"The lie can withstand a great deal in this world but it cannot withstand Art."

Solzhenitsyn, the Creative Artist, and the Totalitarian State

Q. D. Leavis

INTRODUCTION

Q. D. Leavis intended to deliver the following paper as a lecture to a summer school organized by the Department of Education and Science and held in Cambridge in July 1981. Mrs. Leavis had been working on the subject of the paper during the previous winter, when the illness by which she had been intermittently dogged since February 1980 led to her admission to hospital in March of the following year. It was her intention to start writing out the lecture on her return home, but she was too ill to do so. She died a few days later.

The delay in publication is largely due to the editor's dissatisfaction with his original draft; the eventual emergence of the present, more satisfactory version is attributable in no small measure to the encouragement and constructive suggestions of three interested friends: Robin Leavis, of the University of Nijmegen; David Hopkins, of the University of Bristol; and notably Maurice Kinch, co-author of F. R. and Q. D. Leavis, An Annotated Bibliography (New York, 1989), who copy-edited the completed article.

Mrs. Leavis's interest in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn first became evident in 1977, when she wrote her contribution to the symposium New Perspectives on Melville (Edinburgh, Scotland, 1978). In this essay, entitled "Melville: The 1853-6 Phase," she asks why it is that The Confidence-Man (1857) ends in despair, when Solzhenitsyn's much more dreadful account in The First Circle (1968) of an evil society does not. She notes in partial explanation that there was in Russia a "great, undying tradition of a literature in general possession and of the poet's importance, which [Melville's] pioneer society lacked."

It is probable, however, that the paper here presented took shape in Mrs. Leavis's mind as a result of the wide reading she undertook when preparing the lecture on the Russian novel that she delivered at the Queen's University of Belfast in 1980, as part of a series of lectures and seminars on the European and the American novel. It will be noted by readers who take the trouble to look up the published version of that lecture, which can be found in the second volume of Mrs. Leavis's Collected Essays (Cambridge, Eng., 1985), that there is in fact a certain amount of duplication in the present paper:
the comments on Dr. Zhivago (1957) and The First Circle, on Sinyavsky and on Solzhenitsyn's use of language are all very similar. No attempt has been made to excise the relevant passages here, because they constitute an integral part of the argument; in any case, they amount to only about one-fifth of the whole piece. Comparable overlaps may be found in the later and posthumous publications of F. R. Leavis.

The present paper is also foreshadowed in the last substantial article by Mrs. Leavis to be published in her lifetime: the 1980 Cheltenham Festival Lecture entitled "The Englishness of the English Novel," which was repeated soon after in the Redgrave Theatre, Clifton College, the institution at which she had given annual lectures and seminars to candidates for entrances to Oxford and Cambridge for the previous seven years. (The article was reprinted in the first volume of her Collected Essays [Cambridge, Eng., 1983].) In this remarkably wide-ranging survey, Mrs. Leavis favorably contrasts Solzhenitsyn's novels, and also Dr. Zhivago, with the "most acclaimed" contemporary English novels, which "deal with artificial worlds, inhabited by cardboard characters whose behaviour is arbitrary, so that one forgets each novel immediately after reading it."

Mrs. Leavis would have admitted that she was of course handicapped by her inability to read the original Russian texts, but this limitation was less serious than might be supposed because of the enormous breadth of her reading: not merely almost every conceivable work of fiction produced by Western civilization, but also a vast number of relevant historical, sociological, and autobiographical texts. Certainly the present paper provides further evidence of the intense interest she exhibited throughout her career from Fiction and the Reading Public (1932) onwards, in the relationship between art and society.

One may reasonably speculate that Mrs. Leavis would have been fascinated by the political and cultural developments now taking place in the Soviet Union. It is certain that, while not feeling surprise, she would have deplored the fact that publication of Solzhenitsyn's later works is still prohibited there, despite that astonishing relaxation of literary censorship that forms an essential part of Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost. Equally, while applauding the fact that Andrei Sinyavsky has been able to return to Moscow after fifteen years, she would have noted the bitter truth that his friend Yuli Daniel was by then dead, only a year or so after that other heroic and persecuted writer, Anatoly Marchenko.

—BRIAN WORTHINGTON

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN'S work presents for the reader this side of the Iron Curtain a particular difficulty. We who as of right and unthinkingly breathe the air of a democratic society, with our ancient traditions of freedom of thought and speech and publication, must make a great imaginative effort to realize the peculiar conditions in which Solzhenitsyn's works were written and disseminated. Fortunately he has provided us with documentation of these conditions in his open letters to public figures, his debates on his difficulties with his political critics and the Soviet Writers' Union, and his Nobel Prize lecture. All of these are now conveniently accessible in his volume where they are collected, The Oak and the Calf (1980), and the necessary background is presented in the three volumes of his great work, The Gulag Archipelago (1973).

We can check that these are not the products of monomania nor even exaggerations of the facts of his life and times by comparing his non-fictional writings with obviously reliable, unheated if embittered, books available in print—and God knows how many more have perished unpublished—such as the great composer Dmitri Shostakovich's autobiography, Testimony (1979), with the invaluable notes appended by his pupil and confidant Solomon Volkov; the two volumes of Nadezhda Mandelstam's autobiography, Hope Against Hope (1970) and Hope Abandoned (1972); Anatoly Marchenko's account of his life in prison and labor camps under both Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev, My Testimony (1969) (he, a Siberian child of Stalin's Russia, achieved moral and intellectual freedom from communism in Khrushchev's Russia and after two bouts of imprisonment has disap-
peared into a death camp); *People, Years, Life* (1961), the memoirs of Ilya Ehrenburg, a novelist and critic who wrote the well-known novel *The Thaw* (1954) and who survived all changes of régime; and novels by other writers anatomizing the system and structure of the Soviet machine and the ethical problems its theory and workings pose, such as Victor Serge's *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* (1950), Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940), and Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone* (1956).

The Serge and the Koestler books, it should be noted, preceded any of Solzhenitsyn's works, and it is certain that he never read them, as they have never been published in the Soviet Union and were not in fact written in Russian, so they are particularly useful in being independent of him and each other and he of them. Shostakovich's autobiography gives a detailed history of music and the struggles of musicians in post-Revolutionary Russia which is parallel and comparable to, though independent of, other accounts of the situation as regards literature and the effects of communism in practice on the life of the mind generally and on men of letters in particular. There can therefore, I take it, be no argument as to the facts of what we are going to consider. Nor is it sound to argue that these conditions apply only to Stalin's régime, for Marchenko and Shostakovitch show that conditions were even worse under his successor, and in 1973 Andrei Sakharov had the courage to tell the outside world through a press conference that "the USSR is one great concentration camp," while Nadezhda Mandelstam declared that the only difference between Stalin's age and the present is that "they don't take you away in the night any more." In 1973 the typist of *The Gulag Archipelago* was tortured by the State Security police until she revealed where she had hidden a copy, and was then murdered by them. The situation of the writer in Soviet Russia is to be considered unchanged.

A striking deduction from all these books I've mentioned is that though written by people living in Soviet Russia or in the case of Serge and Koestler by subscribers originally to European communist theory, they could only have proceeded from a critical attitude, passionately detached from the ethos they shared. They are surely witnesses to an indestructible source of integrity and intuitive knowledge of the difference between good and evil that these writers have somehow tapped in spite of their original conditioning by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Some of them of course, like Mandelstam and his wife, Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova and their circle, had the advantage of having in their youth inherited from parents and teachers the liberal ideas of the intelligentsia of Tsarist Russia, and also imbibed the values and principles of that ethos through the works of the great Russian poets and novelists of the past, and the opera, drama, and music of the nineteenth-century Russian geniuses, as well as through the works current in Russia till the Revolution of the great thinkers and writers of England, France, and Germany that equally formed part of Russian culture under the Tsars. But this still leaves us with the cases of those like the composer Shostakovich, the proletarian worker Marchenko, and the scientist dissidents like Sakharov, who were all born after the Revolution and exposed to a Soviet education and conditioning from infancy. Such also are the literary dissidents like the poet Andrei Sinyavsky and his friend, the writer Yuli Daniel, both born in 1925 and imprisoned for publishing their banned works abroad; Yuri Galanskov, the poet, prose writer, and editor born in 1939, imprisoned repeatedly in psychiatric institutions and finally moved to a strict-régime camp which killed him off; and Aleksandr Ginzburg, born in 1937, who was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned for demanding human rights and finally deported in 1974.

II

The older Russian writers—Akhmatova, Mandelstam, and Pasternak—were figures
who, grown up before the slave-state came into operation, were writers from outside it and could never be assimilated into it morally or intellectually. Solzhenitsyn, born in 1918, unlike Shostakovich (1906) was literally a child of the Revolution and knew no previous freedom: But they both had to work out for themselves the position in ethics which, as creative artists and intellectuals, they could adopt as their own, without help from outside. Shostakovich did this by means of the role of yurodiy. Solzhenitsyn, with the help of Leo Tolstoy's and Fyodor M. Dostoevsky's writings and in the light of his own experience of prisons and prisoners, became the interpreter of the Soviet world and its moralist. His awakening to what communism and Stalin had made of Russia was due to his experience of the Second World War and his arrest and imprisonment for criticism in a letter of the leader's conduct of the war, and his release ten years later into a monstrous society. His indictment of it parallels that of Nadezhda Mandelstam. Her husband, Osip Mandelstam, tried to survive as a poet who, though not allowed to be published, carried on privately in freedom of spirit; yet he felt obliged at some point to register his criticism of the régime by writing a poem on Stalin's crimes ("the devourer of peasants," etc.) and reading it to friends, from whom it inevitably leaked, leading to his imprisonment and death.

In Hope Against Hope Mrs. Mandelstam considers the consequences of the developing official hostility towards independent writing from the 1920s onwards. Stalin ordered that all literature must be "natural in form and socialist in content." Mandelstam attacked his call. Form and content are indivisible, he pointed out; otherwise writers are only "translators of ready-made meaning."

People were always saying how impossible M. was. In fact, it was simply that he was uncompromising: what a pity this was not a quality that could be doled out to others—he had enough of it for a dozen writers. He was particularly uncompromising in his attitude towards our academic intelligentsia. "They've all sold out."

People were generally presented with such [Party] "statements," and asked to put their signature to them. "He probably only signed it," I suggested. "That makes it even worse," said M. But what, objectively, could the academician have done? Could he have revised the text? I doubt it. Or could he have thrown out the person who came to collect his signature? Can one expect people to behave like this, knowing what the consequences will be? I do not think so, and I do not know how to answer these questions. But a question one may ask now is: was there a moment in our life when the intelligentsia could have held out for its independence? There probably was, but, already badly shaken and disunited before the Revolution, it was unable to defend itself during the period when it was made to surrender and change its values. . . . People talked much more freely and openly in working-class homes than in intellectual ones in those savage times [outside Moscow, that is]—"hereditary proletarians" were scathing about the show trials. . . . They clung firmly to their proletarian conscience.

A woman told Mrs. Mandelstam that in the forced labor camps she and her companions in misfortune always found comfort in the poetry which, luckily, she knew by heart and was able to recite to them.

The second part of Mrs. Mandelstam's memoirs, Hope Abandoned, confirms how stark was the choice demanded by tyranny:

A poet is a private person who works "for himself" and has nothing whatsoever to do with literature as such. In the Union of Writers the poet is always a foreign body, subject to expulsion like Pasternak or Solzhenitsyn. There is no point in making a great fuss when this happens, and I have little faith in the well-meaning youngsters who do: they also eat their oats from the feed racks of the Writers' Union.

All of us, M. and Pasternak included, were never able to develop some of our ideas. . . . The mind was captive. To some extent the mind is always captive to our times, but these can either enlarge or limit its horizon; in ours it was reduced to the most beggarly
dimensions. We were so weighed down by the cruel realities of our epoch and the prevailing philosophy of life that we were incapable of real thought—only of idle talk. The times favoured those who had really nothing to say. Three poets [Akhamtova, Pasternak, and Mandelstam] who had something to say also had to pay their price: for a time they were stricken dumb. This was by no means the highest price one could pay. Prose writers, whose work by its nature depends vitally on ideas, paid even more dearly.

Typical of the empty work of the Marxist-Leninist ethos is that of Ilya Ehrenburg, as a novelist the lackey of Stalin obediently toeing the party line. The Thaw duly delivers the message that all the troubles of the Stalinist economy and all the apparent wrongs were due to the managerial level and the bosses in the Party didn’t know about them, but now they did, all would be put right; the thaw had begun including that of the censorship of the arts. No matter that nothing had really changed and another freeze soon followed.

Ehrenburg was an ambiguous figure, explained to some extent by Mrs. Mandelstam, who was able to observe his changing attitudes to her husband’s poetry and the work of other writers of their Russia. Under the influence of Hitler’s conquest of France he became a changed person and told her, “There is only poetry left,” but when Russia entered the war his despair disappeared; he was again indifferent to the countless victims of Stalin except for Mandelstam, who, he finally argued, had brought his arrest on himself by writing a poem against Stalin. But he did what he could for writers as long as it did not endanger himself, and in People, Years, Life (his memoirs published a few years before his death in 1967) he gives a powerful account of the fate of the Russian intelligentsia under Soviet rule, salvaging many lost names for history and the younger generation, who, Mrs. Mandelstam thought, profited by this work of recovery. She sums him up thus:

He was as helpless as everybody else, but at least he tried to do something for others. It may well have been he who first roused people into reading samizdat.

Yet Ehrenburg, a pre-Revolutionary intellectual, ran a periodical advocating a Marxist utilitarian view of art, and always paid lip-service to the régime and so managed to be extremely productive as a novelist and journalist, though after Stalin’s death he felt safe enough to advocate freedom for writers and artists and to support the cultural values that the Soviet system had attempted to do away with. He was an opportunist who thought integrity demanded too high a price as things were, but he was not really base; he seriously cared for the artist and, though unfeeling personally, gave advice and help to some writers. His sardonic tone and irony were the inevitable accompaniments of his basic ambiguity; Mrs. Mandelstam noted that he had developed this in his earlier days as a writer. She says he “took refuge in a kind of ironical knowingness. He had already understood that irony is the only weapon of the defenceless.”

The Revolutionary period and the civil wars and aftermath—as may be seen in the poet Pasternak’s novel Doctor Zhivago—gave rise to the problem of keeping civilized values in being for a future Russian society after the transitional phase was over, to keep in touch with Russia’s spiritual past in an officially determined atheistic society: of keeping a way of life somewhere that can support creative minds. (Many poets and artists committed suicide from disappointment and moral shock at what had happened to the Revolution: more were killed by hunger, disease, unjust imprisonment, or execution.)

With Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn the great Russian tradition was picked up again. In Doctor Zhivago Pasternak takes his doctor-poet through the Revolution and the Civil War that followed, by means of the family life, loves, and career of the protagonist, thus making use of Tolstoy’s model War and Peace. Instead, however,
of a nation defending its fatherland from a foreign invader, a purely physical conflict, Pasternak’s Russia is at war within and there are no clear-cut divisions of who are the enemy and who the patriots—as political and ideological groups temporarily get the upper hand, right and wrong, good and bad, patriot and traitor constantly change their meaning, and the moral bewilderment in political chaos is the worst feature of the wars that destroyed not only the cities, animals, crops, and populace, but also even more the certainties and values of innocent people. Yet amidst these horrors, both physical and spiritual, the human values—love, responsibility and home, the love of nature and the life of the spirit—are salvaged and kept alive however fragmentarily, like a flickering flame that is never quite extinguished in a storm. This is symbolized, but also exemplified in convincing detail, by the chapters in which the fugitive poet Yuri (Pasternak), shut up in the deserted village with his second wife (his inspiration, Larisa) and her child, can recapture the happiness of family life in spite of the horrors of the civil war now outside and the privations of cold and hunger in the depths of the forest in the Russian winter. Outside he is threatened by the wolves (hungry animals; human beings waging a relentless war) or by nature (the Russian winter) and by fate; but he finds that these conditions are the challenge and the stimulus he needs to compose—he writes through the nights poems related to his position and that of humanity, at peace in the midst of war because he is fulfilling his function, by day cutting wood and carrying out other domestic duties to enable the family to survive, by night working “for the race.” He is (symbolically) a doctor and has functioned as such with the partisans but—at the risk of his own life from the partisans—carrying out the doctor’s ethic of treating wounded enemies as well.

Both as poet and doctor Zhivago is a dedicated man, though unlike his creator he finally decides to emigrate with his family. This dual role means that the creative writer lives a personal life as a man and a professional life as a poet and writer, which together commit him absolutely to serve society in his vocation. In Doctor Zhivago Pasternak even takes us into the poet’s workshop and shows the tremendous effort of concentration and the devotion it demands. But society also has its obligations to the artist—it must allow of conditions which will support genius. In the last stage of the novel, Zhivago has given up writing poetry and has married a girl of the people, supporting his family by menial work and gradually dying of heart trouble: He has lost his vocation as doctor and as poet. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the physical conditions brought about by the civil wars have robbed him of it. Society is the poorer. And the child of Lara and Zhivago’s passionate love is a waif, abandoned of necessity during the flight to the East as a baby and now one of the wretched hordes of such children who struggled to survive by whatever means in Soviet Russia. But unlike Zhivago, Pasternak refused to emigrate with his family, showing by implication his own courage and outspokenness.

III

MY CONCERN is with the particular case of the creative writer or musician. There is no need to describe the effects on higher journalists, literary critics, and historians, who are exposed to direct censorship on unmistakable lines laid down by state authorities and who only risk losing their integrity if they bow to current directives in their subjects. Solzhenitsyn points out that “a literary critic is even more vulnerable to any rap over the knuckles from politicians than a creative artist.” The critic had hurdles to surmount: An extensive course in Marxism-Leninism at the university was needed to get a good degree: to study for a higher degree it was necessary to be a member of the Komsomol. A genuine creative elite, Solzhenitsyn says, is always very small in number and individualist through and through. But in contemporary Russia a
shoddily educated rabble has usurped the title of the intelligentsia.

The dilemma of the creative writer in a Communist society is illustrated by the case-history of Alexander Tvardovsky, a peasant-poet and would-be innovating chief editor of Novy Mir. Frustrated by the state censorship and, even worse, torn between the dictates of his conscience as a writer and his loyalty to his Soviet principles, he took refuge in huge drinking-bouts which eventually destroyed him. Fortunately he was a peasant by origin (and so was Khrushchev); thus, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (1963), the peasant's eye view of a prison camp, got permission to be published. Solzhenitsyn says: "It was not poetry or politics that decided the fate of my story, but that unchanging peasant nature. . . ." That was in 1962 and no other novel of Solzhenitsyn's was ever allowed to be published in Russia.

Tvardovsky was "a famous poet, the editor of the best magazine in the country, an important figure in the Writers' Union, and not unimportant in the Communist Party." 7

A true artist himself, he could not reproach me with not telling the truth. But to admit that it was the whole truth would have undermined his political and social beliefs at their foundations. . . . It was not of course the first time that he experienced a destructive collision within his soul. . . . His first "loyalty" was to Russian literature, with its devout belief in the moral duty of a writer. . . . He had wanted only to be like them—like Pushkin and those who came after him. But this was another age and another, more powerful truth had been implanted in all of us, especially in chief editors, and had been everywhere acknowledged: the Party's truth. In our time he could not set the course of Russian literature, could be of no help to it, without a Party card. It was vitally important to him that these two truths should not diverge but merge. . . . Whenever Tvardovsky's first [poetic] self felt strongly attracted to a manuscript, he had to test the feelings of his second [political] self before he could publish it as a work of Soviet literature. 8

Tvardovsky was removed in 1954 for publishing an article "On Sincerity" but reinstated in 1959; he was dismissed in 1970. He and his staff had learned their lesson, so that when Cancer Ward (1968) came in to be considered for publication they all knew that "writing about sincerity was wrong." They insisted that Solzhenitsyn should amputate the chapter with Aviette and the discussion of sincerity in literature, though Solzhenitsyn pointed out that actually the subject of sincerity had come up in the hospital in which he was being treated for cancer, and that everything Aviette says about literature was taken from Party utterances or the official comments by Party critics. Hence this chapter is as much a necessity in the novel's structure (because an essential part of the theme) as the section of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina where the role of the artist and relation of the painter to the world of the Russian aristocracy are investigated by the drama enacted between Vronsky as amateur artist and the true artist.

The head of the KGB at this time (1966) saw the writer as the main danger to the régime. Solzhenitsyn says, "A poet cannot be a Party member for so many years without paying the price," but 100 writers supported him in 1967, amounting to "a writers' rebellion." 9

Creative writers—novelists, playwrights, and especially poets, if major talents, are bound to be recalcitrant to the coarse party-line directives of the dictatorship. The difficulty for the instruments of the Party machine is determining what in fact is the message of any given work and whether its technical means are objectionable to the authorities. It is easier for the artist to make these tasks impossible in music and poetry, whose language is obscure, than in novels or drama. The problem of the creative mind is how to survive spiritually and intellectually in a totalitarian climate, that is, how to go on writing or composing under at worst the fear of death and at best knowing the book could not be allowed to be published or
the music performed. Opera and songs were more vulnerable, because more easily understood, than music without words. It was his successful opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* that brought about Shostakovich's original downfall.

To circumvent censorship, Shostakovich reorchestrated and made a new edition, for performance, of Modest Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov*, which powerfully appealed to him as the recurrent Russian tragedy of the people oppressed by a tyrant. It was a way of expressing allegorically what he had dared not utter in any other form. "Music," he said, "is man's last hope and final refuge," and "I always felt that the ethical basis of *Boris* was my own." 10 Again: "I sometimes got so carried away that I considered the music mine, particularly since it came from within, like something I composed." The *yurodiy* plays an important part in *Boris*. (Shostakovich says that the *yurodiy*'s utterances at that time seemed like news from the papers—"not the official brazen lies that were packed in to fill pages but the news that we read between the lines.")

Shostakovich contrasts Mussorgsky with Igor Stravinsky. He says that the latter and Sergei Prokofiev, with their love of publicity, show "the loss of some very important moral principles . . . Stravinsky . . . always spoke only for himself while Mussorgsky spoke for himself and his country." Stravinsky and Prokofiev were not thoroughly Russian composers therefore, because of the "flaw in their personalities." And Shostakovich says that he admired another Russian composer, Alexander Dargomyzhsky, along with Mussorgsky: "... both men brought bent backs and trampled lives into music, and that's why they are dearer to me than so many other brilliant composers."

Shostakovich's revival of *Boris Godunov* may be compared with the situation during the last war in German-occupied Paris, when playwrights wrote plays on classical myths that were easily seen to apply to their present situation and its ethical problems. These plays were performed and applauded in the public theaters because German military censorship did not see that the dramas had a contemporary application. But the writers in occupied France had the French nation (except for those top-level traitors who sympathized with the Nazis) with them to give moral support and eagerly buy dissident poetry or attend deviously critical drama and opera—the French dramatists had recourse to the same "underground" art-forms as Shostakovich. In Russia the dissident intellectuals were unsupported by the workers or the middle class of bureaucrats and managers.

Shostakovich was bitter towards Western journalists and visiting politicians because they could not possibly understand or even believe in the all-embracing power of the state in Soviet Russia or the pressures under which its citizens lived. Except for the brief period of the Terror after the French Revolution, the inhabitants of Western Europe in the past few centuries have had no experience of anything of the sort. At the beginning of the eighteenth century when the poet John Gay's satiric work *The Beggar's Opera* was performed (a deadly satire on the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, and his government), Walpole sat in a box at the first performance and made a point of applauding, sending for Gay at its end to praise the piece, and following this up with a handsome present of money to him. When the absolute monarch Frederick the Great noticed and read a satire against himself pasted on a wall he merely remarked that "they have fixed it too high up," and passed on. In short, until the rise of the Fascist, Nazi, and Soviet states, artists in Europe had a fair chance. Even in Russia in Pushkin's time, a phase of revolutionary movements when the poet was subject to literary censorship, the Tsar himself took over the censoring of what Pushkin wrote and the poet's voice was not silenced. The disconnectedness of Stavrogin's character and actions in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* is said to be due to Russian censorship; but only the chapter recording a piece of Stavrogin's depravity and the history of

Modern Age

301
his offences against decency seems to have been deleted in order to satisfy the censor at the time of publication, and Dostoevsky's finest novel was not impaired by this excision.

But under the Soviet régime artists, prose writers, poets, and musicians could not escape compulsory subservience to the state. Shostakovitch illustrates this in his autobiography with his anecdote about the monstrous White Sea canal, which was made over the bodies of millions of slave laborers. (For the conditions of making this, see *The Gulag Archipelago.*)

An entire brigade of respected Russian dullards wrote a collective book praising that canal. If they have any excuse at all, it is that they were taken to the canal one day and the next day any one of them could have been shovelling dirt there. Then again, Ilf and Petrov [well-known Russian satirical writers] got out of participation in that shameful "literary camp" anthology by saying that they "knew little" about the life of the inmates. Ilf and Petrov were lucky and they never did find out about that life, like many hundreds of other writers and poets did.

Thus the difference between Soviet censorship and that of any previous régime in history is that formerly censorship only suppressed heretical opinion, whereas Soviet censorship, as a Russian scholar has pointed out, "not only censors a writer, it dictates what he shall say." Russian literary classics, when restored after the censorship they had endured, are seen to be not substantially different, whereas post-Revolutionary works would not be altered because the Soviet censorship transformed manuscripts into the opposite of the authors' intentions.

Shostakovitch justifies his own ambiguous position when he argues that the "famous humanists" of the West (represented by delegates and journalists visiting Russia for information), gullible, biased, and unable to realize that if any Russian questioned spoke the truth to them he would be shot, have no moral right to question or lecture him. He admits he is "not happy, lest my students have adopted my suspiciousness." His system was not to implicate himself, but never to help the tyrants by reporting anyone else and protecting musicians and music where he could. He avoided moral degeneration but his life foundered in bitterness and resentment. Others, even musicians, degraded themselves morally, but he stood up to Stalin sometimes and admired Maria Yudina, a pianist of great stature professionally and fearless in religious faith, who, when Stalin sent her a large sum of money to thank her for a recording of Mozart she had made at his request, wrote back that she had given the money "to our church" and would pray for all his sins against God and man to be forgiven him. The horrified authorities who read this letter had her death-warrant all ready for the Leader to sign, but he did nothing against her, and the Mozart recording she had made was on Stalin's record-player when he died, the last music he had heard in life. Shostakovitch said of Yudina's moral courage: "The ocean was only knee-deep for that one." But Yudina's case was unique; all other dissidents, who hadn't the advantage of being great pianists admired by Stalin, went to prison, labor camp, or execution: Sinyavsky, Daniel, Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn, *et al.*

The war years had been better for artists because they had more freedom—in peacetime unclouded optimism was required of art. As soon as the war was over, repression and mass terror began again. From 1946 onwards books, films, painting, music, and plays were attacked by Party resolutions. The "historical resolution" of 1948 attacked all the leading composers as "formalist" and anti-democratic. Andrei Zhdanov, instructed by Stalin, "gathered the composers, and they began hanging one another. Of course, almost nothing surprises me, but this is one thing that's to repugnant to think about." "Formalism" was used as a weapon to attack any disinterested creative mind or serious critic of art and exterminate them, *e.g.*, a promising young and original analyst of the structure of Russian folk-tales was charged
with “formalism” and disappeared forever, his valuable work cut off early. Formalism was defined generally as “the expression of bourgeois ‘ideology’ in the arts.” The works of “Formalists” were suppressed and even their names removed from all Soviet reference books, so that no knowledge of them should remain for posterity. There were two main anti-formalist campaigns, in 1936 and 1948.12

Shostakovitch, evidently as a relief for his feelings, wrote for private consumption “a satirical vocal work mocking the anti-formalist campaign of 1948 and its main organisers”—but it isn’t available. He could never forgive the musicologist Boris Asafiev for allowing his name to be used to support the attack on the alleged “formalist” composers.

The Party views on “formalism” were supported by Khrushchev and are still in force. As Mrs. Mandelstam said to a journalist before she died, “the only difference now is that they don’t come and take people away in the night, but the same trash still write the books,” that is, the submissive, whom her husband had described as “translators of ready-made meaning.”

After 1948, Shostakovitch’s works disappeared from the repertory and he was constantly made to appear in public bitterly reading confessions which he had not written. In order to survive he withdrew into private composition. He had to earn his living and his right to survival by composing music for at least forty films mostly praising Stalin, about which he was bitter. The changes of régime after Stalin’s death didn’t do him much good; his Thirteenth Symphony (1962), which used Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s poem Babi Yar and was directed against Anti-Semitism (a cause Shostakovitch always felt strongly about), dissatisfied the authorities and was banned by them after its premiere in Moscow. In 1966 Shostakovitch developed his last illness and signs of general strain which were reflected in his works. He died in 1975 worn out and embittered. It was remarked that the only time anyone had seen him smile was as he lay dead, not yet sixty-nine.

Solzhenitsyn was a Christian and found in religion a support for his inner life and conscience. Shostakovitch resented this, though he himself had an uncomfortable conscience, the result of his creative genius that made him feel responsible and have a sense of duty and an obligation to protest—and that were all frustrated by his instinct for self-preservation, society being what it was after the Revolution. Characters in Solzhenitsyn’s novels are revolted by the servile behavior of Soviet men of letters to Stalin, the murderer of their fellows.

The novelist is a special, the extreme, instance of the impossibility of the creative genius exploring the totalitarian tyranny—because, as Solzhenitsyn points out, the novelist must be a critic of society, a prophetic voice visualizing its future from forces inherent in its past, a rival government. This is the novelist’s function and he is indispensable to the health of society.

Most great novelists have been acutely conscious of the importance of art and of the artist’s responsibility to society, and have explored these topics in their work, for example Charles Dickens in Bleak House, where Skimpole, the aesthete and amateur, suggests the developing fin de siècle attitudes of hostility towards real artistic values. In Little Dorrit Henry Gowan fulfills a similar role, and another kind of enemy is presented in the form of Mrs. Clennam and her Calvinism.

Later, in Daniel Deronda, George Eliot contrasts the amateur musical enthusiasm of Gwendolen Harleth with the dignified devotion to his art of the European musician Klesmer. In Middlemarch the dead scholarship of Casaubon is set against Will Ladislaw, descended from an actress and a violinist, a radical in politics, educated in a German university, and at home with the artists in Rome. With his sunny nature, his singing and painting, he initiates Dorothea into the necessity of art.

From his early novel Roderick Hudson, via innumerable tales, Henry James examines the relationship of the artist to society and the values of art itself, the last
and best consideration being that in *The Tragic Muse*. Likewise D. H. Lawrence constantly explores, in his mature novels and tales, the role of the artist and the nature of art, for example in *Women in Love*, where Ursula's passionate rejection of the German sculptor Loerke's views may fairly be taken to represent Lawrence's own position.

The classic instance in pre-Revolutionary Russian literature may perhaps be found in *Anna Karenina*, where we see Tolstoy's concern with the real artist as against the dilettante in Vronsky's attempts to "be an artist" in Venice and his condescending lack of true understanding of the genuine paintings produced by the professional Mikhaylov. We have already noted that the Aviette chapter of *Cancer Ward* which Tvardovsky was so frightened of is no less essential to the structure of the novel than the Mikhaylov episode is to Tolstoy's: and there are comparable scenes in *The First Circle*. For example, Clara, the privileged daughter of a high official, had found that at school

[their teacher had advised them not to read Tolstoy's novels, because they were very long and would only confuse the clear ideas which they had learned from reading critical studies about them. . . . The teaching of literature in school had consisted entirely of forcible instruction in the meaning of these writers' works, their political attitudes and the ways in which they had responded to the pressure of the laws of class struggle; then when the pre-revolutionary writers had been exhausted, it was the turn of Soviet Russian literature and the writings of the non-Russian fraternal peoples of the USSR who were ground through the mill of Marxist analysis. To the very end of it all Clara and her school friends never did manage to discover just why so much attention had to be paid to these writers. Was it surprising that young people left school with nothing but loathing for these monstrous taskmasters?]

At the university the study of literature was what you would expect from such a preparation and attitude to it.

Inevitably Solzhenitsyn gets to the artist and his function as well as his position in the new society in chapter 42 with the artist Kondrashev-Ivanov, implying the question: What place has the new communist culture for the artist? Either like Clara's brothers-in-law he is a subservient hack whose talents have been nullified by this necessity to conform and take instructions, or he is in trouble with the authorities and loses his license to publish at all. The painter Kondrashev is a prisoner in the special prison, "kept there rather as landowners once kept talented serfs because the walls of the officials' apartments needed adorning with pictures that were large, beautiful and free of cost." He is a necessary figure in the novel to supplement the histories of the scientists with whom he shares the prison, the outer circle of hell in which, we are shown, its creator Stalin is himself the greatest victim in his degraded self-imprisonment in fear and madness.

The *sharashka* is Dante's Limbo. But the good—that is, those who reject evil to obey their consciences—are shown at the end to be turned out into the depths of hell represented by the transit camps and finally the forced labor camps. At the center of Solzhenitsyn's hell is Stalin, as is Satan in Dante's, and he is both tormentor and tormented, following his immediate instincts. Lavrenti Beria and the other heads of departments, themselves always on the edge of downfall, exercise their power while they have it by torturing and terrifying their subordinates. This system, invented and promulgated by Lenin, had been extended by Stalin in Solzhenitsyn's youth and he only awakened to its wickedness when he lost his rank and was confined to prison.

The Stalin episode in *The First Circle* and the description of him were criticized, especially by Western communists and sympathizers with the Soviet system, as false, a caricature, a lapse in the stylistic unity and tone of the novel. But it is not false; it is true, and corresponds exactly to the accounts of Stalin and his actions and character given by others, especially Shostakovich, who, by understanding how
Stalin's mind worked and what his weaknesses were, was sometimes able to deflect him from the characteristic impulse to torture or destroy people. That amounted to heroism in Shostakovitch, seeing the risk he ran of activating the tyrant's vindictive impulses against himself. And Stalin's last years, and his last days, now that they are known (a nightmare for Russia), bear out the portrait of this deified madman that Solzhenitsyn created through imaginative insight.

A former communist, Dr. David Craig of Lancaster University, has argued that the (to him more satisfactory) picture of Stalin in Victor Serge's novel of 1948, The Case of Comrade Tulayev, shows the falsity of Solzhenitsyn's. But Serge's Stalin is the Stalin of his prime, and because Serge was an anarchist, is a comparatively anodyne one, which explains why it leaves no impression. Victor Erlich, a professor of Slavic languages at Yale, says that these Stalin chapters in The First Circle are an organic and indispensable element in the novel's structure, where the Soviet system is shown as a bureaucratic spiral of fear from top to bottom. This "pyramid or terror" is capped by the Leader who is psychologically terrified himself and extends his terror downwards.

Solzhenitsyn makes us recognize the radical reductiveness of Soviet ideology and the systematic degradation of the individual by the Soviet system: He shows us what happens to man when so reduced and what to the state whose ideology justifies murder, injustice, torture, starvation, and every conceivable oppression of mind and soul. "Where else can you argue if not in prison? You'd soon be put inside if you tried anywhere else"—a theme constantly echoed throughout The First Circle till its final page. Sologdin says: "Prison is the only place in Soviet Russia where there is freedom . . . free to say what you like, free to find out about yourself . . . time to sort yourself out, to understand the part of Good and Evil in human life. Where could you do this better than in prison? . . . Where else . . . could one get to know people so well, where else could one reflect so well on oneself?"

Innokenty, at the end of chapter 84, finds that he has learned the folly of Epicurus' philosophy: "... for Innokenty good and evil were now absolute and distinct, by the experience of his first night in prison." He also achieves inner freedom. Clara learns the truth about the society in which she has lived her life of the privileged when she gets a post in the prison and talks to the prisoners. Kondrashev-Ivanov is unchanged by prison because as an artist of complete integrity and worldliness he already is free and, being "inside," leads the same life as when outside, a life devoted to painting. Solzhenitsyn says he was virtually invulnerable: "... for [him] art was a way of life, the only possible one." He had lived in exactly the same way as a free man as he does as an imprisoned artist commandeered to provide pictures for the walls of the governing class at the rate of at least one a month.

We see also the dishonesty in the discussion in chapter 57 between "the well-known writer and Stalin Prize-winner Galakhov" and Innokenty the diplomat; also the aesthete and critic Lansky. Literature in the USSR has to be written in obedience to the dictates of the régime—"but then why have literature at all?" asks Innokenty. He concludes that "for a country to have a great writer is like having another government." That is why the Soviet system can't allow great writers, only safe writers. The safe writers also are "scared stiff of losing their jobs" and so they conform, in dread of being hounded as "anti-social" characters, as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky would have been if they had lived after the Revolution.

Indeed, when we turn to Cancer Ward, the affinity with the Tolstoy of The Death of Ivan Ilyich is undeniable, as Erlich points out, and the parallel between the two works inescapable. Yet there is a significant difference, as Erlich says: Whereas Tolstoy's tale is an exhibition of an average bureaucratic man realizing in the face of death the ultimate futility of his whole existence, Solzhenitsyn uses a com-
parable situation to elicit in a wide range of people of both sexes and of all ages condemned to the cancer ward a variety of responses, not all of which are depressing, for some are encouraging.

One of these people, Shulubin, about to die of cancer, is chosen to voice what seems to be the novelist’s own social ideals—“ethical socialism.” Shulubin is an ex-academician who has been driven to take refuge in librarianship, where for twenty-five years he outwardly acquiesced in everything, even dutifully burnt all the library books condemned by Soviet authority and apparently renounced all his beliefs. Dying in pain he whispers, “Not all of me shall die”—a quotation from Pushkin, and reminiscent of Tolstoy’s tale. Nevertheless he has kept inner freedom—that is, he resembles Shostakovitch.

It is only when we have grasped the literary and ideological situation in the Russian world Solzhenitsyn had to live with that we can appreciate the connection between the parts of the novel, particularly why the characters of Rusov and his daughter are there; why there are the discussions on sincerity and on the world of literary journalism; the choice of personae to voice attitudes about life and Marxist views; and the evolving feelings of Kostoglotov. The form presented itself to Solzhenitsyn in life, a phase of his own experience as a cancer patient, just as The First Circle was the obvious form for his experience in the superior-grade prison for scientific research; The Gulag Archipelago enshrines his tremendous experiences in labor camps and transit prisons and his remembrance—guilty in that he survived them—of his dead companions there. Father Alexander Schmemann, writing on Gulag, argues that it is not for the facts that the work is so valuable, since others had revealed such data before, but for “the spiritual perspective” in which they are seen and described—“the reality behind” the prisoners’ experiences. (Marchenko’s My Testimony [1969] deals with the later phase of post-Stalin prisons. Marchenko was a heroic dissident and stoic character like Solzhenitsyn, similarly forged by suffering and an inflexible resistance, and tempered by compassion for his fellow-victims of Soviet oppression.)

It is understandable therefore that Solzhenitsyn chose as the form of his novels a prison situation (literal or symbolic) in which moral choice or a similar challenge faces each character in it. His play The Love-Girl and the Innocent (I used to think Woyzeck the most depressing in existence until I read this) links with Ivan Denisovitch; it supplements the novel to give a complete picture of the running of a labor camp (mixed sexes) and its part in the destruction of both the innocents and those of good intention by the authorities and the corrupt system on which they run the camp. Though interesting and obviously dramatic it could hardly be staged because of the very large cast needed and, still more, on account of the complicated and very demanding setting stipulated by the dramatist, which is designed to make the audience feel they are inside the prison camp. The play was actually rehearsed by a Russian theater but the authorities stopped it after the dress rehearsal (1962). The authorities felt that Solzhenitsyn’s works “are more dangerous to us than those of Pasternak” and that they are “ideologically incorrect.” He was turned out of the Writers’ Union, which meant he could not be published and had no salary, no privileges of working in buildings appointed for members, and no translation jobs to keep him going. One of his fellow writers said, “I always strive to write only about joyful things. Why does he see only the dark side?”

But as Solzhenitsyn says in One Word of Truth, his Nobel Prize speech, “Literature becomes the living memory of a nation.” Along with the Russian proverb which provided that title—“One word of truth outweighs the whole world”—Solzhenitsyn believes as his creed that “Violence can only be conceded by the lie and then be maintained by violence.” Violence, he says, demands from its subjects that they become accomplices in the lie. (This is what Shostakovitch’s contemporaries felt he was doing in rubber-stamping with his
public approval the party line, though in fact he read aloud to audiences the statements prepared for him as fast and unimpressively as possible.

"The lie can withstand a great deal in this world but it cannot withstand Art." But unless the Russian writer had had Western publishers (and brave men prepared to risk smuggling out the typescripts of literature) and samizdat distribution in Russia, his art could not have survived. Composers, painters, and sculptors had no such resources. And how many countless hundreds of poets and creative writers and other artists, great actors like Solomon Mikhoeles, innovatory producers like Vsevolod Meyerhold (both friends of Shostakovich's who were murdered) were cut off prematurely in the terrors or, if surviving, were silenced by being forbidden publication, like Pasternak and Akhmatova, or performance, like Shostakovich?

Few creative minds had the physical stamina and the moral courage of Solzhenityn and the dedication to fulfill what he felt to be the writer's obligation to bear witness to the fate of his fellows in prison. "A whole national literature has been left there, buried without a coffin. . . . Should Art and the artist go their own way or should they constantly bear in mind their duty to society?"

One sees what Solzhenitsyn got by recovering the Russian tradition through Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. He added Dante and Shakespeare to this tradition and ultimately fell back upon the Christian tradition inherited through the Russian Orthodox Church of Russia. An extract from one of his letters to Tvardovsky provides a fitting conclusion:

I can say without affectation that I belong to the Russian convict world no less, and owe no less to it, than I do to Russian literature. I got my education there and it will last for ever.

**APPENDIX I**

Andrei Sinyavsky

Imprisoned as a dissident who had committed the crime of sending his poetry and prose work to be published abroad (though under a pseudonym), Andrei Sinyavsky was sentenced to seven years' servitude in labor-camps. The letters he wrote to his wife during the five-year period he served before his release and exile were kept by her, and it was out of these notes recording his experiences as a prisoner that he constructed his book *A Voice from the Chorus* (1973). The voice is his; the chorus is that of the various categories of prisoners: old men suffering for their religious faith who were the repositories of Russian traditions; the criminals and thieves; non-Russian nationalists imprisoned for demanding freedom for their countries or displaced tribes' return to their homeland; and also genuine dissidents like himself; lastly, he was in a hospital zone with a prisoners' cemetery, which obliged him to listen to the voices of the dying too.

This book represents a departure from Sinyavsky's previous literary work, and critics consider it an advance, for it registers the changes the experiences of the labor camp made in his life, thought, feeling, and attitudes to his fellows, whose lively conversation in all kinds of idioms and directness of thought refreshed the language for him. It represents the discovery of himself too, a discovery of what literature can mean. For it was his literary resources that kept him going—like Pasternak's alter ego in *Doctor Zhivago*, he sustained himself because he was a poet and writer. He remembered *Gulliver's Travels and Robinson Crusoe* from his childhood and thought himself into them, realizing their utility for a prisoner; *Crusoe* as an invaluable model of how to make an enforced solitary life tolerable and *Gulliver* because it shows that "there are no uninteresting objects" so long as the artist looks at them with fresh eyes. The books' narrators are, like himself, thrown out of their own world and become necessarily self-dependent, "teaching survival where there can be no escape." He realized that prison was the "living model" he needed through which to examine his society and come to terms with himself, by means of the Voice and the Chorus in their changing relationship as the book progresses through the years in prison.

Sinyavsky, writing on Pasternak, said "art is an attribute of the personality, the nation, the age and of all mankind, like the instinct of self-preservation." In *A Voice from the Chorus* he starts by declaring that an artist must discover his "living world"—"When, by the will of chance or the force of fate he comes upon a life that corresponds to his thoughts, he is happy. He looks at this country and he says 'rise.'"
And he saw that prison life was the "living model" he needed. It was the same with Solzhenitsyn, but he saw all Soviet Russia as the prison or the cancer ward. And intellectuals who could toughen themselves to endure the prison camps had direct access to all Russia instead of, like Jean-Paul Sartre, knowing only other intellectuals. They can thus tell the truth about Russian life as an avant-garde writer can't.

Professor Henry Gifford sees A Voice from the Chorus as one of "a series of modern classics in the literature of endurance" and adds that "only in this class does the literature of the Soviet Union tell the truth about Russian life." And the Russian language in which they are written had to be revitalized to be a language of truth instead of falsehood and deceit. Hence we see that the suffering of some creative writers of Soviet society has resulted in the revival of Russian literature even if the writers have been prematurely killed (like Mandelstam) or for long silenced (like Akhmatova and Pasternak) or their works only circulated surreptitiously.

APPENDIX II
The Case of the Marxist Critic
Georg Lukács

Whether Georg Lukács would ever have been a good literary critic if he had lived in a free country is arguable, but by examining his history we can certainly see what happened to a man of letters who wished to be a literary critic in a communist state. An excellent essay by the American critic and professor Irving Howe, "Lukács and Solzhenitsyn," which he wrote in 1971, is reprinted in the Collier-Macmillan volume on Solzhenitsyn. Howe says of Lukács:

He had always to keep looking over his shoulder, sometimes literally and more often figuratively, so as to measure the latitude allowed him by the Party. Long ago he had chosen the role of the (at times) semi-dissident Communist, but never an openly oppositionist Communist and certainly not a public opponent of the party-state dictatorship.

But the consequent deviousness, defensive tactics, and sense of precariousness in trying to keep at all costs on the right side throughout the changes in Party line, as well as the changes in the successive régimes in Hungary, made Lukács a time-server and a mere manipulator of dialectics, with a consequent self-defeating opacity of style. These compulsions, Howe thinks, explain Lukács's fascination with Solzhenitsyn, whom he kept praising for the virtues of independence and courage which he himself dared not practice. (The more usual reaction to Solzhenitsyn of Soviet-state writers was fear and hatred, so Lukács was a comparatively decent man of letters.) One sees that Lukács was at least ashamed of himself, and though generally abject was not wholly so.

In a free environment he could and would have abandoned the compulsory Marxist dialectics and the prescribed attitudes of a "Soviet person" and, for instance, in writing his book on The Historical Novel would not have been driven to conclude, as a good Marxist, that Scott's Ivanhoe (that historically ridiculous romance) is a good model for writers in that genre. And a more serious result of Lukács's cowardice, in addition to his uselessness as a critic, is that his surrender to Marxist jargon and literary fallacies produced a foggy medium which West European left-wing intellectuals have foisted on our world and its young as important literary criticism and a proof of the value of the Marxist-Leninist procedure.

APPENDIX III
Solzhenitsyn's Language

One of the results of the falsity in the Soviet system was that words no longer had true meanings. They easily lent themselves to ironic use, and the Russian satirists got into trouble for thus exposing the absurdity of the Party slogans and clichés.

Russian writers and journalists and many critics have complained that the written and spoken language is a mess of foreign words, shabby communist jargon, prison and camp slang (such a high proportion of its citizens having been through one or both of these institutions, very often for a large part of their lives)—an impoverished, contaminated, and unloved idiom. But how to revitalize language and restore the connection between words and reality, without which there can be no literature worth reading? Solzhenitsyn with his creative interest in language has made it the expression of human truths, and so revived the medium of literature: purified it of worn-out words and mechanical phrases (which he often invokes for ironic purposes) and enriched it from traditional folk-words and lively native
idiom. He began this movement of regeneration of the Russian tongue in *Ivan Denisovitch*, which is told in the first person by an uneducated peasant.

Victor Erlich says: “Solzhenitsyn's immediate targets are not literary conventions grown stale, but externally imposed and enforced taboos and clichés... To establish a reliable connection between words and things, between language and the facts of experience, is to recreate the essential conditions of a genuine literary enterprise... its natural function, that of search, exploration, and above all testimony.” Another competent critic, Alexander Schmemann (a theologian and specialist in Slav thought), wrote that Solzhenitsyn exorcised the Russian language, making a language of truth where the Soviet system had altered and subverted all meanings to produce a language corrupted by lies and deceit.

It is important for us who can't read him in the original that we realize what Solzhenitsyn did for the Russian language and how bad are the translations, hastily and incompetently done into English or American. We have his works, but they are marred not only by errors but by paraphrases, omissions, and revisions, which we are told denature his work by changing the narrative structure and ignoring the metaphor, wit, and subtle irony. Thus we are likely to fail to appreciate Solzhenitsyn's original handling of the Russian language, which he regenerated by rejecting the new idiom created by the dishonesty of the bureaucratic régime and the parrot-language of Marxist-Leninism, working instead in a direct speech-based idiom of creative truth. Alexis Klimoff says that in spite of the disservice his English and American translators have done Solzhenitsyn, “his work is so rich in thought, imagery and texture that even in an imperfect version the prose of this verbal master still produces a powerful and sometimes overwhelming effect.” But we lose the parody and irony, the numerous literary and historical allusions, and the sudden changes of tone in his writings, as well as the nuances on which the reader's grasp of the meaning sometimes depends. *The Gulag Archipelago* by the nature of its material merely as brutal fact makes an unforgettable impact in any language. But its subtitle is *Essays in Artistic Investigation* and it is the literary art that has been obscured by the translator.

Solzhenitsyn himself has complained about the “stylistic levelling” of his works, something that English translators had done with Dostoevsky too—both novelists are original stylists.

**APPENDIX IV**

*Practical Difficulties in Preserving Literature*

Many of Solzhenitsyn's writings were first composed cerebrally and memorized and only put down on paper after a lapse of years, *The First Circle* taking about nine years to write. This was due to his being in camp or prison without facilities for writing, or to fear that the police would search his room or flat and find incriminating pieces of prose or verse. (Compare this with the practice of Akhmatova and Mrs. Mandelstam, who preserved poems by memorizing them and constantly repeating them.)

The so-called “thaw” after Khrushchev had “exposed” Stalin, which enabled Solzhenitsyn to publish *Ivan Denisovitch*, lasted only a brief while and the authorities soon closed up again, dashing the hopes of the writers and of editors of literary journals like *Novy Mir*. Neither *Cancer Ward, The First Circle*, nor *The Gulag Archipelago* were allowed publication in the Soviet Union. Russians could read them only in *samizdat* (clandestinely circulated typescript). This is the first fact that differentiates Solzhenitsyn from any modern creative writer in Western Europe or North America. And though denied publication in his own country he has been nevertheless vilified and exiled for writing his books and for first trying to get them published in Russia and then, on failing to do so, smuggling copies for publication abroad. This and his general attitude of uncompromising and intransigent dissidence ended in his summary deportation to West Germany—only the pressure of world opinion prevented his immediate execution or ultimate extinction in a labor camp.

1See Appendix I. 2“The yurodivy is a Russian religious phenomenon, which even the cautious Soviet scholars call a national Russian trait. The yurodivy has the gift to see and hear what others know nothing about. But he tells the world about his insights in an intentionally paradoxical way, in code. He plays the fool, while actually being a persistent expositor of evil and injustice” (Solomon Volkov, introduction to *Testimony* by Dmitri Shostakovich). Western readers may be reminded of the fool in Shakespeare's plays and (in actual life) the court jester, as late as "Archie" in the reign of James I. 3Akhmatova was not shot like her two husbands but...