

George Sand

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The Language of Instrumental Music in George Sand's *Les Sept Cordes de la lyre*

The shifting landscape of music during the nineteenth century gives rise to the impression of instrumental music as dramatic and expressive. This alteration in musical sensibilities is influenced in part by the changing aesthetic response of the public to music as well as the very perception of music. A transformation takes place not only in the behavior of audiences, which become increasingly silent, but in the perception of music by the listener.

Instrumental music plays a prominent role in Sand's novel *Les Sept Cordes de la lyre*, where she posits the notion that music communicates. This paper explores the concept of a direct link between music and language through a semiotic analysis of music as language in this work. In addition, the influence of music on the structure of her writing is also addressed through an examination of the poetic language of her narrative fiction.

This novel also presents a situation wherein the music of the lyre is characterized as having divine origins and communicates solely to those who have the gift and training to receive it. As such, it is only the heroine Hélène who comprehends the lyre's music. This paper furthermore probes the manner in which Sand's perception of music and the artist, particularly the female artist, affect the structure of her writing. Through a study of the influence of instrumental music as a creative force for the writer's imagination, this paper addresses one of the ways in which nineteenth-century musical sensibilities enter into literary discourse in Sand's novels.

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The Wild *Berrichon* Girl: The Influence of Sydney Owenson Lady Morgan's National Tales in George Sand's Early Regional Novels

During her adolescent sojourn at a Parisian boarding school run by British Augustinian nuns, January 1818-March 1820, the future George Sand likely learned of the popular Irish novels of Sydney Owenson Lady Morgan, who visited Paris August 1818-May 1819 (Suddaby 12), especially her recently translated *Wild Irish Girl* and *Florence McCarthy*.

As the *Ossian*-influenced Morgan infuses her country's natural landscape with a romantic "twilight celticism where melancholic ruins and magic names tell the history of the Gaels" and whose regionalism is nationalist (Rafroidi 151-52), Sand uses the landscape of Berry to evoke druidic magic in her first regional novel, *Jeanne* (1844). To *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) Sand owes the idea that traveling to an isolated rural area is a voyage back to the origins of national identity and in *Jeanne* inscribes the *berrichon* peasants as exotic, primitive peoples, less civilized than urban Frenchmen. Sand is indebted to Morgan's depiction of a young woman as the repository of ancient lore and to her attempts to imitate peasant speech in her novels.

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Florence McCarthy (1818) inspired Sand's plot of an educated heroine who assumes her rightful place as leader of the peasants around her rural estate in *Le Meunier d'Angibault* (1845). As Morgan in her "national tales" attempts to interpret and reconcile the Protestant and Catholic populations of Ireland (Rafroidi 151), using the marriage plot to create an Anglo-Irish identity, in her regional novels Sand uses marriage across classes to create a national French identity.

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Reproduction and Performance in George Sand's *Teverino*

In George Sand's *Teverino* (1846), what begins as a country outing turns into a brief trip to Italy during which two couples, the aristocratic Léonce and Sabina and the orphans Madeleine and Teverino, momentarily change places. The encounter transforms the relationship between Léonce and Sabina, who become lovers, while also overturning Sabina's disdain for the popular classes. But Sand's text also plays off opposing notions of artistic production. Léonce and Teverino first meet when the latter sheds his ragged clothing to bathe in a lake. An unobserved observer, Léonce's first reaction is to sketch the beautiful body in its beautiful surroundings, but he changes his mind: "Oui, les grands maîtres de la peinture eussent été seuls dignes de reproduire ce que moi j'ai surpris et comme dérobé à la bienveillance du hasard. C'est bien assez pour moi, qui ne saurais manier un pinceau, de le voir, de le sentir et de le graver dans ma mémoire." (104) His words suggest not only his own limitations as an artist but also the limitations of an aesthetic founded in the belief that it is possible – or desirable – to copy directly from nature. Sand's use of the verb "reproduire," moreover, may well tie such a view to photography and mechanical reproduction, as well as to its more recent usage in social theory to denote the role of cultural artifacts and institutions in affirming and perpetuating the status quo. While it seems that Voltaire was the first to use the verb in the sense of imitation or copying, in the 1840s it acquired the additional meanings of the production of contraband copies and of multiplying versions of a work by mechanical means. Robert cites Balzac (*La cousine Bette, L'envers de l'histoire contemporaine*) as an innovator in the use of the word in both senses. Sand's use in *Teverino* is at least equally innovative, for the her text plays off simple reproduction against the character Teverino's preference for "la ligne brisée et la course à tire-d'aile" (236) and, even more significantly, his ability to perform a variety of roles while refusing to identify with any of them.

Teverino is a dramatic novel that reflects self-consciously on the implications of the genres of the novel and the theater. Several of the characters are seen reading a copy of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, while others, the priest and the young orphan Madeleine, hark back to figures in the German text. The plot of the novel, which transports them to Italy for twenty-four hours, also seems to parody Goethe's famous *Italian Journey*. But what is at stake in *Teverino* is the transformation, rather than imitation, of aesthetic models. It is a transformation that has more in common with dramatic works, such as Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, than with the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, according to which a single protagonist finds his place in a patriarchal social order, or even that of the realist novel, which purports to represent – and may well help to perpetuate – the status quo.

Reference:

George Sand. *Teverino. Roman*. Ed. Martine Reid. Actes Sud/Babel, 2003.