

**L'IMPORTANCE DU ROMAN GOTHIQUE ANGLAIS DANS
LES PREMIERS ROMANS DE GEORGE SAND**

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ABSTRACT
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This study analyses the novels of the first decade of George Sand's literary career through the lens of the English gothic novel, especially the works of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. Critics have addressed the links between Sand and her literary predecessors or contemporaries, such as Rousseau and Balzac; however, the omission of English gothic novelists is an important gap which needs to be tackled. By linking Sand to cross-channel writers, we emphasise her permeability to European traditions, while demonstrating how her rewriting of the genre gives rise to what Orr calls a 'positive influence' (Orr, 2003). Our thesis highlights the active way in which Sand reappropriates the parameters of the gothic genre and remoulds them to advance her own concerns: the possibilities of female agency during the Restoration, in light of the constraints of the Napoleonic code. The corpus analysed consists of the first Sand novels with eponymous heroines, which are also framed by the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Close readings of *Indiana*, *Valentine*, the two *Lélia*, *Mauprat*, *Consuelo* and *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt* will therefore focus on three gothic pressure points reconfigured by Sand.

An analysis of the doubling of Sand's gothic heroines sheds light on Sand's treatment of ideological issues surrounding female sexuality, such as excess and transgression. Sand's gothic itineraries reveal the different ordeals faced by her heroines, including imprisonment, in order to accede to a greater sense of agency. Finally, the gothic dénouement enables Sand to indicate the persisting conundrums for the choice of the gothic heroine's final destiny. Through her revision of the ending, she aims to offer her heroines a more enabling end than marriage or death. The gothic model thus emerges as a fruitful exploratory tool which allows Sand to tackle important questions concerning her egalitarian political and sexual ideals.