

Title: The Lover of Julie Wolmar

Author: Milla Fedorova, Georgetown University

The list of Tatiana's reading in Chapter 3 of *Eugene Onegin* – novels where she found models for her perspective love and life, – causes a lot of problems for scholars. “Schastlivoi siloiu mechtan'ia / Odushevlennye sozadan'ia, / Liubovnik Iulii Wolmar, / Malek-Adel' i de Linar... / V odnom Onegine slilis'.” The list of romantic heroes was frequently misinterpreted: Belinsky in Article 9 on *Eugene Onegin* criticized Tatiana for imagining Onegin as “Wolmar, Malek-Adhel and de Linar.” “Pushkin recounts the names of Wolmar – the beloved of Julie, the heroine of *The New Eloise*, Malek-Adhel and de Linar...” - writes Pavel Reifman in his article “Who is Melmot?” (Reifman). But who is Wolmar? In Rousseau's novel Wolmar was not Julie's lover, but her husband. Pushkin does not give us the name of the hero, but points to him: Saint-Preux is the lover of the heroine, Julie Wolmar. Nabokov in his Commentary to *Eugene Onegin* interprets this as an example of Pushkin's inaccuracy: Julie was not married (was not Julie Wolmar) when she became the mistress of Saint-Preux. Even if we keep in mind that “lover” in Pushkin's time could just mean “beloved,” this doesn't exhaust the problem: why are all the other romantic heroes named, and only one is described in this indirect way? The author meant to interrupt the process of reading here – the reader had to take time to unfold Rousseau's novel. I suggest that in chapter 3, Pushkin encoded the future plan of *Eugene Onegin*, a new *New Eloise*. Tatiana is inspired not only by romantic love stories, but by the choice of Julie Wolmar: to marry the man she was promised to, and to remain faithful after the return of her lost love.

It was especially important for Pushkin to create a dialogue with Rousseau, since Rousseau's novel itself was conceived as a meta-novel. Rousseau is overcoming “the impasse of vice and virtue” (Mitchell). Pushkin in his quest to write “a novel of life” does not let his heroine die out of suppressed passion, but intends her for a life “closer to life”.

Reifman, Pavel. “Kto takoi Melmot?” *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii*, Literaturovedenie IV. Tartu, 2001:126-155.

Mitchell, Stanley. “Tatiana's Reading.” *Forum for Modern Language Studies*. Vol.IV, №1 (1968): 1-21.