali Alobar a Kudra.

Annotation

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This thesis focuses on the question as to how to make love stay forever with the possible answers to this question having been extracted from the novel *Jitterbug Perfume* by Tom Robbins, which was deemed a suitable source. It represents a story, where one of the strongest love stories is being told with this statement demonstrated throughout this thesis. The major part of this work consists of characteristics of romantic love, which comprise the six major subsections found in the novel. Each subsection consists of an explanation as to what the author imagines under those terms used in a title of the particular subsection. This theory is demonstrated using actual examples from the novel which are commented on and analyzed.

Anotace

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