

Ghillebaert on Powell and Prasad, eds. (2016)

Powell, David A., and Pratima Prasad, editors. *Approaches to Teaching Sand's Indiana*. The Modern Language Association of America, Approaches to Teaching World Literature, 2016, pp. 219, ISBN 978-1-60329-210-8

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The latest volume of the MLA's *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series devoted to George Sand's famous novel *Indiana* sparks new discussions on femininity, masculinity, Romanticism, French law, colonialism, and race. Published in 1832, *Indiana* elevated George Sand to the rank of a consummate novelist alongside Hugo, Stendhal, and Balzac. It is an engaging and captivating novel that reads well in upper-level French classes as Margaret Waller explains in sharing her experience in the volume. It is also well-fitted for undergraduate history courses.

The volume is divided into two parts, the first of which offers an overview of French editions of the novel and several English translations. A list of background readings helps contextualize the plot within the historical period in which the novel is set (1814–30), particularly with regard to family laws and colonization. The section covering Sand's place in literary history points out in particular Henry James's anthology of French literature and modern biographies that underscore Sand's contribution to feminist and gender studies. A plethora of biographic and literary information on Sand is also available to the greater public via multimedia resources thanks to independently created and professional web pages, a web site created by the French Ministry of Culture (2004), and an abundant filmic production including a BBC miniseries (*Notorious Woman*). Most attractive of these is electronic access to the Raphael translation and the Richards and Ives editions (Françoise Massardier-Kenney).

This short first part concludes with an in-depth incursion into the substantial critical body of publications on *Indiana*, remarkable for the broad range of different theoretical lenses that have been applied to it. The second part of the volume features twenty-one articles offering a wealth of historical, literary, and stylistic teaching approaches supported with examples of types of assignments. The first six articles adopt a historical and geographical approach that helps situate sites, events, and characters in the novel in and around the period that extended from the 1789 Revolution and the Empire to the Bourbon Restoration and the July revolution (Lauren Pinzka). Google maps suggested by Margaret E. McColley and Patrick Bray offer a visual representation of specific points of interest and allow students to follow Indiana's movements (Bray).

Readings of colonial history, evoked in many ways through the use of the term "Creole," and its links to geographical location, slavery, and the abolitionist movement, encourage students to link the theme of Creole recognition and misrecognition to female enslavement in marriage and false liberties granted to French colonial subjects (Carolyn Vellenga Berman, McColley). As a final touch to this section, James Smith Allen and Peter Dayan contend that Sand moves away from historicity and Romanticism. Guided by Allen's analysis of historicity, students will follow the dismantlement of pre-revolutionary French society and be exposed to a new social order resulting from the nascent industrial revolution.

The second section invites discussion on race, ethnicity, class, political stance, and the unwillingness to discuss color and social status differences in Sand's time (Doris Kadish). With the help of similar texts that discuss race, contemporary lithographs, and a reading of the Code Noir, readers are presented with a more complex and critical view of racial identity. Blurring race and color (Kadish) versus racial identification through clothing (Véronique Machelidon) in two masquerade scenes in *Indiana*'s bedchamber provides an enlightening picture of Sand's understanding of race in French colonized territories, though secondary sources on this topic are not referenced as well as they should have been. Molly Krueger Enz completes this discussion of race with a portrait of white male dominance dictated by the Napoleonic Code and explains the intersections of race and gender in the novel through the trope of the tragic mulatta found in the representation of *Indiana* enslaved by marriage.

The analysis of character types and homosocial relationships in the next set of four articles inflects narrative form in the novel through the application of Hippocrates's theory of the four humors (Isabelle Hoog Naginski), the *vitalist* portrait of Ralph (Charles Stivale), competing homosocial bonds that reflect the fall and rise of the first Empire and Monarchy, and Ralph's Republicanism (Aimée Boutin, Nigel Harkness). These articles point out the construction of masculinity as a vital force, particularly with the multiplicity of characters in Ralph's mutating portrait. In addition, Harkness highlights the fracturing of the authorial persona hidden behind a metadiegetic narrator, a technique used by Sand to protect her authorial identity.

Katherine Bonin notes the importance of contextualizing *Indiana* with regard to other novelists who engaged with the tradition

of the literary island and inspired Sand's novel. In the same vein, Lynn Penrod provides fascinating insights into the dynamics of female to male relationships in regard to the Napoleonic Code, which shaped the society in which Sand grew up, and the unwritten code of honor enforced by public law courts.

The final section guides teachers and students through specific and customary teaching techniques in literature such as textual portraiture in the opening scene of the novel (Christopher Bains). Several other articles go beyond the traditional interpretation of the novel as a Romantic story with a return to a realist situation in the conclusion. In this respect, John T. Booker looks at the basic features of melodrama in *Indiana* featuring a knowledgeable character (Ralph) ready to help the innocent heroine (Indiana) victimized by a villain (Raymon). Allan H. Pasco concentrates on Sand's technical innovation associated with realist writings and exemplified in the narrative gap that occurs between the fourth part and the conclusion. Last but not least, in the process of deconstructing *Indiana* as an exclusively Romantic novel, Shira Malkin identifies theatrical aspects in the novel: the division into four chapters that make it read like a four-act drama; monologues; and repeated *coups de théâtre* in the double scenes of substitution of identities in Indiana's bedchamber.

To conclude, *Approaches to Teaching Sand's Indiana* is more than welcome among Sandian and literary scholars at large. It offers a wide spectrum of literary criticism and teaching approaches for a novel that offers an accurate portrait of the situation of women in nineteenth-century French patriarchal society.

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