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

Sentimentální Kanada: Literární analýza
Příběhu Emily Montague

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague*, sentimentální román, epistolární román, kanadská literatura, britská literatura osmnáctého století.

KEY WORDS

Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague*, sentimental novel, epistolary novel, Canadian literature, eighteenth-century British literature.

THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses primarily on *The History of Emily Montague*, a novel written in 1769 by Frances Brooke. The novel is remarkable for covering a vast spectrum of eighteenth-century debates. In formal terms, it is an epistolary as well as a sentimental novel, both of which were widely popular during the eighteenth century. As it is written in letters by several persons, an example of the polyvocal epistolary novel, it provides a broad range of perspectives whereby it achieves exceptional insight into the social, cultural and even political concerns of the era.

The thesis will focus on issues of form and on thematic issues: which range from the sentimental construction of ideal femininity and marriage, aesthetic conceptions of the visual appreciation of landscape and depictions of cultural otherness as parts of socio-cultural and literary debates of the eighteenth century. The thesis is consequently divided into three parts. The first part introduces the background of the author and of the novel concentrating on the specificities of its epistolary form. A short introduction into the history and development of this particular literary device will be provided, but the main thrust will be on its functions in the novel, advantages and disadvantages. The second part will observe *The History of Emily Montague* as a prime example of the sentimental novel. Typical themes such as courtship and marriage or specific types of characters usually presented in these novels will be exposed. The nature of sentimental heroines will be revealed using the instances of Emily Montague, an ideal sentimental heroine, and Arabella Fermor, who serves as a lively foil for Emily. Differences and contrasts between these heroines will be scrutinized as well as the formation of the sentimental hero (Edward Rivers) and his specific traits distinguishing him from ordinary male characters (Sir George).

Finally, the novel is set in Canada and, although the novel was written by an English woman writer who published it in England, it is frequently mentioned as an important text in Canadian literary history, perhaps even the first Canadian novel. The characters come to Canada as new settlers and they contemplate the location, frequently applying contemporary notions of the picturesque, the beautiful and the sublime in their descriptions. Their arrival takes place closely after the Seven Years' War when the English gained Canada as their colonial possession from the French. This means that three cultures meet in one place: the English, the French and the Canadian aboriginal population. Thus the characters face cultural and social differences, which provide an extraordinary portrayal of the social interaction from the English perspective. Although the novel is not a well-known canonical literary work, its intriguing style and wide scope of themes contributes significantly to the pressing debates of the eighteenth century. The aim of this thesis is to discuss the novel within the contemporary discourse ranging from such issues as femininity, masculinity and marriage to Canadian landscape, cultural otherness and the political reach of the British Empire.

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá především románem *The History of Emily Montague*, který byl napsán v roce 1769 anglickou spisovatelkou Frances Brooke. Román je pozoruhodný tím, že zahrnuje široké spektrum závažných otázek osmnáctého století. Z formálního hlediska *The History of Emily Montague* je epistolární a zároveň sentimentální román. Oba tyto žánry byly během osmnáctého století velmi rozšířené a populární. Jelikož je román tvořen z dopisů mezi několika osobami, mnoho perspektiv a úhlů pohledu vykresluje výjimečný obraz společenských, kulturních a i dokonce politických záležitostí dané doby.

Tato práce se bude zabírat jak formální, tak i tematickou stránkou románu, která zahrnuje sentimentální konstrukci femininity a manželství, estetické vnímání krajiny a vyobrazení kulturních odlišností jakožto součástí společensko-kulturního a literárního diskursu. Bakalářská práce je rozdělena na tři hlavní části. První část je věnována epistolárnímu románu a její úvod mapuje historii a vývoj tohoto žánru. Důraz je kladen na funkce, výhody a nevýhody, které epistolarita naskýtá. Druhá část pojednává o románu jako o hlavním příkladu sentimentální tradice. V této kapitole budou představena typická sentimentální témata jako láska a rovnocenné manželství a také specifické typy postav jako například prototypická sentimentální hrdinka Emily Montague a její rozverný protějšek Arabella Fermor. Rozdíly a odlišnosti mezi těmito hrdinkami budou odhaleny. Podobně tak i charakteristické rysy sentimentálního hrdiny Edwarda Reverse budou porovnány se sirem Georgem, který slouží jako příklad zbytku mužské populace.

Román se odehrává v Kanadě, a ačkoliv byl napsán anglickou autorkou a vydán v Anglii, je často zmiňován jako důležitý text kanadské literární historie, proto je i někdy považován za první kanadský román. Hlavní postavy přijíždějí do Kanady jako osadníci a při

rozjímání o okolní krajině často uplatňují dobové představy o malebnosti, kráse a vznešenosti. Jejich příchod do Kanady probíhá krátce po skončení Sedmileté války, následkem níž Anglie získala od Francie Kanadu do svého koloniálního vlastnictví. To znamená, že na jednom místě se střetávají tři národy: Angličané, Francouzi a kanadská domorodá populace. Dopisovatelé jsou tedy vystaveni kulturním i společenským rozdílům. Vylíčení interakce mezi odlišnými kulturami z anglického pohledu dodává románu neobyčejnou atmosféru. Ačkoliv toto dílo není velmi známé, svým poutavým stylem a tématy významně přispívá do debat o osmnáctém století. Cíl této práce je vypracovat literární analýzu již zmíněného díla a zasadit jej do dobového diskursu, který se pohybuje od pojetí femininity, maskulinity a manželství až ke kanadské krajině, kulturní odlišnosti a politickému vlivu Britského impéria.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	11
2. The epistolary novel	13
2.1. Epistolarity in the <i>The History of Emily Montague</i>	14
2.2. Advantages of the epistolary mode	15
2.2.1. Various perspectives	15
2.2.2. Formal realism	16
2.2.3. Writing to the moment	17
2.2.4. Psychological insight	18
2.3. Disadvantages of the epistolary mode	19
2.3.1. Artificiality	19
2.3.2. Oscillation	21
2.3.3. Didacticism	24
3. The sentimental tradition	26
3.1. Sentimental terminology and its development	27
3.1.1. Sentiment	28
3.1.2. Sensibility	29
3.2. The sentimental novel and the novel of sensibility	30
3.2.1. Sentimental characters	32
3.3. Companionate marriage	41
3.4. Women's integrity	43
4. Canadian literature	45
4.1. Travel narratives	46
4.2. Canadian setting	47
4.2.1. The sublime	51
4.3. Clash of cultures	53
4.3.1. The native aboriginal population	53
4.3.2. The French Canadians	57
4.3.3. The Other and the English superiority	59
4.3.4. The British Empire and the civilizing mission	60
5. Conclusion	65
Bibliography	67

1. Introduction

Frances Brooke is an English woman writer of the eighteenth century. She was born in Lincolnshire and her father was a clergyman, which may have had influence upon her choice of her future husband, Rev. John Brooke. When she became an orphan, she spent her childhood with her sister Sarah at clerical rectories. Brooke then became a firm supporter of the Anglican Church, which was most apparent during her stay in Canada and consequent interaction with the French Catholics. In the 1750s she moved to London, which was crucial for her future literary career. Her literary scope was broad, indeed. She began writing poetry and plays, she also translated works from French. However, she achieved acknowledgment by editing her weekly periodical *The Old Maid*, which lasted from November 1755 to July 1756.¹ Moving to London was of the utmost importance for her as she became a member of a literary circle, and got acquainted with numerous prominent literary figures of that age such as famous Fanny Burney. However, the main impact on her writing and career had Samuel Richardson. From him, she learned many techniques and modes which she then applied in her novels.

In 1760 she published *Letters from Juliet, Lady Catesby, to her friend, Lady Henrietta Campley*, which was a translation of a French novel of sensibility. The fact that she was familiar with French literature and culture proved essential regarding her sojourn in Canada. Three years later she wrote her first novel, *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* and the same year she joined her husband at Quebec in Canada, which was the key point in her career. Here, she drew inspiration and wrote *The History of Emily Montague*, whereby she became famous. In 1768 she returned to England and later became co-manager of the Haymarket Opera House. In 1774, *All's Right at Last; or the History of Miss West*, which is considered the second Canadian novel,

¹ Janet Todd, *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (London: Methuen, 1987) 60.

was published anonymously, but it is assumed that Brooke was the author.

Taking into account all the circumstances, *The History of Emily Montague* seems to encompass the main currents of the eighteenth century. The thesis will then place the novel within the context of the eighteenth-century literary and cultural environment. The first part surveys the epistolary novel as important genre established by Samuel Richardson and contribution to the development of the novel. The particularities of epistolarity applied in *The History of Emily Montague* and possible deviation from Richardson are then exposed. The second part surveys the sentimental tradition and its development. Furthermore, Brooke's ideas about gender equality are examined. The last part sets the novel within the Canadian context employing contemporary sentimental notions when contemplating the landscape. Finally, the Canadian society is contrasted with the English which produces the early notions of nationhood and reveals the omnipresent superiority of the British Empire. The thesis concludes by affirmation that the novel should be given more attention and acknowledgment as it is a great contribution to the eighteenth-century cultural and literary discourse.

2. The epistolary novel

The beginnings of the English novel can be traced back to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* written in 1740 followed by *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* in 1748. Both these novels belong to sentimental tradition. Furthermore, they are instances of epistolary fiction. The epistolary novel is a novel composed mainly of epistles - letters. The word "epistle" originates from Greek, Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "a formal or elegant letter."² Apart from letters, epistolary novel may include diary entries, newspaper fragments, or other documents. As opposed to the other current in the development of novel-writing primarily represented by Henry Fielding, the narrator is not omniscient. Terry Castle notes that "the multiple-correspondent epistolary form, unlike other modes of narration, has no built-in authorial rhetoric. We hear no authorial voice in the text."³ In fact, the characters of the novel tell their story by means of the letters they write. Thus, the novel is virtually written by the characters themselves. The plot is driven by the reciprocal exchange of letters whereby new events unfold. This narrative technique somewhat engages the readers in active participation as they are anxious to learn what follows next. The epistolary form elaborated by Richardson is aptly explained in Tom Keymer's essay:

... a plan of narrative of a peculiar kind: the persons, who bear a part in the action, are themselves the relaters of it. This is done by means of letters, or epistles; wherein the story is continued from time to time, and the passions freely expressed, as they arise from every change of fortune, and while the persons concerned are supposed to be ignorant of the events that are to follow.⁴

² "Epistle", *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Since 1828*, 2017 <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistle>> 16 April 2017.

³ Terry Castle, *Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning & Disruption in Richardson's "Clarissa"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016) 167, *Project Muse*, <<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/47562>> 14 April 2017.

⁴ Tom Keymer, "Reading Epistolary Fiction," *Cambridge University Press* (2009): 4, CambridgeCore <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/richardsons-clarissa-and-the-eighteenthcentury-reader/reading-epistolary-fiction/080A3D91512BED6A934596799DABB44A>> 14 April 2017.

Furthermore, Ian Watt mentions that because the epistolarity sets the story in motion, Richardson called it a “dramatic narrative” rather than a “history.”⁵ The difference lies only in the fact that instead of speaking, the characters write letters. In general, the epistolary novel was especially popular during the eighteenth century, thus it was imitated by many writers, among them Frances Brooke.

2.1. Epistolarity in the *The History of Emily Montague*

The History of Emily Montague is written in the epistolary mode. There are nine correspondents exchanging letters from April 1766 to November 1767. In total, the novel is composed of 228 letters. There are three pairs of lovers: Edward Rivers and Emily Montague, Arabella Fermor and J. Fitzgerald, Lucy Rivers and John Temple. However, only letters shared between Rivers and Emily are revealed. The main part of the correspondence flows alternately among the friends, not lovers. Apart from these main correspondents, there are three less prominent characters contributing to letter-writing: Arabella’s father, William Fermor sending letters to the Earl of — in England and providing mainly descriptions of Canada and local habits. Furthermore, Emily’s distant relation E. Melmoth writes several letters and Sir George sends only one. The characters exchange letters between Canada and England and within the colony, as well. Rivers, a British officer who immigrated to Canada, is along with Arabella the main correspondent. The dialogue, or rather the interaction among the characters is of an exceptional nature. Carl F. Klinck remarks that the brevity of the epistles “makes allowance for something of the give-and- take of conversation.”⁶ Stephen Carl Arch adds that “the voices of

⁵ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), 209.

⁶ Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1961) xii. All future page references will be to this edition and will be included in parentheses in the text.

the lovers dominate the novel, and Brooke has constructed it so that the variations in character between them provide contrast and wit.”⁷ As it was already mentioned, epistolary novel engages reader’s attention, which is also the case of the *The History of Emily Montague*. Klinck claims that “the reader is aware that reciprocity of thought and feeling is demanded of him: he has to concern himself with thinking and feeling, not merely with being a spectator of what someone else, in the story has seen and heard” (xii). Nevertheless, this is not the only advantage provided by the epistolarity.

2.2. Advantages of the epistolary mode

2.2.1. Various perspectives

The epistolary fiction, in general, has several advantages over other narrative strategies. First of all, multiplicity of correspondents provides a broad range of perspectives, thus the story becomes more dimensional. The events are shown from different points of view, through various lenses, whereby exceptional insight into the social, cultural and even political concerns of the era is achieved. Keymer states that “letter is ‘the exemplary form of the period’, which in its characteristic tones of candour and spontaneity ‘reflects the profoundly social quality of the age’.”⁸ As *The History of Emily Montague* is a polyvocal epistolary novel, it presents wide range of voices which represent various viewpoints. Castle notes that in epistolary novels, the characters not only write but read as well, so they interpret the content of the letters. Actually, the characters “decode their world; and their own letters”⁹ and consequently “organize it differently, according to their different psychological, social, and cultural expectations.”¹⁰ The variety of perceptions and meanings then compensate for the simple plot of the novel.

⁷ Stephen Carl Arch, “Frances Brooke’s ‘Circle of Friends’: The Limits of Epistolarity in *The History of Emily Montague*,” *Early American Literature* 39.3 (2004): 466, EBSCO, 14 April 2017.

⁸ Keymer 1.

⁹ Castle 50.

¹⁰ Castle 51

Dermot McCarthy asserts that the novel “contains and expresses a structure of ideas, values, and perspectives.”¹¹ The opinions presented in the story concern mainly colonial issues, descriptions of life in Canada and the contemporary perception of marriage, which the characters communicate to their friends back in England. Thus, there seems to be a link between the epistolary novel and the travel narrative as the letter is the principal means of expression in both forms. Jodi L. Wyett, elaborates it:

This parallel between internal and external audiences allows readers to consider *Emily Montague* an authentic description of Canada, yet the multiple perspectives of an epistolary novel also offer readers a variously mediated travel narrative.¹²

Realistic descriptions of the setting and society belong among other advantages.

2.2.2. Formal realism

As a new genre at that time, the novel was deemed the medium which could capture everyday experience. This belief is connected to Watt’s term “formal realism,” which most importantly implies “that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience”¹³ and contains “such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions... .”¹⁴ The epistolary form grants the novel even more realism and authenticity. The title “*History*” seems to indicate verisimilitude, as well. The characters exchange letters as actual people in real life, thus the epistolary style imitates a real-life act. Readers may imagine real people placed in real setting. The exchange of letters resembles familiar conversation as the style is usually natural and relaxed. Keymer mentions that letters constitute “the nearest approach to conversation.”¹⁵ Klinck comments on Brooke’s fluid style: “Her epistles are short, her paragraphs of minimum length; her transitions telepathic;

¹¹ Dermot McCarthy, “Sisters Under the Mink: The Correspondent Fear in *The History of Emily Montague*,” *Essays on Canadian Writing*, 93.51 (1993): 343, EBSCO, 14 April 2017.

¹² Jodi L. Wyett, “‘No Place Where Women Are of Such Importance’: Female Friendship, Empire, and Utopia in *The History of Emily Montague*,” *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 16.1 (2003): 39, EBSCO, 14 April 2017.

¹³ Watt 32.

¹⁴ Watt 32.

¹⁵ Keymer 7.

her sentences either balanced or uncomplicated; her flow rapid; and her diction wholly modern, familiar, requiring no footnotes” (xiii). Each correspondent may use different style, different grammar, vocabulary or punctuation which can correspond with their personality. The specific way of expression makes the characterization of the persons easier. This is particularly true with Arabella’s lively style.

Furthermore, references to the material and the tools with which the characters write also increase the authenticity: “Adieu! I can no more: the ink freezes as I take it from the standish to the paper, though close to a large stove. Don't expect me to write again till May; one's faculties are absolutely congealed this weather” (89). Realism is also supported by dates and locations of the letters. What is more, even the time of the day can be stated, for instance when Arabella writes a letter to Lucy, River’s sister in England, before she is going to a ball. She elaborates her ideas when suddenly she stops writing and says goodbye: “Adieu! They wait for me” (160). Then, the letter continues with the time stated “Tuesday, midnight” (160), and she gives description of the party. It ends by the predictable phrase: “Good Night... !” (161) These features emphasize the dramatic immediacy of the text. In his preface to *Clarissa*, Richardson himself called these situations “instantaneous descriptions and reflections.”¹⁶ In fact, these passages are the ones which have the most intensity and place the reader within the action.

2.2.3. Writing to the moment

The letter-form creates a sense that the events are happening at the very moment. The story is not told retrospectively, the narration is rather “continuous or periodic,”¹⁷ which in terms of tense and person enables the author and the readers to get closer to the narrative world and experience what is being described. The narrative technique “writing to the moment” is induced by the letters “being written under the immediate Impression of every Circumstance

¹⁶ Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa: or The History of a Young Lady*, Project Gutenberg, 25 January 2013 <<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/9296/9296-h/9296-h.htm>> 11 May 2017.

¹⁷ Keymer 4.

which occasioned them.”¹⁸ This has been showed by the two examples above, in which the letter-writing was interrupted by sudden circumstances. Therefore, it can be pointed out that letter-writing is a spontaneous act incited by abrupt incidents, thoughts and feelings. Writing to the moment gives the story a great amount of minute details, as well.

2.2.4. Psychological insight

The characters relate what happened, they provide detailed descriptions of events and conversations. Richardson believed that the form provides a “‘well-drawn Picture of Nature’.”¹⁹

In contrast, traditional third person narrators are more remote:

By making his characters their own narrators ... Richardson had eliminated the interferences characteristic of third-person forms, in which an external voice mediates between the world of the novel and the reader he invites to view it.²⁰

Thus, the epistolary provides a close insight into character’s thoughts and feelings without any mediator. The readers learn about the most intimate and private desires or opinions of the characters, whereby they sympathise with them more readily. Their interior lives are exposed overtly, letters enable the characters to confess their sentiments more easily. Therefore, Arabella suggests sharing letters with Emily, although there is no spatial distance between them: “we shall be a thousand times more sincere and open to each other by letter than face to face; I have long seen by her eyes that the little fool has twenty things to say to me, but has not courage; now letters you know, my dear, *Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart*” (107). Thus, the emotional distance is bridged by letters.

The depths of human hearts and souls are surveyed in great details. Keymer claims that the epistolary form is “the pioneering precursor of interior monologue and the stream of

¹⁸ Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 2002) 358.

¹⁹ Castle 153.

²⁰ Keymer 4.

consciousness...’²¹ Indeed, the access to characters’ consciousness is enabled within the frame of psychological realism in the novel. So, it can be pointed out that the epistolary novel anticipates the modern psychological novel as the psychology of the characters is taken under close scrutiny. The various points of view are highly subjective. Richardson states that letters are the only means to represent with accuracy: “those lively and delicate Impressions, which Things present are known to make upon the Minds of those affected by them,”²² and which lead “us father into the Recesses of the human Mind, than the colder and more general Reflections suited to a continued and more contracted Narrative.”²³ Watt defines the form as “the most direct material evidence for the inner life of their writers that exists.”²⁴ The characters are introspective and they reflect on their lives. In fact, letter-form was frequently used in sentimental novels as it enables the characters to release their emotional outpourings. This is especially true about Rivers and Emily as they both fall in love and exalt one another. However, the confessions and outpourings may sometimes seem a bit ludicrous as well as the effects of the writing to the moment.

2.3. Disadvantages of the epistolary mode

2.3.1. Artificiality

Indeed, the epistolary form does have flaws and imperfections. Richardson’s novels were criticized primarily by Henry Fielding, who was seen as his main opponent. He ridiculed the “writing to the moment” in his parody *Shamela* in 1741. He mocked the impossibility of writing on all occasions, such as during rape, in order to show the possible inconsistencies.

²¹ Keymer 5.

²² McKeon 414.

²³ McKeon 414.

²⁴ Keymer 5-6.

From this point of view, writing to the moment seems rather clumsy and the authenticity is dismissed. As opposed to Richardson, Fielding saw the epistolary style as unsuitable “to the Novel of Story-Writer.”²⁵ On the one hand, writing to the moment lends the story more dynamics, on the other hand it proves artificial as in the following example: “But I see a ship coming down under full sail; it may be Emily and her friends: the colours are all out, they slacken sail; they drop anchor opposite the house: 'tis certainly them; I must fly to the beach...” (62), or “... the little man is fixed as fate in his resolve, and is writing at this moment in my father's apartment” (103). The narration of things happening is indeed dramatic, but it seems quite comic when it describes succession of rapid actions. Authenticity becomes partly problematic when the characters state unnecessary information. As the correspondents are in close contact and they know each other, they do not have to repeat their occupations or plans. The repetitions are included only for readers to inform them about the context such as in the opening letter by Rivers to his friend Temple: “... I am just setting out for America, on a scheme I once hinted to you, of settling the lands to which I have a right as a lieutenant-colonel on half-pay” (17). Most likely, Temple already knows about Rivers’ position and ambitions. The information is only additional.

All these shortcomings lead to possible questions, such as why do the characters write so much, where do they get the time to do so and how the letters were collected. Castle explains this “every reader of epistolary fiction feels the pressure of certain ‘naive’ questions having to do with the mediacy of the letter.”²⁶ He then adds that “the more characters refer to their own letter-writing activity-the act of production ostensibly mediating between the reader and the fictional world-the less realistic the fiction becomes.”²⁷ This is especially true when the

²⁵ McKeon 414.

²⁶ Castle 154.

²⁷ Castle 155.

characters talk about the way the letters are sent and delivered. Allusions such as the following one disclose the artificiality but at the same time refer to the realistic problems of sending letters across the continents: “Adieu! for the present: it will be a fortnight before I can send this letter; another agreeable circumstance that: would to Heaven I were in England, though I changed the bright sun of Canada for a fog!” (85) This implies the spatial gap between the characters. The letters literary bridge the two continents, “letters themselves function as a means of bridging or connecting people who are separated in space.”²⁸

2.3.2. Oscillation

There are three courtships going on from which only two unfold in Canada, where the story is set. The courtship between Lucy and John is set offstage in England, however, the letters between this pair are not shown. Both of them write letters primarily to Rivers, which means that sometimes it takes quite a long time until the letter is received by either side. McCarthy alleges that “the novel's epistolary conventions foreground divisions of spatial and temporal otherness... .”²⁹ A great difficulty arises with the coming of winter to Canada, when the waterway communication with England is hindered. Arabella describes it with a feeling of despair: “... we are now left to ourselves, and shut up from all the world for the winter: somehow we seem so forsaken, so cut off from the rest of humankind... ” (85). The delivery of letters is prolonged, the events are not shown linearly, time gaps occur. Arch points out “winter is an interregnum in social communication: travelers cannot come and go; letters cannot be sent and received as easily (they were posted overland to New York and shipped from there).”³⁰ Winter as well as the distance itself inflicts disturbing temporal gap.

Letters which convey urgent and dramatic emotions are being received with two or three months delay. For instance, Lucy writes anxiously: “... I tremble at the idea that to-morrow

²⁸ Arch 470.

²⁹ McCarthy 344.

³⁰ Arch 468.

will determine the happiness or misery of my life. Adieu! my dearest brother” (143). The letter is sent in January and received by Rivers in March, though. Thus, the writing to the moment and its consequent immediacy is prevented by the distance. Arch exposes the defect in Brooke’s method: “In that great spatial (and social) distance she has rendered immediacy irrelevant, for the most part.”³¹ When the letter is received, the resolution of the situation is already two months old.

Arch notes that the hourly updates were tactics used by Richardson, as well.³² The inconsistency can be seen in the following example: “Ten o’clock. Not a line from your brother yet ... Twelve o’clock ... my esteem for your brother is greatly lessened...” (128–9). Although the emotions are clearly manifested and the reader sympathise with the writer, by the time the letter is received, Arabella will presumably be concerned with other issues. This problem is obvious to the reader as well as to Lucy. Arch concludes: “Brooke’s reader, in other words, is asked to pretend that the letter sent from 3,000 miles away is, nevertheless, written immediately and spontaneously... .”³³ This manifests the deviation from Richardson as his technique is more plausible, because the letters are sent from one street in London to another. However, the characters are aware of the time delay, so their fears and disappointments are even greater as they must wait for another letter. Furthermore, the readers do not undergo the waiting process as they read on, so they can experience the effects of the writing to the moment and they can sense character’s anxieties.

Nevertheless, in epistolary fiction, oscillation will always occur. In fact, there is an interval between the present and past voice of the characters as there is always the gap between the action and the event retold, which disrupts the notion of the stream of consciousness. Similarly, there is a gap between the writing and reading. Castle examines this problem

³¹ Arch 471.

³² Arch 471.

³³ Arch 471.

claiming that composing the text is the action itself: “The only events in epistolary fiction, strictly speaking, are events of language.”³⁴ So, when the two pairs move back to England, the barriers are disrupted and the novel logically ends. When Rivers conveys his desire “to see our dear groupe of friends re-united...” (316), Arch sees it as “the end of epistolarity in the novel”³⁵ as all the friends will meet each other. Castle mentions Jacques Derrida’s belief that letter as a text is considered “a sign of absence.”³⁶ He then elaborates it: “the text is always only a substitute, or trace of being, rather than being itself.”³⁷ As there is no narrator and the narrative consists only of letters produced by the characters, the reader must interpret and arrange the pieces of the story together. Thus, many interpretations and meanings are created. Multiple interpretations may be perceived as drawbacks. It is up to the readers to re-construct the meaning and order the incidents. Thus, when any time gap appears the reader must figure out the succession of the events. So, the reader gains more freedom than in other forms of fiction. According to Castle, “the reader shapes the novel in letters into a coherent structure... .”³⁸

It is generally known that each reader makes different reading and interpretation, however, the more characters write the letters, the more perspectives we get. There is no guarantee that their viewpoints are true. Therefore, it is important to read between the lines: “in attributing authority and objectivity to the narrative, we take our cue not only from its author but also from its other internal readers.”³⁹ For instance, the readers are only told about Madame De Roches, a widow and potential River’s lover, as she does not contribute to the letter-writing. Her perspective and her own experience are concealed. When she gives up Rivers, Emily

³⁴ Castle 46.

³⁵ Arch 479.

³⁶ Castle 44.

³⁷ Castle 44.

³⁸ Castle 168.

³⁹ McKeon 358.

concludes that if Madame De Roches had loved Rivers as much as she, she would have struggled for him more and would not have surrendered so readily. However, this does not have to be true whatsoever. In fact, she confessed that loosing Rivers “... wounded her to the soul” (173). This demonstrates Emily’s wrong assumptions, which may then influence the readers. McCarthy comments it:

In this instance, we can see how Brooke's use of the epistolary form controls the Other, embodied in the figure of Madame Des Roches, by circumscribing, silencing, and, in effect, disembodying it.⁴⁰

As Castle suggests, “in the most basic sense, existence in the fictional world depends on reading. To be in an epistolary novel at all, one has to be a reader.”⁴¹ Madame De Roches is not a reader, she is just the Other. Thus, it is demonstrated that the readers of the letters in the novel can misinterpret the events. Nevertheless, as the actual readers of the novel project their own experiences and premises on the text, they can misinterpret the events as well. And as the projections are multiples, the author cannot be certain that his message will be understood. This may be problematical when it comes to the author’s attempts at didacticism.

2.3.3. Didacticism

Richardson’s aim was not only to delight the readers but also to teach them. He hoped to convey moral message and to affect the readers in a positive way. Nevertheless, Castle claims that the lack of authorial voice impedes the author to influence the readers in any significant way.⁴² The more correspondents the epistolary novel has, the more difficult it is to indoctrinate the readers: “Though one character in the novel in letters may, in effect, speak for the author and articulate authorial points of view, this sanction can never be made apparent by the epistolary sequence itself.”⁴³ Although *The History of Emily Montague* is, in fact, multiple-

⁴⁰ McCarthy 345.

⁴¹ Castle 47.

⁴² Castle 170.

⁴³ Castle 168.

correspondent epistolary novel, each contributes by a different amount of letters. The proportion of letters is not equal. As it has been already mentioned, Rivers and Arabella are the main contributors dominating the narrative. It is believed that the two of them display Brooke's own ideas and opinions. Castle supports this claiming that the "the dominant correspondent seems to speak with a special privilege and insistence-so much so that we tend almost invariably to identify his or her views with the real author's."⁴⁴ Even though Brooke's aims may be of a different nature than Richardson's, they were certainly didactic as well. Didacticism in art was spread practice among the authors of the sentimental tradition, which will be consequently discussed in the following chapter.

⁴⁴ Castle 169.

3. The sentimental tradition

One of the issues occupying a major place in the eighteenth-century debates is the sentimental tradition. In fact, sentimental ideas, values and attitudes had a great influence on European history, culture and literature. According to Robert Francis Brissenden “the sentimental tradition, properly so called, embodied some of the most vital, dynamic and productive elements in eighteenth-century civilisation.”⁴⁵ Regarding literature, sentimentalism was spread in all literary genres; novel, essay, poetry and drama, it reached its peak in fiction written between the 1740s and the 1770s. Actually, the emergence of sentimentalism coincides with the birth of the novel, thus it is not surprising that the most popular form in prose was the sentimental novel. Its main aims were to instruct readers on how to behave according to certain moral norms generally accepted by the contemporary society. Thus, sentimental novels were sources of practical instruction resembling conduct books and they induced moral notions in readers.

The characteristic features of the sentimental literature are “the arousal of pathos through conventional situations, stock familial characters and rhetorical devices.”⁴⁶ Usually, this literary genre demands an emotional response on the part of the reader. The sentimental novel is also remarkable for its psychological veracity, emphasis on thought and feeling and on the inner life of characters. Without a doubt, the author acknowledged as a founder of the sentimental novel and of the novel itself is Samuel Richardson. The impact of his work was immense and it can be traced even to Jane Austen and the English domestic novel. By his novels, especially *Clarissa*, Richardson established a certain form and pattern which was then

⁴⁵ Robert Francis Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 10.

⁴⁶ Janet Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986), 2.

widely imitated by several writers. This was the case of Frances Brooke who was one of Richardson's friends. For this fact and many other reasons which will be consequently presented, *The History of Emily Montague* can be alleged as an example of a sentimental novel but also a novel of sensibility. McCarthy notes that the novel is "an embodiment of the literary forces at work in the second half of the eighteenth century,"⁴⁷ in particular, the "cult of sensibility." Nevertheless, before scrutinizing the work itself, it is vital to comprehend the terminology and the development of the sentimental tradition.

3.1.Sentimental terminology and its development

There has always been a great confusion between the words "sentiment," "sensibility" "sentimental" "sentimentalism" "sensitive" and "sense." Todd argues that these terms were "counters in 18th century literature and philosophy, sometimes representing precise formulations and sometimes vaguely suggesting emotional qualities."⁴⁸ They were commonly inserted in scientific essays as well as in private letters. Sometimes being applied interchangeably their meanings were not completely clear. William Empson remarked that "this family of words is obviously very difficult; the mere number of them is distracting."⁴⁹ However, the major confusion is primarily between the words "sentiment" and "sensibility" which are usually comprehended as synonyms, which is also the case of the sentimental novel and the novel of sensibility. Nevertheless, each term has a different historical development and reference.

There are two distinct roots from which the large family of the similar words originates. The first one is the Latin word "sentire" which basically means "to be aware." It is mainly

⁴⁷ McCarthy 340.

⁴⁸ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 6.

⁴⁹ Brissenden 14.

connected with the physical awareness: “to discern by the senses; to feel, hear, see, etc.; to perceive, be sensible of.”⁵⁰ However, it can be applied to mental awareness as well: “to feel, perceive, observe, notice.”⁵¹ The other origin is the expression “sensus,” which signifies “the faculty or power of perceiving, perception, feeling sensation, sense, etc.”⁵² To make matters worse, it can also refer to physical or mental perception. Thus, the ambiguity lies in the fact that both the expressions can be applied either to physical or mental awareness. Furthermore, they can refer to feeling as well as to thinking, or we can say, reason. From this confusion stems the ambiguous relationship between “sentiment” and “sensitivity.”

3.1.1. Sentiment

The adjective “sentimental” appeared first in the English language around the 1740’s, it used to mean “pertaining to sentiment (in the sense of) opinion, thought, judgement, mind.”⁵³ In this sense it also occurred in the postscript to the third edition of *Clarissa* by Samuel Richardson. It used to point to the high capacity of moral reflection. However, in the following years, the word’s significance went through a change. At first, the word was defined in a positive way: “characterised by or exhibiting refined and elevated feeling.”⁵⁴ A sentimental manifestation is best displayed by Emily Montague herself raving about her lover Edward Rivers:

Were I never again to behold him, were he even the husband of another, my tenderness, a tenderness as innocent as it is lively, would never cease: nor would I give up the refined delight of loving him, independently of any hope of being beloved, for any advantage in the power of fortune to bestow. (137)

During the 1760’s it gained more emotional and erotic character, which was most likely

⁵⁰ Brissenden 14.

⁵¹ Brissenden 15.

⁵² Brissenden 15.

⁵³ Erik Erämetsä, *A Study of the Word 'Sentimental' and of Other Linguistic Characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1951), 146.

⁵⁴ Erämetsä 21.

influenced by Laurence Sterne's publication of *A Sentimental Journey* in 1768. By the end of the century, it began to resemble the contemporary meaning, which means that it acquired a pejorative sense of "affectation and excessive emotional display,"⁵⁵ which led to the noun "sentimentality." Thus, it suggested shallow, insincere and superficial display of feelings. A sentimental person is described as "apt to be swayed by sentiment."⁵⁶ All in all, "sentiment" was a major issue of the eighteenth century. It was also a problem of ethics and philosophy. According to David Hume, who believed that thinking was impossible without feeling, "*reason* and *sentiment* concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions."⁵⁷ Thus, along with reason, the faculty of sentiment was responsible for moral judgements. It was also believed that men "have a basic desire to act benevolently; that the sentiments of humanity and sympathy are among the most powerful feelings we possess."⁵⁸ In other words, human beings were deemed innately sympathetic, benevolent and good, which is a typical eighteenth-century sentimental idea.

3.1.2. Sensibility

Conversely, the connotations of sensibility evolved the other way around. "Sensibility" would denote "the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering."⁵⁹ Manifestations of sensibility were for instance characteristic of spontaneous crying, weeping or fainting, it was perceived as "a nice and delicate perception of pleasure or pain, beauty or deformity."⁶⁰ People took pleasure in sensations such as sadness, pity, self-pity or indulgence. In fact, pity was described as "the

⁵⁵ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 6.

⁵⁶ Brissenden 7.

⁵⁷ Brissenden 53.

⁵⁸ Brissenden 30.

⁵⁹ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 7.

⁶⁰ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 7.

greatest luxury the soul of sensibility is capable of relishing.”⁶¹ Nowadays, the adjective “sensible” stands for reasonable, basically conveying common sense and the display of good manners, as well. The difference between sentimentality and sensibility being now explained, how then, do the sentimental novel and the novel of sensibility differ?

3.2. The sentimental novel and the novel of sensibility

According to some literary critics there is a division between the sentimental novel and the novel of sensibility. In general, the heyday of the sentimental novel is dated between the years 1740 and 1750. This particular genre emphasises “a generous heart and often delays the narrative to philosophize about benevolence”⁶² as opposed to the novel of sensibility, which was in vogue from the 1760s onwards, stressing the power of refined feeling. Erämetsä also remarks that according to some theoreticians “sentimentalism” as a trend is typical for Richardson, while “sensibility” mainly defines Sterne’s writing.⁶³ For illustration, the main character in Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* tends to manifest spontaneous feelings of compassion and benevolence. In contrast, Richardson’s sentimental novels are primarily moralistic. When a novel was described as sentimental it meant that it was “a thoughtful, moral work, and one which presented human passion in a sober and realistic rather than a fancifully romantic manner.”⁶⁴ Richardson himself described his novels in this sense, he pointed out that “moral and instructive sentiments,”⁶⁵ with which were infused most pages of his works, were of the utmost importance. In fact, *Clarissa* abounds with opinions and contemplations which mainly reflect on human innate goodness. It examines the rights and wrongs of human deeds. Actually,

⁶¹ Brissenden 83.

⁶² Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 8.

⁶³ Erämetsä 68.

⁶⁴ Brissenden 101.

⁶⁵ Brissenden 100.

Richardson hoped that the sufferings portrayed in his works would warn the readers and would serve as deterrents, so he aimed at moral purpose. Thus, the main function of these novels was didactic.

Brissenden ascertains that “the main stream of sentimentalism in the English novel springs directly from Richardson.”⁶⁶ Nevertheless, there is a slight chasm between sentimental novels of the 1740’s, and the ones published between the 1770’s and the 1790’s. Some literary critics claim that “both sentimentalism and sensibility ... blend into each other and it would be safer not to draw a strict dividing line”⁶⁷ between these two terms. In fact, in the later novels there is less sentiment and more sensibility, which means that the decade between 1760 and 1770 is perceived as transitional. From there on the sentimental novels were not focused only on reason and morality but rather on feeling and emotions. This transitional period is of great importance as it saw publication of the *History of Emily Montague*.

The real core of a sentimental novel is its characters. The inner lives of the characters are scrutinized as opposed to the action or plot which is not of that importance. By exposing the mental and emotional sides of the protagonists Richardson aimed to depict a real world. According to Brissenden, Richardson produced “an account of the inner conflicts of morally sensitive individuals which for dramatic, psychological vividness and minuteness of detail is new in English fiction.”⁶⁸ Thus by placing the characters into confrontation of problems Richardson could examine the course of their feelings and judgment, he plunged into their minds and depicted their moral responses to particular situations. Similarly, the main focus of *The History of Emily Montague* is the characters, the courtship plot being frequently considered unnecessarily lengthy: “What made the novel an interesting and valuable text for eighteenth-century readers was not its plot but its combination of the tenets of a sentimental novel and the

⁶⁶ Brissenden 116.

⁶⁷ Brissenden 104.

⁶⁸ Brissenden 34.

features of a travel narrative.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, as it has been already pointed out, the novel slightly differs from the novels written by Richardson. Ann Edwards Boutelle summarizes it: “Brooke’s Canadian novel disavows violence or the threat of violence. Very little actually happens in the novel: no one is seduced, murdered, or kidnapped: three couples marry – that is all... .”⁷⁰ This leaves a space for the characters themselves.

3.2.1. Sentimental characters

Touching upon the characters, another important term connected with the sentimental tradition needs to be explained; a man or woman of sentiment. In fact, they were assumed the instances of the human innate goodness, always virtuous, sympathetic, chaste and benevolent but sometimes a bit self-complacent. “Man or woman of sentiment as presented in the fiction of the age was seen as someone in whom the claims of reason and feeling were properly balanced.”⁷¹ Erämetsä defines a man of sentiment as “a man of the ‘right’ kind of sentiment = a man of lofty moral thoughts, opinions, notions.”⁷² In fact, the fictional characters served as role models for the readers in order to influence them in a good way, it was necessary that they possessed all these noble traits.

3.2.1.1. The sentimental heroine

Nevertheless, usually the sentimental characters are rather passive than active, thus vulnerable to corruption. They face hostile society and their frail delicacy renders them weak and victims, they may become the embodiment of virtue in distress. “The sentimental work reveals a belief in the appealing and aesthetic quality of virtue, displayed in a naughty world through a vague and potent distress.”⁷³ Usually the victims, or the virtue in distress are innocent

⁶⁹ Wyatt 38.

⁷⁰ Ann Edwards Boutelle, “Frances Brooke’s Emily Montague (1769): Canada and Woman’s rights,” *Women’s Studies*, 12.1 (1986): 8, EBSCO, 6 May 2016.

⁷¹ Brissenden 24.

⁷² Erämetsä 28.

⁷³ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 3.

suffering women, rewarded in marriage or dying redemptive death, and the sensitive man whose feelings are too exquisite when compared with the cruel world. Actually, Emily Montague can be deemed as an example of a sentimental heroine and a virtue in distress at once.

The conception of a sentimental heroine partly blends with the eighteenth-century conception of ideal femininity. In fact, Richardson's *Clarissa* was widely considered as a representation of the contemporary feminine ideal. Without a doubt, Emily Montague was placed on the same pedestal as *Clarissa*. Jodi L. Wyatt describes Emily as "the properly English sentimental heroine."⁷⁴ As well as *Clarissa*, Emily is sensitive and believes in higher moral standards and human goodness. She is not selfish, but benevolent, innocent and generous. Furthermore, an ideal woman was also thought to be deeply religious, chaste and somewhat prudent. Janet Todd pointed out that the "depictions of women's 'moral splendour' ... are scattered over 18th century fiction and conveyed in plots and characters of considerable stylization."⁷⁵ Nevertheless, a sentimental heroine also thinks that an individual has a right to listen to wishes of his or her own heart.

Usually, the sentimental heroes and heroines struggle to prevent the others from compelling them to act as they want. The climax is then the main character's decision not to allow his or her integrity to be subdued, because they believe in power of their judgements. This is also the case of Emily. At the beginning of the novel, Emily is engaged to Sir George, an admired wealthy gentleman very popular among other ladies. However, she does not love him truly and she perceives the coldness on his side. Nevertheless, her engagement to Sir George was conducted on a particular purpose. Emily got engaged to Sir George because her property was not abundant and her family struggled to arrange a better position in society for her. In sentimental novels, the distresses of the heroes are inflicted by "the misconduct both of

⁷⁴ Wyatt 40.

⁷⁵ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 111.

parents and children in relation to marriage.”⁷⁶

Unfortunately, in reality the supervision and interference of family and others usually did more harm than good. There were many cases when spouses were united against their will and led unhappy lives as they did not choose according to their liking. Emily respects her uncle’s wish because she does not even know what it is to love and to be loved. As her uncle dies, Emily’s only relations, the Melmoths, assume the role of her guardians. Especially, Mrs Melmoth advises Emily on her proper conduct towards Sir George. However, Rivers’ presence helps her to realize what it means to love. In the past, “marriage was a speculative enterprise with unpredictable consequences. The decision to marry carried huge risks for both men and women, because it was a lifetime commitment.”⁷⁷ Emily herself recognizes the possible disaster, emphasising the importance of the right choice:

What wretchedness would have been the portion of both, had timidity, decorum, or false honor, carried me, with this partiality in my heart, to fulfill those views, entered into from compliance to my family, and continued from a false idea of propriety, and weak fear of the censures of the world? (137)

Emily opts for love over vanity. However, she is not the only one, who recognizes the threat in Emily’s submitting to Sir George. As Rivers admits: “I cannot bear to see her devote herself to wretchedness: she will be the most unhappy of her sex with this man...” (54). Her decision of giving up the rank and fortune in favour of love elevates his estimation for her and he adores her with even a greater intensity. Nevertheless, most people in the vicinity are astonished by Emily’s refusal of Sir George. She also rejects the advice of Mrs Melmoth concerning her private life. Arabella Fermor describes to River’s sister that Emily “has hinted, though not impolitely, that she wants no guardian of her conduct but herself.” (99) Brissenden states that:

⁷⁶ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 71.

⁷⁷ Richard Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism : Marriage, Family and Business in the English-Speaking World, 1580-1740* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2001) 83.

“The sentimental heroine is prepared to go to almost any lengths to preserve her independence of spirit.”⁷⁸

Although Emily’s decision is the prime concern of the novel, as a character she does not stand out in any significant way. At that period, female virtues were considered superior to men, it was believed that “women were formed to temper Mankind, and sooth them into Tenderness and Compassion.”⁷⁹ Rivers admires Emily’s “bewitching languor, that seducing softness, that melting sensibility,” (248) in general, “the feminine softness and delicate sensibility.” (83) Indeed, Emily is mostly described as a passive heroine as opposed to Arabella’s “fire, the spirit, the vivacity, the awakened manner.” (248) Arabella is Emily’s counterpart, being a coquette she may sometimes seem rather shallow whereby the importance of sensibility is stressed. Basically, an ideal woman was considered passive, which is disapproved by Arabella, she even “denigrates Emily for her passivity, the very quality which makes her the ideal object of a man’s love.”⁸⁰

her whole appearance is gentle, tender, I had almost said, supplicating: I am ashamed of the folly of my own sex: O, that I could to-day inspire her with a little of my spirit! she is a poor tame household dove, and there is no making any thing of her. (138)

Furthermore, sentimental novels used to depict female friendships in which usually one friend is more sentimental and the other one spirited. Wyatt adds that romantic friendship in a novel “allowed women to express extravagant sentiments to each other while remaining chaste,”⁸¹ which rendered the novel even more sentimental. As it has been already indicated, compared

⁷⁸ Brissenden 129.

⁷⁹ Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, *Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator* (London: Penguin Books, 1988) 252.

⁸⁰ Wyatt 47

⁸¹ Wyatt 48.

to sentimental Emily, Arabella is frequently described as “the spirited coquette”⁸² or “the lively heroine.”⁸³

Arabella struggles to preserve her independence even more than Emily. In comparison with Arabella, Emily may seem rather naive and desperate when she falls in love. She thinks about nothing but her lover unlike Arabella, who loves her Fitzgerald, but at the same time is able to keep her independent spirit. In fact, she finds another means of self-fulfilment than happy love, such as reading or friendship. It can be pointed out that she depends on her friendship with Emily more than on her relationship with Fitzgerald. Without a doubt, she could imagine living on her own without men, which at that period was a very disruptive idea. Nevertheless, eventually both heroines entrust their hearts to men they choose according to their preferences, they both become English wives. Throughout the novel, Arabella’s comments and opinions about marriage and society provide the readers with an exceptional insight into the period. Thus, although sometimes frivolous, she is the main female character occupied with moralizing. As Wyett points out Arabella “serves as the text’s active, questioning, unconventional feminine presence.”⁸⁴ She is beautiful but witty, frank, firm and straightforward. She frequently takes advantage of irony as opposed to Emily whose style is plain and innocent.

All in all, Arabella is more active and assertive than Emily, which may be caused by the fact that Arabella is highly educated. Actually, Brooke’s Arabella is “the response to Pope’s portrait of women”⁸⁵ in his *Rape of the Lock* which satirizes vain Belinda whose character was based on a real lady named Arabella Fermor. In comparison with Pope’s depiction of women,

⁸² Wyett 38.

⁸³ Wyett 34.

⁸⁴ Wyett 39.

⁸⁵ Janice Fiamengo, “Emily Montague,” *Canadian Literature*, 18.6 (2005): 170, EBSCO, 10 February 2017.

Brooke's Arabella is intelligent, witty and learned. She reads profoundly and quotes several literary works by significant authors. Her education is enabled by her father, normally such high standards of education were not common with women. Therefore, some critics would see Arabella more as a man, she has the "spirit and firmness" (159) and abounds with lively energy. According to Boutelle, "officers' daughters are proposed by Brooke as the new prototype: women educated in and through the company of men, with Bell as the model of the new woman."⁸⁶ As a model of the new woman, Arabella criticizes the current state of education:

Tis a mighty wrong thing, after all, Lucy, that parents will educate creatures so differently who are to live with and for each other. Every possible means is used, even from infancy, to soften the minds of women, and to harden those of men: the contrary endeavour might be of use. (159)

This suggests Brooke's wish to switch the gender roles constructed by society. Todd assures: "In sentimental literature women could complain obliquely, refashion the structures of power they inhabited, recreate their own images, and reform men."⁸⁷ The most significant result of reforming men can be seen in the figure of John Temple, River's friend who eventually marries River's sister Lucy. Temple is an example of reformed rake. Thus, Brooke creates a new woman as well as a new man: "the man with a stronger dose of feeling, and the woman with a stronger dose of intellect."⁸⁸ Her construction of an ideal man merges into the well-known representation of a man of sentiment.

3.2.1.2. The man of sentiment

Edward Rivers is a typical sentimental hero. He is benevolent, reasonable and his virtue and foresight are in the end rewarded by happy marriage with Emily. The man of feeling usually surrenders his manly powers to gentleness. Boutelle notes that as it usually goes with

⁸⁶ Boutelle 11.

⁸⁷ Janet Todd, *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (London: Methuen, 1987) 19.

⁸⁸ Boutelle 11.

sentimental heroes, Rivers “appears comically overburdened with sensibility.”⁸⁹ For example, he drops “a tender tear” (17) when he admires beauty of the landscape, which is a typical scene as if taken from Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*. In fact, Rivers becomes feminized. Wyett claims that the conflicting impulses in *The History of Emily Montague* are to feminize men as well as to get away from the influence of men.⁹⁰ Rivers himself admits that he prefers the company of women to men: “To make me happy, you must place me in a circle of females, all as pleasing as those now with me, and turn every male creature out of the house,” (263) and that his “heart has all the sensibility of woman.” (111) Furthermore, Arabella points out that Rivers and her future husband Fitzgerald are quite different from other common men:

You men are horrid, rapacious animals ... I should not, however, make so free with the sex, if you and my *caro sposo* were not exceptions. You two have really something of the sensibility and generosity of women. Do you know, Rivers, I have a fancy you and Fitzgerald will always be happy husbands? (269)

In fact, the men of feeling were usually alleged to lead happier lives than other men. Rivers and Fitzgerald differ significantly from Richardson’s male characters such as Lovelace, which is caused by their sensibility. They are not described as tyrants. In this way, there can be seen diversion from Richardson and inclination towards Sterne.

The ideal picture of a sentimental man was of a man relishing domesticity, loving and respecting his wife as opposed to the selfish patriarch. This clash can be seen when comparing Rivers with Sir George, Emily’s former fiancé. Thanks to his understanding and self-reflection, Rivers can achieve happiness and live more fully than Sir George, who will always lead a superficial life. At first Sir George seems more than agreeable:

Sir George is handsome as an Adonis; you allow him to be of an amiable character; he is rich, young, well born, and loves you; you will have fine clothes, fine jewels, a fine house, a coach and six : all the *douceurs* of marriage... . (47)

⁸⁹ Boutelle 11.

⁹⁰ Wyett 57.

Indeed, Emily's future looks really promising and almost every woman would envy her. However, she begins to have some doubts about Sir George's ability to make her happy, especially when compared to Rivers. Arabella observes it in her letter to Rivers' sister Lucy, saying that Sir George "takes amazing pains to please in his way, is curled, powdered, perfumed, and exhibits every day in a new suit of embroidery; but with all this, has the mortification to see your brother please more in a plain coat." (100) The portrayal of Sir George indicates a peculiar shift in the issue of femininity already mentioned. Although it has been pointed out that Rivers is the one who becomes feminized, Sir George's appearance resembles rather women's fashion. Certainly, he is not depicted as a manly figure, thus his masculinity can be doubted as well. Nevertheless, he is feminized only in terms of his visual aspect, which was at that time still common, especially among aristocracy and the upper class. Sir George's personal qualities and manners do not resemble that of a sentimental hero, at all. Gradually, Emily favours Rivers for his sensibility, softness, sincerity and emotional depth. In fact, Rivers can converse with her, he knows how to please women. Not only are they lovers but friends as well, which is a very important fact:

"... we found his conversation always new; he is the man on earth of whom one would wish to make a friend; I think I could already trust him with every sentiment of my soul; I have even more confidence in him than in Sir George whom I love... . (Rivers) seems to take such an interest in your happiness, as gives him a right to know your every thought. (46)

In this way, he wins her heart. Consequently, Emily refuses Sir George for his artificiality and coldness.

Compared to Rivers, Sir George does not really care about Emily and their future family life, all he is interested in is his wealth and status. It is best seen when he prefers "pleasure of parading into Quebec, and shewing his fine horses and fine person to advantage, to that of attending his mistress." (54) As opposed to Rivers, Sir George does not prefer spending his

time by conversing with Emily. His pleasures and interests are of more importance to him. Furthermore, he does not mind postponing their marriage for reasons concerning his fortune thus obeying his mother's orders. Although Emily is content with such news, she observes his tranquillity and unconcern. It can be pointed out that he represents a typical husband who comprehends marriage as a matter of business. A husband not caring about his wife, pursuing status, wealth, taking marriage, family life and children just as the means of life accomplishment as everybody is supposed to form family someday. With such a man, there is no probability of domestic felicity. Sir George is selfish, capricious and dull, he is not concerned with the needs of his fiancé or others. He lacks compassion, which for Emily is a very essential aspect. The moment of realizing that is very crucial and leads to favouring Rivers:

a very affecting story, of a distressed family in our neighbourhood, was told him and Sir George; the latter preserved all the philosophic dignity and manly composure of his countenance, very coldly expressed his concern, and called another subject: your brother changed color, his eyes glistened; he took the first opportunity to leave the room, he sought these poor people, he found, he relieved them; which we discovered by accident a month after. (92)

Indeed, Rivers finds the key of happiness: "That we are generally tyrannical, I am obliged to own; but such of us as know how to be happy, willingly give up the harsh title of Master, offer the more tender and endearing one of Friend." (164)

Undoubtedly, Rivers is a fine example of a man of feeling. As opposed to Sir George who abounds with wealth, Rivers must deal with unfavourable conditions, such as a period of poverty or rather insufficient financial resources. This is a common obstacle for a sentimental man, thereby his moral integrity is tested. River's remark to his affluent friend Temple heralds his and Emily's forthcoming troubles: "You are so happy as to have the power of chusing; you are rich, and have not the temptation to a mercenary engagement". (47) This demonstrates

the privilege of more fortunate individuals whose choice of a partner was a way easier as they did not have to struggle with financial obstructions as opposed to the poorer pairs. Even though Emily and Rivers give up everything to mutual love they have to manage somehow as both of them are not so well-off. Moreover, Rivers feels responsible for Emily's surrender of luxury and comfort and he endeavours to provide her with the best although both know that property is not the key to happiness:

I love, I adore this charming woman; but I will not suffer my tenderness for her to make her unhappy, or to lower her station in life ... I cannot bear my Emily, after refusing a coach and six, should live without an equipage suitable at least to her birth, and the manner in which she has always lived when in England. (127)

Thus, before the final disclosure of their family origins takes place, they have to furnish themselves with the little what they have.

3.3. Companionate marriage

The themes inserted in the novel such as love, marriage, courtship, family and patriarchy reflect the actual state of society at that time. In general, sentimental novelists were mainly concerned with love, marriage and money so they employed them as subjects of their plots. Todd claims that in that period "marriages were increasingly entered into with the expectation of affection and companionship and with the intention of carefully raising children."⁹¹ The decreasing importance of family decision about the future couple is marked by Emily choosing Rivers against expectations of her guardians. Thus, Brooke creates an ideal marriage couple: "Rivers's and Emily's marriage is the ideal marriage of a man and woman of sensibility, and the achievement of this symbolic-emblematic union is the polemical goal of the sentimental

⁹¹ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 16.

project.”⁹² Furthermore, Berland adds that, “in Emily and Rivers together, Brooke offers a visible example of the new order.”⁹³ In fact, they share the same conviction about the perfect state of marriage. Apart from love, delicacy, sensibility and taste they both stress the importance of friendship. Actually, the partners should be more friends than lovers. Passion is temporary and transient, friendship builds up the mutual understanding and respect. As Rivers remarks: “The tumult of desire is the fever of the soul; its health, that delicious tranquillity where the heart is gently moved, not violently agitated; ... is only to be found where friendship is the basis of love, ... in other words, in a marriage of choice.” (267) Thus, we can see that the basis of sentimental marriage does not lie in display of romantic and passionate emotions or in self-absorbing love but in companionate friendship and mutual understanding, which resembles the modern notion of soul mates.

Friendship as the keystone of marriage indicates the most essential principle, which is equality. Where there is friendship, there is equality. Rivers supports this idea:

Equality is the soul of friendship : marriage, to give delight, must join two minds, not devote a slave to the will of an imperious lord; whatever conveys the idea of subjection necessarily destroys that of love, of which I am so convinced, that I have always wished the word obey expunged from the marriage ceremony. (164)

The fact that a man advocates and defends equality of gender is of the utmost importance. It has more impact and power and it subverts the prevailing patriarchy. Boutelle concludes that “Brooke argues forcefully for a marriage-ideal, a partnership based on balance, spontaneity, and equality.”⁹⁴ Indeed, her ideas were quite controversial and daring in the contemporary patriarchal society. Stone remarks that the most striking feature of marital life in the eighteenth century in England was:

⁹² McCarthy 341.

⁹³ McCarthy 341.

⁹⁴ Boutelle 8.

the theoretical, legal, and practical subordination of wives to their husbands, epitomized in the concept of patriarchy. It was a domination mitigated only by the skilful resistance of many wives, and the compassion and goodwill of many husbands.⁹⁵

Despite the unfavourable conditions of the period, Brooke provides an alternative option to patriarchal society. The happy-ending conveys the construction of nuclear family surrounded by faithful friends: “On Thursday I hope to see our dear group of friends re-united, and to have nothing to wish, but a continuance of our present happiness.” (316) Todd remarks that

an emphasis unknown before was placed by literature and art on the image of the small, loving nuclear family and on the kindly parent. ... sentimentalism expressed a longing not only for a domestic close-knit family but for a community firmly linked by sentiment and familial structures.⁹⁶

3.4. Women’s integrity

Brooke’s novel is also deemed to contain feminist ideas, which are of a revolutionary nature calling for women’s right to own oneself or to make one’s own decisions irrespective of men or society. Her feminist goals are mainly advocated by the two main heroines as well as Rivers who support the idea of equality in marriage and in some way the notion of gender complementarity. For instance, Arabella comments on Emily’s refusal of Sir George: “She has, in my opinion, done the wisest thing in the world; that is, she has pleased herself.” (114) However, pleasing one-self clashes with the eighteenth-century notion of social duty. At that time, public role and duty to society were given great importance, which collided with another typical eighteenth-century concept: the pursuit of happiness, which belongs among the natural rights of the people. Self-reliance and self-perception were essential for an individual. Thus, individual was in sharp chasm with society. Taking into account the eighteenth-century

⁹⁵ Lawrence Stone, *Uncertain Unions and Broken Lives : Marriage and Divorce in England, 1660 – 1857* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 16.

⁹⁶ Todd, *Sensibility: an Introduction* 16.

notions of subjectivity, how could women serve society, comply with conventions and at the same time pursue happiness?

The patriarchal society defined woman in relation to man, in fact women were socially and economically inseparable from men. Nevertheless, Brooke found another way to escape the patriarchal system. Emily and Arabella are deeply devoted to each other. Actually, their friendship provides them with an “idealized English space in which women may read and think, sustained by bonds with each other and unimpeded by the politics of contemporary Britain or by interference from their benevolent husbands.”⁹⁷ In conclusion, Boutelle states that:

Brooke wanted her work to reach women. She wanted to show that the political corollary to her ideal marriage is a society which eschews violence, a society based on a balance between the sexes, a society where women (as well as men) are enfranchised and educated, and where men (as well as women) are taught to listen to their feelings and to cultivate virtue.⁹⁸

In this way, Brissenden appreciates the main values of the sentimental novels resting in the way they “re-examine the basic human relationship of marriage, reassess the importance and power of love, and reaffirm the value of individual dignity and freedom.”⁹⁹ Taking into account the recognizable characters, as well, *The History of Emily Montague* is without a doubt a significant piece of sentimental fiction. However, its merit lies also in its remarkable place within Canadian fiction.

⁹⁷ Wyatt 34.

⁹⁸ Boutelle 15.

⁹⁹ Brissenden 122.

4. Canadian literature

Although Frances Brooke is an English author, *The History of Emily Montague* is deemed the first Canadian novel. In fact, the main part of the story is set in Canada during the 1760's and there are vivid descriptions of the setting. All the knowledge of Canada stems from Brooke's personal experience. Her husband, John Brooke, was a clergyman of the Church of England. Due to his appointment as a military chaplain to the Quebec garrison, in 1763 Frances Brooke travelled to Canada and stayed there until 1768. The Brookes lived alternately in Quebec and the neighbouring Sillery. Wyatt claims that Brooke's "residency there until 1768 lent credence to *Emily Montague's* claim to be a legitimate, eye-witness account of Canadian culture."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, in her dedication, which belongs to the Governor of Quebec, she states her aim to "only beg leave to add mine to the general voice of Canada..." (xv). Therefore, she is claimed the first Canadian novelist.

The beginnings of Canadian literature date back to the period before Canada became a nation. According to Russell Brown, Canadian early literary works often express "either an immigrant's sense of loss and displacement or an explorer's excitement of discovery, pre-Confederation writers initiated the struggle to find suitable language and forms to describe new experiences in a new landscape."¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the works tended to be realistic so as to expose the everyday experience of the pioneer life: "a wilderness of colony, a new nation based on a rural economy, an urban culture sharing the continent with a dominating, technological society..."¹⁰² The writers wanted to reveal the Canadian reality to the readers back in England. For the immigrants writing was also the means of reconciliation with the wilderness of the New

¹⁰⁰ Wyatt 37.

¹⁰¹ Russell Brown, et al., *Anthology of Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto : Oxford University Press, 1990) xv.

¹⁰² Brown xv.

World. Brown claims that Frances Brooke “provides some of the earliest imaginative responses to the country—responses that anticipated those of later writers.”¹⁰³ In general, Canadian literature is mainly influenced by the immigration as the entire nation relies on diversity, which is not surprising taking into account that Canada was founded by two nations and there are two official languages spoken by the inhabitants. Furthermore, the aboriginal population and its various languages cannot be forgotten. The literature then reflects wide cultural and ethnic differences. *The History of Emily Montague* displays all these notions and therefore it is acknowledged as an important text in Canadian literary history:

While Brooke herself would never have considered herself a Canadian, temporary residence in Canada has always provided good grounds for acceptance into the body of Canadian literature ... In Brooke’s case, the specifically Canadian content of the work makes the case solidier than most.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, Brooke’s exceptional portrayal of Canada and local society ranks the novel among travel narratives, as well.

4.1. Travel narratives

Travelogues were very popular during the eighteenth century. Letters and non-fictional travel books were the means to acquaint the broad readership with exploration of remote countries and newly discovered lands as well as with the aboriginal population living there.

Regarding Canada,

throughout the French colonial period (1608-1760), the discoverers, explorers, missionaries and visitors ... wrote letters, accounts, memoirs, sermons and treaties which, having outlived their immediate diplomatic, administrative or propagandistic purpose, live on with increasing vitality as literature, consulted for pleasure and perused for interest.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Brown 1.

¹⁰⁴ Boutelle 7.

¹⁰⁵ Laurent Mailhot, *French-Canadian Literature* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Department of External Affairs, 1983) 1.

Although, *The History of Emily Montague* is mainly a sentimental novel, its epistolary form and depiction of the surrounding resembles the travel narrative. Wyett alleges that “with *Emily Montague*, Brooke blends two popular writing forms: one a purportedly feminine genre, the sentimental novel, and the other a purportedly masculine genre, the travel narrative.”¹⁰⁶ Susan Staves points out that “only rarely does women’s fiction of this period look to the wider world and remind us that the eighteenth-century novel generally still drew upon the enlightenment’s interest in travel literature, as Brooke’s *History of Emily Montague* does.”¹⁰⁷ The pioneer life was especially hard to endure for women, which explains the small number of women’s fiction in Canada. Moreover, as opposed to England not many women in Canada had the time and sufficient education to occupy themselves with writing about their experiences. Nevertheless, those who did, provided an exceptional insight into the pioneer Canada. Brooke’s first-hand experience of the country helped her to depict Canada in a realistic authentic way. Therefore, the novel was sometimes labelled as “required reading for early British travellers to Canada”¹⁰⁸ or “a kind of guidebook for tourists and emigrants.”¹⁰⁹ In fact, the genuine portrayal of Canada following the British conquest provided by someone who really witnessed it, could serve as essential information and advice for the potential travellers or immigrants. Celine Kear emphasizes that Brooke was “an attentive observer of her social and natural surroundings.”¹¹⁰

4.2. Canadian setting

Actually, Brooke’s depiction of her surroundings was so accurate and striking that when a diarist Elizabeth Simcoe arrived in Quebec in 1791 she remembered Brooke’s novel:

¹⁰⁶ Wyett 36.

¹⁰⁷ Susan Staves, *A Literary History of Women’s Writing in Britain, 1660-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 359.

¹⁰⁸ McCarthy 340.

¹⁰⁹ McCarthy 340.

¹¹⁰ Celine Kear, “Canada’s First Literary Ladies,” *Beaver*, 82.1 (2002): 15, EBSCO, 1 May 2017.

“The woods are beautiful and we went to Sillery, that pretty vale Emily Montague describes, indeed her account of Quebec appears to me very near the truth.”¹¹¹ Indeed, Brooke’s literary output mirrors reality:

This river, from Montreal to Quebec, exhibits a scene perhaps not to be matched in the world ... the lovely confusion of woods, mountains, meadows, corn-fields, rivers (for there are several on both sides, which lose themselves in the St Lawrence), intermixed with churches and houses breaking upon you at a distance through the trees, form a variety of landscapes, to which it is difficult to do justice. (64)

When contemplating Canadian landscape and climate the characters usually compare it with their homeland: “The verdure is equal to that of England, and in the evening acquires an unspeakable beauty from the lucid splendor of the fire-flies sparkling like a thousand little stars on the trees and on the grass” (36). What is more, some of them even react to the contemporary misapprehensions about Canada degrading the country and its resources: “...our political writers in England never speak of Canada without the epithet of *barren*” (60). Arabella then assures that Canadian land is fertile whereby she dismisses the usual misconceptions and prejudices about Canada:

You will judge how naturally rich the soil must be, to produce good crops without manure, and without ever lying fallow, and almost without ploughing ... They tell me this extreme fertility is owing to the snow, which lies five or six months on the ground. (60-1)

Wyett summarizes Arabella’s attitude: “In these letters she first presents herself as a defiant English woman who views Canada not as an inhospitable, savage land, but as a fruitful, powerful place with great potential to enrich the lives of its inhabitants.”¹¹² Canada is rich with crops and fruits such as cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, “currants, plumbs, apples, and pears; a few cherries and grapes ... The wild fruits here, especially those of the bramble kind,

¹¹¹ Kear 15.

¹¹² Wyett 41.

are in much greater variety and perfection than in England” (60). Nevertheless, the quality of the land is not the only subject of interest.

The weather and climate are under close scrutiny for Canada’s inveterate severe conditions and intense cold. Nevertheless, the story starts with the beginning of summer:

“I know not what the winter may be, but I am enchanted with the beauty of this country in summer; bold, picturesque, romantic, nature resigns here in all her wanton luxuriance, adorned by a thousand wild graces which mock the cultivated beauties of Europe!” (35) Arabella then adds that summer is hotter there and temperatures higher than in England, consequently the storms greater but beautiful in some way. Later, winter comes with its ferocity causing the isolation of the English immigrants as the communication with the Old World is hindered:

I have been seeing the last ship go out of the port, Lucy; you have no notion what a melancholy sight it is: we are now left to ourselves, and shut up from all the world for the winter: somehow we seem so forsaken, so cut off from the rest of human kind, I cannot bear the idea: I sent a thousand sighs and a thousand tender wishes to dear England, which I never loved so much as at this moment. (85)

This passage exposes the genuine despair and loneliness which must have been felt by the early settlers of Canada and other lands as well.

The isolation is incomparable just as cold and frost: “there are indeed some days here of the severity of which those who were never out of England can form no conception...” (121). It is hard to breathe, wine freezes, ink freezes, the faculties of mind and thoughts are as if frozen. Although it seems that Canadian winter is an insupportable season, Arabella explains that it is the very opposite and again reverses the misconceptions: “...the season of which you seem to entertain such terrible ideas, is that of the utmost cheerfulness and festivity.” (122) She assures that it is not joyless time at all. There are many parties and balls to attend: “I must venture to Quebec to-morrow, or have company at home: amusements are here necessary to life; we must be jovial, or the blood will freeze in our veins” (90), but one has to wear proper garment as not

to freeze outside when travelling in sleighs. Men resemble bears as they are wrapped in furs to prevent cold, which is an amusing spectacle. Morgan Vanek states that Brooke's correspondents "discover the cold can be made pleasant—if only one is willing to enjoy its 'changeable force'."¹¹³ Nevertheless, the cold has some impact on the characters. Sometimes, winter influences their mood and their hearts are as though congealed. Thus, the love plot stiffens as well. Vanek observes that in Brooke's novel there is "the possibility of environmental influence in the structure of her sentimental plot—and particularly in the strong seasonal effect on the progress of Rivers's romance with Emily."¹¹⁴ Consequently, when the winter ends and the ice melts, the arrival of spring inflicts some significant changes. Rivers notes that Emily is blossoming with "inexpressible melting languor, a dying softness, which it was not in man to see unmoved..." (140).

By experiencing Canadian weather and especially the winter, the characters learn to appreciate English climate and landscape, they gain new and different perspective. Vanek explains it:

By the novel's fourth volume, the capacity to find joy in Canada's weather demonstrates precisely the sort of sensibility that Brooke recommends to readers both at home and abroad—and as her protagonists turn back to England to find even their memories of local weather improved by their recent experience in Canada...¹¹⁵

So, when the winter gets too long, Arabella remembers England's climate:

Cruel creature! why did you give me the idea of flowers? I now envy you your foggy climate: the earth with you is at this moment covered with a thousand lovely children of the spring; with us, it is an universal plain of snow. (183)

Moreover, she complains about the short duration of spring:

¹¹³ Morgan Vanek, "'Set the Winter at Defiance': Emily Montague's Weather Reports and Political Sensibility," *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 28.3 (2016): 452, EBSCO, 1 May 2017.

¹¹⁴ Vanek 457.

¹¹⁵ Vanek 468.

This is all the quarrel I have with Canada: the summer is delicious, the winter pleasant with all its severities; but alas! the smiling spring is not here; we pass from winter to summer in an instant, and lose the sprightly season of the Loves. (183)

Nevertheless, she admits that the abrupt and violent changes of seasons generate pleasures “arising from meer change, the very high additional one of its being accompanied with grandeur.” (188) Thus, throughout the sojourn in Canada, the characters learn to contemplate weather and to be moved by it, which heightens their capacity of feeling.

4.2.1. The sublime

In contrast to pastoral England, Canada’s vastness is the source of the sublime. In fact, when contemplating the scenery, the characters apply contemporary aesthetic conceptions of the picturesque, the beautiful and the sublime. In his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Edmund Burke defines the sublime as:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible ... is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling...¹¹⁶

Furthermore, he adds that the sublime may sometimes be delightful. As opposed to the smallness and delicacy of the beautiful, the sublime is mainly connected with greatness, magnitude and obscurity. The incomprehensible sublime provokes excess of emotions such as pain, awe, terror and respect on the one hand, and pleasure and delight on the other hand. This mixture of emotions was considered the most desired effect of art. On the contrary, the beautiful provokes tranquillity, love and tenderness.

In *The History of Emily Montague*, the characters are overwhelmed and deeply affected by the natural extremities they find in Canada. Brown assures that their reactions to landscape

¹¹⁶ Luke Gibbons, *Edmund Burke and Ireland: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Colonial Sublime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

are “often shaped by the eighteenth-century fascination with sublime.”¹¹⁷ They even use the term:

Sublimity is the characteristic of this western world; the loftiness of the mountains, the grandeur of the lakes and rivers, the majesty of the rocks shaded with a picturesque variety of beautiful trees and shrubs, and crowned with the noblest of the offspring of the forest, which form the banks of the latter, are as much beyond the power of fancy as that of description: a landscape-painter might here expand his imagination, and find ideas which he will seek in vain in our comparatively little world. (186)

Furthermore, the following passage as if describes the notion of the sublime put in practice:

“the tremendous appearance both of the ascent and descent, which however are not attended with the least danger; all together give a grandeur and variety to the scene, which almost rise to enchantment.” (122) Breaking of the ice bridge is delineated in similar terms. It is magnificent, immense, dreadful, prodigious but pleasing at the same time. Even Captain Fermor confesses how much he was moved by the scene he saw: “it however struck me so strongly...” (188). Vanek claims that the characters “comment on the weather when it moves them, inspiring dramatic emotion to match the conditions outside.”¹¹⁸ Regarding the beautiful, it is applied when describing the towns, villages and vegetation. In general, the beautiful is found in pastoral England, whereas Canada and its great waterfalls are the source of great sublimity. As manifested above, depictions of Canada are very detailed and of exceptional nature, however Brooke did not portray only the landscape but the society as well.

¹¹⁷ Brown 1.

¹¹⁸ Vanek 452.

4.3. Clash of cultures

As the story unfolds briefly after the British conquest of Canada, three cultures meet in one place: the English, the French Canadians and the Canadian aboriginal population. Thus, the characters face cultural and social differences, which provide an extraordinary portrayal of the social interaction from the English perspective. Boutelle characterizes the novel as “packed with lively details about the social life, agricultural practices, and cultural characteristics of the resident populations (British, Canadian, and Indian).”¹¹⁹

4.3.1. The native aboriginal population

The visual aspect and the manners of the aboriginal population, namely the Huron tribe, are pictured very thoroughly. J. M. S. Tompkins informs that the figure of the Indian “first entered fiction as a philosophic character, a blameless vegetarian and Deist... .”¹²⁰ Staves supports this statement and assures that Rivers describes the Huron Indians “as free and egalitarian, hospitable (when not at war), and essentially deists.”¹²¹ Rivers then observes their customs and habits. Some of the Indians already underwent conversion by the Jesuit missionaries, although they used to believe “in one God, the ruler and creator of the universe, whom they called the *Great Spirit* and the *Master of Life*.” (39) What they value most is honour, they are superstitious and have vivid imagination. Regarding their visual aspect, the colour of their skin is delineated as copper, their black radiant hair is decorated by feathers. As opposed to the European colonizers, the Indians are resistant to cold and heat. Rivers then elaborates more accurate characterization:

Their general character is difficult to describe; made up of contrary and even contradictory qualities; they are indolent, tranquil, quiet, humane in peace; active, restless, cruel, ferocious in war: courteous, attentive, hospitable, and even polite, when kindly treated; haughty, stern, vindictive,

¹¹⁹ Boutelle 7.

¹²⁰ J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1969), 181.

¹²¹ Staves 338.

when they are not; and their resentment is the more to be dreaded, as they hold it a point of honor to dissemble their sense of an injury till they find an opportunity to revenge it.
(41)

It is also intriguing that even their language is designated as sublime as it is melodious and constitutes of metaphors. Since they have no alphabet and keep no textual records of their history, they rely on strong memory.

Due to the European colonization and wars among the tribes, the Hurons were being exterminated and started to retreat. Their retreat enabled the settlers to expand and spread their civilization. According to A. I. Silver, “in 1760, then, Canada, like any other Western society which has evolved under normal conditions, had a secular ruling class composed of administrators, military officers, and businessmen.”¹²² This claim is supported by Captain Fermor’s lamentation: “Here are some very estimable persons, and the spirit of urbanity begins to diffuse itself from the centre; in short, I shall leave Canada at the very time when one would wish to come to it” (224).

4.3.1.1. The noble savage

Although the Indians lost most of their territory, Arabella points out that:

they could still keep their freedom: other nations talk of liberty, they possess it; nothing can be more astonishing than to see a little village of about thirty or forty families, the small remains of the Hurons ... preserve their independence in the midst of an European colony consisting of seventy thousand inhabitants ... they assert and they maintain that independence with a spirit truly noble. (38)

The ending of her portrayal suggests another sentimental topos of the eighteenth century, which is the noble savage. Boutelle argues that “in the early pages of *Emily Montague*, Brooke’s Indians could have walked out of the pages of Rousseau, so close are they to his description of

¹²² A. I. Silver, *An Introduction to Canadian History* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991), 90.

the noble savage.”¹²³ Indeed the noble savage was a literary stock character, Brissenden notes that “both his nobility and his savagery are in quarantine and can be observed and admired in safety. In this combination of potential danger and actual harmlessness the noble savage can be seen to be not only sentimental but sublime.”¹²⁴ Thus not only Canada’s landscape and climate, are considered sublime, but its aboriginal inhabitants as well. As in the case of Canada’s weather, the perception of the Indians changes throughout the novel and in the end England is favoured, again.

4.3.1.2. The liberty of the Indian women

At first sight, it seems that the Indian women have more independence than the English women. They even participate in their government by voting their chiefs, which Rivers commends and he criticizes the state of affairs in England:

...women are, beyond all doubt, the best judges of the merit of men; and I should be extremely pleased to see it adopted in England ... In the true sense of the word, *we* are the savages, who so impolitely deprive you of the common rights of citizenship... . (40-1)

Thus, the Indian concept of government furnishes women with new opportunities. Indeed, Arabella sees the possibility of liberty for women in the Indian life and culture as well. After meeting a group of native women, drinking wine and feasting with them, she is enchanted by their way of life and thinks about their encounter in terms of gender:

Absolutely, Lucy, I will marry a savage, and turn squaw (a pretty soft name for an Indian princess!); never was any thing delightful as their lives; they talk of French husbands, but commend me to an Indian one, who lets his wife ramble five hundred miles, without asking where she is going. (50)

She even calls them her “good sisters the squaws.” (51) Nevertheless, she dismisses her resolution when she finds out that in reality the aboriginal women are not autonomous and absolutely free. This is the moment when she remembers and praises dear old England:

¹²³ Boutelle 12.

¹²⁴ Brissenden 74.

I declare off at once; I will not be a squaw; I admire their talking of the liberty of savages; in the most essential point, they are slaves: the mothers marry their children without ever consulting their inclinations, and they are obliged to submit to this foolish tyranny. Dear England! where liberty appears, not as here among these odious savages, wild and ferocious like themselves, but lovely, smiling, led by the hand of the Graces. There is no true freedom anywhere else. They may talk of the privilege of chusing a chief; but what is that to the dear English privilege of chusing a husband? (55)

For Arabella, free choice of husband is the most important right for women and the relative freedom of movement and participation in vote cannot equal that. Thus, England is the only place of freedom, which is conveyed in Arabella's recount of Emily's decision to settle her future on her own:

Emily has answered her with the genuine spirit of an independent Englishwoman, who is so happy as to be her own mistress, and who is therefore determined to think for herself ... and has hinted, though not impolitely, that she wants no guardian of her conduct but herself. (99)

This passage reveals the omnipresent national spirit infused in the novel and it is especially embodied in the characterization of Emily as the main sentimental heroine. Thus, sensibility is linked with liberty and democracy and it contributes to the sense of belonging into the privileged nation. Arch summarizes it:

...Brooke's novel takes up questions that are central to the discourse of sensibility in the 1760s and 1770s and her treatment of those questions engages in important ways the emergent discourse of nationhood and national identity in the last third of the eighteenth century.¹²⁵

Since England is the idyllic space of liberty, it is favoured at the expense of Canada. Even Arabella's portrayals of the indigenous people deteriorate from noble to odious. This conveys the general attitude of the English colonizers perceiving everyone not English as the Other.

¹²⁵ Arch 466.

4.3.2. The French Canadians

Brooke depicts the social milieu in Quebec with brilliance. Boutelle recounts her extraordinary situation, Brooke was “one of the few Englishwomen in Quebec, at the center of the colony’s social and political life, attached to the garrison and yet not of it, equipped with a good working knowledge of French.”¹²⁶ She presented the social environment from her own experience. In fact, before the British occupied Canada, the gentry had been already established by the French. Arabella describes the social class dwelling in Quebec as “a third or fourth rate country town in England; much hospitality, little society; cards, scandal, dancing, and good cheer” (86). Nevertheless, this apparently provincial society proves also as liberating space for women:

But what particularly pleases me is, there is no place where women are of such importance: not one of the sex, who has the least share of attractions, is without a levee of beaux interceding for the honour of attending her on some party, of which every day produces three or four. (122)

Thus, women are acknowledged important members of the garrison culture.

The French Canadians and especially the women are scrutinized and they are being compared with the English, as well. Rivers perceives them as counterparts to the English sensible ladies:

they are gay, coquet, and sprightly; more gallant than sensible; more flatter'd by the vanity of inspiring passion, than capable of feeling it themselves; and, like their European countrywomen, prefer the outward attentions of unmeaning admiration to the real devotion of the heart. There is not perhaps on earth a race of females, who talk so much, or feel so little, of love as the French; the very reverse is in general true of the English: my fair countrywomen seem ashamed of the charming sentiment to which they are indebted for all their power. (24)

In general, the French ladies are considered seductresses “of the salamander kind” (106).

¹²⁶ Boutelle 11.

Furthermore, when Arabella speaks about the French men, she stresses the English superiority. The French men are agreeable but not as much as the English: “I am not surprized the Canadian ladies take such pains to seduce our men from us; but I think it a little hard we have no temptation to make reprisals” (37). Nevertheless, when describing the French women she does not begrudge their beauty: “they are lively, and in general handsome... .” (50) In fact, Arabella shares some traits which are typically attributed to the French ladies. She is coquettish and sprightly, Wyett claims that her personality “aligns her with the spirited French-Canadian women perhaps more closely than is comfortable for a good English girl.”¹²⁷ However, Arabella’s attitude towards the French ladies changes when her lover dances with one of them: “These Frenchwomen are not to be supported; they fancy vanity and assurance are to make up for the want of every other virtue; forgetting that delicacy, softness, sensibility, tenderness, are attractions to which they are strangers.” (152-3) Although Arabella herself is lively and spirited she acknowledges that sensibility should be the main quality of women, whereby she is detached from the French and appreciates the English values.

Another rivalry between the English and the French occurs when the English sentimental heroine Emily is threatened by Madame Des Roches, the charming Canadian widow. Although Emily is jealous of her, she admits Madame Des Roches’ superiority: “How superior, my dear, is her character to mine! I blush for myself on the comparison; I am shocked to see how much she soars above me: how is it possible Rivers should not have preferred her to me?” (174) Madame Des Roches is charming and attractive but also intelligent, sincere and elegant. As opposed to Emily she is older and leads a lonely, pioneer life. It can be noted that she is the opposite foil to Emily. “There is an unbridgeable gap between Emily and Madame Des Roches not only as characters in the romance plot but also as symbols in the novel.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Wyett 44.

¹²⁸ McCarthy 344-5.

In fact, Madame Des Roches is never admitted speak for herself as she is considered the Other and the voice of the Other is always silenced. The colonized, the French as well as the Indians represent the Other in the novel. McCarthy points out how the epistolary form emphasizes the otherness: “pronouns and verb forms in the third person mark an Other outside the dialogue.”¹²⁹ In fact, the Other is embodied by Madame Des Roches herself: “Madame Des Roches is important because she incorporates all the modes of alterity -- race, sex, religion, and landscape -- that represent the Other in Brooke's novel.”¹³⁰

4.3.3. The Other and the English superiority

Although the Other is sometimes delineated in positive terms, it is eventually always rejected in favour of England. Thus, on the one side stands sentimental Emily, England and the Old World and on the opposite side, Madame Des Roches representing wilderness of Canada and the New World. McCarthy asserts that “the rivalry for Rivers between Emily and Madame Des Roches is symbolically a struggle for the deepest loyalties of the British settler.”¹³¹ Eventually, Rivers rejects Canada and returns to England, which is paralleled to his choice of wife. Madame de Roches as an enigmatic figure identified with the untamed forest is contrasted to soft, domesticated Emily who will at the end of the novel spend her free time cultivating the English garden. Therefore, McCarthy concludes that the novel is ultimately a “narrative of rejection.”¹³²

Since Rivers has family obligations which compel him to return to England, Emily insists on his happiness in England irrespective of her, although they decided to settle together in Canada, she would not “suffer him to hide that shining merit in the uncultivated wilds of Canada, the seat of barbarism and ignorance... .” (169) Her formulation again shows Canada as the seat of the Other. McCarthy summarizes the general attitude towards the Canadian

¹²⁹ McCarthy 344.

¹³⁰ McCarthy 343.

¹³¹ McCarthy 345.

¹³² McCarthy 348.

otherness: “What these tourists see in the New World disturbs them because the Other is as attractive as it is fearful... .”¹³³ This recalls the definition of the noble savage and the sublime. Rivers comments on his choice to return to England: “with all my passion for the savage luxuriance of America, I begin to find my taste return for the more mild and regular charms of my native country” (235). It can be pointed out that Rivers virtually prefers the picturesque and the comprehensible beautiful over the excess of the sublime embraced by Canada. McCarthy assures that “Brooke makes clear the interrelations between the aesthetic and moral attributes of sensibility... .”¹³⁴ Basically, the English prefer their culture to which they are accustomed and they attempt to spread it in Canada.

4.3.4. The British Empire and the civilizing mission

The arrival of the characters takes place closely after the Seven Years’ War which was fought from 1754 to 1763. After the British victory over the French, the Treaty of Paris increased the colonial possessions of the British Empire with Canada. Thus, some letters concern the political issues, mainly the transfer of power from the French to the British. The subjugation of the French to the British rule is obvious also by the fact that almost all the English correspondents have connections with the army. The information about Canadian politics and economy is especially provided by the Captain Fermor. Vanek highlights “Emily Montague’s contribution to an important mid-century debate about how Britain would imagine and manage the increasingly diverse environments of its empire.”¹³⁵ The prevalent tactic is obvious, the British attempted to spread their values and civilization all over the world but their subjects had to remain content so that the civilizing mission would succeed. They preferred to expand

¹³³ McCarthy 347.

¹³⁴ McCarthy 347.

¹³⁵ Vanek 447.

the trade rather than military rule, because establishing common market was more profitable variant.¹³⁶ The preference for global commerce is expressed in Fermor's statement:

...Heaven intended a social intercourse between the most distant nations, by giving them productions of the earth so very different each from the other, and each more than sufficient for itself, that the exchange might be the means of spreading the bond of society and brotherhood over the whole globe. (178)

In fact, the Seven Years' War "inspired a new and almost universal discussion of the politics of commerce and conquest."¹³⁷ The British hoped that the French Canadians would adopt British habits whereby they would contribute successfully to society. What is more, their lives would be improved by the English influence:

...the gradual progress of knowledge, to adopt so much of our manners as tends to make them happier in themselves, and more useful members of the society to which they belong: if with our language, which they should by every means be induced to learn, they acquire the mild genius of our religion and laws, and that spirit of industry, enterprize, and commerce, to which we owe all our greatness. (176-7)

This passage can be seen in propagandist light to justify British imperial goals. Canada is thus the target of the Britishness.

Through the character of the Captain Fermor the novel "reveals some prejudices which may be classified as conservatively English, imperialistic, Anglican, and characteristic of her time and social position." (x) Nevertheless, he is not the only one who judges the local inhabitants as inferior, for instance, Rivers observes: "Nothing astonishes me so much as to find their manners so little changed by their intercourse with the Europeans; they seem to have learnt nothing of us but excess in drinking." (43) In general, all the English characters look down on the French and the Indians from the British perspective. The French settlers are condemned for

¹³⁶ Vanek 450.

¹³⁷ Katherine Binhammer, "The Failure of Trade's Empire in *The History of Emily Montague*," *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 23.2 (2011): 296, EBSCO, 2 May 2017.

their failure in civilizing the aboriginal population and for adoption of the local way of life. The fact that the French Canadians assimilated with the savages and accustomed to the wilderness is threatening the equilibrium. This suggests the concept of the civilizing burden in the colonial discourse and supports the racial stereotypes. McCarthy explains that “progress will only come if this people can be transformed, brought within the pale of English and Anglican institutions.”¹³⁸ Thus, for the good of the British Empire the Other must adjust to their ways not the other way around.

In fact, the Brookes did not agree with tolerant policy towards the French Catholics, they considered Catholicism as threat to the British. They insisted on Anglicization of Canada: “...agreement in religious worship being the strongest tie to unity and obedience” (168). From their point of view the Catholics were corrupted and had bad influence on the prosperity of the colony: “The corn here is very good, though not equal to ours; the harvest not half so gay as in England, and for this reason, that the lazy creatures leave the greatest part of their land uncultivated...” (59). Nevertheless, the English are not good settlers at all: “The English are also, though industrious, active, and enterprising, ill-fitted to bear the hardships, and submit to the wants, which inevitably attend an infant settlement even on the most fruitful lands.” (176) In fact, the English “men like Rivers have become, too civilized, too feminine, to perform manual labour, and thus Canada will not be colonized by men like him or through mass immigration from the mother country.”¹³⁹ Therefore the natives must submit and assimilate. Arch comments it: “The French Canadians, in other words, must come to ‘resemble’ English citizens, but they must not actually be English citizens.”¹⁴⁰ In fact, this is the very mechanism and attitude applied by the British Empire not only towards Canada but to all its colonies. Captain Fermor explains the importance of the colonies for British welfare:

¹³⁸ McCarthy 348.

¹³⁹ Binhammer 314.

¹⁴⁰ Arch 480.

It is not only our interest to have colonies; they are not only necessary to our commerce, and our greatest and surest sources of wealth, but our very being as a powerful commercial nation depends on them: it is therefore an object of all others most worthy our attention, that they should be as flourishing and populous as possible.

The power lies in the number of people gained by the colony. The wealth does not originate from the vast area of the acquired lands but from the inhabitants capable of producing it.

As a proper sentimental man, Rivers returns to England preferring civilization whereby he ends his colonial adventure. At the end of the novel, Arabella rejects colonization as well as Canada and reproaches Rivers:

What could induce you, with this sweet little retreat, to cross that vile ocean to Canada? I am astonished at the madness of mankind, who can expose themselves to pain, misery and danger; and range the world from motives of avarice and ambition ... You men are horrid, rapacious animals, with your spirit of enterprize, and your nonsense: ever wanting more land than you can cultivate, and more money than you can spend. That eternal pursuit of gain, that rage of accumulation, in which you are educated, corrupts your hearts, and robs you of half the pleasures of life. (269)

Thus, it seems that after all, Brooke condemns colonization. Nevertheless, the spouses can dwell at their estate in England only with the property they gained from Emily's discovered father, who made his living in colonial India. Consequently, the novel presents many controversies and ambivalences regarding colonization. All in all, Binhammer states that: "In many ways, what the ending discloses is the interdependence of economic growth and colonial expansion in the late eighteenth century."¹⁴¹ Although the critics are not certain about Brooke's attitude towards colonisation and the message she wanted to convey, it is clear that the novel raises some important questions and perspectives concerning imperialism "that became foundational in Canadian cultural discourse during the colonial period."¹⁴² Without a doubt,

¹⁴¹ Binhammer 318.

¹⁴² McCarthy 342.

The History of Emily Montague contributes in a significant way to the Canadian literary canon and the colonial discourse and therefore it should not be ignored.

5. Conclusion

The overall analysis of *The History of Emily Montague* proves that the novel deserves to be acknowledged as a significant contribution to the novel-writing of the eighteenth century as well as to the cultural discourse. It is intriguing that virtually unknown novel encompasses so many eighteenth-century issues and topics and that within this single text the three most popular eighteenth-century genres are merged. The influence of Samuel Richardson is evident, however, Brooke's novel slightly deviates from the main stream whereby she contributes to the development of the novel and new genres in her exceptional way. Brooke interconnects the sentimental and cultural issues with the formal features of the novel. What is more the form and style supports and elaborates the themes.

The sentimental tradition with its aesthetic concepts is omnipresent throughout the whole novel ranging from the epistolary form to building of national consciousness. The novel raises important questions about gender and companionate marriage as well as race and colonisation which are inherent to contemporary English society and culture. Wyett summarizes the novel's merit. It

marks a moment in literary history when a sentimental novel met a travel narrative. The text transgresses many boundaries—generic, geographic, and gendered- in its wide geographical scope, its uneasy negotiation of the colonial economy, and its potentially transgressive utopian possibilities for women within the bounds of conventional, English spaces.¹⁴³

The setting of *The History of Emily Montague* distinguishes the novel from traditional sentimental novels mainly set at homeland. Therefore, its historical and geographical importance is usually emphasised over its literary contributions. Consequently, Brooke's novel can be deemed experimental. The novel caused various controversies mainly for its allegedly

¹⁴³ Wyett 33.

feminist ideas, however, the feminist load should not be overstated. Nevertheless, Frances Brooke belongs among important English women writers of the eighteenth century who helped to establish the tradition of the novel-writing and manifested that women's literature can equal the works of their male counterparts. Indeed, the novel has some flaws and uncertain points, however, the reading is amusing and it provides extraordinary insight into Brooke's age. Its contribution to socio-cultural discourse is obvious and its literary value should not be underestimated. *The History of Emily Montague* plays a significant role in the English tradition as well as in the Canadian one. Thus, its legacy should be examined by the literary academics more thoroughly.

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