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Cultural Specificity of the European Novel on the Periphery: Sophie von La Roche and Pietro Chiari

Abstract

The article explores the eighteenth-century novels of Germany and Italy defined as the countries of European periphery, as cultural and stylistic phenomenon. The study focuses on the difference in perception and reflection of English and French novelistic tradition, expressed in the novelistic tropes, clichés and plots, which were adapted by German and Italian authors from English and French novels. The objective of the research is to highlight the specificity of the novel of European periphery as cultural phenomenon, distinct and distant from the headline stylistic and cultural trends. The new themes and ideological points risen by German and Italian authors, who acted as the outsiders of the mainstream European literature, are also investigated. The research revolves around the study of one of the first German psychological novels, “Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim” (“The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim”) (1771) by Sophie von La Roche, and Pietro Chiari’s “La Filosofessa Italiana” (“The Italian Philosophess”) (1753), the first attempt in the genre of Italian novel, both investigated as brought in the context of the fundamental monuments of European literature of the 18th century.

Keywords: Sophie von La Roche, Pietro Chiari, European novel, 18th century, Samuel Richardson.

Introduction. The European novel of the 18th century constitutes a constant object of research in view of the incessant progress of psychology as a science and of growing interest in the history of emotions and emotional life. The relevance of the genre of sentimental novels and novels of education as sources from the history of emotional development and formation of personality thus increases in the light of this academic agenda. A massive number and inexhaustible diversity of the studies dedicated to European sentimental novels of the 18th-19th centuries and the mental phenomena they depict are determined by their remarkable abundance, plot richness and intensive semantic load of the aforementioned literary sources. Yet the

major part of the academic research focuses on the English and French sentimental novels due to the pioneering roles of English writers such as Samuel Richardson, Laurence Stern, Henry Fielding and Oliver Goldsmith in creating the genre of sentimental novel and the novel of personal formation and growth. Traditionally, Germany and Italy in the 17th and 18th centuries are regarded as zones of periphery in the Western academic paradigm in the studies of European economic and cultural history, and I follow this division in my research as well.

Problem statement. In comparison to the large number of studies dedicated to English and French sentimental novels, those of Germany and Italy remain relatively overlooked. One can contest the

statement about the scarce representation of the German sentimental novel in the international scholarship, by appealing to the numerous research, dedicated to the works of Weimar classicists and later German Romantics. Yet the origin of the early sentimental novel in Germany dates back significantly earlier, as of 1760s-1770s, a period which enjoyed a poor display in the international humanities. At the same time, the Italian novel of the eighteenth century is represented by a sole yet prolific author – Pietro Chiari (1712-1785), whose works are explored still less than the 1760s-1770s German novel. The problem we shall deal with is the issue of the unexplored specificity of the sentimental discourse expressed in German and Italian novels, which shall be studied on the material of the second German psychological novel, *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (*The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim*), 1771, and the first early modern Italian novel *La Filosofessa Italiana* (*The Italian Philosophess*), written by Pietro Chiari in 1753.

Objective. My objective is to illuminate the sentimental and ideological narratives in the German and Italian novel of the second half of the 18th century and highlight the similarities and discrepancies of their discourses with the discourses of stylistic and ideological traditions of the so-called mainstream sentimental and psychological literature, English and French novels in particular. The article aims to highlight the affinities and divergences of the stylistics and ideology of the European sentimental novel in the center and on the periphery of the European cultural landscape.

Current state of the global research on the problem. As it was indicated above, the scholarship dedicated to the genesis and formation of the psychological novel, and “Bildungsroman” as its sub-form, is unexpectedly meager. Moreover, most of the studies focused on the issues related with the history of the early European psychological novel skip the question about the role of German contribution into formation of this genre. Thus, the research field displays a sort of division between the studies dedicated to English and French sentimental novels and those devoted to German Bildungsroman.

As for the Italian novel of the 18th century, it is practically excluded from the global research of the early modern European psychological novel in view of its rarity and obscurity. The genre of Italian novel was represented by a single polygraph author, Pietro Chiari, who wrote ten sentimental novels within the period from 1753 till 1784 (two of them were released posthumously). In this view, Pietro Chiari is subject to a strong academic prejudice of labeling

him as a worthless imitator of English and French novels. Many scholars still deny the very existence of the authentic Italian novel before Ugo Foscolo’s *Jacobo Ortis’ Last Letters* (1802) or even Alessandro Manzoni’s *The Betrothed* (1827). Yet there are several researchers, who not only try to accentuate Pietro Chiari’s pioneering role in creation of the very phenomenon of the first Italian novel of the 18th century, but also reveal the actual vivid originality of his oeuvre, such as Valentina Caravaglia, Cindy D. Stanphill, Alberto Zava, Daniela Mangione, Luigi Comparini. Yet most of the studies devoted to Pietro Chiari’s work belong to the Italian scholar milieu, and, with a few exceptions, lack the comparative and interdisciplinary context.

In contrast to Pietro Chiari’s novels, those of Sophie von La Roche (1731-1807) have attracted a keen interest of scholars, yet their prior research focus is placed on her first novel, to the detriment of the rest of her fruitful oeuvre. Despite the higher international diversity of the researchers working on the study of La Roche’s textual legacy, this theme still predominantly remains within the German academic domain. The overall scholarship about the novels of Sophie von La Roche is significantly more abundant than that of Pietro Chiari, and covers also a wider problematic scope, yet the international comparative prospect is largely missing as well. In spite of the fact that Sophie von La Roche created but a second attempt of the novel about formation of the individual, the thorough comparison with her only and immediate predecessor, Martin Christoph Wieland, and his Bildungsroman *Agathon* (1767), is necessary, yet still missing. Nevertheless, a circle of the researchers, who investigate the problematics of Sophie von La Roche’s works, is large, and includes Bernadette B. Hyner, Christine Lehleiter, Catherine Mainland, Sol Gittleman, Eris Glass, Andreas Mielke, Monika Nenon, and Reinelda Moschner Baucic.

Sources and methods. We use primary sources for our research, such as the aforementioned novels of Sophie von La Roche and Pietro Chiari, as well as the range of the works of their contemporaries. These works include novels, such as *Pamela, or, Virtue rewarded*, *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady*, and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* by Samuel Richardson, *The Sufferings of Young Werther* by Johann Goethe, *Dangerous Liaisons* by Choderlos de Laclos, and dramas *Emilia Galotti* by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Intrigue and Love* by Friedrich Schiller. In our study we take recourse to methods such as textual and biographical analysis, and comparative discourse analysis.

Presentation of the main material. Marie Sophie von La Roche (1731-1807) was a foundress and the matriarch of the family La Roche-Brentano-Mereau-von Arnim, a dynasty of German literati, who are credited with the creation of the German romanticism as spiritual movement and both artistic and literary style. She wrote her first novel at the age of forty, and under the name of her close friend and ex-fiancé, Martin Christoph Wieland, upon their previous mutual agreement. An overwhelming and immediate success followed the novel's release, causing the author to reveal her identity and pursue a long and prolific literary career, which lasted more than thirty years. This career covered the period of the Ancien régime, the years of the French revolution, and almost half of the Napoleonic era. While the impact of these events was not felt directly in German countries, they have produced substantial repercussions throughout the whole Europe. For this reason, Sophie von La Roche's oeuvre is an excellent source in researching the formation and subsequent transformation of the sentimental and psychological narrative in the European novel.

The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim tells a story about a modest, yet gifted, diligent, virtuous and honorable German officer, named Sternheim, who made a successful military career in England, was ennobled after obtaining the rank of colonel and later fell in love in his best friend's sister, Sophie. The marriage proposal was fervently supported by Sophie's brother, and eventually accepted by the rest of the family, who overcame their prejudice against status difference. Only the fiancée's sister, Charlotte, is strongly opposed to this idea in view that such a marriage lowers the family's social prestige and thus decreases her own chances to contract an alliance with a high-ranking representative of the upper class. Her brother loves his friend and Sophie that much, that immediately loses his fraternal affection to Charlotte,¹ who later weds successfully a noble and becomes countess von Löbau. The young couple acquires an estate adjacent to that one of Mrs. Sternheim's brother establishes there a perfect and exemplary economy with a labor commune for the poor peasants, sponsored and surveilled by the estate's owners. In their union the couple has the only daughter, named Sophie, who later becomes a key protagonist in the

novel. Sophie obtains a careful education based on the enlightened principles of her parents. She is reasonable, apt in domestic economy and household chores, dutiful, and exercises charity regularly. Yet her mother dies when she is nine years old, and her father succumbs to a disease when Sophie is nineteen. Upon her father's death, her aunt, countess von Löbau, invites her to the capital city to live with them. There Sophie displays a weak interest in court festivities, and in the company of the socialites. Instead, she prefers spending her time reading, and maintains an extensive correspondence with Emily, daughter of the pastor, who lived in the vicinity of Sophia's parents' estate. She quickly arouses hostility in her relatives because of her non-conformist persuasions and independent character. They identify the books she reads as the source of her persuasions and throw them out during her absence. Meanwhile, the girl gets acquainted with two Englishmen: lords Seymour and Derby. The first one attracts her attention and develops a romantic affection for Sophie, yet he is horrified and enraged to learn the fact that the prince of the local court they both are represented to, displays too vivid an interest in the damsel. The girl is unaware of the fact that her aunt and uncle encourage her presence at the court and heat up the prince's interest purposely in order to make their niece a royal mistress and even arrange a morganatic marriage between her and the prince, in view of the future contributions to their own welfare and rank. Lord Seymour is persuaded not to disclose his feelings to the girl too early, nor ask for her hand in marriage. Sophie is totally unaware about the plan of her kins yet cannot totally avoid the presence at the court and escape the prince's advances. The prince organizes luxurious festivities for her and eventually plans to seduce her on the masquerade ball, having previously bribed her aunt with some precious jewels in exchange to her assurance about her nieces' favors. The jewels are offered to Sophie by her aunt in the guise of a set given but to wear on the ball. That same evening the prince plans to stay alone with Sophie and take advantage of her at the banquet, yet Seymour warns her about his plans. Sophie collapses in a nervous attack, the seduction fails, and she is sent back to her aunt's home. During the time of her stay Sophie exercises an active support for the impoverished family of a clerk, who squandered their fortune by means of excessive expenditures. She didn't just help them by soliciting a job for the husband yet made a financial plan for them to live a frugal life.

The second Englishmen, named Derby, is depicted as a staunch and vicious libertine, and he

¹ "Dein Herz entfernt die Ahnen, auf deren Namen du stolz bist! O, wie klein würde die Anzahl des Adels werden, wenn sich nur die dazu rechnen dürften, die ihre Ansprüche durch die Tugenden der edlen Seelen des Stifters ihres Hauses beweisen könnten! [Your heart rejects the ancestors of whose names you are proud! Oh, so small would have been the number of the nobles, if their claims could be attested by the virtues same as those displayed by the noble souls of the founders of their Houses!]" (La Roche 1771, 32).

has developed not only an insuperable lust for Sophie, but also regards her chastity as the most precious prize in his “career” as seductor.² His plan is not only to seduce her and win his rival Seymour, but also destroy her principles and virtuous personality. An assistant seconding him in his heinous project, is John, one of his servants, a man with a bitter hatred to the ecclesiastics and the honest, pious, and virtuous people. Derby successfully pretends to be a man who had lost his honest way of life in libertinage yet trying to reform. He plays a charity scene to Sophie’s impoverished neighbors, thus gaining her favor. In the meantime, lord Seymour is disappointed with Sophie’s tolerant attitude to the prince’s advances, and withdraws to his rural estate, abandoning the plan to marry her. Upon the prince’s failed seduction Derby offers his help to the shocked girl and organizes a fake marriage with the assistance of his vile servant disguised as a priest. They flee the house of Sophie’s relatives, yet she feels unsurmountable repulsion to him, and after several unsuccessful attempts to consummate the marriage, he eventually reveals to her his deceit in a letter. Derby leaves Germany for England, and Sophia with her maid immediately abandon the rural house in Germany, they used to secretly reside in. The shattered Sophie adopts the name of madame Leidens (“suffering” in German), cedes all her revenues for three years to her uncle, count Löbau, and starts working as a teacher in charity mission. Soon she gains the confidence of a few wealthy sponsors and moves to England with one of them, Lady Summers, to work on the establishment of another school for girls, this time in England. Although her identity as Sophia von Sternheim is discovered, the fact of faux marriage is not known to anyone, and lord Derby faces no obstacles in the wedding of a wealthy and noble lady Ashton, who appears to be a niece of Lady Summers. Sophia quickly learns the name of Lady Ashton’s husband, and avoids presence at the young couple’s reception, yet she is recognized by Derby’s servant John. Derby fears possible denunciation, and with the help of his servant abducts Sophia and secludes her in a solitary peasant cabin in one of his distant manors in Scotland, with a family of poor

peasants paid to keep her. The peasant family treats her well, and she educates their daughter, whose needlework attracts the attention of a certain countess Douglas. In the peasant family also lives a little girl, Derby’s bastard child from a certain Nancy, another woman once abducted by him and kept in that very same peasant hut till her death. Yet Derby’s flame for Sophie still teases him, and he writes to Lady Sternheim, offering her to dissolve his marriage with Lady Ashton if Sophie recognizes and agrees to consummate their previous union, which proposal she discards with indignation. Yet Derby’s vicious assistant John decides to kill the imprisoned Sophie upon reception of her answer and shoves her into an old tower and shuts her up there, where she spends a night under cold rain and miraculously survives exhaustion and the wounds received at the fall. All out of sudden Derby falls sick and, on his deathbed, makes a confession to Seymour about Sophie’s presumable death and the particulars of the whole affair. Seymour and his brother Lord Rich rush to Scotland and find Sophie exhausted and broken, yet alive. Seymour and Sophie wed each other eventually and live a harmonious life in the estate managed according to Sophie’s wise and charitable principles, showing good example to their neighbors.

At the first examination of this novel, one could easily notice multiple references to the novels *Pamela* and *Clarissa* by Samuel Richardson, which were accurately enumerated and described in Reinelda Baucic’s doctoral thesis. A few examples include “motives of a sham marriage ceremony; scenes of abduction, imprisonment and despair; the remorseful death of the libertine; scenes of extreme sensibility; expressions of overwhelming emotions; letters as documents proving a character’s virtue; the presentation of psychologically complex motivation; the importance placed on mutual love in marriage” (Baucic 2010, 121). Yet the author of this research omits totally in her comparative analysis such a substantial part of S. Richardson’s oeuvre as *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, while “Lady Sternheim” contains vivid references to its plot. To illustrate, the scene where the prince tries to take advantage of Sophie at the masquerade ball and her subsequent disgust to this type of festivities is almost step by step rewritten by Sophie von La Roche from the story of Harriet Byron, a protagonist of *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*. In that oeuvre she is abducted by the vicious and impertinent rich libertine Pollexen Hallgrave at the masquerade, and subsequently sustains an attempt of the forced marriage with her abductor, with the ceremony performed by unfair priest, which event served

² Aber ein der Göttergewidmetes Meisterstück der Natur und der Kunst zu erbeuten, den Argus der Klugheit und Tugend einzuschläfern, Staatsminister zu betrügen, alle weithergesuchte Vorbereitungen eines gefährlichen und geliebten Nebenbuhlers zu zernichten, ohne daß man die Hand gewahr wird, welche an der Zerstörung arbeitet; dieß verdient angemerkt zu werden! [But to overlord over a masterpiece of nature and art, put asleep an Argus of intelligence and virtue, deceive state ministers, destroy all the following projects of a rival dangerous and fallen in love, without one knowing, whose hand is working on that destruction, that is worth of merit!] (La Roche 1771, 165).

a starting point to *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*. According to Reinelda Baucic, the novel also contains references to some tractates of J.-J. Rousseau (Baucic 2010, 114–5).

The novel of Sophie von La Roche creates in German literature the first example of an emancipated and enlightened woman in spite of the fact that her protagonist professes the traditional values of bourgeoisie – familial happiness, philanthropy, and perfection and optimization of domestic household and economy. The author praises female intellectuality and introvert attitude, and here we can see another reference to *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, where Harriet Byron, the protagonist, wins an intellectual debate over her unfortunate libertine seductor.

Yet *The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim* is most notable for a display of the plot sets to be later adopted and exploited in a range of the 18th century literary bestsellers. First, one cannot skip the resemblance of Lord Derby's intention to seduce Sophia as a model of chastity and offering financial aid to the impoverished family to the conduct of vicomte de Valmont from *Dangerous Liaisons*. Nevertheless, one must remember that *Sophia von Sternheim* (1771) was written eleven years before Laclos' novel (1782). Yet the French translation of *The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim* was released already in 1774, which means Choderlos de Laclos had the opportunity to get acquainted with this text and borrow some moments for his own plot. The theme of seduction of a young girl by a wicked prince is a plot of G. E. Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*, released one year and a half after the novel of Sophie von La Roche, and the theme of unhappy love and suffering in a marginal individual is evoked in Goethe's *The Sufferings of Young Werther*. Goethe, in his turn, maintained relations with Sophie von La Roche and attended her salon in Frankfurt am Main. The intrigues of the corrupted court against an honest family shall also be a plot of F. Schiller's *Intrigue and Love* (1784).

The novel *La Filosofessa Italiana* represents a unique mix of genres. Though it manifests an undoubtful affinity with the genre of the Baroque picaresque novel, it also possesses several characteristics, which make it different from it. The main protagonist is a damsel of quality, named d'Arville, who has lived in Avignon convent since her early childhood, totally unaware of her parent's identity. Yet reaching adulthood she receives a letter and a money gift from her mother, who promises they will encounter each other soon. Yet the young lady discovers by chance a letter addressed to the convent's abbess, where her supposed mother

promises an abundant donation to the convent, if they persuade the girl to accept the veil. The girl has no vocation to monastic life, and she plans her escape from the convent. Suddenly one of her friends, mademoiselle di Rennes, dies, and d'Arville gets acquainted with her late friend's brother, count di Terme, who came to attend his sister's funeral. Young people fall in love yet soon he sends her a brief note, where he briefly reports his sudden departure to the army. The girl is offended with the dry tone of her fiancé and is persuaded it's a consequence of her mother's intrigues. She escapes the convent successfully with her maid Celestina, both dressed as men. Mademoiselle d'Arville pretends to be the aristocrat Enrico Ricciard, and Celestina plays the role of his wife. To get funds for their trip the girls buy some manufacture in Lion to resell it for a higher price in Paris. By that time the news about a fugitive boarder reached the newspapers, the girl is searched, and the story attracts public attention. Celestina dies suddenly upon a brief disease, and a wealthy Lionaise merchant, to whom d'Arville had engaged an acquaintance, takes the supposed Ricciard under his protection. The merchant receives from Avignon a missive from his friend, count di Terme, who announces to him the missing of his fiancée and reports his own intention to find her. D'Arville is touched with his affection and even responds to count di Terme with a letter in return, yet she finds it impossible to reveal him her incognito before the right time. The protagonist leaves Lion and visits several French cities, and encounters their different people of quality, one of whom turns out to be an ambassador of France to Italy. The ambassador employs d'Arville-Ricciard as his personal secretary. The ambassador, who has a title of duke, is married and his spouse shows affection to a certain prince, who once was her fiancé, yet their marriage was cancelled due to political necessity of the French court. The duke commissions his secretary to surveil his spouse's fidelity, yet "Ricciard" finds the role of a spy repulsive and confides everything to the duchess. Thus, d'Arville becomes the prince's and duchess' trusted person. At that time one of the duchess' court ladies, who secretly loves "Ricciard" falls pregnant, and persuades the duke to marry her to his secretary. Under the duke's pressure Ricciard agrees reluctantly yet discovers with horror that his future wife's handwriting is identical to that of her supposed mother. After a brief investigation, though, it appears that the lady asked her friend to write compromising notes on her behalf to avoid suspicion at possible disclosure. Eventually the girl recognizes her possible father, yet the duke learns about

d'Arville's non-loyalty and now she fears his vengeance. The supposed Ricciard demands his dismissal and transfers to the prince's service and plans to accompany her new sovereign to Paris and join the French front to meet count di Terme there. Yet she is thrown to prison under false accusations of espionage, in particular conducting secret correspondence with German courts, of which she is acquitted quickly with the help of the prince. Yet one of her prison mates, an Italian adventurer, provides her with precious information, which sheds light on the identity of her possible parents. Later, still in a man's guise, d'Arville takes part in the battles of the war for Polish succession, gets wounded, and survives many dangerous adventures, until her parents discover her identity by her handwriting, and in the end of the second volume she resumes her female identity and eventually marries count di Terme. The story does not end up with their marriage, moreover, she describes her encounters with her old acquaintances who knew her in a male guise and keeps on adventuring even being heavily pregnant and after having two kids and sustaining widowhood. Half of the narrative is told from a protagonist in a male guise, and in the other half she assumes a female identity.

Even a cursory overview of the novel displays its stylistic and cultural uniqueness. Though a stylistic affinity with a range of English and French novels is ascribed to this novel, none of the existing narratives treats a female protagonist from a bi-gender perspective, and exercising both male and female functions. D'Arville expresses explicitly her views of feminine education in Italian women, same as does Sophie von Sternheim. To illustrate, d'Arville says the following:

In Francia leggono più le donne, che gli uomini; perocchè essendo esse meno occupate di loro dagli affari civili, e domestici, hanno più tempo da coltivarsi colla lettura d'ingegno; dannogli quella tintura di varie cose morali, istoriche, geografiche, romazeche e civili...

[In France women read more than men, because being less occupied with the civil and domestic affairs, they have more time to cultivate themselves with intellectual reading, from which they receive a tincture of knowing different things – moral, historical, geographical, romantic, and civil] (Chiari 1753, 266).

The most salient feature of d'Arville is a total absence of sympathy to the representatives of non-aristocratic social strata: actors and valets in the novel are depicted as villains, and she offers help to

adventurers and even poor orphans, which always turn to be aristocrats in distress, and not poor peasants or impoverished clerks. D'Arville, along with Sophie von Sternheim, undergoes a significant personal development through their independent social interactions before entering into a marital union. Though Pietro Chiari's work does not belong to the classical examples of *Bildungsroman*, it has a set of common features with the genre despite a large time lapse, which divides *La Filosofessa Italiana* (1753) from *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim* (*The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim*) (1771).

In contrast to the novels of Pietro Chiari and Sophie von La Roche, their ideological predecessors, English novelist Samuel Richardson and French writers Antoine-François Prévost and Denis Diderot never indicate education and reading as ways to build a strong female personality resistant to the deleterious influence of the milieu or pressure of the toxic family. Richardson's Clarissa Harlow and Harriet Byron, or Prévost's Marianne are never described as insatiable readers. Moreover, Richardson's Harriet Byron gets once engaged into a table-talk, where a pedantic mediocre scholar and her future abductor, sir Pollexen Hallgrave, argue about the inferiority of a female mind. Yet Harriet manages to shame the pedant even having but basic knowledge of Latin grammar and give a decent response to Hallgrave. Nevertheless, she states that she was never taught any ancient languages systematically, since they are of no use to the women, but rather picked up some basics of Latin from her grandfather, a cleric. On the other hand, Harriet Byron is never mentioned to read a book in all seven volumes of the story. Also, many times in Richardson's texts his female protagonists call themselves and are being called scribblers due to their extensive correspondence but are never actually called readers. They appear to be born or raised virtuous, intelligent, dutiful, or noble as A. Prévost's Marianne, and it's never mentioned that any education or readings have contributed to the development of such their qualities. Yet the situation is totally different with Sophie von Sternheim and mademoiselle d'Arville. Different to the English and French novelists, Pietro Chiari and Sophie von La Roche constantly accentuate the role of the reading in the personal formation of their protagonists. But if Pietro Chiari names directly the books mademoiselle d'Arville reads, it's never indicated what Sophie von La Roche's protagonist reads in particular. We can but make guesses relying on the fact Sophie von Sternheim's father directed her education personally. Back in the 18th century

novels and romances were not regarded as genres suitable for educational purposes. That's why a caring and enlightened father would have hardly recommended reading novels to his daughter. Yet in one place Sophie sheds light on her reading background when she sees a crowd of paupers who gathered to observe a royal progress of the prince, her would-be seductor. Having noticed a miserable state of the prince's subjects, she openly declares her disappointment. In response to praising of the prince's qualities as state ruler, she "finds in him little resemblance with those examples of [virtuous monarchs] shown in the books my father taught me from". Thus, we can deduce that young Sternheim's readings contained some books which detailed the biographies of the rulers and men of great deeds. To this description oeuvres of Plutarch, Cicero, Tacitus fit accurately, which constituted the corpus of educational literature for the young people. Only one work of the close contemporary to Sophie von Sternheim matches the theme and style of the literature regarded appropriate for both education and leisure of a young woman and matches Sophie's views and taste: François Fénelon's *The Adventures of Telemachus* (1699). This novel was actually the first example of "Bildungsroman" in European literature, where a story about the formation of a future monarch out of a young prince is told. Its protagonist sets in a perilous and tumultuous voyage searching for his father, and attends the courts of several monarchs, learning their stories and governing experience as well. The hero takes part in a few bloody military conflicts, gets in and out of a hard slavery, and gets trapped on the island of a voluptuous nymph fallen in love with him. The very likely suite of trials and ordeals shall be survived by Sophie. Eventually, both Fénelon's and von La Roche's heroes became equally tempered and experienced, transforming into a wise monarch and an enlightened mother of the family respectively.

As we can see, although Sophie von Sternheim is literally drawn from Samuel Richardson's Harriet Byron, she differs starkly from her non-reading counterpart due to the accentuated role of reading and education in the formation of her personality. Nevertheless, the novels which Sophie von La Roche refers to and imitates directly appear to be dismissed from the background of the protagonist of her story in apparent favor of the classical and moralistic literature. At the same time, Pietro Chiari's character of mademoiselle d'Arville as an adventurer is only constituted by the novels, interpreted by her just as an appeal to use her own mind and follow her own inclinations and ways to live.

Conclusion. The remarkable point is, that both novels, Pietro Chiari's *La Filosofessa Italiana* and Sophie von La Roche's *The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim* actually refer to the same set of English and French novels. These are Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa, or the History of Young Lady* (1748), *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1754), Pierre Marivaux's *The Life of Marianne* (1731-1741), and some novels from Antoine François Prévost's series *Memoirs and Adventures of a Gentleman* (1728-1731).³ Yet their specific feature is that the two authors display, treat, and process the same ideological, plot and stylistic *topoi*, adapted from S. Richardson, P. Marivaux and A. Prévost, in absolutely different ways. Both narratives advocate for women's education through the reading of novels and developing of their own opinions and independence from the social pressure of their milieu. Yet the definition of the milieu to be resisted is quite different: in the German novel of education it denotes corrupting court society, libertines and vacuous socialites, while the Italian novel accentuates the significance of the ability to withstand the tyrannic pressure of family and clerics over a woman. Sophie von La Roche is closer to the mainstream literary discourse of the English and French novels, which define female virtue as assiduity in charity and domestic chores, while Pietro Chiari puts the accent on the importance for a woman to be able to develop her own ability to reflect. His protagonist is purposely set aside from the concepts of adventurer, picara or libertine, she acts as a mature person equally wise and reflecting in her male and female persona. Nevertheless, the common idea in both novels is the importance of love in a marriage.

Thus, based on the foregoing, first examples of the genres of psychological novel and the novel of education and personal development in the regions of European periphery share the common thematic ranges with the similar oeuvre in England and France. Yet, in spite of the influence of the English and French novels, those of Sophie von La Roche and Pietro Chiari trespass the genre and stylistic boundaries, set by English and French authors for this type of novels. The protagonist of Pietro Chiari's novel acts as an adventurer while keeping

³ [Questo romanzo] ...Esser egli migliore di quanti ne sono usciti fin ora : più istruttivo della *Marianna*, più tenero della *Pamela*, più intrecciato della *Contadina*, più vago, e diro così, filosofico del *Filosofo Inglese*, che pur fu ricevuto con tanto compatimento. [This novel... It's better of those released for this moment; more instructive than *Marianna*, more tender than *Pamela*, more intricate than *A Peasant*, more vague, and, let's say, philosophical than *The English Philosopher*, which was received with such sympathy] (Chiari 1753, 8).

her persona as noble lady, preserving and keeping developing her off-marriage personality, which is totally unimaginable both for the genres of “noble lady’s novel”, nor typical for satirical Baroque novels. On the other hand, Sophie von La Roche’s novel displays the scenes of cruelty, miseries, deception and planning of evil schemes, which were never described with such an exactitude and in such vivid details in English and French novels of this genre in the period of the 1770s. As we can see, the

mainstream (English and French) novelistic tradition never accentuated the point about the value of the female education and role of reading in constructing of a female personality. On the other hand, already the first psychological and sentimental novels in such non-novelistic (countries of intellectual and cultural periphery) countries as Germany and Italy equally emphasize the importance of reading the proper books as the way of construction, or *Bildung*, of a personality.

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Культурна специфіка європейського роману периферії: Софі фон Ля Рош і П'єтро К'ярі

У статті досліджено німецький та італійський романи XVIII століття як культурний та стилістичний феномен. З огляду на те, що Німеччину та Італію визначають як країни європейської периферії, проаналізовано відмінності у сприйнятті та відображенні англійської та французької романної традиції, виражені в тропях, кліше та сюжетах, адаптованих німецькими та італійськими авторами з англійських і французьких романів. Метою дослідження є висвітлення специфіки романістики європейської периферії як культурного явища, відмінного й віддаленого від головних стилістичних і культурних течій, а також аналіз нових тем та ідеологічних моментів, висунутих німецькими та італійськими авторами, які були аутсайдерами «мейнстримної» європейської літератури. Проаналізовано один із перших німецьких психологічних романів «Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim» («Історія паночки фон Штернгайм») (1771) Софі фон Ля Рош та першу пробу жанру італійського роману «La Filosofessa Italiana» («Італійська філософка») (1753) П'єтро К'ярі. Розглянуто жанрові та стилістичні особливості італійського та німецького романів 1750-х та 1770-х років, проведено їх порівняння в контексті впливу інших літературних пам'яток епохи. Виявлено, що обидва романи спираються на один і той самий корпус творів Семюела Річардсона, П'єра Мариво та Антуана Франсуа Прево, однак переосмислюють їх у різний спосіб, кожен із них формує свою власну, унікальну і відмінну від країн «мейнстримної» романної традиції стилістику та художню ідеологію. Зокрема, обидва твори підтримують ідею освіти жінок через читання книг (французьких та англійських романів у П'єтро К'ярі та просвітницької навчальної літератури у Софі фон Ля Рош). Акцентовано увагу на становленні, формуванні та розвитку особистості героїнь.

Ключові слова: Софі фон Ля Рош, П'єтро К'ярі, європейський роман, XVIII століття, Семюел Річардсон.

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Сфера наукових зацікавлень: історія європейської культури, культура модерної доби, рококо.

Main research fields: European cultural history, Modern Age culture, Rococo.



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