

Eugene Onegin and the Album Culture of Pushkin's Time

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Pushkin's novel *Eugene Onegin*, according to the felicitous definition of the Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, is an encyclopedia of Russian life. The pages of the novel reveal the history, literature, culture, and everyday life of the first third of the nineteenth century. Among the great variety of aspects represented we find private albums.

Albums came to Russia from Western Europe—France and Germany—in the second half of the eighteenth century. When Pushkin was writing *Eugene Onegin* in the 1820s, Russian album culture was at its peak. Albums were the latest fashion everywhere: in Petersburg, Moscow, and the provinces. They were displayed on the tables of drawing rooms and taken to balls. They were bound in leather with gold embossing and bronze clasps. Men of fashion were supposed to be able to compose a witty inscription in verse or prose, draw a flower, landscape, or genre picture on an album page. It is impossible to truly understand literary salons and friendly gatherings without attention to albums. At our disposal we have albums of fashionable and provincial ladies, young men, and men of letters that have survived. Sometimes such albums turn into a sort of museum collection with autographs of famous writers and pictures by well-known artists. When we open their pages, we encounter phenomena of the artistic and poetic life of Pushkin's time. Thus we can become closer to people of the past, their thoughts, feelings, and relations. The distant past draws nearer, becomes familiar and clear. Albums are touching reminders of the transient nature of our life.

Pushkin came across such domestic albums in his childhood. His uncle Vasily Lvovich Pushkin, a well-known poet of his time, was very active in writing his own verses in the albums of Moscow ladies and his friends. In memoirs we find evidence that as an adolescent Pushkin was asked to write in albums. At the Lyceum he wrote poems in his schoolmates' albums. And we can also find entries and verses by Pushkin in all kinds of albums that belonged to his friends and acquaintances, fashionable ladies and young girls, actresses and men of letters. In L. B. Modzalevsky's book, *In Pushkin's Hand*,¹ twenty-seven such entries are listed by the scholar. But the book was published in 1935, and since then some new album entries made by Pushkin have been discovered. Thus, it has become known

¹ L. B. Modzalevskii, *Rukoii Pushkina* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1935).

that in 1836 Pushkin wrote down his poem “The Commander” in the album of grand duchess Elena Pavlovna. Pushkin knew the album culture of his time, actively participated in it, and highly esteemed its values. And quite naturally he mentioned albums in his novel *Eugene Onegin*.

First of all, I would like to note that in the novel Pushkin speaks not about one album but about several. In chapter two he mentions the sentimental albums of tender girls in which Tatiana’s mother used to write and her own album completely forgotten after her marriage. In chapter four Pushkin gives a detailed description of a provincial girl’s album with its naive inscriptions, amateur verses, and pictures and the splendid albums of fashionable ladies decorated with watercolors by the famous artist Feodor Tolstoy and poems by the well-known poet Eugene Baratynsky. In the same chapter Pushkin wrote about Olga Larin’s album filled with verses and pictures by Vladimir Lensky. In the next chapter albums with sketches by Saint-Pries are mentioned by the author. And finally in the manuscripts of *Eugene Onegin* we can find the description of Onegin’s own album which was intended for chapter seven. All of the albums I have mentioned represent the main types of albums that existed at that time and reproduce the most characteristic specimens of album art and poetry.

Onegin’s album is a subject for special study. Here I would simply like to note that this album is a sincere diary of its owner who composed the entries himself. First of all, we find there epigrams portraying his acquaintances. An especially expressive characterization is given of a very important person of high rank who dyes his hair and whose title exonerates him from any intellectual activity:

Сегодня был я ей представлен.
 Глядел на мужа с полчасца.
 Он важен, красит волоса.
 Он чином от ума избавлен.²

Onegin’s album reveals his meditations on life, and here the voice of the author, Pushkin’s own voice, can be heard distinctly. To my mind Pushkin did not include Onegin’s album in the final version of the novel because it contained too many autobiographical thoughts.

With regard to the commentaries to the lines in *Eugene Onegin* that depict albums, those that we have are not sufficient and can be augmented by original album texts that demonstrate Pushkin’s exactness. If we examine the collection of albums in the State Pushkin Museum in Moscow, we can find quite interesting material for comparison with the

² A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 17 tomakh*, VI (Moscow-Leningrad, 1937), 437. Hereafter this edition is cited in the text with the volume indicated by a roman numeral and the page by an arabic numeral.

albums portrayed in *Eugene Onegin*. Let us listen to Pushkin's description of a provincial girl's album in chapter four, stanzas 28 and 29:

Конечно вы не раз видали
 Уездной барышни альбом,
 Что все подружки измарали
 С конца, сначала и кругом.
 Сюда, на зло правописанью
 Стихи без меры, по преданью
 В знак дружбы верной внесены,
 Уменьшены, продолжены.
 На первом листике встречаешь
 Qu'écrivez-vous sur ces tablettes;
 И подпись: *t.à.v. Annette*;
 А на последнем прочитаешь:
 «Кто любит более тебя,
 Пусть пишет далее меня».

Тут непременно вы найдете
 Два сердца, факел и цветки;
 Тут верно клятвы вы прочтете
 В любви до гробовой доски;
 Какой-нибудь *пиит* армейский
 Тут подмахнул стишок злодейский.
 В такой альбом, мои друзья,
 Признаться, рад писать и я... (VI, 85)

Anna Kern, to whom Pushkin addressed the lyric, "I Remember a Wonderful Moment," wrote in her memoirs that her own album had been sort of a copy of an album depicted by Pushkin. And this was true for many of the actual albums of that time. If we examine the poems in them, many have no fixed meter (as is the case in the album described above). Thus an album of 1817–1820 that belonged to Anna Lukashevich and was filled with entries made by her friends is typical. It included many verses without meter:

Все разрушится и истлеет
 И злодей во мрак пойдет
 Одна лишь добродетель предела не имеет,
 Она в душе твоей живет.³

³ Gosudarstvennyi muzei A. S. Pushkina (henceforth abbreviated GMP), rukopisnyi otdel (henceforth abbreviated RO), fond 3, opis' 1, Al'bom 8/51, list 4.

And vows of love until death can also be met with on these pages:

Тебе вручаю душу
Тебя клянусь любить
Я клятвы не нарушу
Доколе буду жить.⁴

The verses in another album that belonged to guards cornet Sumarokov can be compared to the “vicious verse” written by the army poet in *Eugene Onegin*. Here we read about a girl who was dressed in luxurious garments to be given in marriage. The girl is compared to a pill that is gilded so that it can be easily swallowed:

Девушка, – кою сбыть скорее с рук желают,
И тщатся, чтобы ее богачей нарядить,
Сродна с пилюлею, котру позлащают
Дабы скорей ее заставить проглотить.⁵

The lines at the very end of the album’s last page usually sounded like this:

Кто любит тебя больше меня,
То пусть напишет ниже меня.⁶

As we saw above, we find similar lines in *Eugene Onegin*:

Кто любит более тебя,
Пусть пишет далее меня. (VI, 85)

Typological comparisons of this kind can be extended. The pictures described by Pushkin – “Здесь непременно вы найдете/Два сердца, факел и цветки” (chapter four, stanza 29) – can also be found on actual album pages. Often these pictures had symbolic meanings. Allegorical language was used to describe feelings. Lensky drew in Olga’s album (chapter four, stanza 27):

сельски виды
Надгробный камень, храм Киприды... (VI, 84)

⁴ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 21/87, l. 6 oborot.

⁵ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 43/118, l. 11 ob.

⁶ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 8/54, l. 56.

This allegory meant love until death. Lensky also drew two doves sitting on a lyre. Since the lyre is the symbol of poetry and the dove is Venus' bird, the allegory reads: poetry serves love. It seems quite curious that Lensky's pictures predict his fate. His sketches of the countryside, a grave stone, Venus' temple seem to reflect the landscape of the near future with its tombstone marking Lensky's own grave. With regard to those albums with watercolors by Feodor Tolstoy, drawings by Saint-Pries, and poems by Baratynsky which Pushkin mentions, thorough investigations in archives and museums might possibly reveal the originals.

Subsequent lines in the novel (chapter four, stanza 30) can be related to a certain episode in Pushkin's own biography:

Когда блистательная дама
 Мне свой in-quarto подает,
 И дрожь и злость меня берет,
 И шевелится эпиграмма
 Во глубине моей души,
 А мадригалы им пиши! (VI, 86)

In the memoirs of Vladimir Gorchakov, one of Pushkin's Kishinev acquaintances, we encounter a humorous situation concerning a beauty who demanded that Pushkin write a poem in her album.⁷ Pushkin refused, she kept insisting. Eventually the poet gave in and wrote down a madrigal. The memoirist describes the beauty's feeling of selfish joy when she listened to the complimentary verses. But suddenly someone called her attention to the date written under these sweet lines. It was "April 1st." The lady became absolutely furious. The author of the memoirs did not identify the beauty. Some scholars suppose her to be Idalia Poletitsa, one of the poet's bitter enemies; others associate the episode with Zinaida Volkonskaia, the hostess of the most fashionable Moscow salon of the period, who was always the center of admiration. At any rate the episode in *Eugene Onegin* was written much earlier than any of these events took place. The memoirist's evidence serves as a kind of parallel and proves the truthfulness and realism of Pushkin's narration.

All the facts mentioned above relate to the sphere of commentaries to *Eugene Onegin*. Meanwhile many different aspects of the album culture of Pushkin's time can be traced in the novel. To my mind it is very interesting to examine *Eugene Onegin* in the context of the album culture of Pushkin's time. The problem can be formulated more broadly as follows: how the subjects, motifs, types, and the compositional and stylistic peculiarities of the album of the first third of the nineteenth century are re-

⁷ A. S. Pushkin v vospominaniakh sovremennikov, 2 vols. Vol. I (Moscow, 1985), 246–57.

flected in the poetic structure of the novel. I will try to provide some answers.

We can already see a certain likeness between *Eugene Onegin* and the album at the very starting point of its creation. As a rule, an album was kept and filled with entries over a period of several years. Pushkin's novel was created over an eight-year period: 1823–1831. The notebooks Pushkin wrote in can be considered a kind of album, where lines from *Eugene Onegin* and corresponding drawings were mixed with other verses or drawings by the poet.

Certain rules were followed in filling the pages of an album. It was considered a bad omen to make an entry on the first page, while making one on the very last page stood for a declaration of deepest love and devotion. That is why many of the albums were started from the end. Yet despite all this, the album had no fixed structure. Anyone could fill its pages in his or her own way. And *Eugene Onegin*, though it has a well-balanced structure, was first planned as a free composition.

The album, like Pushkin's novel, was oriented toward dialogue or conversation, so this feature too links the album and *Onegin*. As Iurii Lotman pointed out, Pushkin's text contains allusions which are clear to a few of his friends but hidden from other readers.⁸ Many authors of inscriptions engaged in dialogue on the album's pages, but it remained secret, accessible only to initiates. Album writings revealed and modified ideas of transient life, youth, illusory happiness, and the vanity of existence. Album authors wrote about farewell and hope, love and friendship, personal contacts. And all of these subjects we can easily find in *Eugene Onegin*.

Special attention should be called to motifs of memory and reminiscences that run through the pages of albums. Quite often the mistress of an album begins by writing the first inscription on her own, asking those who love her to write something as a keepsake:

На память всех, кто меня любит,
Прошу в альбоме сем писать.⁹

Relatives and friends tried to develop this idea, as we can see in the following quotations from albums:

БЫТЬ В ПАМЯТИ ТВОЕЙ,
ВОТ ЦЕЛЬ ДУШИ МОЕЙ.¹⁰

⁸ Иу. М. Lotman, *Roman A. S. Pushkina Evgenii Onegin. Kommentarii. Posobie dlia uchitelia* (Leningrad, 1980), 9–10.

⁹ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 6/16, l. 1.

¹⁰ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 7/50, l. 14.

Любить тебя меня ты научила
Забывать тебя не выучить меня.¹¹

О слишком счастлив был бы я
Когда б вспомнили меня
Без помощи альбома.¹²

The album itself was considered a memory book:

Все на свете сем пройдет.
Все забудется – и то,
Что сегодня нас займет
Завтра – новым сменено.

Память для друзей мила.
Их в наш век такая стая,
Что и алгебра сама
Покрахтела б их считая.

Список всех друзей – Альбом
Также может изорваться,
И валяясь под столом
И с друзьями затеряться.

Как же вспомнишь ты меня
Как альбом твой изорвется?
Участь всем друзьям одна ...
Цель альбом – и вспомнется.

О! Альбом! Живи сто лет
Нашу память сохраняя!...
Без тебя и нас как нет ...
Ах! Живи нас вспоминая!¹³

These verses are actual quotations.

Pushkin's uncle, poet Vasily Pushkin, wrote verses in an album in which he said the album is a memorial of the soul. *Eugene Onegin* could rightfully be termed the memorial of its author's soul. Pushkin's own reminiscences run through the body of the novel from the very first chapter to chapter eight and through the fragments from "Onegin's Journey." Whom

¹¹ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 9/52, l. 16.

¹² GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 29/95, l. 44 ob.

¹³ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 48/148, l. 71–71 ob.

does he not recall? He thinks of pretty ladies, of his friends, his school days in the Lyceum, his first steps in poetry. He recalls terrible historical events: the war against Napoleon in 1812, the fire that destroyed Moscow, his native and beloved city. The reminiscences we find in *Eugene Onegin* are as remarkably cordial as intimate album entries. It is no accident that album pages are called in *Eugene Onegin* the pages of recollections.

Among the subjects in albums we find that of the album itself. I would like to mention a poem by A. F. Merzliakov, "To the Album Against Albums." There the author comes out against albums, refuses to write in a beauty's album, but in the end admits that he has written the expected inscription:

Нет, нет! Пускай скорее надо мною
 Ударит грозный гром,
 Чтоб я, усердною исполненный душою
 В альбоме говорить с тобой, Елена, стал!
 Ни строчки, никогда! ...Ах! я уж написал.¹⁴

So we can definitely say that the description of albums in *Eugene Onegin* and Pushkin's condemnations of fashionable albums reflect the album tradition itself.

Album production was of different kinds: madrigals, friendly epistles, fables, romances, songs, inscriptions, occasional verse, maxims, aphorisms. A number of studies on the diversity of genres incorporated into the structure of the novel has been done. I would only like to mention that in *Eugene Onegin*, as in the album, everywhere prose joins poetry. Some of the epigraphs and the notes are written in prose. *Eugene Onegin* was defined by its author as a novel, that is, a prose genre. But it is a novel in verse. One more thing should be pointed out: it is the tradition to insert letters in albums. In a certain sense the letters of Tatiana and Onegin resemble insets in the author's album of a peculiar kind, his novel in verse. About Tatiana's letter (chapter three, stanza 31) it is said:

Письмо Татьяны предо мною:
 Его я свято берегу... (VI, 65)

The author keeps Tatiana's letter as well as Lensky's "Elegy," written just before his death.

Maxims given by Pushkin in the novel to my mind also go back to the album tradition. Having told the story of Tatiana's mother and her marriage, the author writes (chapter two, stanza 31) that habit is given from on high as a substitute for happiness:

¹⁴ *Sobranie obraztsovykh russkikh stikhotvoreniĭ*, Izd. 2-e, chast' 5 (St. Petersburg., 1822), 52.

Привычка свыше нам дана:
Замена счастьем она. (VI, 45)

In the notes Pushkin pointed out that this is a quotation from Chateaubriand's novel *Rene*: "If I were so reckless as to believe in happiness, I would look for it in regular habit." Chateaubriand was one of the most popular album writers. Extracts from his works are often met with on album pages. In one of them we find peculiar verses about how habit leads to happiness:

Привычка с сердцем согласилась
Взрев красу души твоей
Привычка в чувство обратилась
А чувство в счастье моих дней
И так я в страсти не таюся
И в том, что буду век любить
С привычкой век не разлучуся
Без ней твой друг не может жить.¹⁵

Again this is a quotation from an actual album.

Extracts from works by Russian, ancient, and European authors occupy considerable space in the album. Quotations were readdressed, altered, and thus appropriated by the creators of mass album production. Triquet welcomes Tatiana with a couplet from an old almanac, altering "belle Nina" to "belle Tatiana" and posing as the author. We can definitely say that he was following the album tradition. When we look through albums of Pushkin's time, we often find his poems or verses by other popular authors signed by unknown names. It is amazing that sometimes album writers admit they have borrowed the text:

Читал – скажу я «ах!»
Без лести и притворства
Во многих тут стихах
Нет правил стихотворства
И лучше б не писал
Кто не рожден поэтом
Стихов в альбоме этом
А их бы выбирал
Что делать? рока злого
Преследуем грозой

¹⁵ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 29/95, l. 44 ob.

Беру из Языкова
Я с горькою слезой.¹⁶

Another acknowledgment sounds like this:

Все здесь писано прекрасно
Кто из Пушкина хватил
Иной из песенок вклеил
Другой трудился не напрасно.¹⁷

It is generally recognized that quotations and reminiscences occupy a considerable place in *Eugene Onegin*. In this case we can regard them as appropriations of others' ideas. In this connection I would like to remind the reader that Pushkin wrote down in albums not only his own poems but those of others as well. I have looked through the album of Ostafiev, a landowner from Nizhegorodsky province, which is now preserved in Pushkinskii Dom in St. Petersburg. Pushkin was shown this album after his uncle Vasily's death in 1830, when he arrived at Boldino. And on its pages Pushkin could see his uncle's poems on the Russian victory over Napoleon, his fables, and verses entitled "Venus' Testament." The glorious war was over. His uncle had passed away, and his poetry had become a thing of the past. That might explain why Pushkin, having read his uncle's writings in the album, wrote down a poem by another poet, not his own. He wrote down verses by Derzhavin, verses that were the last written by the late poet and spoke of the fleeting nature of happiness and the transitoriness of life:

Река времен в своем теченье
Уносит все дела людей
И топит в пропасти забвенья
Народы, царства и царей;
А если что и остается
Чрез звуки лиры и трубы,
То вечности жерлом пожрется
И общей не уйдет судьбы.¹⁸

In albums amateur poets often expressed regret at their insufficient talents. They addressed famous poets. As an example we can take the following text:

¹⁶ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 6/16, l. 57 ob.

¹⁷ GMP, PO, F. 3, op. 1, A 6/16, l. 59 ob.

¹⁸ L. B. Modzalevskii, *Rukoii Pushkina*, p. 667.

Так, в первый раз еще роптать
 На провидение я смею!
 Зачем я даром дивным не владею?
 В листы холодные переливать,
 Что так я сильно чувствовать умею;
 Мою любовь к моим сестрам.
 Владая Пушкина искусством
 Тогда с каким бы пылким чувством
 Ее в альбоме описал бы вам.¹⁹

Or:

Зачем я не могу Жуковскому подобно
 Стихи писать как он приятно и удобно?
 Волшебным обладав поэзии пером
 Я смело бы тогда брался за ваш альбом.²⁰

In a sense the same thing occurs, but with hidden irony, in *Eugene Onegin*. Pushkin, for example, appeals to the poet Baratynsky (chapter three, stanza 30), asking him to translate Tatiana's letter written in French:

Певец Пиров и грусти томной
 Когда б еще ты был со мной
 Я стал бы просьбою нескромной
 Тебя тревожить, милый мой:
 Чтоб на волшебные напевы
 Переложил ты страстной девы
 Иноплеменные слова.
 Где ты? приди: свои права
 Передаю тебе с поклоном. (VI, 64–65)

In *Eugene Onegin* we can see another feature of the album: its wide range of intonations. The verses written in it could be joking or affectionate, serious or enthusiastic. Pushkin's own poems are very significant in this respect. The joking lines in Anna Kern's album confirm the absolute indifference of the poet to any kind of food, even to delicious dishes, when his sweetheart is away from him:

¹⁹ GMP, PO, f. 3, op. 1, A 26/92, l. 21.

²⁰ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 29/95, l. 32.

Мне изюм
 Нейдет на ум.
 Цуккерброд
 Не лезет в рот.
 Пастила не хороша
 Без тебя, моя душа. (III, 126)

A refined lyrical intonation is heard in the poem written in the album of Karolina Sobanska, who was one of the objects of Pushkin's passion. In the album of grand duchess Elena Pavlovna, the poet put his philosophical lyric, "The Commander." We can find the same variety and richness of intonations in the novel *Eugene Onegin*.

The album as a combination of different texts—prose and verse—and pictures of all kinds—portraits, caricatures, landscapes, and flowers—formed a diverse and motley mixture. Pushkin mentions this artless colorful mixture of the album in his poem, "To P. V. Slenin." He calls *Eugene Onegin* a "collection of motley chapters" when presenting it to the reader.

Pushkin's contemporaries sensed these genetic relations between *Eugene Onegin* and the album. One of the critics Nikolai Nadezhdin observed: "this work has been nothing but... a poetic album of vivid impressions of a talent that is playing with its rich gifts."²¹ And the first readers of the novel inserted passages from it into their albums where the extracts were surrounded by all kinds of inscriptions and pictures. We find such extracts in five out of the eighty albums that are preserved in the State Pushkin Museum in Moscow.

Thus, the pages of Annette N.'s album reveal declarations of love and friendship, moral maxims, and naive drawings. Among other entries we find Pushkin's epistle, "To N. Ia. Plushkova," and an extract from *Eugene Onegin*, chapter one, stanza 20, under the title, "The Description of Istomina in *Onegin*."²² The album is dated 1818–1829. That means that the extract was copied out from the first edition of chapter one which was published separately in 1825.

Kireevsky's album is one of utmost interest for us. Pushkin was acquainted with the Kireevsky brothers, Ivan and Petr. Which of them was the owner of this album is still the subject of debate. The album was kept during the period 1820–1836. In it we find extracts from works by Russian and French authors, aphorisms, and sayings. The owner was evidently a young man interested in public life and well informed about literature banned by the censors. The album contains copies of Ryleev's ode, "Civil Courage," Denis Davydov's fable, "Head and Feet," and some extracts from

²¹ *Teleskop*, chast' 9, No. 9 (1832), 108.

²² GMP, PO, f. 3, op. 1, A 48/148.

Griboedov's comedy *Woe from Wit*. In it we find nineteen poems by Pushkin and among them the ode "Liberty," the poem "In the Country," the epistle "To Chaadaev"—all of which were banned because of their freedom-loving motifs but widely distributed in handwritten copies. Kireevsky included in his album sayings and extracts from works by Boileau, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Balzac. His attention was attracted by meditations about love and women. One of the inscriptions reads like this: "A nice lady is a destiny that sets everything in motion. Eyes are transmitters of love."²³ Kireevsky, like Annette N. mentioned above, wrote down an extract from *Eugene Onegin*, the description of the famous ballerina Istomina. These lines were much admired by Pushkin's contemporaries:

Театр уж полон; ложи блещут;
 Партер и кресла, все кипит;
 В райке нетерпеливо плещут,
 И взвившись, занавес шумит.
 Блистательна, полувоздушна,
 Толпою нимф окружена,
 Стоит Истомина; она,
 Одной ногой касаясь пола
 Другою медленно кружит,
 И вдруг прыжок, и вдруг летит,
 Летит, как пух от уст Эола;
 То стан совет, то разовьет,
 И быстрой ножкой ножку бьет. (VI, 13)

Kireevsky also wrote down in his album the description of Onegin's study from chapter seven of the novel.

The album of Redichkin, dated 1829–1831, represents a manuscript collection formed according to its owner's taste. On its pages we find poems by Karamzin, Dmitriev, Denis Davydov, Pushkin's "Black Shawl," "To the Slanderers of Russia," and "Prisoner of the Caucasus." Redichkin copied out chapter one of *Onegin* from the first edition in 1825, and, when in 1827 *The Moscow Herald* published an extract from "Onegin's Journey," the owner of the album copied it as well.²⁴

In the State Pushkin Museum in Moscow there is an anonymous album filled with pictures, poems, and inscriptions on friendship, love, and melancholic feelings. There we also find three lines from chapter three of *Onegin* (stanza 7) which speak about Tatiana and her expectations of love:

²³ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 1/4, l.l. 45.51.

²⁴ GMP, PO, f. 3, op. 1, A 13/78, l.l. 20–42, 57–59 ob.

Давно сердечное томленье
Теснило ей младую грудь;
Душа ждала ... кого-нибудь... (VI 24)²⁵

There is one more album I would like to mention. Different people wrote entries in it during the years 1825–1884. Volkov was its owner—presumably Platon Grigorievich Volkov, the poet and translator. He translated into French Pushkin’s lyrics “A Tear,” “To Morpheus,” and “Elegy.” The album’s owner wrote down lines from chapter one of *Eugene Onegin* (stanza 46):

Кто жил и мыслил, тот не может
В душе не презирать людей;
Кто чувствовал, того тревожит
Призрак неотвратимых дней.²⁶

Under these lines we find the date, 14th of December, 1827. On the 14th of December, 1825, the uprising of the first Russian revolutionaries, the Decembrists, occurred in Petersburg. Many of Pushkin’s friends took part in this uprising, which was cruelly suppressed. It may be that the album’s owner used these lines of Pushkin to mark the second anniversary of this event.

As we can see, even these five albums show the process of versatile assimilation of *Eugene Onegin* by album culture.

And here is the last item I would like to focus attention on. Pushkin himself probably recognized the similarity of his novel in verse to the world of the album and assumed the possibility of bringing *Eugene Onegin* back to album pages. This is suggested by his entry, dated October 2, 1835, in the album of his Mikhailovskoye neighbor, Anna Wulf, who lived on the adjacent estate of Trigorское that Pushkin often visited. In memory of Trigorское the poet wrote down in Anna Wulf’s album lines from *Onegin*, chapter six (stanza 46):

Простите ж, сени,
Где дни мои текли в глуши,
Исполнены страстей и лени
И снов задумчивой души.²⁷

In this entry the extract from *Eugene Onegin* joins a quotation from Coleridge’s “The Good Great Man”:

²⁵ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 18/84, l. 88 ob.

²⁶ GMP, RO, f. 3, op. 1, A 31/97, l. 56 ob.

²⁷ Modzalevskii, *Rukoiu Pushkina*, p. 664.

How seldom, friend, a good great man inherits.²⁸

Thus Pushkin freely used his own work in accordance with the traditions of album culture which were so much reflected in his novel in verse.

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²⁸ Editor's note: From a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Good Great Man" (1802) according to the author known to Russian readers as "Complaint."

How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits
Honour or wealth with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
If any man obtain that which he merits
Or any merit that which he obtains."

For shame, dear friend, renounce this canting strain!
What would'st thou have a good great man obtain?
Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
Or throne of corses which his sword had slain?
Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends!
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good great man? three treasures, LOVE, and LIGHT,
And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's breath:
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL DEATH!