

Magdalena Kowalska

George Sand and Louise Ackermann

The analysis of "two lives", or actually two life narratives: *Histoire de ma vie* by George Sand and *Ma vie* by Louise Ackermann (1813-1890), may bring some ideas and present future directions in the research concerning the content of the autobiographical message of women writers in the 19th century and its shape. The themes and properties that appear in both accounts seem interesting, despite the obvious differences in the situation of the authors, as well as the huge differences related to their texts. Ackermann is first and foremost a poet who makes her debut after the age of 40, and beyond the 32 years of her life, during her childhood and adolescence, partially marked by stays in metropolises such as Paris and Berlin, she spends the rest in a hideaway in Nice created by herself: "my life is summed up in a few words: a numb and sad childhood, youth that was also like that, two short years of a happy relationship and twenty-four of voluntary loneliness. " She was married once and her writings do not contain traces of another love relationship. She never felt the need of faith in a religious sense. The text of *Ma vie* is just 20 pages of a compact narrative. Ackermann was not as prolific writer as Sand - her output is only one volume of *contes*, two volumes of poetry, a book of reflections and a short life narrative.

The story begins: Je suis née ... In Sand's text, these words are uttered after an extensive introduction, and even so, the plot that has just begun breaks off in the next sentence in order to provide the true facts about her ancestors. Ackermann does not have to prove the wrongness of certain judgments about her so often (there were not many of them) – she does it only once, it is only because of the nature of her poetry and alleged inspirations, and she answers only at one point to the questions that arose after her poetry was published in print: "Why so late? Why so little?" Ackermann starts directly by stating the time and place of her birth.

Childhood The motive of transforming into the animal being: for Sand it is the figure of a bird (human being-bird is an artist), for Ackermann - a centipede. In both cases, these thoughts are related to the period of childhood, with a specific place: a garden and the company of people: in the case of Sand it is a company conducive and supportive to the development of the mother, and in Ackermann's case, it is an attempt to escape from contact with the unfavorable human environment, to hide from her peers who she does not understand and is afraid: "Like her, I would like to curl up and hide."

A childhood infinitely sad versus full of wonder: childhood for Ackermann was a period when "the sun never came out", in which caresses were more painful than punishments, and which appeared as black, infinite distance. Sand: "To summarize all the wonders of a child's life is to act against nature itself. Childhood is not a mysterious state for a man and full of unexplained miracles? ".

Scientific and spiritual education. Learning to read, first reading, first communion. The influence of mothers on the life of their daughters.

Love, loneliness, relationships. Contrary to popular beliefs and certain labels given to women writers, love is not the main theme in the analyzed life narratives. In Ackermann's text, when the word "amour" is mentioned, it refers to "amour de l'indépendance". The dominant feeling in Ackermann's work is rather loneliness: such an impression of the reader was created by turning to certain threads, their accumulation - for example, the image of a single wife in her marriage. In Sand's autobiography, solitude also appears as a respite, but the pages of *Histoire de ma vie*, populated with many characters, do not reflect loneliness as much as Ackermann's sparse, self-centered account.

Loneliness:

Ackermann: I have purchased a small property, former Dominican property, with a wonderful location. The building was still divided into cells. I built a tower there, from which the view on one side stretched out to a magnificent blue bay, and on the other, it reached the white peaks of Piedmont. There was no other way to reach this place than to walk through the difficult paths, so my solitude was completely assured.

Sand: It was absolute solitude and, for once in my life, I lived in Nohant as an abandoned house. The abandoned house has been one of my dreams for a long time. Before I experienced the sweetness of family life without fear, I was soothed by the thought of having a house in some forgotten neighborhood, be it ruins or huts, in which I could disappear from time to time and work without being distracted by the human voice.

Ackermann: Great struggles, bitter disappointments, were spared from me. Overall, my existence was sweet, easy, independent. The fate offered me what I wanted above all else: entertainment and freedom.

Sand: I was very loved and it was not what I missed in my life. So I do not complain about life, despite all the sorrows, because the greatest of them is not to evoke the feelings that you experience yourself. It was my misfortune and destiny to be wounded and torn apart by the excess of those feelings that lacked predictability and gentleness as much as justice and moderation.

The way women writers are perceived by society.

Ackermann: The women who write is, unfortunately! Predestined to go astray. A similar danger terrified my mother. It was because of her that I did not stay *femme de lettres*.

The way writers perceive a man in the world.

Sand: The most vivid and religious source of the advancement of the human spirit is, in the language of my age, the concept of solidarity. The human race is no longer a crowd of isolated beings heading blindly somewhere, but a collection of lines that join together and do not perish.

Ackermann: Considered from a distance in my solitary meditations, the human species seems to me like a hero of a pitiful drama, playing in a forgotten corner of the universe, under blind laws, in front of an indifferent nature, with a void that ends everything.

The method of including archival materials from private and family collections in their life narratives (S. Smith, J. Watson). The share of these materials is proportional to the length of the accounts themselves, that is, they are large parts of letters in Sand's autobiography and only a dozen or so lines in Ackermann's text - lines of her poem from the period of her stay at the boarding school, which one of her sisters kept "in old family papers".