

Title: Definition(s) of Freedom in *Eugene Onegin* and Russian Novel of Adultery
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Freedom is a key value in *Eugene Onegin*, which the author himself designated “a free novel.” Freedom, more specifically, as an ability to love freely and engage in a platonic or sexual relationship with the person of one’s choice, is also the central value for adulterous or quasi-adulterous characters in *Who Is to Blame?* and *Anna Karenina*. As the foundational text of the Russian novel as a whole, and the novel of adultery in particular, *Eugene Onegin* sets the terms for discussing issues of love and freedom. The question for the characters is this: what is the “correct” hierarchy of freedom, peace, and the happiness of love?

In their excellent studies, Douglas Clayton and Olga Hasty have shown how various characters define freedom differently, and how the overall idea of freedom evolves over the course of the novel. Onegin’s pursuit of purely external “freedom from” does not preclude internal enslavement that makes him impotent to exercise any “freedom to.” In contrast, Tatiana does not deliberately “pursue” freedom, yet Pushkin describes her as “free” throughout the novel, notwithstanding her “restrictive rank” in Petersburg. What does he mean, then? In my paper I will show how Pushkin uses grammatical forms to distinguish between external and internal freedom: whereas the outwardly “free” Onegin is most often described as an **object** of his mental states, feelings, and circumstances, Tatiana appears in most cases as a **subject**. Pushkin’s definition of freedom as “subjecthood” frames subsequent discussions of freedom in the Russian novel of adultery.

Bibliography:

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