

GEORGE SAND'S RECEPTION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The texts published in this issue of our journal are the outcome of the conference *The Sun and Her Planets. Around George Sand's Reception in Central and Eastern Europe*, held at the Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences [IBL PAN] in Warsaw from 20th to 22nd October 2021.¹

The contributing scholars, including nine foreign—from the United States, Switzerland, France, Russia, Slovenia, Romania, and Japan—delivered a total of twenty-eight papers. The special guests included Professor Isabelle Hoog Naginski of the Tufts University, Massachusetts, the author of the important monographs *George Sand. Writing for Her Life* (New Brunswick, 1991) and *George Sand mythographe* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2007), organiser of conferences on George Sand, founder of the journal *George Sand Studies*², intensively involved in the work on the critical edition of Sand's *Oeuvres complètes* with the Honoré Champion publishers³; Professor Françoise Genevray (l'Université Jean-Moulin—Lyon III); Professor Olga Kafanova (St. Petersburg Institute of Business and Innovation), an expert on Russian reception of Sand, author of, *inter alia*, *George Sand et ses contemporains russes. Audience, échos, réécritures* (Paris, 2000) and *George Sand i ruskaia literatura XIX veka. 1860-1830. Mify i realnost'* (Tomsk, 1998); Professor Regina Bochenek-Franczakowa (Jagiellonian University, Krakow), Polish Romanist and expert on Sand, author of the first monograph on Polish reception of this writer—*Présences de George Sand en Pologne* (Frankfurt am Main, 2017); and, Corinne Fournier Kiss, PhD (University of Bern), Swiss Romanist and Slavist, author of the second study on Polish reception of Sand—*Germaine de Staël et George Sand en dialogue avec leurs consoeurs polonaises* (Cler-

¹ For more on the conference (organisers, contributors, abstracts, programme (incl. accompanying events), sponsors), see www.georgesand.ibl.waw.pl (accessed 2023-09-09).

² The annual has been published since the early 1980s.

³ Edited by Béatrice Didier; published in a series of volumes since 2008.

mont-Ferrand, 2020), edited in 2021 as *Literatura, pleć i naród w XIX wieku. Germaine de Staël i George Sand w dialogu ze swymi polskimi siostrami*, in the series “Lupa Obscura”, by the IBL PAN.⁴ The previous issue of *Wiek XIX* published two reviews of her studies.⁵ (Ms. Fournier Kiss co-organised the conference in question.)

Yet another book on the reception of Sand came out in 2022, as part of the said series—namely, Katarzyna Nadana-Sokołowska’s *George Sand – polskie spojrzenia*. The intensified interest in the French novelist in Poland⁶ is an expectable consequence of the phenomenon observable elsewhere, particularly in France or the U.S. The output of the intensively developing modern Polish Sandian studies (to which R. Bochenek-Franczakowa has also contributed, though most of her texts have been published in French), successfully reconsidering the legacy stereotypes and altering the perception of the French writer’s work and biography, has long been worth noticing as a context for studies on Polish nineteenth-century literature and culture.

Modern research methodologies, including the feminist criticism (quite diverse in itself) and *men or queer studies* derived from it, postcolonial studies and ecocriticism have offered the tools with which Sand’s output—extensive, formally and thematically diverse as it is—could be approached in variety of hitherto-unsuspected ways, re-encouraging the study of these works with use of more traditional narratological, imagological, genological, and poetological instruments, along with those related to intertextuality or history of ideas. A dedicated area of scholarship focuses on Sand’s extensive autobiographic output. All these have given results which prevent Sand’s oeuvre from being ignored. The conference delegates also sought to situate these considerations in a regional context, thus following up the attempts comprised in the studies such as *George Sand lue à l’étranger. Recherches nouvelles 3* (Amsterdam, 1995); *George Sand: la réception hors de France au XIXe siècle* (Tübingen, 2003), and *Le chantier de George Sand*.

⁴ Translated by Barbara Głowacka.

⁵ Penned by Małgorzata Litwinowicz and Katarzyna Nadana-Sokołowska, *Wiek XIX*, XV (LVII) 2022, p. 356–368.

⁶ Worth mentioning in this context are the recent articles in which Sandian threads are strongly highlighted, cf. I Puchalska, “Kraśiński i George Sand”, in *Wokół Kraśińskiego*, ed. M. Sokalska, Kraków 2012; A. Paja, “Puszka Pandory, czyli czego obawiali się dziewiętnastowieczni publicyści piszący o czytelnictwie kobiet” in *Zalecenia i przestrogi lekturowe (XVI–XX wiek)*, ed. A. Bajor, M. Jarczykowska, Katowice 2012; M. Rudkowska, “Alegoria i namiętności. Kartka z dziejów krytyki literackiej w XIX wieku,” *Prace Filologiczne. Literaturoznawstwo* 2016, no. 6 (9).

George Sand et l'étranger (Debrecen, 1993), containing, *inter alia*, articles on Sand's reception in the Czech Republic, Romania, or Hungary.

The Warsaw conference coincided in time with the finals of the 18th Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition. This incidentally concurrent celebration of the two once-lovers, founded upon their individual artistic achievements, might be viewed as a groundbreaking moment in George Sand's reception in Poland. Re-examining the patriarchal image of Sand as Chopin's *femme fatale*, quite common in this country and almost utterly depreciating her own work, was one of the objectives behind the conference. The texts presented herein demonstrate how unobvious this image is: each nation has, as it were, its own 'George Sand', selecting from it threads of importance for itself. Studies on the Polish reception also testify that her work was present in the nineteenth century in a number of reading circles, arousing strong resonance and quite extreme emotions. As such, Sand's output could serve (even if oftentimes discretely, owing to the aura of moral scandal that surrounded her) as a biographical model or source of literary inspiration for a vast number of Polish (as well as Central European) writers of either sex.

The sequence of the texts published in this issue basically follows the geography. Embarking on this pioneering Polish edition of a monographic Sandian journal, we decided that it should open with essays on Polish reception of George Sand, followed by three texts by our special guests, dedicated to Sand's reception in Russia and, subsequently, by studies on the reception in Central European and other countries. The volume ends with a few attempts at reinterpreting Sand's works or proposing their inapparent comparisons or juxtapositions in novel contexts.

Will this volume exhaust the need for studies of this sort? Or, will it encourage such research in Poland, making scholars aware that George Sand's works are worth revisiting—including in order to identify traces of their diverse appearances in Polish culture, or, to take it as a comparative point-of-reference, enabling to shed a new light on a number of phenomena?

Katarzyna Nadana-Sokołowska
Corinne Fournier Kiss
Monika Rudaś-Grodzka

