

# VALÉRIE, OR THE LETTERS OF GUSTAVE DE LINAR TO ERNEST DE G...

## SUMMARY

A significant interpretive context for *Valérie* (1804) are its connections to other sentimental novels. The inspiration for Madame de Krüdener were Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's works, from which she took two most important aesthetic postulates: aversion to civilization and emotional landscape, her hero is sustained by nature, which is consoling and reflecting his feelings.

Another person who contributed to the creation of *Valérie* was Madame de Stael. Both authors published their novels, *Valerie* and *Delphine*, at the same time. The two books promoted moral ideals and touched not only on the theme of love, but on the social issues as well, which determined their modern character. The works also share a similar sentimental style and language.

Madame de Krüdener also drew inspiration from Chateaubriand, the author of *René* – both works were partly autobiographical. The author depicts the story experienced as a tragedy of characters, and presents their innocence and adherence to the system of Christian values as an example for the reader.

*The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe is another work in which connections to *Valérie* can be found. Madame de Krüdener openly rejected the Werther model and created the opposing model of conduct: in spite of suffering, her hero does not commit suicide.

*Valérie* had a direct impact on the beginnings of the Polish sentimental novel, it made its mark not only on literature, but on Polish mores as well. Józef Lipiński's *Halina i Firlej, czyli niebezpieczne zapęły* [Halina and Firley, or Dangerous Passions] of 1804 proved that from the outset the Polish sentimental novel followed the narrative and aesthetic models close to *Valérie*. For Lipiński, it became the best tool for improving the society.

As regards Polish literature, the most important are connections between *Valérie* and *Dziady* [Forefather's Eve] by Adam Mickiewicz, who also referred to this novel by making allusions to his love affair with Maryla Wereszczakówna. In the first scene of part I of *Dziady*, a Virgin reads a romance, that is *Valérie*. In the two works, the unhappy lovers have the same name – Gustaw.

*Valérie* is a representative work of sentimentalism. While writing her novel, Madame de Krüdener used the typical schemes of a sentimental novel, however she enriched the text with the latest aesthetic and ethical discoveries – emotional landscape, seemingly autobiographical themes, and, more importantly, a moral message of the work. *Valérie* heralded the next literary era, and sentimental motifs used in the novel were adopted and later developed by Romanticism.

**Keywords:** Krüdener, *Valérie*, sentimentalism, feminine novel, Mickiewicz, French literature

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