

Bachelor Thesis Evaluation

Author: Aneta Jerglová

Title: *Sentimental Canada: Literary Analysis of The History of Emily Montague*

Thesis Supervisor: PhDr. Soňa Nováková, CSc.

External Assessor: Mgr. Klára Kolinská, M.A.,PhD.

External assessor's evaluation:

Aneta Jerglová's bachelor thesis addresses a very complex and productive topic: the genres of epistolary and sentimental novel, which blend into one in the case of Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*, published in 1769, that the author chose to focus on for her analysis. Quite rightly, however, the author does not only consider the formal aspects of the text under scrutiny, but discusses it in a larger historical, social, and cultural context, as a productive platform for reflecting upon many pressing issues of the time of the novel's publication, such as social, particularly women's rights, domestic, as well as colonial politics, culture, literature etc.

The dissertation is coherently, logically and carefully structured, making the argument easy to follow and sufficiently convincing. It is divided into three, well proportioned chapters, the first one of which is dedicated to the discussion of the genre of epistolary novel, with special attention given to *Emily Montague*. The author seems to proceed quite independently in evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the epistolary novel; while the advantages appear as rather obvious, I am somewhat unclear as to what exactly the author means by "oscillation," listed among the disadvantages, and why this feature should automatically constitute a problem – could this, perhaps, be addressed in the discussion?

The second chapter establishes a terminological framework for discussing the novel as an example of sentimentalist fiction; it tries, again quite rightly, to describe the formal and discursive differences between the so-called sentimental novel and the novel of sensibility, and interpret *Emily Montague* through these categories. Needless to say, strict classification of such concepts is anything but easy and given once and for all; in the end of this part, the author seems to partially resign upon determining where *Emily Montague* should stand, admitting that many characters and situations within it qualify rightfully for both of these categories.

The last chapter then places *Emily Montague* within the context of Canadian literature, specifically that of the beginning of the tradition of fiction. It makes some valuable observations, namely concerning the discussion of the picturesque and the sublime in early Canadian fiction, the relation between the – then typically Canadian – genre of travel writing, and the literary discourse of “the Other” of the time. While the author’s conclusions are generally correct, they are, in part, not free from simplifications and inaccuracies; sometimes the author makes what appears as a logical assumption which, however, is not grounded in evidence – thus, it is inaccurate to claim that women writers appeared only extremely sporadically in early Canadian literature, given by the difficult conditions of life in the colony, which makes Frances Brooke’s case quite exceptional. However, the opposite is true, and early Canadian literature – surprisingly perhaps – abounds in female writers, who provided very valuable testimony of the colonial experience.

All in all, however, this dissertation obviously meets all the requirements for texts of this kind and level. And, in spite of the fact that there are occasional minor language mistakes and stylistic inaccuracies, it is written in good and natural sounding English, which makes it interesting to read.

In view of the comments made above I recommend Aneta Jerglová’s bachelor thesis for defence with suggested evaluation of EXCELLENT.

Prague, June 7th, 2017

Mgr. Klára Kolinská, M.A., PhD.