

Title: George Sand and Fedor Dostoevsky: two quests for the ideal

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This work examines the question of George Sand's influence on Dostoevsky, which, according to Joseph Frank, "has never been thoroughly explored" (Frank 1976: 129). Since Frank's statement in his book *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt*, there has been a number of works written on Sand-Dostoevsky connection but the scholarship has been mostly limited to the examination of Dostoevsky's female characters in their comparison to Sand's heroines: suffering but strong and self-giving in spirit.

This paper, however, takes a different approach and studies Dostoevsky's writing against Sand's two metaphysical novels, namely, *Lélia* and *Spiridion*, the latter being her most atypical creation due to the absence of a female character and love theme (except for the main character's love for God). The paper analyzes why *Spiridion*, and in a lesser degree, *Lélia*, are seen by some scholars as "prefigurative texts" for Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. The paper affirms that despite the almost fifty-year gap which separates Sand's early novels and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Sand's impact on the young Dostoevsky remained with the latter to the end of his life and resulted in the continuity of ideas that brings the two great novelists together. The paper studies Dostoevsky's reinterpretation and deeper re-development of Sand's concepts of forgiveness, the idea of "not by bread alone", and the idea of the ultimate responsibility of each for all through the theme of father-and-son which came to the foreground in Dostoevsky's late novels, culminating in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

In a close comparative analysis the paper demonstrates that while Sand's characters in *Lélia* and *Spiridion* "devoted their lives to a quest for the ideal and have not found it" (Naginski 1991: 155), Dostoevsky puts his characters through a different, very hard, but more rewarding experience.

*Bibliography:*

Frank, Joseph. *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt*.

Naginski, Isabelle. *George Sand. Writing for Her Life*.