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Reading Pushkin's «Tales of Belkin» through Sainte-Veuve's «Vie, Poésies et Pensées de Joseph Delorme»

Ana Rodriguez Navas*

Visitors

It has been widely assumed that Alexander Pushkin's *Tales of the Late Ivan Petrovich Belkin* (1831) were inspired by the oeuvre of Sir Walter Scott, and most notably by Scott's *Tales of my Landlord, Collected and Arranged by Jedediah Cleishbotham* (1816-19) and *The Monastery* (1820), both works with which Pushkin is known to have been familiar long before he began writing the *Tales*. That such a link exists seems inarguable; both D. P. Jakubovich and Sona Stephan Hoisington have convincingly demonstrated resonances between Scott's work and the *Tales*, especially in relation to the latter's preface. Nonetheless, I will argue, readings of this connection have so far proven insufficient, neglecting the importance of the broader *manuscrit trouvé* tradition—and almost entirely overlooking the important mediating role played by Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve's *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme* (1829). There is compelling evidence that at the time he was working on the *Tales'* preface in late 1830, Pushkin was reading, writing about, and pondering the implications of Sainte-Beuve's text; indeed, it is well established that *Joseph Delorme* was the key source for a large part of Pushkin's literary production of the period. As such, the *Tales'* preface may be most fruitfully and most accurately read not as a mere pastiche or spoofing of Scott, but rather as part of a broader dialogue that, while clearly indebted to Scott, is also a direct response to the critical issues brought to Pushkin's attention by Sainte-Beuve's *Joseph Delorme*.

In their theme, style, and structure Pushkin's *Tales* owe a great deal to Scott's mystifications—notably the various prefaces of his *Tales of My Landlord* and Captain Clutterbuck's Introductory Epistle in *The Monastery*.^[1] As Hoisington notes, there are a number of parallels between Scott's works and Pushkin's *Tales* ranging from the general (their spoofing tone; the “staircase device” used to create layers of narrative removal) to the specific (a date used by Pushkin echoes one cited by Scott).^[2] Such similarities are, of course, given added weight by Pushkin's documented interest in the work of the writer he referred to as “the Scottish wizard.”

But despite these evident resonances, critics have struggled to parse the precise nature of the connection between Scott's and Pushkin's work. Both Pushkin's contemporaries and more recent critics have suggested that for his first work of prose Pushkin simply and uncritically borrowed from Scott. Such a view is, however, at odds with the larger body of Pushkin scholarship, which consistently shows Pushkin to have been a subtle and critically engaged writer. Russian writers in Pushkin's time, as Caryl Emerson states, “were exposed to a steady influx of styles and genres: neoclassical odes, sentimental ballads, society tales, gothic narratives, Byronic verse epics, romantic dramas, Waverley historical novels. With great virtuosity, Pushkin absorbed these models, transfigured them, integrated

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them, parodied them, and then readied himself—and the Russian language—for the next wave.” [3] Furthermore, Emerson continues, the censorship of Tsar Nicholas I “encouraged Russian subjects to encode disagreements in ‘Aesopian language’ rather than risk illicit public opposition; intonations of irony came to underlie the most innocent utterance.” [4] The shortcomings of critical readings of the *Tales*’ preface in connection with Scott thus become painfully obvious: how to reconcile the Pushkin presented by Emerson—and studied by generations of scholars—with a Pushkin apparently content to aimlessly pastiche Scott’s work in his first venture into prose?

Here again Hoisington has done important work, seeking to make sense of the *Tales*’ preface through the lens of Scott’s texts and insightfully noting that “whereas Scott assumed a literary disguise to deceive the public, Pushkin donned the mask of Belkin to deceive the authorities. Unlike Scott, Pushkin never intended to fool the public.” [5] Hoisington is well aware of the mockery and playfulness that run through the text, and rightly finds Pushkin’s work more complex than Scott’s, since “rather than being a ploy to conceal the author’s identity, the ‘mystification,’ in fact, turns out to be a strategy of self-acknowledgment, a way of whispering the real author’s name to the reader.” [6] Indeed, while ostensibly arguing for the similarities between Pushkin’s and Scott’s works, she states that “the differences, however, are much more significant, for they reveal that Pushkin was really playing with Scott’s literary conventions, adapting them to very different ends.” [7]

Hoisington’s essay acknowledges the gap between Scott’s and Pushkin’s works, but does not succeed in bridging it. This is, in part, because—like many Pushkin scholars—Hoisington fails adequately to explore the degree to which the devices employed by Scott, and subsequently by Pushkin, are not exclusive to either writer’s work but instead belong to a broader “found manuscript” tradition that informed and inspired both writers. As Viktor Shklovskii writes in *Theory of Prose*, the modern found manuscript device has its origins in Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605), a large part of which was purportedly translated from an Arabic manuscript by Cide Hamete Benengeli. Cervantes’ device apparently inspired a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts, most notably by Laurence Sterne, Daniel Defoe, and Jonathan Swift; these works pose as true narratives, perhaps with the intention of overcoming their readerships’ mistrust of fiction. Even in these early examples, the tradition of the found manuscript involves the establishment of a surrogate author, usually deceased, who imposes a strong narratorial presence in the text. A common corollary is the presence of an editor who vouches for the manuscript’s authenticity by stating the circumstances of its creation or discovery, and whose introduction to the text, most often through what Christian Angelet calls “an editorial and inaugural preface,” [8] commonly serves to steer the reader towards an “appropriate” or

correct interpretation, all the while eschewing responsibility for what follows. Indeed, Angelet writes, “The editor is nothing more than a fictional enforcer and, as such, not accountable. [I]n what concerns the found manuscript, the rule thus stipulates that there be discontinuity from the (fictional) story to the (real) publication.” [9] In any found-manuscript text, then, what Gérard Genette terms the paratext is at once removed from the text (the found manuscript itself) and inextricably bound to it, determining its reading.

The practical and literary values of such a device helped to maintain the popularity of the found manuscript through the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, which spread across Europe and into Russia and America. By 1805, readers in St. Petersburg saw the anonymous publication of the first few pages of the Polish writer Jan Potocki's *Manuscrit trouvé à Saragosse*; four years later, in the United States, Washington Irving published his *History of New York* using the surrogate author Diedrich Knickerbocker. Irving famously complicated the mystification by purporting the text to have been found and published by Knickerbocker's landlord, one Seth Handaside; the text's preface, which was presented as though written by Handaside, is in tone and character very similar to the prefaces composed by Scott's surrogates Cleishbotham and Clutterbuck—and, of course, to the preface of Pushkin's *Tales*. [10]

The *manuscrit trouvé* also played an important role in the French literature of the period, which, naturally, Pushkin followed closely: consider Benjamin Constant's claim merely to have edited the novel *Adolphe* (1816); or Victor Hugo's *Le dernier jour d'un condamné* (1829), presented as the true autobiography of a man condemned to death. [11] Also of importance was the work of Prosper Mérimée: his *Le Théâtre de Clara Gazul* (1825) was allegedly the translation of a Spanish work done by Joseph L'Estrange, while *La Guzla* (1827) was said to have been a series of ballads translated from the Serbian by Hyacinthe Maglanovitch. [12] It was after this trend that Sainte-Beuve fashioned his *Joseph Delorme*—a text that, in turn, went on to play a crucial role in influencing Pushkin as he composed the *Tales*.

Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, essayist and literary critic, made his poetic debut through the anonymous publication of *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme* in Paris on April 4th, 1829. [13] By the time *Joseph Delorme* came out, Sainte-Beuve had already won a small degree of celebrity in Parisian literary circles for his *Tableau historique et critique de la poésie française et du théâtre français au seizième siècle* (1828), as well as for the essays and articles he wrote for the journal *Le Globe* since 1824. [14] *Joseph Delorme* was so clearly autobiographical that many of his friends immediately saw his hand in it. [15] However, it is less clear when those without personal connections to Sainte-Beuve became aware that the late Joseph Delorme was a mystification and that Sainte-Beuve was the book's true author; his correspondence seems to indicate that his

true role became common knowledge almost immediately, but Barberis suggests that the secret may have remained intact for some time, at least outside of the circle of his close friends.[16] Perhaps more important—and certainly more intriguing—than the precise details of Sainte-Beuve's "outing" as the author of Joseph Delorme, however, is the question of why he chose to create an authorial alter ego in the first place.

As we have seen, Sainte-Beuve had available to him a rich found manuscript tradition from which to draw inspiration for *Joseph Delorme*. He may also have been influenced, as Gérard Antoine suggests, by a book he had read by Charles Nodier in 1828, *Questions de littérature légale: Du plagiat, de la supposition d'auteurs, des supercheries qui ont rapport aux livres*, the eighth chapter of which deals with a certain Monsieur de Surville, who published a book of poetry under the name of his own alleged late ancestor.[17] Other critics, Pushkin among them, have attributed the birth of Joseph Delorme to Sainte-Beuve's fear of moral censorship; the cloak of anonymity may also have provided some small insulation against possible criticism of his work's perceived aesthetic shortcomings, no small consideration for a professional critic making a foray into creative writing.[18]

Whatever the initial inspiration, though, it seems clear that Sainte-Beuve—who believed, above all, in connecting biography with literary criticism—found in the creation of Joseph Delorme a felicitous framework through which he could not only provide his poems and reflections with a greater depth and poignancy, but also directly manifest his own literary philosophy. Sainte-Beuve, after all, was a critic fascinated by the possibility of understanding texts by studying their creators. It is tempting to agree with René Wellek when he claims that Sainte-Beuve "was not primarily a literary critic at all but was mainly interested in biography, the psychology of the author, and social history. He constantly confused life and art, man and work." [19] Including a *Vie* was certainly, as Antoine argues, a custom of the times, a device mined by both poets and fiction writers, but it also gave Sainte-Beuve an opportunity to exercise a *mise en fiction* of his ideas on literary theory.[20]

Given Sainte-Beuve's belief that biography was the key to understanding and interpreting literature, his *creation* of a biography can only be read as an attempt to manipulate his readers' understanding and reading of his work. Arguably, his goal in presenting *Joseph Delorme's* author as a "pauvre diable" was to effect a poetry of the common man. As Michaut says about Delorme, Joseph "had an innate sense of the poetry of common things. Intimate life, familiar, even humble, bourgeois feelings, day-to-day and almost earthly, vulgar realities or even trivial ones were capable, in his eyes, of containing a certain obscure and to some degree sickly ideal; and he took pleasure in drawing it out." [21] The fictional biography of Joseph Delorme, Michaut argues, is the carefully drawn portrait of a simple man with the express intent of leading us towards "la poésie

des choses communes,” the poetry of simple things.

The date of Pushkin's first acquaintance with *Joseph Delorme* has been the subject of much debate. It seems likely that Pushkin read and admired the book soon after its anonymous publication in Paris on April 4, 1829; we know he owned copies of both the first edition and the 1830 reprint.[22] Unfortunately, it is hard to be more precise; Pushkin offers us few clues besides his 1831 review for the *Literaturnaia gazeta*, in which he discusses both *Joseph Delorme* and *Les Consolations*, Sainte-Beuve's disappointing follow-up work. This uncertainty has led David Bethea to write that “we do not know exactly when Pushkin read the volumes (although as early as May 1830 he asked Elizaveta Khitrovo to obtain a copy of *Les Consolations* for him in St. Petersburg), nor can we say for certain that, if he did read them soon after they came out, these works actually entered into his creative consciousness in productive ways.”[23]

Nonetheless, there is compelling evidence that Pushkin had read *Joseph Delorme* by May 1830 and that he returned to it repeatedly over the next two years both to review it and to mine it for inspiration. Indeed, the letter to Khitrovo that Bethea mentions is cited by Gerda Achinger as evidence that by June 1830 Pushkin was already familiar with the text's mystification, and well aware that Sainte-Beuve was the real author of *Joseph Delorme*. [24] Numerous other studies have been dedicated to tracing the connections between *Joseph Delorme* and Pushkin's work in the 1829 to 1831 period: even Bethea, despite his reservations regarding the date when Pushkin might first have read *Joseph Delorme*, claims that “based on the evidence, we can have little doubt that Delorme's elegies gave Pushkin food for thought” as he composed *Eugene Onegin*. [25] Vickery, meanwhile, finds the roots of Pushkin's famous “la vas liubil” in two of the *Delorme* poems; similarly, Pushkin's Wordsworth imitation, “Sonnet,” composed between January and April 1830, was—as Surat, Wachtel and Vickery have shown—indisputably based on Sainte-Beuve's own imitation of the sonnet as it appeared in *Joseph Delorme*. [26]

Based on these connections, it seems reasonable to conclude that Pushkin was familiar with *Joseph Delorme* well before he began composing the *Tales*' preface in late 1830. [27] Such a realization has significant repercussions, especially since recent scholarship shows critics still struggling to discover all the elements necessary to uncover the *Tales*' internal logic. Victoria Sevastianova, for example, has sought to explain the *Tales* through what she sees as Belkin's half-concealed heartbreak; this conceit, she claims, explains the text's structure, its narrative gaps and fragmentations, and the function of its preface. [28] David Bethea and Sergei Davydov, meanwhile, have examined the *Tales* through the lens of what they call the poetics of parody, which seeks to establish a certain unity among the tales relying chiefly on the interplay between the writers of the epigraphs and Pushkin, and on the overturning of the literary model each tale introduces. [29]

But while Sevastianova's article tackles the role of the preface, her argument seems speculative; Bethea and Davydov's reading, on the other hand, is highly convincing, but leaves the problematic preface isolated from the unity shared by the tales themselves. Neither Bethea and Davydov nor Sevastianova's readings, therefore, satisfactorily explain Pushkin's "Belkin" project as a whole; they also fail to address the *raison d'être* of the *Tales'* very particular preface. The same might be said of Wolf Schmid's seminal work on the *Tales*, which offers a very detailed examination of the text as a unit, but considers the preface only insofar as it constitutes one of the text's key elements from a structural and formal standpoint.[30]

In this context, a reading of the *Tales* through—or against—Sainte-Beuve's *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme* has the potential to offer new insights and a fuller understanding of Pushkin's text. At a time when Pushkin was setting out to explore prose as a new field, constructing an authorial alter ego must have seemed an attractive method of freeing his work from the constraints and readerly expectations imposed by his fame and previous work: *Joseph Delorme* offered a fresh reminder of the creative possibilities—in narrative tone, style, viewpoint, and the like—that a new identity could open up.[31] For Pushkin, to admire a technique was to assimilate it into his own authorial toolkit; and, as we shall see, to move beyond mere imitation and find in the borrowed technique a wealth of new possibilities and new complexities.[32]

That Pushkin had *Joseph Delorme* in mind as he wrote the *Tales'* preface is suggested by his use of footnotes, which corresponds to Sainte-Beuve's practice much more than it does to Scott's.[33] While Scott's notes are mostly explanatory, the notes in *Delorme*—just a few in the *Poésies* section, written by the book's "editor"—far from elucidating the text or according it further credibility, hint at a puzzling relationship between the editor and Delorme or, rather, at the curious way the editor perceives the poet.[34] Perhaps the best example is the note that accompanies "Après une lecture d' *Adolphe*"—incidentally, a reference that functions as a clin d'oeil, reminding the reader of an ancestor text that is also part of the found manuscript tradition—where the editor asks, "Has there not spread in this piece a slight tint of irony, and does the poet not affect the sentimental languor for his own pleasure? It is a simple conjecture that we submit to the reader's sagacity." [35] This note and others at first seem to open up the two poems by proposing new ways to approach them; in fact, however, it offers the reader a clearly articulated interpretation of Delorme's character based on what could have been his *actual* thoughts and attitudes on two very different matters. It is one of the clearest examples of Sainte-Beuve's attempt to make use of his fictional poet, and editor, in order to control and rein in his reader's responses to the work. The freedom of interpretation that comes with every creative text is, in these cases, closed off by the "suggested" reading

put forth by the editor of *Joseph Delorme*. In short, Sainte-Beuve's footnotes serve as yet another literary device to further his project of biographical criticism.

Pushkin's footnotes move in the opposite direction: while, like Sainte-Beuve's, they open up the text by hinting at a larger reality outside of it. This is true of the first in particular, which reads: "There follows an anecdote, which we do not include, believing it superfluous. However, we assure the reader that it contains nothing at all that would be harmful to the memory of the late Belkin."

[36] However, they do not then seal off the text by also laying out a possible interpretation. In fact, the text is even more puzzling and unstable than it was before the footnote. This is certainly the case in the second footnote, in which the reader is given a "detailed" account of the people from whom Belkin heard each tale; as it turns out, not a single one of these people is actually traceable. In a tone that is simultaneously naive and ironic, there follows a careful list containing the initials of Belkin's sources. [37] As can be seen from these cases, Pushkin's use of footnotes in the preface to the *Tales* constitutes a single instance representative of the whole project as it stands in relation to *Delorme*: different aspects of the text are borrowed, rewritten, and turned on their head, with the purpose of at once improving upon Sainte-Beuve's creation and refuting his literary theory.

Pushkin's use of footnotes speaks to his broader fascination with Sainte-Beuve's use of authorial surrogacy to further his literary theories. Despite Pushkin's claim that Sainte-Beuve created Delorme to avoid moral censorship ("Sainte-Beuve, already famous for his *Tableau de l'apôésie française au seizième siècle* and also for his scholarly edition of Ronsard's works, took it into his head to publish the first of his poetic works under the invented name of Joseph Delorme, probably fearing the reprimands and severity of moral censorship" [38]), he appreciated the ingenious gambit Sainte-Beuve employed to manipulate the reader's approach to his poems. While Pushkin's review does not explicitly discuss the technique, its structure attests to his admiration of it. For the first few pages, Pushkin talks of Delorme as if he had once lived, writing:

Вместо предисловия романтическим слогом описана была жизнь бедного молодого поэта, умершего, как уверяли, в нищете и неизвестности. Друзья покойника предлагали публике стихи и мысли, найденные в его бумагах, извиняя недостатки их и заблуждения самого Делорма его молодостию, болезненным состоянием души и физическими страданиями. В стихах оказывался необыкновенный талант, ярко отсвеченный странным выбором предметов. [39]

By not immediately exposing Sainte-Beuve's stratagem, Pushkin tacitly endorses

and acknowledges its effect and value.[40]

Pushkin's fulsome praise for the work of the young Joseph Delorme is founded upon what he calls (with a certain knowing irony) the sincerity of the fictional poet's inspiration.[41] In acknowledging Sainte-Beuve as the author of the work, Pushkin is torn between celebrating the author's return to life and mourning the loss of the sincere and sensitive poet Joseph Delorme. The work is not only more convincing when written by Joseph Delorme; it has greater internal consistency, and holds more closely to its own convictions. That Pushkin prefers Delorme to Sainte-Beuve is confirmed by Pushkin's stated disappointment with *Les Consolations*, Sainte-Beuve's subsequent work.

Even in 1829, readers who approached *Joseph Delorme* as Joseph Delorme's work were rare, for Sainte-Beuve's authorship rapidly became known.[42] The uninformed reader, entirely under Sainte-Beuve-as-Delorme's spell, thus quickly became a veritable *rara avis*. Despite this, and perhaps because he was writing for Russian readers, the first part of Pushkin's review knowingly explores the book's effect on this uninformed reader. To read *Joseph Delorme* after the revelation of its authorship became an act of conscious suspension of disbelief; one read a book with two authors, one real, one imaginary. Pushkin's review played with—and therefore acknowledged—both.

Sainte-Beuve would barely have distinguished between the man Joseph Delorme and the text *Joseph Delorme*; works of literature and human lives were one to him. There is a kind of equivalency at work here: according to Sainte-Beuve's philosophy, the author *is* the text, and vice versa. In this light, the text *Joseph Delorme* serves as a nexus linking Sainte-Beuve, the text's true author, and Joseph Delorme, its putative author. Two men are the author of a single text; they therefore must be, according to Sainte-Beuve's logic, the same man. It can hardly be surprising, then, that only a few aspects of the biography Sainte-Beuve attributes to Joseph Delorme do not correspond to his own life and character. As Antoine aptly puts it, "Joseph Delorme's *Vie* already deserved the title Sainte-Beuve would later give to his ideal critical study: an essay of 'biographical psychology,' applied in this case to himself." [43]

Characteristically, Pushkin took Sainte-Beuve's key innovation and turned it on its head. His surrogate author, Belkin, may or may not have been a great literary artist; but to us he is merely a "writer" in the most literal sense, a compiler rather than a composer of tales. Of Belkin's life, little is known; of what is known, little is of any consequence to a critic wishing to make a biographical reading of his work. Sainte-Beuve's somewhat labored conceit was, for Pushkin, a point of departure used simultaneously to free himself from the constraints of his own authorial identity and to obfuscate the reader's knowledge of his stand-in. Thus Pushkin responds to Sainte-Beuve's biographical method by providing both an

author and a biographical sketch—but by drenching both in an irony that borders on parody. The “highly sufficient biographical notice,” as he describes it, fails to convey a portrait of Belkin the writer in any meaningful sense—at least insofar as a scholarly (or even intellectually curious) reader would require. This device functions as a jibe aimed at the scholarly sensibilities of the reader as much as at Sainte-Beuve’s method; indeed, a biographically minded critic such as Sainte-Beuve would be hard pressed to find anything relevant to their reading of the *Tales* through this portrait of Belkin—however “true” the facts about Belkin’s life may be. Pushkin thus introduces the notion of incompleteness—perhaps even of *necessary* incompleteness—into Sainte-Beuve’s theory. By providing us with biographical scraps, Pushkin implies that no biography or authorial presence can ever be much more than a collection of those scraps, and that no series of biographical facts can presume to approach the authorial self.

In short, Pushkin’s preface to the *Tales* not only obscures his own authorial identity, but also responds to Sainte-Beuve’s ideas about authorship and readership. Sainte-Beuve’s theory—as seen both in his critical work and in *Joseph Delorme*—is that a writer’s identity and known persona create certain expectations in the reading of a text, and that the text must be read in conjunction with a clearly defined authorial voice. Pushkin, who held that “a poet risked to lessen his influence if he overcelebrated his actual biographical (or physiological) person,” [44] retorts through the *Tales*’ parodic preface that writing is a controlled construction, an artifice, and that as such a writer can choose to create an entirely new persona and build a text on this foundation.

In this sense, the effect achieved by both Pushkin and Sainte-Beuve is one of a text standing in isolation, separated from the writers’ reputation and previous works. Even if we are aware that the author is not Delorme but Sainte-Beuve-as-Delorme, we are at least also aware that the author is not *solely* or *purely* Sainte-Beuve; the nature of authorial surrogacy is such that, whether or not we know the identity of the true author, it creates a layer of displacement that encourages us to view the text unfiltered by our preconceptions of the true author. As Angelet states, “Placed as a warning, *this is not a novel* immediately implies the opposite: *this is a novel*. Now, true or false? Fiction or reality? We read, and we know well that it is no more than a story, but still....” [45] The urgency of such a reading is made clear in both texts by their claims to be word-for-word transcriptions of original manuscripts, except for a few “justified” instances when the editors either omit or paraphrase a portion of the material. The supposed writer of the *Vie* claims on the opening page that “For this delicate work [writing Delorme’s biography], the journal [Delorme’s] remained constantly before our eyes, and often all we did was transcribe it”; [46] the *Vie* is, in fact, riddled with long quotes from Delorme’s diary that support this claim. Pushkin’s preface in the *Tales* also states a similar adherence to their original source: “The aforementioned tales

were, it seems, his first attempt. They were, as Ivan Petrovich used to say, to a large extent accurate and heard by him from different people.” [47] In keeping with the found manuscript tradition, the long quotes transcribed in the *Vie* and in the preface of the *Tales* attest to the faithfulness of the texts that follow, as well as to the purported existence of their authors.

These claims to accuracy leave their mark on the style of writing. The romantic, elegiac style with which Delorme's friend writes his biography—and which is mimicked in the neighbor's letter reproduced in the preface of the *Tales*, the coarseness of its contents notwithstanding—resembles Delorme's own way of writing as we see it in the quoted passages of his journal and in the *Pensées*. The conjunction of the *Vie*, the poems, and the critical reflections creates a model of *écriture intime*; as Lieven D'Hulst writes, “*Joseph Delorme* would be in poetry (and in prose) one of the essential models for intimate writing.” [48] This is fitting: given Sainte-Beuve's conception of the interconnections between style and substance, life and art, the fidelity of the *Vie* serves to both elucidate and constrain the text that follows.

Pushkin's *Tales*, while assuring the reader in their preface that the text is faithful to each of Belkin's sources, provide no direct access to Belkin's own writing; it is therefore impossible to ascertain whether both style and story correspond to Belkin's source, or whether the story is the source's and the style Belkin's. It is even possible, as some critics have suggested, that both are Belkin's creation.[49] In crafting the *Vie* Sainte-Beuve strives to remove any authorial marks, in order to let his alter ego stand alone; emphasizing his text's exact adherence to the original, and maintaining the same style throughout the text, thus becomes a way of tying the reader more closely to the given literary-biographical framework. Pushkin prefers to function as the enabling publisher-mediator, and makes Belkin yet another mediator, turning his “writing” into a mere act of compilation of other people's stories. Pushkin thus creates multiple authorial layers at the outset, enabling him to flaunt his craft as he weaves different narratives, tones, perspectives and even genres, into his text. The supposed faithfulness of *Joseph Delorme* serves to constrain the reader; the fidelity of the *Tales* serves to liberate its true author.

Pushkin also seems to have been attracted to Sainte-Beuve's attempt to write poetry from the standpoint of a humble, sometimes even vulgar reality. But Delorme's poverty—of which Barberis writes, “It is his poverty that gives new meaning to the importunity that devours Joseph Delorme. The theme, in consonance with that, is absolutely unprecedented” [50]—is turned on its head by Pushkin: Joseph Delorme becomes Ivan Belkin, a man of a respectable family, also poor in the material sense, hopelessly weak and with a penchant for writing, who does not seem to possess the same hankering after grandiose eloquence with which Sainte-Beuve invests Delorme. Belkin's sophistication as a narrator may be

debatable, but his subject matter, contrary to Delorme's, usually remains within the sphere of the common or "little people" upon which Sainte-Beuve intended his text to focus.

The vulgar realities and the "poetry of common things" that Sainte-Beuve deals with in *Joseph Delorme* seem most evident in some of its more coarse moments. These are generally of a physiological nature. (Critics have attributed the malady imagery to Sainte-Beuve's medical studies.[51]) Pushkin, with typical irony, noted in his review of the book that Delorme's muse coughs and spits blood; the physiological details included in the *Tales*' preface (the neighbor's mention of Belkin's doctor's specialty in corns, Belkin's own death of a severe cold) echo Sainte-Beuve's, albeit creating an effect that is tongue-in-cheek rather than tragic.[52] The sense of physical urgency that at times runs through *Joseph Delorme* stands in stark contrast to its attempted elegance and sophistication, and to the decidedly lofty tone of its writing.[53] Belkin, whose papers were used by his housekeeper to paste the windows of his house, seems very far removed from this canon.

Removal is a key word when dealing with *Joseph Delorme* and *The Tales of Belkin*. Sainte-Beuve created both Delorme and, to make his presentation even more indirect, the friend who writes the *Vie*. [54] The device is of course simplified in the second and third parts of the book—the *Poésies* and the *Pensées*—where one of the layers is removed and Delorme's work is directly transcribed. Pushkin borrowed the device of indirect representation in the *Tales* and, characteristically, took it to a new level: he creates the publisher A.P., an alter ego removed from Pushkin both by the substance and the ironic undertones of his remarks—yet who paradoxically also hints, if only through his initials, that he and Pushkin are one and the same.

To make matters more complicated, this A.P., in the preface of the *Tales*, introduces a book of tales collected by the writer Ivan Petrovich Belkin, who from what is said *is* a writer, an unpublished one, but who didn't write the tales we are about to read—he merely compiled them from a few unknown people ("heard by him from different people"). [55] To remove Belkin further still, the reader learns that this publisher hadn't met him; that neither had his only relative, Maria Alekseevna Trafilina; and that the unnamed and unnamable neighbor who did know him only shared with the readers a few facts and anecdotes of little or no interest, all unrelated to his writing. This is another instance in which the form of the *manuscrit trouvé* that dominates *Joseph Delorme* and which, in consonance with that tradition, is used to seal off the text and its possible readings, is used by Pushkin to serve the opposite purpose, that is, to raise questions about the text and open it to fresh possibilities.

Delorme's biography certainly underscores the romantic traits of the poet's life

and guides the reader's reaction to the poems:

In a word, Joseph's soul does not offer us from then on anything other than an unconceivable chaos, where monstrous imaginings, fresh reminiscences, criminal fantasies, great aborted reflections, wise foreshadowings followed by acts of madness, and pious impulses after blasphemous ones play and are confusedly agitated against a background of despair. [56]

These dramatic swings, paired with the poet's tempestuous life and its premature end—not to mention the biographer's speculations on Delorme's suicidal intentions—compel the reader to take seriously the ailing Delorme and the intensity of his romantic poems.

The *Tales'* preface likewise fixes a programmatic reading on the text; but Pushkin's publisher, "A.P.," with his scant knowledge of Belkin and his botched attempts to strike a scholarly tone, quickly forces the reader to become aware of the parodic nature of the text he is about to read. In the preface, "A.P." reproduces a letter that goes on a wide-ranging tour of incongruous aspects of Belkin's life—from his "weakness and disastrous negligence" in housekeeping and the managing of his estate to his physical description ("Ivan Petrovich was of medium height, had grey eyes, light brown hair, straight nose; his face was pale and thin") or his "truly girlish" bashfulness. [57] The publisher claims to reproduce the whole of Belkin's neighbor's letter, then says that he has left out an anecdote contained therein, and adds that the manuscript includes the source of each one of the tales, while merely providing the initials of each person! The ironic distance between Pushkin and the character who writes this preface is evident at times—such as when he states: "We publish it without any changes or explanatory notes, as the precious souvenir of a noble way of thinking and touching friendship and furthermore, a quite sufficient biographical notice"—and unclear at others. [58] By spoofing himself at the outset, Pushkin makes the reader his accomplice in what follows; and with this initial joke foreshadows the multiplicity of authorial presences that run through the text and that undermine Sainte-Beuve's theories.

The preface of the *Tales* serves to announce the artlessness and naiveté that Belkin's acquaintances and his publisher share; A.P. causes the *Tales* to take on a tone that spoofs the elegiac style with which Sainte-Beuve infuses *Joseph Delorme* by "unintentionally" ridiculing Belkin and portraying him as someone incapable of running his own life. This difference in tone seems significant; Belkin and Delorme stand in very different relationships to their work. Delorme's *Vie* emphasizes his constant struggle to stay away from his literary inclinations and to maintain his resolution to serve others through his medical work. Delorme's staunch determination to become useful and his refusal to follow his poetic calling,

especially given that it apparently deprived him of his only real pleasure, makes the reader even more aware of the tragedy of his fate. Delorme's poetry, and to a lesser degree his reflections, if seen as the result of the losing battle Delorme played against his own nature, acquire an urgent necessity and a more dramatic significance.

Perhaps more importantly, *Joseph Delorme* suggests, in keeping with Sainte-Beuve's own ideas, that a poet never *becomes* a poet, but rather is *born* one; in this sense, Joseph Delorme is the true son of French romanticism. Belkin's literary inclinations, in contrast, appear to be anything but a part of his nature. The reader in fact knows little about them, other than the few comments quoted in the preface: that his pleasure in reading came through the deacon who educated him, that his housekeeper earned his trust through her storytelling abilities, and that at his death he left behind a number of manuscripts. Delorme's tragic vocation, in Pushkin's rewriting, becomes a mere hobby: Belkin is no martyr to his craft, but rather a sort of accidental author, far removed from the higher calling that singled out Delorme and his sensitive nature. If, as is likely, Pushkin knew at the time he wrote the *Tales* who the real Joseph Delorme was, then it is easy to imagine that he conceived Belkin—incapable of dealing with his household problems, bullied by his housekeeper, and too bashful to talk to women—in direct opposition to the spleenful Delorme. Thus Belkin becomes Pushkin's response to Sainte-Beuve, deflating the grandiose literary theories of the French romantics, the condescension of their ideas of authorship and readership, and their pretensions to speak for the common man while adopting a tone far removed from his daily life. The very banality of Belkin's life—and the fragmentary and disparate nature of the tales themselves—points us to the humanity that Pushkin found lacking in Sainte-Beuve's work.

We can thus see that while Pushkin's *Tales* were heir to a rich tradition of found-manuscript texts—particularly Scott's work, for which Pushkin indubitably had a profound affection—they can be most fruitfully viewed as a robust response to Sainte-Beuve's *Joseph Delorme* and, more broadly, to the ideas established by his literary criticism. Pushkin infused *The Tales of Belkin* with a critical stance that dismantled Sainte-Beuve's post-romantic biographical method of interpreting literature; in this sense, Pushkin anticipated Marcel Proust's famous critique of Sainte-Beuve's method, as developed in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*:

The famous method [...] which consists in not separating the man from the work [...] of having first answered the questions that seemed the most alien to his work (how he behaved, etc.), to surround himself with all the information possible about a writer, to collate his correspondence, to interrogate the men who knew him, to talk to them if they still live, to read what they could have written about him if they died, this method is unaware of what the somewhat deep frequentation

of ourselves teaches us: *that a book is the product of a self other than the one we manifest in our habits, in society, in our vices.*[59]

Sainte-Beuve, in writing *Joseph Delorme*, created a surrogate author that would allow him to establish what was merely a nominal distance from his character, given the autobiographical nature of his text; Delorme was a vehicle for his own already extant creative persona, little more than a fleshed-out *nom de plume* that would support his biographical criticism. Pushkin, on the other hand, reinvented himself in Belkin, and in Belkin's acquaintances, thereby maximizing the creative freedom that this surrogate authorship allowed. In doing so, he not only refuted Sainte-Beuve's critical ideas and suggested his own; he also elevated the found manuscript device to new levels of subtlety and complexity that neither Scott nor Sainte-Beuve had reached, flaunting the potential of artifice as a key to some of the greatest complexities and possibilities of modern literature.

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[1] Scott's work had been available in Russian since the early 1820s. It is not clear when precisely Pushkin first encountered Scott, but his admiration of Scott's oeuvre is stated in an 1830 review of a novel by Mikhail Zagoskin.

[2] As Hoisington points out, November 16, 1830 is the date that Pushkin's preface assigns to the letter sent to the editor by Belkin's friend, the Nenaradova landowner: "this date may well have been borrowed from Scott: Jedediah Cleishbotham dates the 'Peroration' which concludes *Old Mortality* November 15, 1816." Hoisington, "Pushkin's Belkin and The Mystifications of Sir Walter Scott," *Comparative Literature* 33: 4 (Autumn 1981): 342-57, esp. 347.

[3] Caryl Emerson, "Pushkin, Literary Criticism, and Creativity in Closed Places," *NewLiterary History* 29: 4 (1998): 653-72, esp. 653.

[4] *Ibid.*, 654.

[5] Hoisington, "Pushkin's Belkin," 347.

[6] *Ibid.*, 357.

[7] *Ibid.*, 351.

[8] Christian Angelet, "Le topos du manuscrit trouvé: Considérations historiques et typologiques," in *Le topos du manuscrit trouvé: Hommages à Christian Angelet*, ed. Jan Herman and Fernand Hallyn (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), xxxi-liv; esp. xl. All translations from the French and Russian are my own.

[9] *Ibid.*, xlv.

[10] Irving had been translated into Russian in 1827. For a full account of Pushkin's debt to Irving in the writing of "The Golden Cockerel" and "The History of the Village of Goriukhino," see John Fiske's article, "The Soviet Controversy over Pushkin and Washington Irving," *Comparative Literature* 7: 1 (Winter 1955): 25-31.

[11] Another crucial precursor of that tradition in French letters was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761).

[12] Interestingly enough, between 1832 and 1833 Pushkin translated some of the ballads contained in *La Guzla*, finding out only later that he had been taken in by Mérimée's hoax, a fact of which Mérimée himself informed Pushkin's friend S. A. Sobolevsky in 1835. See Voyslav M. Yovanovitch, "*La Guzla*" de Prosper Mérimée: *Étude d'histoire romantique* (Paris: Hachette, 1911), 503-10.

[13] It was Sainte-Beuve's poetic debut but for an important exception: his poem "À la rime" had been previously published in 1828, both in *Tableau de la poésie française au seizième siècle* and in the *Annales romantiques*. See *Tableau historique et critique de la poésie française et du théâtre français au XVI^e siècle. Édition revue et très-augmentée* (Paris: Charpentier Libraire-Éditeur, 1843), 165, nn. 96 and 97. Pushkin obviously had read "À la rime" in 1829, since it influenced his lyric "Rifma, zvuchnaia podruga" of that same year. See Gerda Achinger, "Die Lyrik Sainte-Beuves als Faktor der lyrischen Textgenese bei Puškin," *Arcadia* 35 (2000): 45-65, esp. 47-48.

[14] Some sections of this had been printed in *Le Globe*, with which Pushkin was familiar, from July 1827 onwards.

[15] A fact noted by both Gérard Antoine, "Introduction, notes et lexique," in Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme* (Paris: J & S éditeur, 2002), vii-ccvi; and Gustave Michaut, *Sainte-Beuve avant les "lundis": Essais sur la formation de son esprit et de sa méthode critique* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968). It was not only the autobiographical facts that gave

Sainte-Beuve away; most of the poets referred to by Delorme are the same ones upon whom Sainte-Beuve focused his critical attention. Ronsard, in particular, was amply discussed in Sainte-Beuve's *Tableau de la poésie française au seizième siècle* and was also the subject of an annotated edition he published shortly before *Joseph Delorme*. Sainte-Beuve's strong critical impulse leads Joseph Delorme to discuss and analyze his own work in the *Pensées* section of the book.

Furthermore, Antoine notes that most of the facts concerning Delorme's biography and mentioned in the *Vie*, if not corresponding directly to Sainte-Beuve's life, were direct displacements or décalages thereof. Indeed, Antoine claims that, "Where a born novelist would devise transpositions, he contents himself with [introducing] simple shifts: such [was the case] with places, or with dates [...] The parallels between the dispositions and tastes of Joseph and those of Charles Augustin are blinding: colored by childhood memories, studious poverty, painful uncertainty regarding the future, ravenous hunger for reading, sorrowful mood and fatal sensibility, dreams of voluptuousness soured by his timidity at the time of the conquest and his frightful withdrawal when faced with the chains of happiness: everything is there, absolutely everything..." ("Introduction," lv).

[16] In a letter to his friend M. Loudierre dated December 6, 1828, Sainte-Beuve wrote: "I will only add that I have sold the first edition of my Poems to Delangle for 400 francs, for 1,000 copies, and that I will start to be printed at the end of January. Until then, I will work on little else; I would rather perfect my little work" (12). This letter suggests that Sainte-Beuve was not taking great pains to conceal his authorship. Barberis, however, states the opposite when he claims: "In 1828 it was sincerely believed that Joseph Delorme had existed: proof of the efficiency not as much of the nominal subterfuge [...] but of the facts chosen, presented and highlighted [prove] that Joseph Delorme was possible and true." Pierre Barberis, "Signification de Joseph Delorme en 1830," *Revue des sciences humaines* 135 (July-September 1969): 365-90, esp. 373 (Barberis's emphasis). Incidentally, the March 26, 1829 issue of *Le Globe* introduces *Joseph Delorme* and reviews some of his poems without making mention of the fact that Delorme had never actually existed.

[17] Antoine, "Introduction," lvi. Critics have also noted connections between Sainte-Beuve's *Joseph Delorme* and the work of English lyricist Kirke White, who is mentioned in the *Vie* as one of Delorme's readings. The parallel was, in fact, noted by the book's first review, which came out in *Le Globe* before *Joseph Delorme* appeared in bookstores. See also Antoine ("Introduction," xxi-xxix) and Achinger ("Die Lyrik Sainte-Beuves," 60-61) for a more detailed discussion of the motifs Sainte-Beuve may have borrowed from White in the creation of Delorme.

[18] Sainte-Beuve apparently found surrogate authorship an effective device: he returned to it for his largely autobiographical novel, *Volupté* (1834), which was

published unsigned and presented as the work of a cleric named Amaury.

[19] René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950*, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955-92), 3: 34. It should be noted that Wellek's adverse opinion of Sainte-Beuve's criticism may have to do with the strong reactions that biographical criticism raised in his time. The Russian formalists' theories—as well as the New Criticism—marked a violent break with Romantic criticism, of which biographical criticism was probably the most widespread legacy.

[20] Antoine explains that “the idea of preceding the poems with a touching biography of their author was due to an established custom: the works of poor poets who died of hunger or of desperation at the dawn of their life were published at the end of the Empire and the beginning of the Restoration—Malfilâtre and Gilbert are the most illustrious examples of that kind. At the threshold of their Poems was included a sentimental and melancholic biography” (“Introduction,” iv).

[21] Michaut, *Sainte-Beuve avant les “lundis,”* 173.

[22] Pushkin owned two editions of *Joseph Delorme*, both published in Paris: one was dated 1829, the other one, referred to as “deuxième édition,” was published in 1830. See Boris Modzalevskii, “Biblioteka A. S. Pushkina,” *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki*, vypuski 9-10 (1910), 221. The first edition was the one published in Paris on April 4, 1829 by Delangle frères. Two new editions appeared in 1830; one was an expanded edition published again by Delangle, including four additional poems and two *pensées*, the second by Renduel.

[23] David Bethea, “Pushkin's Review of Sainte-Beuve's 'Vie, Poésies et Pensées de Joseph Delorme' and the Tat'iana of Chapter Eight of 'Evgenii Onegin,'" in *Analytischen als Deuten: Wolf Schmid zum. 60 Geburtstag*, ed. Lazar Fleishman, Christine Götz, and Aage Hansen-Löve (Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2004), 337-51, esp. 339-40.

[24] See Achinger, “Die Lyrik Sainte-Beuves,” 46. In his letter of 19-24 May 1830 Pushkin writes to Khitrovo, “Hugo and Sainte-Beuve are without doubt the only French poets of this time, especially Sainte-Beuve—and in this respect, if it is possible to obtain Sainte-Beuve's 'Les Consolations' in Petersburg, be kind, by heaven send it to me.” Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1937-59), 14: 93 (henceforth *PSS*.)

Pushkin's review of Sainte-Beuve's book states that the discovery of the real Delorme took place “suddenly” (*vdrug*; xi, 200), which seems to hint at his awareness of some specific event through which the real identity of Joseph Delorme became common knowledge. I have been unable to discover such an event.

[25] Bethea, "Pushkin's Review," 350.

[26] Irina Surat, "Tri Zametki," *Moskovskii pushkinist* 5 (1998): 211-16; Walter Vickery, "'Ja vas ljubil...': A Literary Source," *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 15 (1972): 160-67; Michael Wachtel, "Pushkin's Sonnets," in *Word, Music, History: A Festschrift for Caryl Emerson*, pt. 1, ed. Lazar Fleishman, Gabriella Safran, and Michael Wachtel, Stanford Slavic Studies, vols. 29-30 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 167-77.

[27] The precise date of composition of the preface remains, in fact, unclear. A strong indication that Pushkin wrote it *after* he finished the five stories is that he did not submit it to the censors alongside the rest of the tales in 1831. N. N. Petrunina notes that Pushkin first put together a sketch that may or may not have been the origin of the preface in 1829, but that a rough date for the writing of the actual preface ranges, in all likelihood, between 14 September 1830 and 9 December of that same year. Petrunina, "Kogda Pushkin napisal predislovie k 'Povestiam Belkina,'" *Vremennik Pushkinskoi komissii 1981* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985), 31-51.

[28] Victoria Sevastianova, "Belkin's Hidden Heartbreak: Gaps and Clues in Belkin's Tales," *Die Welt der Slaven* 50: 2 (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2005): 362-70.

[29] David M. Bethea, and Sergei Davydov, "Pushkin's Saturnine Cupid: The Poetics of Parody in *The Tales of Belkin*," *PMLA* 96: 1 (January 1981): 8-21.

[30] Schmid's interest lies chiefly in the preface as a frame text. See Schmid, *Puškins Prosa in poetischer Lektüre: Die Erzählungen Belkins* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1991), 51-61.

[31] An important consideration was that *Joseph Delorme* was a literary essayist's first attempt at poetry (and, to a lesser extent, at prose). Pushkin was in a similar position; in fact, the *Tales* inaugurated his "descent into prose." It is also worth noting that this was the first time Pushkin borrowed from a poet to write prose.

[32] Cf. Bethea and Davydov: "Though Pushkin chooses a domestic model for the epigraph to each story, he parodies or undermines the artistic intelligence of that model in every one except the last" ("Pushkin's Saturnine Cupid," 14). Their findings show yet another level at which Pushkin uses the *Tales* to comment on both the literature and the literary customs of his time.

[33] In *Tales of my Landlord*, notes serve at times to highlight the somewhat ridiculous character of Cleishbotham; they are most often used to explain Scottish idioms or to add details to the narrative. For instance, "a new-fangled machine" is described in a footnote as "Probably something similar to the barn-fanners now used for winnowing corn, which were not, however, used in their

present shape until about 1730. They were objected to by the more rigid sectaries on their first introduction, upon such reasoning as that of honest Mause, in the text." Scott, *Novels and Tales of the Author of Waverley*, vols. 7-12 (Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co., 1819. 12 vols. 1819), 7: 369. The former notes go unsigned; in the latter case, either the editor or Jedediah Cleishbotham make their authority clear by signing each note; "[the] accomplished authoress of 'Glenburnie'" is flanked by a footnote that reads, "Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton, now no more.—*Editor*" (9: 177); or "the intercession of a good-humoured visitor" is accompanied by a footnote adding "His Honour Gilbert Goslinn of Ganderclough; for I love to be precise in matters of importance.—J.C." (9: 16). The most curious aspect of the notes contained in the Introductory Epistle to *The Monastery* is, perhaps, their very presence: Captain Clutterbuck riddles his letter to "The Author of *Waverley*" with them, a curious way for a correspondent to proceed. These notes are mostly digressions concerning Clutterbuck's acquaintances, such as: "The nobleman whose boats are mentioned in the text, is the late kind and amiable Lord Summerville, an intimate friend of the author. David Kyle was a constant and privileged attendant when Lord Summerville had a party for spearing salmon; on such occasions, eighty or a hundred fish were often killed between Gleamer and Leaderfoot." Scott, *The Monastery* (London: J. M. Dent & Co.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910), 25.

[34] The first note opens the poem "À la Rime." Delorme's friend and editor avows to having previously published the poem that follows under his own name (see first footnote of this essay). The note at the end of "Le Cénacle," the second one in the text, reads as follows: "It is necessary to note that in his cenacle Joseph has not introduced but a handful of poets and a great painter very close among themselves, and to him, by relations of close friendship and vicinity. He cannot have meant to exclude from his ideal cenacle, more vast and more complete, so many other artists which he does not name (note from the editor)" (Sainte-Beuve, *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme*, 101). It is hardly necessary to point out the strangeness of this editor's need to apologize on behalf of the deceased Delorme for his selection of a literary canon. Could it be Sainte-Beuve keeping the peace among his colleagues?

[35] *Ibid.*, 177.

[36] "Следует анекдот, коего не помещаем, полагая его излишним. Впрочем уверяем читателя, что он ничего предосудительного памяти пок. [ойного] Белкина в себе не заключает" (*PSS*, 8: 61).

[37] The footnote reads as follows: "In fact, in Mr. Belkin's manuscripts above each tale there was a note written in the author's hand: heard by me from *such and such a source* (either their rank or title and their first and last names' initials follow). We copy them for curious researchers: "The Stationmaster" was told to

him by Titular Councillor A.G.N., “The Shot” by Lieutenant Colonel I.L.P., “The Undertaker” by Steward B.V., “The Blizzard” and “Young Lady” by the maiden K.I.T. ” (8: 61).

[38] “Сент-Бёвёв, известный уже «Историей французской словесности в XVI столетии» и ученым изданием Ронсара, вздумал под вымышленным именем И. Делорма напечатать первые свои поэтические опыты, вероятно опасаясь нареканий и строгости нравственной цензуры [sic]” (PSS, 11: 200).

[39] “Instead of a preface there was a description in the romantic style of the life of a poor young poet, who had died, as they assured us, in poverty and in obscurity. The friends of the deceased offered to the public verses and reflections, found in his papers, excusing Delorme for their inadequacy and errors, on the grounds of his youth, the ill condition of his soul and physical suffering. The verses show unusually bright talent, illuminated by a strange choice of subjects” (PSS, 11: 195).

[40] Bethea also notes this: “After introducing Delorme to his Russian audience Pushkin cites several long extracts, all in the original French, from the deceased’s poetry. These extracts are so extensive and the framing commentary by Pushkin so enthusiastic [...] that the reader falls under the sway of the poet’s strange and sad story. We feel that, with Pushkin’s guidance, we are learning something significant about the art of his day and about the views of poetic biography. But then, the same author who enjoyed literary ruses and who turned anonymous ‘publisher’ to give us the tales of the *late* Ivan Petrovich Belkin provides the punch line” (“Pushkin’s Review,” 338).

[41] Pushkin’s enthusiasm for writers generally considered mediocre has baffled and frustrated some critics—including Vladimir Nabokov, who complained that “Pushkin’s critical acumen is curiously absent in the extravagant praise he bestows [...] on Sainte-Beuve’s derivative and mediocre *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme*.” Nabokov, *Commentary. Chapter I. Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse*, by Aleksandr Pushkin, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 2: 154.

[42] The unsigned review of *Joseph Delorme* printed in the March 26, 1829 issue of *Le Globe* (a mere week before the book’s publication on April 4th of the same year) does not mention Sainte-Beuve as the work’s author. *Le Globe* discusses Delorme as a recently deceased poet: “This good Joseph Delorme whom few people met, and who, according to his biographer, died very young last autumn” (unsigned and untitled review of *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme*. *Le Globe* [26 March 1829]: 186-87, reprinted in *Le Globe: Journal philosophique et littéraire*, 9 vols. [Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974], 7: 186). Incidentally, Pushkin’s review in *Literaturnaia gazeta* borrows the same poems selected (and printed alongside the piece) by the *Globe* reviewer, as Tomashevskii notes (cited

by Bethea, "Pushkin's Review," 339). Pushkin himself also comments on some of the same stylistic aspects explored in the *Globe* review.

[43] "Introduction," Ixii.

[44] Emerson, "Pushkin, Literary Criticism, and Creativity in Closed Places," 656.

[45] Angelet, "Le Topos du manuscrit trouvé," lii.

[46] "[D]ans ce travail délicat, le journal est resté constamment sous nos yeux, et nous n'avons fait souvent que le transcrire" (*Vie*, 2).

[47] "Вышеупомянутые повести были, кажется, первым его опытом. Они, как сказывал Иван Петрович, большею частию справедливы и слышаны им от разныхъсоб" (*PSS*, 8: 61).

[48] Lieven D'Hulst, "De l'Usage d'un topos en poésie: Le manuscrit posthume de Joseph Delorme," in *Le Topos du manuscrit trouvé*, 372.

[49] Cf. Sevastianova: "Despite the variety of opinion regarding the degree of involvement of Belkin's correspondents, it is clear that he was purported to be the real author. Pushkin created too much of an elaborate background story to support a mere middleman who simply relates the stories told by others" ("Belkin's Hidden Heartbreak," 369).

[50] Pierre Barberis, "Signification de Joseph Delorme en 1830," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 135 (July-September 1969): 365-90, esp. 374.

[51] "[E]lle chante parfois, une toux déchirante / La prend dans sa chanson, pousse en sifflant un cri, / Et lance les graviers de son poumon meurtri" (134). This image would in fact find its way into Pushkin's poem "Osen" (cf. Achinger, "Die Lyrik Sainte-Beuves," 60-61).

[52] Scott's Jedediah Cleishbotham also plumbs the depths of the prosaic. For instance, in the preface to the second series of the *Tales of My Landlord*, he shares with his reader that "I have endued a new coat, (snuff-brown, and with metal buttons,) having all nether garments corresponding thereto" (iv); however, as is clear from this example, he does not quite attain the same depths reached by both Pushkin and Sainte-Beuve.

[53] Delorme's biographer, in fact, leaves no doubt as to this when placing him in the school of the great literary figures of his time: Chénier, Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo, and Deschamps (41).

[54] One important gap in *Joseph Delorme* concerns the identity of the biographer-friend, who remains unknown throughout. Knowing that Delorme was Sainte-Beuve's invention may lead the reader to assume that this friend *is* Sainte-Beuve

himself, much in the same way A.P. is a Pushkin persona of sorts. Another question that remains unanswered has to do with the identity of the editor who writes the notes included in the *Poésies* section: is it the same biographer-friend, or yet another person? The nature of these notes makes the answer to the question difficult to establish.

[55] “слышаны им от разных особ” (7: 61).

[56] “En un mot, l'âme de Joseph ne nous offre plus désormais qu'un inconcevable chaos, où de monstrueuses imaginations, de fraîches réminiscences, des fantaisies criminelles, de grandes pensées avortées, de sages prévoyances suivies d'actions folles, des élans pieux après des blasphèmes, jouent et s'agitent confusément sur un fond de désespoir” (27).

[57] “слабость и пагубное нерадение” (8: 60); “Иван Петрович был росту среднего, глаза имел серые, волоса русые, нос прямой; лицом был бел и худощав” (8: 61); “истинно девическая” (8: 61).

[58] “Помещаем его безо всяких перемен и примечаний, как драгоценный памятник благородного образа мнений и трогательного дружества, а вместе с тем, как и весьма достаточное биографическое известие” (8: 59).

[59] “La fameuse méthode [...] qui consiste à ne pas séparer l'homme et l'œuvre [...] d'avoir d'abord répondu aux questions qui paraissent les plus étrangères à son œuvre (comment se comportait-il, etc.), à s'entourer de tous les renseignements possibles sur un écrivain, à collationner ses correspondances, à interroger les hommes qui l'ont connu, en causant avec eux s'ils vivent encore, en lisant ce qu'ils ont pu écrire sur lui s'ils sont morts, cette méthode méconnaît ce qu'une fréquentation un peu profonde avec nous-mêmes nous apprend : *qu'un livre est le produit d'un autre moi que celui que nous manifestons dans nos habitudes, dans la société, dans nos vices.*” Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 127 (my emphasis).



