

The remark that the poem "Pamiati Mariny Tsvetaevoi" does not fit thematically into the cycle *Na rannikh poezdakh* fails to consider that the poem was included in the collection only by the editors of the Michigan edition and not by Pasternak himself (see both the notes to this poem in the Michigan edition and Gleb Struve's comment in *Sbornik statei posviashchennykh tvorchestvu B. L. Pasternaka*, p. 227). Some minor oversights occur as well: an article by I. N. Bushman [Irina Nikolaevna] is twice referred to as "his"; W. Weidlé's name appears not in its usual English spelling, but is transliterated from the Russian as V. Veydle; and for some reason Boris Eikhenbaum's article "Teoriia formal'nogo metoda" is quoted in German.

The book can serve as a basic guide for the reader largely unfamiliar with Pasternak. However, ample room remains for further general studies that would both probe more deeply into the individual works and provide a better overview of the corpus of Pasternak's work.

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ALEXANDER SOLSJENITSYN: BIOGRAFI OCH DOKUMENT. By *Hans Björkegren*. 2nd edition. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1972. 218 pp.

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN: A BIOGRAPHY. By *Hans Björkegren*. Translated by *Kaarina Eneberg*. New York: The Third Press, Joseph Okpaku Publishing Co., 1972. 186 pp. \$7.95.

SOLZHENITSYN. By *David Burg* and *George Feifer*. New York: Stein and Day, 1972. ix, 371 pp. \$10.00.

Now that Nobel Prize winner Solzhenitsyn is uncontestedly a figure of international significance, various attempts are being made in the West to piece together descriptions of his remarkable life and his career so far. As is the case with these biographies, some of the work is outstanding while other attempts are of limited value.

Hans Björkegren is a journalist who spent several years in Moscow as a correspondent for a Swedish newspaper. His book has its flaws, but despite some organizational awkwardness and a somewhat choppy newspaper style, it provides a substantial amount of information about Solzhenitsyn's life, along with an interesting selection of material from correspondence, magazine and newspaper articles, speeches, transcripts of meetings, and other such documents connected with the "Solzhenitsyn affair." Some of the texts Björkegren uses are more complete and more accurate than those in the 1970 Posev compilation (*Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, Frankfurt am Main, vol. 6: *Delo Solzhenitsyna*) or in the recent French collection (*Soljénitsyne*, edited by Georges Nivat and Michel Aucouturier, Paris: Éditions de l'Herne, 1971)—although the latter is valuable, among other things for a number of interesting items from the Soviet press that I have not seen in any other Western collection, and for printing full texts which have often been abridged in other publications, such as Labeledz (*A Documentary Record*, edited by Leopold Labeledz, 1971; see review in *Slavic Review*, December 1972). In documenting the period up to the end of 1970, Björkegren has little to offer that is not at least as effectively presented in the Labeledz collection, in spite of abridgments. However, the second edition of Björkegren does include reports of the most

recent intrigues and activities (1971–72), events covered but not documented in the same kind of detail by Burg and Feifer. Taking only documents into consideration, Björkegren's recent book is perhaps the most up-to-date one at present.*

However, as regards presentation and interpretation of the facts, Björkegren is of less interest, especially when viewed alongside Burg and Feifer. Attitudes and circumstances from Solzhenitsyn's fiction are assumed without discussion or demonstration to be autobiographical, personalities figuring in his life are sometimes presented very vaguely (Pavel Ličko and Victor Louis are needlessly spectral and ambiguous, for example), and there is often no clear picture of the broader cultural movements against which Solzhenitsyn's biography needs to be viewed. Quotations, moreover, are sometimes abbreviated or edited without comment, while thematic and chronological roughness mars the text and makes it difficult to follow at times. Finally, the image and personality of Solzhenitsyn himself do not emerge with the force and definition one might expect of a good biography.

In spite of its weaknesses, Björkegren's book hardly deserved to fall into the hands of the translator and copy editors of the Third Press. Their product looks amateurish and sloppy when examined at all closely. The translation itself, uneven and graceless at best, is often confused and sometimes simply incoherent. What is a story, for instance, "without a non-too-serious content" (p. 56)? There are many such spots. On one remarkable page (p. 62) Solzhenitsyn is reportedly accused of an "extraordinary incompetence in interpreting a contemporary material of realities," the journal *Novyi mir* is said to come out in "editions," another journal is identified as "*Okchabr*," and a literary debate "rolls off and on" in the press. Here is a small sampling of the kinds of oddities this book contains: at his literary emergence in 1962, Solzhenitsyn the beginner (*debutanten*) becomes an "upstart" in the English version (p. 47); newspaper headlines described as enthusiastic (*patetiska*) become, inevitably, "pathetic" (p. 49); at one point the Lenin Hills in Moscow (*Leninsbergen*) are reduced to a single lonely hill (p. 60); *Literaturnaia gazeta* (sometimes "*Gazetta*"), still a newspaper in Björkegren's text, is consistently a "magazine" in translation; the dread SMERSH, translated gently as "Death for the spies," is spelled out for the reader as "*Smerch Shpionam*" (p. 24); Iulii Daniel becomes "Yuri" (p. 79); "Tvardosky" and "Krushchev" impersonate Tvardovsky and Khrushchev (pp. 44 and 69); and August 31 becomes "August 3" (p. 61).

Often what was once Russian and then a fairly faithful Swedish is distorted finally beyond recognition in the English version. An example of this is the transcript of the notorious November 1969 meeting of the Riazan writers' organization that was summoned to oust Solzhenitsyn (pp. 143–54). This is an extremely powerful document reflecting a unique point in Solzhenitsyn's career as well as the duplicity of some of his colleagues, but in the translation the force of the moment is sapped by awkward phrasing, malformed syntax, translation clearly based on misunderstanding, and (the editor's fault) confusion over what is quotation and what is commentary. In almost startling contrast to these garbled passages are a number of quotations from English translations published in *Problems of Communism* or *Survey* (sometimes with a few words changed), or taken directly from published translations of Solzhenitsyn's works, such as Thomas

* After this writing an enlarged edition of the Labeledz book appeared (Indiana University Press, 1973), in which are included documents from the Solzhenitsyn affair well into 1972.

Whitney's version of *The First Circle* (Harper and Row), which in several places (p. 33, for instance) is copied out word for word, again with no indication of source.

The Eneberg translation of Björkegren's book, incidentally, was based on the 1971 edition, which means that besides what has been pointed out above, a few inaccuracies which have been corrected in his 1972 revised edition still appear (such as locating the émigré publishing house Possev-Verlag in Belgrade instead of Frankfurt am Main, p. 133). There is little to recommend in this book.

On the other hand, George Feifer, the American author of *Justice in Moscow* and *The Girl from Petrovka*, and Russian-born David Burg, who writes regularly for the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* in London, have made a really first-rate contribution. Their book is a serious, thorough study which was written in spite of considerable personal risk and difficulty, not to mention Solzhenitsyn's almost total aversion to publicity. Some scholars may not care for the slightly popularized tone at times, but the book is well organized, and the mass of material—much of it unearthed in the Soviet Union firsthand by the authors—is well presented. The reader moves year by year through Solzhenitsyn's life—from his arrest, the labor camps, cancer, exile, recovery and rehabilitation, through the complications of de-Stalinization and the brief moment of official recognition and encouragement, to the denunciations, harassment, humiliation, and final "depersoning." Each moment is dramatized effectively and imaginatively without sensationalism. The circumstances, content, and impact of Solzhenitsyn's work are analyzed and interpreted with a great deal of sensitivity to the author's current political position, as well as his ideas, his own human character, and his personality. Finally, besides portraits and other illustrations, the reader is given a helpful chronology of Solzhenitsyn's life and an accurate index, which makes the book handy for reference.

The question about sources is inevitable, given the nature of the work and the hostility of the conditions under which it was researched. Where did the authors get their information? Certainly a lot of interviewing and detective work had to be done, but much of the evidence for Solzhenitsyn's life has been found in his own works. Karamzin's words, "A creator is always depicted in his creation," serve as an epigraph for this biography. When the authors do use characters and events incorporated in Solzhenitsyn's fictional settings to reconstruct his life, however, they establish convincingly the autobiographical nature of the material, often even citing the names of friends who did not mind corroborating such information. Or, in the authors' own words, "Rare speculation . . . without which the genre of biography could hardly exist—is clearly identified" (p. 10).

The cultural and political background for Solzhenitsyn's life is admirably drawn with all the drama and complexity of each trend and moment. His tormentors as well as his supporters are treated vividly, but in perspective and with fairness. Solzhenitsyn's predicament is sometimes illuminated by comparison with Pasternak's situation at the end of the 1950s, while an effort is made to explore Soviet realities in Western terms when possible, to explain the determining political factors behind Solzhenitsyn's treatment at home, to account for the activities of other writers, to untangle the web of his publication in the West, and so forth.

The authors of this book name as one of their purposes the dispelling of misinformation about Solzhenitsyn, and attempt to justify a biography which the writer himself was against on the grounds that the world has a right to the real facts. They handle their topic with sensitivity, discretion, and respect. They show

Solzhenitsyn as a symbol of dignity and supreme honesty tested in his own homeland by a whole arsenal of government agencies and information media, yet never compromised. But they also show him as a human being—impatient, cautious, incredibly self-disciplined, a clever man who, amid great moral pressures made immediate and real in this book, observes, learns, and survives.

There have been objections to this book, even an attack by one of the authors' collaborators on the allegedly "irresponsible manner" in which it was written (Veronika Turkina in the *New York Times Book Review*, September 17, 1972; answered by George Feifer, *NYTBR*, October 8, 1972). But Burg and Feifer are far from irresponsible. Their book is not only a worthy tribute to Solzhenitsyn's talent and literary achievement, but a moving description of a man of profound religious faith and patriotism, and finally a convincing explanation of how that man has come to be a significant ethical force today in Russia and in the world.

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STANICA U PUSTINJI. By *Joseph Brodsky*. Translated by *Mića Danojlić*. Preface by *Milica Nikolić*. "Biblioteka Orfej." Belgrade: "Nolit," 1971. 140 pp.

In the introduction to this Serbo-Croatian translation of Joseph Brodsky's *Ostanovka v pustyne* Milica Nikolić remarks that Brodsky is a "modern" poet, outside the contemporary Russian poetic tradition which is based on nineteenth-century aesthetics. Nikolić conjectures that Brodsky, who emigrated to the United States in 1972, would not be popular in the USSR even if his works were published there, because "his poetry has something which is not in tune with the taste and sensibility of the times" (Soviet "times," presumably). Nikolić feels that in the USSR Brodsky will always remain the poet of only one stratum of readers, "those marvelous aficionados of art, the sort to be found nowhere else but in Russia."

It might seem a relatively simple task to translate poetry from one Slavic language into another, but quite the opposite is true. Danojlić's translation, when compared with the original, provides a good example of the difficulties in translating, for example, from Russian into Serbo-Croatian. It is true that both languages have similar morphological systems, as well as a common lexical inventory. But the Serbo-Croatian sounds are substantially different from the Russian (particularly with respect to the pureness of Serbo-Croatian vowels, the highly palatal quality of some consonants, and the absence of palatalized consonants). This all means that it was impossible for Danojlić to duplicate the rich masculine texture of Brodsky's verse. A further handicap which he faced, and perhaps even more crucial, was the difference between the stress systems in the two languages: Serbo-Croatian stress tends to be fixed and predictable, whereas Russian stress is highly mobile. This difference made it almost impossible for Danojlić to duplicate the rhythm of the Russian original. A great loss, indeed.

These inadequacies aside, Danojlić's translation may be considered reasonably accurate. His work is obviously a labor of love, done with much care. He takes few liberties with the original, and this is a blessing, because Brodsky is a strongly intellectual poet. There *are* some minor mistranslations, here and there, and one would wish Danojlić had translated the same word the same way each time it is used in a poem.