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Gitta Hammarberg

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Karamzin was the foremost Russian representative of the late eighteenth-century Sentimentalist movement. In this study, Gitta Hammarberg makes use of recent advances in literary theory (especially those based on the work of Bakhtin and Voloshinov) in order to develop a new theory of Sentimentalist literature, which she applies to Karamzin's prose fiction.

Professor Hammarberg situates Sentimentalism in its historical context, as a reflection of contemporary shifts in world view, a reaction against the Neoclassicist view of literature, and a vehicle for legitimizing prose fiction. She stresses the importance of the role of the author-reader in the structure of Sentimentalist texts, and relates this to the style and genres of these works. Through close readings of a representative selection of Karamzin's prose fiction, including works previously disregarded as trivial or frivolous, she shows the range of Sentimentalist fiction, its place in literary evolution, and ways in which it anticipates the Romantic movement and the modern Russian novel.

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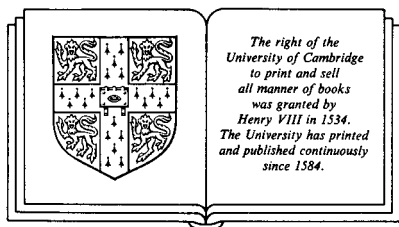
Frontmatter

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Contents

<i>Preface and acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Notes on the text</i>	xii
1 The literary and intellectual context	1
2 Theory of Sentimentalism	15
A Bakhtinian theory of narrator	15
Typology of verbal features marking narrator/narratee	26
3 The literary model: the idyll	44
Karamzin's early Sentimentalist idylls of vicarious experience	51
Karamzin's early Sentimentalist idylls of personal experience	65
4 The extra-literary model: salon trifles	93
The dedication	101
The compliment	107
The game	112
The anecdote	121
5 Serious Sentimental tales: narrator as narratee	128
Complete fragments	132
Incomplete fragments	167

Cambridge University Press

0521383102 - From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose

Gitta Hammarberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	Contents	
6	Humorous Sentimental tales: narrator as parodist	203
	A humorous Sentimental fairy tale	207
	A humorous Sentimental historical tale	221
	A humorous Sentimental confession	240
	A Sentimental novel	251
	<i>Notes</i>	274
	<i>Bibliography</i>	310
	<i>Index</i>	324

Cambridge University Press

0521383102 - From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose

Gitta Hammarberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface and acknowledgments

Numerous studies have been devoted to the major Russian literary movements: Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Realism, Symbolism, Futurism, Socialist Realism, and so on. Russian Sentimentalism as a literary movement, chronologically following Neoclassicism and preceding Romanticism (and sometimes referred to as Preromanticism), spanning roughly the last quarter of the eighteenth century, has generated surprisingly few monograph length studies and none in English. Furthermore, the existing studies tend to focus on Sentimentalist poetry rather than prose. This is all the more surprising, given the crucial role this movement played in literary (and linguistic) evolution and in legitimizing prose fiction as a viable literary concern. Modern Russian prose fiction was indeed born during the second half of the eighteenth century, and Sentimentalist prose is intimately tied to the roots of the modern Russian novel. The present study aims to examine these roots by outlining a theory of Sentimentalism with an emphasis on prose, using modern theoretical concepts introduced by M. M. Bakhtin and V. N. Voloshinov, and further developed by other scholars.

The main part of this study is devoted to close readings of the short prose fiction of N. M. Karamzin, applying the theoretical principles developed. Karamzin, as the major representative of Russian Sentimentalism, has fared better as an object of study than the movement he represents. He has been widely studied as a writer, historian, journalist, political thinker, and linguistic innovator, reflecting the enormous influence he exerted in numerous areas of Russian intellectual history. Nevertheless, the lack of a modern, adequately annotated scholarly edition of Karamzin's complete works (such as the Academy editions of most other writers of his stature) is indicative of the comparative neglect of this major writer. Although 'Poor Liza' is still a staple on Soviet and Western course syllabi, and some of Karamzin's major works, such as *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, have received due attention, many

Cambridge University Press

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Gitta Hammarberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

of Karamzin's lesser works have rarely been studied and remain tucked away in inaccessible eighteenth-century journals. My concentration on short fiction and lesser works is partly theoretically motivated by the fact that precisely the so-called 'small form' (*malaia forma*), from prose idylls to all sorts of trifles (which will be closer defined in the course of this study), was tremendously influential and is arguably most representative of Sentimentalist prose. Partly I have selected short works for the methodological reason that close readings of long works would contribute few new insights about Sentimentalism or about Karamzin's prose that are not revealed in the readings of the short works. The Sentimentalist principles are the same regardless of length. Thus his *Letters of a Russian Traveller* will only receive peripheral attention and his twelve volume *History of the Russian State* is excluded from my analysis, although I believe that both works could fruitfully be discussed within my theoretical framework. My aim of presenting a representative selection rather than achieving completeness is also motivated by the fact that Sentimentalism as a literary movement is much more flexible than it has traditionally been given credit for. The lachrymose and narcissistic aspects of the movement have in general been emphasized to the neglect of its humorous, comic, parodic, and even frivolous aspects. Lachrymosity and narcissism, which certainly characterize a significant part of Sentimentalist fiction, are perhaps the main reasons both for the rapid demise of the movement and the subsequent disregard of, and even distaste for, Sentimentalism. The humorous and frivolous Sternian aspects of the movement will be investigated, not only to set the Sentimentalist picture straight, but also because they are crucial for understanding the origins of the so-called Gogol'ian strain of Russian literature. Karamzin played a more significant role in this continuity than has hitherto been realized.

The impetus for my study came from a reading of Karamzin's last work of prose fiction, *A Knight of Our Time*, in an eighteenth-century seminar at the University of Michigan. This made me realize that there was more to Sentimentalism than tears, sighs, and poor Liza. During several years, I studied Karamzin and Russian Sentimentalism in tandem with various twentieth-century theories of narration, supported by generous grants from the Horace Rackham School of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan. This resulted in my 1982 Ph. D. dissertation on Karamzin and

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Gitta Hammarberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Sentimentalism. Subsequent research was supported by the Bush Foundation and the Summer Research Laboratory on Russia and Eastern Europe at the University of Illinois. A Joyce Foundation Junior Faculty grant supported my 1988 sabbatical leave from Macalester College which allowed me to finish this book. I am most grateful to these institutions for their support.

I thank my teachers, colleagues, and students at the University of Michigan and Macalester College, who have encouraged me, stimulated me, argued with me, distracted me, or in other ways made this book possible. In particular, I wish to thank Ellis Dye, Caryl Emerson, and Peter Weisensel for their careful readings and constructive criticism of the manuscript. The Study Group on Eighteenth-century Russia is gratefully acknowledged as the first public forum for airing some of my ideas on Sentimentalism. Among its members, my special thanks go to Anthony Cross for continued intellectual stimulation. For domestic as well as intellectual support and heroic introductions to several word processing systems, I thank Robert Hammarberg. My greatest debt of gratitude goes to I. R. Titunik, whose high standards of academic excellence and continued personal support have challenged and sustained me for over a decade. He introduced me to Voloshinov and Bakhtin well before their works came into vogue in the US, and he made me realize that frivolity and humor were, and are, distinct positive values in Russian literature as in American academia. To him I dedicate this book.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Notes on the text

Method of citation. The full references to works cited occur in the Bibliography section at the end of this study, and references in the Notes follow the traditional author–title system. A special citation code is used for Karamzin's works, and the full reference, preceded by the citation code can be found in a separate section of the Bibliography.

Special orthography and punctuation are important aspects of Sentimentalist expression. Therefore the original orthography and punctuation have been retained in quotations of Sentimentalist works throughout this study unless otherwise noted, even in translated material where the original Russian punctuation might stretch the rules for English. My commentary and punctuation are enclosed within square brackets and my emphasis within quotations is noted. Thus, e.g., ellipsis dots or dashes, unless placed within square brackets, are original.

Transliteration. For the transliteration of Russian, the Library of Congress system (without diacritics) has been used consistently throughout this study. Old orthography and spelling have been standardized according to the principles established in the *Trudy otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*.

Translation. All translations are my own. In as far as possible I have used first editions of Karamzin's works of prose fiction, in order to reflect the original Sentimentalist style, which in many cases was toned down or in other ways altered in subsequent editions. When this has not been possible, I have substituted other editions, close to the first editions.

Copyright. Permission has been granted to incorporate versions of my previously published articles into the present study, as follows: Chapter 3 incorporates a version of 'Karamzin's "Progulka"' as

Cambridge University Press

0521383102 - From the Idyll to the Novel: Karamzin's Sentimentalist Prose

Gitta Hammarberg

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Notes on the text

xiii

Sentimentalist Manifesto', *Russian Literature*, 26 (1989), 249–66; Chapter 5 incorporates a version of 'Poor Liza, Poor Èrast, Lucky Narrator', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 31, 3 (Fall 1987), 305–21; Chapter 6 incorporates versions of 'Eighteenth Century Narrative Variations on Frol Skobeev', *Slavic Review*, 46, 3/4 (Fall/Winter 1987), 529–39; and 'Metafiction in Russian 18th Century Prose: Karamzin's *Rycar' našego vremeni* or *Novyi Akteon, vnuk Kadma i Garmonii*', *Scando-Slavica*, 27 (1981), 27–46.