



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Posudek vedoucí na bakalářskou práci **Anety Jerglové**

“Sentimental Canada: Analysis of *The History of Emily Montague*”

The submitted thesis deals with a novel which in the official literary canon occupies a secondary rank, however in alternative canons it is of utmost importance. Canadian literary historians adjudge *Emily Montague* (1769) to be the first “Canadian” novel. It is no mean literary achievement – as the discussion of the novel shows, it can fall within many eighteenth-century literary categories: an epistolary novel, a sentimental novel / novel of sensibility, a “Canadian” (i.e. regional) novel. Ms Jerglová takes into account all three categories in their formal and thematic aspects.

In relation to the idea of the epistolary: The polyvocal quality of Richardson’s *Clarissa* results in quite opposing world views when Clarissa clashes with Lovelace and also with Anna. The Anna Howe / Arabella Fermor analogy is clear in relation with the main heroine, but is there in the text an - at least potential - differentiation in some of the other correspondent’s perspectives (which could tally with that of Clarissa / Lovelace)?

Literary critics often applaud the realism of Brooke’s conveying the sense of temporal distance and delay between England and Canada. Ms Jerglová deals with this issue under the heading of 2.3.2. as one of the disadvantages of the epistolary - but does this really need to be one?

In the contrast between the lively heroine Arabella Fermor and its sentimental heroine Emily, the novel provides a kind of contrast that recalls Richardson’s vivacious Anna Howe and serious Clarissa Harlowe, as well as looking forward to Austen’s Marianne and Elinor Dashwood, Elizabeth and Jane Bennet, Emma Woodhouse and Elinor Dashwood. It also has a well-developed sense of location. In this sense the novel is firmly located within the English/Continental (Madame Roccoboni as a follower of Richardson was also one of the possible sources) tradition. What exactly are the reasons that could underline the claims of

this novel as a superbly and uniquely Canadian one? That is, what exactly makes this novel stand apart from the typical writing about Canada of the time?

Regarding the passage on sentimentalism – Emily’s role as a sentimental heroine could use more expansion. Arabella steals the show yet again – but Emily is after all the protagonist, love object of the male protagonist, and thus one of the central pair of lovers. She could use more expansive treatment – and be dealt with more, e.g. her story starts off as having affinities with Clarissa (agreeing to marry a man, then struggling to maintain her own integrity etc.) – an analysis of her role in the text ought to employ a more gendered vision in relation to sentimentalism as such: i.e. what exactly is the power of sentimental femininity?

On page 43 Ms Jerglová mentions an idea central to sentimentalism – “a longing not only for a domestic close-knit family but for a community firmly linked by sentiment and familial structure”. Can Ms Jergová elaborate on this idea of community and how this is imagined in the closure of the book – in the various estates in England?

The novel undermines many contemporary established notions - e.g. traditional forms of representing the “other” landscape etc. Frances Brooke also takes into account the familiar notion of the noble savage – not only in the case of the somewhat naïve notions of Arabella (for her the greatest privilege is the freedom to choose a husband). I would like to know how the entire idea itself is undermined through the principle of empirical experience by William Fermor.

The thesis is refreshing to read: its style is swift, brisk and straightforward. There are some (few) errors – in the use of articles mainly, but these do not in any way impede the sense of the text. The thesis fully meets the requirements in terms of form and content. I **therefore recommend it for defence with the preliminary mark of**

excellent (výborně).

V Praze 11.6.2017

.....

PhDr. Soňa Nováková, CSc., M.A.

úalk

FFUK