

# Water Imagery in George Sand's Work



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Edited by

Françoise Gillebaert  
and Madeleine Vala

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-1579-6

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1579-6

Cover image: Le bord de la Creuse à Gargillesse, promenade habituelle de  
George Sand / River Creuse in Gargillesse, George Sand's customary walk.  
Dessinateur Eugène Grandsire. Lithographie Joliet. Date: 19th century.  
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Artist Eugène Grandsire. Lithograph Joliet.  
<http://www.bn-limousin.fr/items/show/144>

*I dedicate this book to all the people  
who were left without water and power for weeks,  
and even months after Hurricane Maria hit the island  
of Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017.*

*To my mother and father  
For their unconditional support*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the contributors of this volume for their kind patience. Without their continuing participation I could not have completed the present work.

Several course releases granted by the College of Humanities and the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, helped me make this book a reality.

I am especially beholden to the peer reviewers of this volume for their keen observations. Above all, I would like to thank my colleague Madeleine Vala for her meticulous editorial work and helpful suggestions on the manuscript.

Finally, I am most grateful to my long-time friend Jeanne Llewellyn whose unflagging encouragements and decisiveness pulled me out of a state of despondency after Hurricane María hit the island of Puerto Rico. While she provided me with a comfortable and stable home for six weeks away from chaos, I was able to communicate with and reassure both the contributors and Cambridge Scholars Publishing that this project would continue.



## INTRODUCTION

FRANÇOISE GHILLEBAERT

### On Sand and Water

Cet affluent, c'est la Gargilesse,  
Un bijou de torrent jeté dans des roches et dans des ravines  
Où il faut nécessairement aller chercher ses grâces  
et ses beautés avec un peu de peine.  
*Promenades autour d'un village*<sup>1</sup>

Water is a fluid and transparent substance. It is virtually odorless and colorless but bodies of water take their color from the thickness of water, aquatic plants, and the sky that they reflect: turquoise blue in the crystal, clear shallow waters of white sandy beaches; dark blue or seaweed green in deep oceans; multiple shades of grey in stormy weather. Water—fresh, saline, or atmospheric—abounds everywhere on earth and moves continuously from one reservoir to another in the form of rain, streams, rivers, ponds, fountains, springs, lakes, swamps, underground water tables, seas, and oceans. In doing so, water goes through different forms: liquid, solid, and vapor. While water is essentially fluid, more palpable shapes of water are mist, ice, or snowflakes. Water is also manifest in all forms of life on earth: plants, animals, and the human body, particularly in tears. The omnipresence of water in all the elements on earth attests to its importance that Jules

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<sup>1</sup> George Sand, *Promenades autour d'un village*, 108.

Michelet summarizes as, “the most potent and the most elastic of all forms.”<sup>2</sup>

Water is essential for the maintenance of life and ecosystems. It is also necessary for the world economy; yet like all natural resources on earth, its supply is part of a closed system and therefore potentially exhaustible.<sup>3</sup> A recent guide on the politics of water in the European Union underscores the importance of water in the environment, not only in Europe but globally, thus highlighting the interconnectivity of world economies.<sup>4</sup> Water has multiple uses not only in the process of sustaining life on earth, but also in agriculture, as well as in industry. Indeed, natural disasters such as the one that Puerto Rico recently experienced remind us of the necessity to protect the supply and distribution of water, and also to contain its ferocious strength that can cause floods of biblical magnitude. Thus, water has both a positive and negative effect on human and economic life. Yet, we may wonder if water’s greatest impact lies in life maintenance or if it commands our thoughts more substantially. If so, the common knowledge of water’s power to erase all traces in a purifying process could be discounted by recent research, which suggests that water keeps memories of its molecules, as the French scientist Jacques Benveniste claimed in a

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<sup>2</sup> Jules Michelet, *The Sea*, 333.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Secretary General António Guterres declared at the launch of the *International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2018*: “By 2050 at least one in four people will live in a country where the lack of fresh water will be chronic or recurrent.” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/03/1005671>. Accessed on April 1, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Conesa Alcolea, Mathieu Bousquet. *L'eau et l'Union européenne: un guide sur la politique, sa mise en œuvre et ses instruments*. Plouzané: Ifremer, 2001. In the same vein, the Puerto Rican government updated its plan for water resources in March 2016. <https://aldia.microjuris.com/2016/03/03/drna-presenta-actualizacion-del-plan-integral-de-recursos-de-agua-y-celebracion-de-vistas-publicas/> Consulted on March 28, 2018.

controversial article published in *Nature*.<sup>5</sup> The hypothesis formulated by Benveniste has not yet been proven, although Nobel Prize recipient Luc Montagnier<sup>6</sup> is pursuing his research in the same direction. Whatever the results of such research may be, water attracts the attention of scientists and thinkers alike. Given the polymorphism and polyvalence of water on earth, it is hardly surprising that, as John Gregory Brown writes, “images of water should play such a prominent and recurrent role as a metaphor in literature.”<sup>7</sup> Literature is probably the most flexible mode of communication to express thoughts and feelings by way of literal and figurative speech, tropes, metaphors, and symbols. There are, indeed, as many mentions of water as there are thoughts.

While water can be referred to in a literal sense, most often it is associated with symbols through imagery. Throughout literature, water symbolizes not only birth and renewal, but also death by drowning. Water is deeply connected to people's lives: where they live, and how they relate to or depend on water. Water binds lands and continents, and sends the hero on a journey towards great adventures that promise freedom. The crisp taste of water is refreshing, but the vapor that rises from its surface possesses an eerie and bewitching power. People glean positive emotions from the shimmering surface of water. Dark cloudy water, however, represents bad fortune. The enchanting musicality of water exalts the

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<sup>5</sup> Davenas E., *et al. Nature*, 333. 816-818 (30 juin 1988).

<https://www.nature.com/articles/333816a0>.

<sup>6</sup> Professor Luc Montagnier received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or (*sic*) Medicine in 2008 for the discovery of the retrovirus that causes AIDS.

<sup>7</sup> John Gregory Brown “Literature and Water” in *H2O The Mystery, Art, and Science of Water*. Seminar. A Sweet Briar College Learning Resource\_ Spring Semester 1999.

<http://witcombe.sbc.edu/water/index.html>. Accessed on March 18, 2018.

beholder's spirit, whereas the wretched looks for comfort in the mystery of its daunting depths.

Water surrounds us in multifarious ways that are expressed in mythology, religion, music, the sciences, art, film, and anthropology. The celebration of water is quite common in world literature and the arts. Although water cannot be shaped by human hands, artists represent water in many ways. Famous musical pieces for the piano, such as Franz Liszt's *Au bord d'une source* (1855), *Les Jeux d'eau à la villa d'Este* (1883), Maurice Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* (1901), or Debussy's *La mer* (1905), recreate the crystalline, fluid sound of water. Indeed, Ravel wrote that his piece was inspired "du bruit de l'eau et des sons musicaux que font entendre les jets d'eau, les cascades et les ruisseaux."<sup>8</sup> In the same vein, poetry, by the virtue of its concise structure, quickly conveys an abundance of images that evoke the appearance and the movement of water, rapid or tranquil. The sight of water creates a wide array of emotions, exemplified by poems about water, including Arthur Rimbaud's "Le Bateau ivre" (1883), Stéphane Mallarmé's "Brise marine" (1893), Robert Frost's "Going for water" (1915), and Pablo Neruda's "Agua sexual" (1936)<sup>9</sup> to name a few. The movement of water takes expression as well in drawings, the most famous example being Hokusai's woodprint *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1831) in which the contour lines and the detailed tips of the wave shaped as claws illustrate the forceful power of water. Indeed, the mystery of the ocean's depths induces fear in humans, just as the expanse of water that stretches to infinity on the horizon creates anxiety about the unknown.

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<sup>8</sup> Christine Souillard, *Ravel (1875-1937)*. "Pour la musique," 90. Trans. "by the sound of water and musical notes that are produced by fountains, cascades and streams."

<sup>9</sup> Trans. "The Drunken boat," "Sea breeze," and "Sexual water," respectively.



The historian Jules Michelet certainly succeeded in rendering the mystery of daunting waters in his pioneering essay *The Sea* (1861), but Michelet also points out that starting in the Middle Ages, and especially in the eighteenth century, people began to see the benefit of sea water on health. Michelet argues for the benefits of sea water because of the strong health of people who live by the seashore. Sea water is beneficial to health, he underscores, when the body is given time to acclimatize to its effects:

More and more will Medicine lie in Emigration.<sup>10</sup> But it must be an Emigration of foresight, not one of those mad-cap, rapid and most mischievous journeys in which the patient rushes from one extreme climate to another but prudently calculated to the obtaining of those vivifying aids which nature everywhere holds in store for those who know how to profit by them.<sup>11</sup>

Michelet further shows how medicine started to popularize bath therapies and spas for health, a fashion that picked up in Europe with Eugénie de Montijo's penchant for sea bathing.<sup>13</sup>

As varied as the representations of water may be, it is the artist's interpretation and ways of expression that make his or her style noteworthy, as the articles on water imagery in George Sand's work highlight. Water features in Sand's novels, poetry, and paintings in all the forms mentioned earlier.<sup>14</sup> By including water imagery in her work, George

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<sup>10</sup> Michelet, 340. "Emigration" must be understood here as displacement but not for economic or political reasons as in today's acceptance of the word.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.,. The citation respects capitalization and spelling as it is printed in the original.

<sup>13</sup> Eugénie de Montijo was the spouse of Napoleon III. The couple owned a villa in Biarritz, France, where Eugénie enjoyed bathing in the ocean.

<sup>14</sup> Sand's artistic career is multifold. She began by painting Spa boxes before contributing articles to *Le Figaro* and launching her career as a novelist with *Indiana* (1832). With the help of Auguste Charpentier, she painted a fan that represents her closest friends gathered by a stream

Sand describes her reality and the quintessential presence of water in her surroundings. Water as part of the planet's life is so central to Sand's ethics that she was delighted to find it echoed in Michelet's *The Sea*.<sup>15</sup> Sand celebrates water most often in the Berry region where she grew up and settled, as well as in the waterways that meander through Venice and inspired so many of her novels and plays.<sup>16</sup> Max Bédéneau points out that the first element that George Sand takes up in nature is water: "Comme éléments de cette nature, elle retient d'abord l'eau, tant les ruisseaux multiples qui abondent dans la vallée de l'Indre que les mares et marais au milieu des bois et des landes."<sup>17</sup>

However, detailed description of landscapes in Sand's work are not subservient to the water narrative. Indeed, topography disappears behind imagery in such a way that water imagery may be applied to any landscape or country. Unfettered by the constraints of the realist novel,<sup>18</sup> Sand invents sites for her plots, as, for example, the devil's pool that provided the title for her famous rustic novel, *La mare au*

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(1838). She wrote a few poems of her own and she is credited with Alfred de Musset's "Chatterton" that he dictated to her and in which tears are compared to an ocean: "Sachez que les larmes humaines / Ressemblent en grandeur aux flots de l'Océan." Translation: "Know that human tears/ Resemble ocean waters by their size," 683.

<sup>15</sup> Sand admired Jules Michelet's recently published essay *The Sea*, as her letter to him attests. *Correspondance*, 16: 242.

<sup>16</sup> Annarosa Poli was the first Sandian researcher to underpin the influence of Italy or *la matière italienne* in George Sand's work following Sand's stay in Venice with Alfred de Musset (January-March 1834). *L'Italie dans la vie et l'œuvre de George Sand*.

<sup>17</sup> Max Bédéneau, "Le pays sage de George Sand," 7. Norois. Trans. "Among the elements of this nature, she describes first water, multiple streams that are plentiful in the Indre valley as well as ponds and swamps in the middle of forests and moors."

<sup>18</sup> George Sand is a romantic author, also called idealist, who never adhered to the realist movement.

*diable* (*The Devil's Pool*), which the local administration made official by inscribing the site on the land registry in 1987.<sup>19</sup> Sand has written abundantly about the role of water in shaping the local landscape from which she and her writings grew; the childhood landscape around La Châtre and Nohant,<sup>20</sup> with their streams and ponds, made her the author she became:

La ville, jetée en pente, ... et des rues étroites, qui serpentent entre des rangées de pignons inégaux ... , vont appuyer le flanc de l'antique cité à un ravin coupé à pic, au fond duquel l'Indre dessine ses frais méandres dans un paysage étroit mais ravissant.<sup>21</sup>

This passage of *Histoire de ma vie* follows a sermon against the city dwellers of La Châtre that Sand has just admonished for neglecting to keep their town and their homes tidy: “Ô mes chers compatriotes! Pourquoi êtes-vous si malpropres?”<sup>22</sup> Sand rants about the foul smell emanating from the homes of people who let waste accumulate in the streets, thus spoiling the pure air of the surrounding nature otherwise charged with natural fragrance. She blames the town authorities for ignoring the law: “Aucune observation des règlements de la plus simple police ne préoccupe apparemment les fonctionnaires municipaux.”<sup>23</sup> Sand also complained about filth and the destruction of nature in Tamaris and nearby towns: “Ces hommes sans chemise

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<sup>19</sup> Bédéneau, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Sand's property is in Nohant. La Châtre is a nearby town.

<sup>21</sup> George Sand, *Œuvres autobiographiques, Histoire de ma vie*, 1: 160-161. Trans. “The town, flung on a slope, ... and narrow streets, that wind in between rows of uneven facades ... make the side of the antique city rest against an abrupt ravine at the bottom of which the River Indre's cool water meanders around a narrow but ravishing landscape.”

<sup>22</sup> *Œuvres autobiographiques*, 1: 158. Trans. “Dear compatriots! Why are you so dirty?”

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:160. Trans. “Town hall officers do not seem to bother to respect the rules and regulations of the simplest policy.”

doivent être pleins de vermine.”/ “Oui, ils défrichent, ..., ils coupent les arbres,..., ils abîment la solitude.”<sup>24</sup> The fact of the matter is that before 1890, chiefs of state in France, or elsewhere in Europe, had not yet implemented a systematic policy that regulated the distribution of water or that differentiated between drinking water and water for other uses, explains Jean-Pierre Goubert.<sup>25</sup> The cleanliness of small towns was left to the discretion of its people and the availability of nearby sources of water. This is what Sand implies when she points out the manageability of a small town like La Châtre versus larger cities:<sup>26</sup>

Il est bien difficile d'assainir et d'entretenir propres des cités comme Lyon et Marseille; mais La Châtre! ... Vraiment la dépravation de l'odorat, le cynisme de la vue, inhérentes à la population des petites villes de l'intérieur, sont des vices que n'excuse nulle part la misère, et qu'ici la pauvreté ne peut pas même expliquer, puisque cette population est aisée ... .<sup>27</sup>

Sand stresses that neither poverty nor the lack of water supply can account for the smelly town of La Châtre, especially since another site called *Les Couperies*, “un terrain

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<sup>24</sup> Sand spent several months in Tamaris, Southern France, where she recovered from typhoid fever. *Le voyage dit du Midi, Février 1861-Mai 1861*, 151/152. Trans. “These men wearing a robe must be infested with vermin”/“Yes, they clear land, ... , they cut down trees, ... , they spoil solitude.”

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Pierre Goubert, “L'eau et l'expertise sanitaire dans la France du XIXe siècle,” 76.

<sup>26</sup> Napoleon III put Baron Haussmann in charge of implementing a drinking water and waste water system for Paris in 1860.

<sup>27</sup> *Œuvres autobiographiques* 1: 159-160. Trans. “It is quite difficult to sanitize and maintain the cleanliness of large cities like Lyon and Marseilles; but La Châtre! ... Truly the corruption of the sense of smell, the cynicism of eyesight, inherent to the population of small country towns, are vices that misery can nowhere excuse, and that poverty cannot even explain here, since this population is well-to-do....”

miné par les eaux,”<sup>28</sup> well attests that plenty of water is available to sanitize the town. Sand's digression about sanitation in a text intended to revive the memory of her deceased father gives her the opportunity to praise the tidiness of the peasant from the Berry region: “Oui, la propreté est la dignité du pauvre, c'est par elle qu'il se montre supérieur à sa destinée ... .”<sup>29</sup> There are numerous examples of country waifs that take good care of themselves in Sand's writings. The most striking example is certainly the transformation of Fanchon, heroine of *La petite fadette*, from a dirty country girl into a pretty young woman who cleared up her skin by rubbing her face and hands with herbs and flowers. This physical transformation gains her the love of a rich peasant's son and respect from the village people.

Sand scolds the people of La Châtre in *Histoire de ma vie* because she truly loves her hometown and wants the best for it. She loves it because her father, whom she barely knew,<sup>30</sup> had friends in that town. His friends' children, in turn, became Sand's friends: “J'ai décrit La Châtre, je l'ai sermonnée, parce qu'au fond je l'aime, et je l'aime parce que mon père y eut des amis dont les enfants sont mes amis.”<sup>31</sup> This passage illustrates her relationship with her father's land and a connection with her ancestry through water imagery. Through a powerful synecdoche Sand shows the close relationship of city dwellers and countrymen with their town and nature. The poor countrymen take good care of their homes set in the heart of a lavish land, whereas the city dwellers have lost

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 1: 161. Trans. “A site well supplied with water.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1: 160. Trans. “Yes, tidiness is the dignity of the poor man, through which he shows his superiority to his destiny.”

<sup>30</sup> Sand's father died in a horseback riding accident when she was four years old.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 1: 161. Trans. “I described La Châtre, I chastised it, because deep down inside of me I love it, and I love it because my father had friends whose children are my friends.”

touch with nature and its resources that would otherwise make their lives healthy. Moreover, by linking the beauty of her native land with the narrative about her father, Sand reconnects with her ancestry's unknown past on the spear side of her family. Sand further identifies with her beloved father not only through writing and acting in her own plays—just like her father who acted in improvised comedies with his *berrichon*<sup>32</sup> friends—but also by befriending her father's friends.

Water is an everyday presence in Sand's life and work, a key symbol, declares Annarosa Poli,<sup>33</sup> that informs her writing just by its presence, and which is exemplified in her work as a whole but particularly in the accounts of her stay in the village of Gargillesse. Gargillesse is nested in the Creuse country within the Berry region in Central France. Sand marvels at the beauty of the region and compares this paradise to a miniature Switzerland; so deep and hilly is the canyon in which runs a stream, namely the river Creuse. Gargillesse enjoys a moist and warm microclimate that permits an abundance of outdoor activities in the company of Manceau, Sand's secretary and companion. Fishing, hunting, plant picking, and eating freshwater crawfish at the local inn are among Sand's favorite activities when she is not writing. Sand suffered from kidney stones, a condition that required water therapy. To this effect, Manceau bought a small house in the village of Gargillesse, where the two of them made short stays from January 1858 to April 1864.<sup>34</sup> There, Sand continued to work on her literary production, and began a narrative of her visits titled *Promenades autour d'un village* that was first published in 1866. Sand also kept a diary of Gargillesse that

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<sup>32</sup> From the Berry region.

<sup>33</sup> Annarosa Poli. "George Sand et la mythologie de l'eau douce: les lacs italiens," 29.

<sup>34</sup> Sand did not return to Gargillesse after Manceau's death in 1865.

supplements the narrative and gives a candid account of Sand's experience.<sup>35</sup> Water in many forms fills both narratives. Descriptions of rain, moist air, mist, and the river Creuse punctuate Sand's narration of her outdoor activities. Life in Gargillesse consists of walks around the village and drinking fresh spring water: "... je vas (*sic*) plus loin boire à une source délicieuse," she writes in dialect French.<sup>36</sup> Sand does not fail to mention her bathing in the river. Manceau and visitors such as Dumas also enjoyed swimming in the river.<sup>37</sup> She writes to her daughter Solange that the water at Gargillesse is more beneficial to her health than the spa waters of Vichy: "Les eaux auxquelles on m'a envoyée ne sont autres que celles de Gargillesse, dont j'ai, depuis six mois, découvert la propriété extraordinaire, bien plus efficace pour ce genre de maladie que celles de Vichy."<sup>38</sup> In a subsequent letter to her son Maurice she describes the healing effect of water: "Les eaux font leur effet."<sup>39</sup> She reiterates the benefit of Gargillesse spring water in a letter to the theater director Adolphe Lemoine-Montigny, even foreseeing a future marketing of the water: "... eau pure, ... à la propriété curative la plus complète et la plus immédiate ... nous voilà en possession

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<sup>35</sup> Christiane Sand, daughter-in-law of Sand's granddaughter Aurore, published Sand's notes in the form of a diary in the Christian Pirot edition of *Promenades autour d'un village* followed by *Journal de Gargillesse*, 1984.

<sup>36</sup> *Journal de Gargillesse*, 168. Trans. "I am going to drink from a tasty spring farther away."

<sup>37</sup> Dumas the son. The three of them enjoyed swimming in the river Creuse several times during the summer of 1862. *Promenades*, 176-178.

<sup>38</sup> *Journal de Gargillesse*, 148. Trans. "The baths where I have been sent are none other than those of Gargillesse, the extraordinary benefit of which I have been experiencing for six months and which are a lot more beneficial for this kind of ailment than those of Vichy."

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 149. Trans. "The waters take effect."

d'une découverte sérieuse. Sera-t-elle mise à profit, généralement?"<sup>40</sup>

If anything, Gargillesse is the site that confirms Sand's belief that water and nature not only cure ailments but elevate the spirit of the beholder, a relationship that arises from Sand's writing. Indeed, Sand's urge to protect the century-old trees in her park<sup>41</sup> and those in Fontainebleau forest are aspects of Sand's writing that must be read as the first signs of environmental awareness coming from a literary figure, explains Annie K. Smart.<sup>43</sup>

This book collection gathers studies from international scholars who share various perspectives on the representation of water in a wide selection of George Sand's novels, plays, short stories, paintings, and autobiographical writings, including letters and journals. This research exemplifies the interplay of the nurturing role of water with the daunting attraction of murky water, a tension that Sandian characters resolve most often through reverie. The end result of this collection reveals how Sand's relationship to water constructed her identity as a novelist attuned to nature and aware of the importance of the pristine state of both water and nature.

The present research accounts for the polyvalent presence of water in Sand's literary production and expands Sandian research in a variety of aspects related to water imagery. This encompasses life and death imagery, ecocriticism, fluid kinship, socializing around a body of water, misty landscapes

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 151. Trans. "... pure water, ... with the most complete and fast healing properties ... we have got a serious discovery. Will it be put to good use, as a whole?"

<sup>41</sup> *Œuvres autobiographiques*, 1: 749-50.

<sup>43</sup> "Water Worlds: An Ecocritical Approach to "La Reine Coax"," pp. 109-132 in present volume.



in Sand's *dendrites*,<sup>44</sup> and artistic creativity. This scholarly activity evidences the popularity of an author who continues to foment literary research.

Drawing on Gaston Bachelard's premise that the substance of water carries a deep meaning and produces a type of intimacy far different from the one suggested by the "depths" of fire or rock,<sup>45</sup> the articles in this book collection, written both in English and in French by Sandian scholars all over the world (USA, Canada, Europe, and the Caribbean), reflect on water imagery and its symbolism in George Sand's work. Water is associated with suicide in Sand's earlier works, but most often water in Sand's work liberates emotions, and even produces elation; these emotions contribute to the heroine or hero's palingenesis or transformation into artists.

The structure of the book in three sections progresses from a traditional representation of water in life and death to discussions about the impact of water in the formation of relationships. It culminates in the role of water in artistic productivity. The articles in the first section (Abbey Carrico, Angels Santa, Marilyn Mallia, Corinne Fournier Kiss) discuss drowning imagery and water as a source of life or identity growth. The second section (Annie K. Smart, Rachel Corkle, Françoise Ghillebaert, Phillip Griffith) examines characters' relationships with water and nature first from an ecocritical point of view, and then in the formation of social ties. The final section (Emilie Sitzia, Lara Popic, Nancy Ann Watanabe, Nicola Pasqualicchio) addresses the representation of water in Sand's artistic creation from her dendrites to the function of tears and emotions in the creative process.

Water imagery in Sand's work has not generated substantial research despite its frequent representation in her literary

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<sup>44</sup> See Emilie Sitzia's explanation for the use of the word *dendrites* in note 5 p. 213 of this volume.

<sup>45</sup> Bachelard, 12.

production. To this day, apart from a few articles that include discussions about water in Sand's writing,<sup>46</sup> there is no known book publication on water imagery in Sand's work. The topic of a conference proceedings on Sand's flowers and gardens<sup>47</sup> lent itself to the discussion of water imagery, but if some articles touch on the topic, none of them concentrate their research on aquatic elements in Sand's work or thoroughly address Sand's ecology. As Annie K. Smart rightly points out: "Essays by Mary Rice-Defosse and Bernard Hamon in the collection *Fleurs et Jardins dans l'œuvre de George Sand* reference ecocriticism—but most studies in this collection do not examine Sand from an ecocritical perspective."<sup>48</sup> The only known book collection published on water imagery in literature bypassed Sand's abundant contribution to the field.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, it is our belief that the present book collection fills a scholarly void by focusing exclusively on such imagery in a single author's work.

The current interest in water imagery derives from a panel at the Southern Central Modern Language Association's annual conference that took place in Hot Springs, Arkansas

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<sup>46</sup> Kate Bonin, "The Edifying Spectacle of a Drowned Woman: Sympathy and Irony in *Indiana*"; Abbey Carrico, "Decomposition and Re-composition: The Presence and Absence of Drowned Bodies in *Lélia* by George Sand and *L'Éducation sentimentale* by Gustave Flaubert"; Béatrice Didier, "Ophélie dans les Chaînes: Études de quelques thèmes d'*Indiana*"; Yvette Bozon-Scalzitti, "La pierre, l'eau, le sable: l'écriture sandienne dans les *Lettres d'un voyageur*."

<sup>47</sup> Simone Bernard-Griffiths et Marie-Cécile Levet, éd. *Fleurs et jardins dans l'œuvre de George Sand*.

<sup>48</sup> "Water Worlds: An Ecocritical Approach to "La Reine Coax"," p. 127 in present volume.

<sup>49</sup> Michal Piotr Mrozowicki. *In aqua scribis. Le thème de l'eau dans la littérature*, 2005.

(2011)<sup>50</sup> and the worldwide attention given to this precious and natural substance, echoed in the “The Post-2015 Water Thematic Consultation.”<sup>51</sup> This publication seeks to raise awareness about the importance of water by highlighting both its immanence in George Sand's work and Sand's artistic creation and ecological consciousness. Without water nature would vanish, eliminating in turn the inspiration for such a wealth of images in Sand's writing or in Franz Liszt and Maurice Ravel's music.

The merits of this research lie in the contribution to the fields of literature, the arts, and George Sand studies. It provides a theoretical and empirical framework of analysis that may be applied to other writers' work. Moreover, the discussions generated by this publication have the potential to reshape the debate on Sand's ethics by investigating key representations of water not yet analyzed that may lead to more general findings. This project seeks to benefit the scholarly community by bringing together researchers from all over the world who are interested in literature and George Sand studies.

**Edited by Madeleine Vala**

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<sup>50</sup> The theme of a panel organized by this author was water imagery in Sand's work. Two of the panelists are contributors to this volume: Abbey Carrico and Lara Popic.

<sup>51</sup> The precious and natural substance of water is echoed in the “The Post-2015 Water Thematic Consultation” initiated by the United Nations Millennium Summit, 2000. Accessed at <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/es/water> on November 2, 2013. The protection and preservation of water is also central to the environmental politics of the European Union. See *L'eau et l'Union européenne*.

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