

DOI 10.18522/2415-8852-2022-1-34-47

УДК 821.111

**THE PERSISTING TRAUMA OF DICTATORSHIP
IN THE FICTIONS OF HELEN DUNMORE AND SVETLANA ALEXIEVICH**



Marina S. Ragachewskaya

Habilitated PhD, Professor at Minsk State Linguistic University (Minsk, Belarus)

e-mail: marinaragachewskaya@gmail.com

Abstract. This article presents a comparative study of fictional representation of one type of collective trauma – the trauma of dictatorship. Two contemporary writers – the English Helen Dunmore and the Belarusian Svetlana Alexievich – explore the spirit of the Soviet post-war years. Dunmore fictionalizes the historical fact – the infamous “Doctors’ Plot”, using documentary evidence, while Alexievich documents live narrative, turning living memory into document. Both writers explore the mechanism of dictatorial suppression resulting in mass trauma; its major tool being fear in various forms. The traumatic discourse in both novels is shown as disrupted, silenced and distorted, while such defence mechanisms as displacement, acceptance, dissociation, humility, introjection, repression and rationalization are reenacted through the narrative and plot.

Key words: Trauma, dictatorship, fear, defence mechanism, traumatic discourse, the Soviet, memory

*She'd lived so much with the dead that she
had felt like one of them.*

H. Dunmore

Don't try to scare us with your socialism...

S. Alexievich

The concept of trauma is studied within a broad range of disciplines – psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, literary criticism, and sociology. In literary studies, a scientifically precise understanding of the notion of trauma is redundant. As J. Roger Kurtz points out, “We think of trauma as a pathological mental and emotional condition, an injury to the psyche caused by catastrophic events, or by the threat of such events, which overwhelm an individual’s normal response mechanisms” [Kurtz: 2]. To precisely match that definition, world fiction has recorded the inimitable human experience – of which trauma is perhaps the most unique. Literature opens an entry into psychic realms that may not be immediately accessible to a psychiatrist. Different types and forms of trauma have been imprinted on the pages of books: childhood trauma (as, for example, in Anne Beattie’s or J.C. Oates’ stories), war trauma (notably, in the novels of Pat Barker), the trauma of loss and humiliation (*The Catcher in the Rye* by J. Salinger, *Never Let me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, etc.), grief and despondency (*The Other Side of You* by Sally Vickers), rejection and guilt (Ian McEwan’s *Atonement*),

of violence witnessing (J.C. Oates’ and David Mitchell’s novels), sexual abuse and bullying (these same authors), persecution and disaster survival (*Sophie’s Choice* by William Styron, *The Painted Bird* by Jerzy Kosiński). What these and innumerable other books feature, matches exactly the trauma symptoms – altered states of consciousness, split selves, disturbed psyches accompanied by symptomatic obsessions, ritualistic repetitions, and inexplicable aberrations.

The collective historical trauma, suffered not by separate individuals, but by groups of population and entire nations is yet another field of literary representation. Its description is relevant in the following quotation:

“Double temporality of traumatic consciousness, whereby the subject occupies at one and the same time, both the interminable present moment of the catastrophe which, continuously re-lived, refuses to be relegated to the past, and the post-traumatic present that seems to come after but is paradoxically coterminous ... consciousness operates simultaneously within multiple incompatible time-zones of being” [Kohlke: 30].

In Anglophone literary fiction, the traumatic experience of that form appears in novels and short stories about WWI and proves especially relevant in Pat Barker, Tim O’Brien, S. Faulks, etc., focusing on both the war neurosis and PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder).

der)¹. The Second World War trauma is explored in fiction on a much broader international scale by such writers as Kurt Vonnegut, James Jones, Helen Dunmore, Svetlana Alexievich, Jerzy Kosiński and hundreds of other authors. Gerd Bayer in his essay on the subject notes that World War II trauma is “one of the most persistent features of Europe’s collective memory” [Bayer: 155].

Recent decades have also seen an intense outburst of research in the area of literary representation of trauma. Cathy Caruth, Susana Onega, Leonard Shengold, Ann Whitehead, Christa Schönfelder, Stevan M. Wiene, J. Roger Kurtz are just a few notable names who have produced a substantial bulk of criticism about the fiction of trauma. Thus, a special interest for critics lies in such areas as the trauma of the Holocaust and of terrorism, trauma and its relationship to language and memory. One of the latest publications testifies to the growing significance of trauma studies in fiction – *Trauma and Literature* [Kurtz 2018].

However vast the range of depiction and literary critical research of trauma may be, a dictatorial regime – including the fascist state and its communist concoction, the Stalinist or North Korean crucible – is a much rarer case for fic-

tional narrativization. Most well-known are the dystopian texts of George Orwell, A. Huxley, T. Tolstaya, M. Zamyatin, or Margaret Atwood. Some national literatures have explored the aftermath of dictatorships, for example, in Chile: Carmen Castillo’s *Un día de octubre en Santiago* (1982), Marcia Alejandra Merino’s *Mi verdad* (1993), and Arturo Fontaine’s *La vida doble* (2010). As the author of a special research work, Alison Tange, states that these “are all memory stories that deal with survival of a traumatic past associated with the Pinochet dictatorship” [Tange: 33].

Meanwhile, the traumatic impact of dictatorial regimes permeates other nations. Therefore, I address the works of two female authors of different genres and of a different national origin – the English Helen Dunmore and the Belarusian Svetlana Alexievich. Helen Dunmore (1952–2017) is best known for her widely recognized children’s books that received prestigious literary awards, as well as for a range of various other subjects, such as reflections on the two World wars and the concept of memory. However, there is practically no information about what made the writer address the recent history of the Soviet Union (in her novels *The Siege* and *The Betrayal*). The 2015 Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich’s (1948)

¹ Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental and behavioral disorder which occurs because of a previous exposure to a traumatic event (it is especially persistent in war veterans), causing, during the time after the event, disturbing thoughts and feelings, mental or physical distress to trauma-related cues, attempts to avoid any trauma-associated triggers, suicidal or self-harm attempts.

professional preoccupation with the Soviet past, on the other hand, is totally understandable.

In their respective works – the novel *The Betrayal* (2010) and a fictional documentary book *Secondhand Time* (2015) – the life of Soviet citizens immediately following WWII is genuinely reproduced. Both books look, as literature would, at the phenomenon of trauma that is inevitably set in a regime where each and every person is a potential enemy, spy, subverter or saboteur. The Stalinist dictatorship covers a time span – from 1927 to 1953 (26 years) – long enough to generate a persisting intergenerational collective historical trauma, its most vivid symptoms being fear, immature and destructive defences¹, and ultimately depression and suicidal spells. A. Mucci writes: “...in collective trauma, such as war or violent intergroup conflicts, the community suffers as well or is devastated by the trauma” [Mucci: 204]. This fact entails human relationships, their deterioration and even total corruption.

Both books explore the trauma of dictatorship and its extreme and perverted manifestations. *The Betrayal* is based on a fictional case with a realistic sublayer – “the Doctors’ Plot”, and the author acknowledges the sources – an impressive list of documentary and historical books and articles, which adds verisimilitude,

credibility and a sense of lived experience to the narration. Most notable among them are *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1943-1953* by Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk (Oxford University Press, 2004); *Stalin and His Hangmen: An Authoritative Portrait of a Tyrant and Those Who Served Him* by Donald Rayfield (Penguin, 2004); *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* by Sheila Fitzpatrick (Routledge, 2000); *Stalin’s Last Crime: The Doctors’ Plot* by Jonathan Brent and Vladimir Naumov (John Murray, 2003) and dozens others.

Alexievich’s documentary book, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, on the other hand, re-narrates the authentic, truly lived experience, without reference to official or published documents, but frames this experience in terms of mythopoeic titles and authorial comments. Thus, the title of each structural part of the book is intensely metaphoric: “The consolation of an apocalypse”, “Snatches of street noise and kitchen conversations”, “On the beauty of dictatorship and the mystery of butterflies crushed against the pavement”, “On Romeo and Juliet, except their names were Margarita and Abulfaz”, etc. Alexievich’s “lyrical” digressions, reflexive passages and other forms of “side” narration bear the invaluable quality of a regulating narrative agent,

¹ A defence mechanism is a pattern in human behaviour which helps individuals to shield themselves from unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts; a psychological strategy that seemingly builds a distance between the acute consciousness of the source of suffering or discomfort and the feeling one experiences in relation to it.

or voice; they make part of the “story”, but, unlike the voices of her interlocutors, carry a strong quality of artistic completeness of fictionalized ideas and authorial perspective, like in the initial chapter “Remarks from an accomplice”: “We’re paying our respects to the Soviet era. Cutting ties with our old life. I’m trying to honestly hear out all the participants of the socialist drama ... Communism had an insane plan: to remake the “old breed of man,” ancient Adam. And it really worked ... Perhaps it was communism’s only achievement. Seventy-plus years in the Marxist-Leninist laboratory gave rise to a new man: *Homo sovieticus*. Some see him as a tragic figure, others call him a *sovok*. I feel like I know this person; we’re very familiar, we’ve lived side by side for a long time” [Alexievich].

Dunmore’s narrative captures the first traumatized generation, which only too clearly realizes the principle of living: “Scientists can be spies; doctors can be anti-patriotic saboteurs. Anybody can go out of favour in the blink of an eye” [Dunmore: 11]. Alexievich’s book, meanwhile, as if logically continuing the excursion into history and giving voice to successive descendants of the Stalinist victims declaims: “My generation grew up with fathers who’d either returned from the camps or the war. The only thing they could tell us about was violence. Death. They rarely laughed and were mostly silent. They drank ... and drank ... until they finally drank themselves to death. The other option ... the people who were never arrested spent their whole lives fear-

ing arrest. This wouldn’t be for a month or two, it would go on for years – years!” [Alexievich]. These behavioral patterns fall into the category of destructive defences: drinking as a form of obsession and repression, which makes up for the traumatic memories by driving them out of active consciousness.

H. Dunmore portrays the life of some of the characters from her previous novel *The Siege* (2001) – the siege of Leningrad survivors in the 1950s – Doctor Andrei Alexeev, his wife Anna and her younger brother Kolya. The infamous fabricated “Doctors’ Plot” is depicted in a particular example: the son of a Soviet security ministry official is diagnosed with osteosarcoma. The case itself causes terror among the medical staff, and the most expert and conscientious doctor, Andrei, is made a scapegoat in treating the case. The surgery is performed by the most professional Jewish doctor, Brodskaya, but the cancer is not rooted out and later on the boy dies. This is proof enough for the party leadership that the Jew “slaughtered the boy for no reason” [Dunmore: 220], and they start clearing away the medical staff involved, imprison Andrei and later send him to Siberia for 10 years. He is not shown as having served the whole term, only the first year in fact, as some feeble hope, with Stalin’s death, sparkles in the novel’s ending. What makes the novel a fruitful ground for the study of trauma is its power of descriptive and psychological detail, dialogue and truthfulness of historical facts.

Secondhand Time is impossible to retell, as it is produced, like all other of the writer's books, in a voice-recording mode, as a polyphony of testimonies of hundreds of voices each telling their own story of suffering and survival. The main focus is on the 1990s, the tempestuous and swift time of unprecedented change. However, these personages who speak from the depths of their muffled memories, like on the Freudian couch, draw out those very roots of trauma, that were engendered by decades of Stalinism. From generation to generation, the collective trauma has been passed over, seldom redeemed or healed, but rather accumulated and disfigured:

"After Stalin, we have a different relationship to murder. We remember how our people had killed their own ... the mass murder of people who didn't understand why they were being killed ... It's stayed with us, it's part of our lives. We grew up among victims and executioners. For us, living together is normal. There's no line between peacetime and wartime, we're always at war. Turn on the TV, everyone's speaking in prison camp slang: the politicians, the businessmen, even the president; kickbacks, bribes, siphoning ... Human life – you can just spit and rub someone out. Just like in prison ..." [Alexievich].

The continuous sense of never-ending war reveals the traumatic "double temporality", referred to in Kohlke's study. Even the book's author becomes the bearer of painful experience through listening:

"I pace and pace the circles of pain, I can't break out of them. Pain has everything: darkness, triumph. Sometimes I think that pain is a bridge between people, a secret connection; other times it seems like an abyss" [Alexievich].

Both the writers have captured the undeniable symptoms of collective trauma, which will persist and distort human lives. Kai Erikson writes:

"By collective trauma, ... I mean a blow to the basic tissue of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with 'trauma.' But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists in an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared ... 'I' continue to exist, though damaged and may be even permanently changed. 'You' continue to exist, though distant and hard to relate to. But 'we' no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body" [Erikson: 154].

These narratives reflect the destruction of this very notion of "we" as intricate mass psychology manipulation mechanisms transpire through the depiction and recorded episodes of confession of and reactions to otherwise ordinary happenings.

The most powerful and practically unfailing tool, ultimately traumatic in its effect is fear, the

fear generated by a growing list of limitations on both bodily and emotional self-expression, areas of “special interest”, living space, intimacy zones, subjects for discussion, books for reading. Fear-related semantics appears as often as around 300 times in the traumatically coloured discourse of S. Alexievich’s interlocutors, and about 100 times in Dunmore’s novel. It means characters acknowledge their fear, turning it into a defence mechanism of acceptance and humility, which renders subjects powerless and docile. “There was more than one fear... There were many fears, both great and small” [Alexievich], confesses one of Alexievich’s characters who was born and raised in a Stalinist camp, because her father was executed, and her mother was declared the enemy of the people:

“We were afraid of growing up, afraid of turning five. At five they’d take us away to the orphanage, and we knew that was somewhere far away – far away from the mamas ... Everyone was afraid, even the people that everyone was afraid of. I was afraid, too” [Alexievich].

In *The Betrayal*, the author lays bare the abnormality of emotional reactions to the stimulus evoked by mere objective reality. Both the ordinary citizens and the Stalinist nomenclature are affected, with no guarantee for the elite to escape persecution any time they slip. “Sweat is leaking from the pores of dry, competent Rusov. He never talks like this... The breeze is warm and sweet, but ice touches Andrei” [Dunmore: 4]. This so-

matic response is to the diagnosis of an official’s son’s condition. “Keep your tongue and your hands still, unless you are absolutely sure that it’s safe to move them. Don’t stand out. Be anonymous and average; keep in step” [Dunmore: 6] – a character repeats a mental incantation disciplining the learned self-regulatory algorithm. When, after the news of Stalin’s death, a woman runs in and out of the hospital where she works “head down, terrified of breaking imaginary rules...” [Dunmore: 8], she actually reenacts the defence of introjection, having internalized the “rules” and potential reprimands from others. Dunmore reaches for accessible metaphors to relate a reflex caused by a grip of fear: “Andrei feels a plunge in his mouth, as if he were standing on a cliff and had suddenly looked down” [Dunmore: 10]. Most of such metaphors or similes use “corporeal” discourse, involving the description of hands, eyes, or other body parts reacting to emotional stimuli: “Anna’s stomach lurches at the fear” [Dunmore: 35]; “Fear squeezes his heart again, driving out all other thoughts” [Dunmore: 156]. The plot of the novel is also strewn with examples of fear-inducing mechanisms. Not applying for a university course because one is not of the correct origin is fear incarnate. Not doing additional research in the clinic because this can mean “special interest” – which is the prerequisite to spying – is yet another fear-induced self-restraint. Not playing the piano at any time of day because if the neighbours complain this could result at best in expropriation of one

room – is one of numerous other similar behavioral patterns that are no longer the exterior ethic practiced, but already an interiorized inhibition. Fear is at every corner: the authorities trigger the fear of stigma, of otherness, of false hierarchies – when one’s immediate boss steps aside any time the person whose name is too fear-inducing to pronounce, steps in.

This is the mechanics of trauma infusion, of a lifelong persisting complex. So even when the news of Stalin’s death leaks through the thick walls of the kindergarten and of mental arrest, the character who bears this piece of news to her colleagues “hasn’t paused for dramatic effect. She simply can’t get the words out. ‘D-dear’ ... ‘she stammers, ‘Dear c-comrades – and f-friends’ – Galya bends down over her. As if Darya Sokolova were a hysterical girl she takes hold of her shoulders and shakes them firmly. ‘Now tell us sensibly,’ she says. ‘Stalin is dead,’ bleats Darya. Her eyes look like a doll’s eyes, rolling” [Dunmore: 320]. Such broken and distorted discourse becomes an effective narrative device throughout both the books.

Traumatic discourse in *Secondhand Time*, as the personal, and therefore more immediate and “raw”, testimony of trauma, is often convulsive, broken, at times stifled, and even aggressive. The separately interviewed participants of the writer’s recorded conversations reveal surprisingly similar traumatic discourse qualities: they start crying, oftentimes bursting into tears and uncontrollable laughter simultaneously. They all

reiterate one and the same statement “back then, we didn’t talk about it much” [Alexievich] – in the Soviet times, even after the dictatorship, the memory and horror of it were repressed. “I’ve never told anyone any of this. I was afraid... What was I afraid of? I don’t know... (She falls into thought) [Alexievich]. This condition is known in psychoanalysis as containment.

Wilfred R. Bion’s assumption about the containment of war experience [Bion] (in fact, it is true about the containment of any traumatic experience) leading to disruptions of consciousness is fully proven by Alexievich’s characters. It appears they all share something they have never spoken out. In this respect, as the Trauma Theory platform sums up Bion’s ideas: “It is only by encountering another mind willing and able to hold these unbearable pieces of feeling that one can learn to put them together for oneself” [Alford]. Even though many of the people interviewed in Alexievich’s book were born long after Stalin died, they inherited the trauma of dictatorship from their parents. “I was making sure that we always had a full fridge while my parents kept waiting for them to come for me” [Alexievich]. There is always someone in the family repressed, tortured in one of the gulags, dead in the war, or executed by the NKVD. And there is always silence or silencing, which makes trauma more deeply rooted and destructive: “Many of those who live there take vows of silence” [Alexievich].

They also feel guilty – of losing the Soviet Union, of not having done enough for the Communist

party, of not dying for the motherland. In addition to fear and guilt, the sense of shame has been cultivated all around – people become aware of this shame in a distorted form: the 1990s bring about the unexpected and unprecedented liberation and access to Western abundance, bank accounts, trade, books and knowledge. This is too much to bear. These people have been raised and lived traumatized by deprivation – of money, housing, free speech, everyday trifles but liberating necessities, and free thinking. Trauma, like a furuncle, is made aware of when in abscess; the cause of psychic pain is displaced¹: the interlocutors violently blame capitalists, Gorbachev, the West, and worship the perished Soviet Union; they are ashamed of having money, goods in stores, cars and holidays. The traumatic is definitely transferred from its real cause. “The discovery of money hit us like an atom bomb” [Alexievich].

The traumatic discourse – both fictionalized and reported through an interview – resorts to a constant stream of images and metaphors (some appear in nightmares, others help the speakers to shape their sensations: e.g., the metaphor for repressing memories is “bricked up”, “plastered”, “under the sarcophagus”; the metaphor for the acuteness and intensity of feelings is “fire”, “[atomic] reaction”, “crystallization”). As Cathy Caruth

affirms, trauma “must, indeed, also be spoken in a language that is always somehow literary: a language that defies, even as it claims, our understanding” [Caruth: 5]. Patriotic sentiments permeate the discourse – as a defence covering guilt and shame. The phenomena of containment, memory denial, silencing of marginal or unobvious traumatic affection are ubiquitous in both the works.

The effect of collective trauma will not be easy to cast away, it will stay with the victims, survivors and their children and even grandchildren throughout Soviet times. A young person in *Secondhand Time* says:

“I’m not going to tell you my last name. I’m using my grandmother’s ... I’m afraid, of course ... Everyone expects to see heroes, but I’m no hero. I was never prepared to become one. In prison, all I thought about was my mother, about how she has a bad heart. What’s going to happen to her? Even if we win and they write about it in the history books, what about the tears of our loved ones? Their suffering? An idea is an incredibly powerful thing – it’s terrifying because its power is not material, you can’t measure it. There’s no measurement ... It’s of a different kind of essence ... It’s capable of making something more important to you than your own mother. Forcing you to choose. But you’re not ready ... I now know what it

¹ Displacement is a defence mechanism whereby the person redirects their thoughts, feelings and impulses (commonly, anger) at another person or object.

means to walk into your room after the KGB has gone through your things, your books ... After they've read your diary ...” [Alexievich].

This and other episodes reveal the intergenerational effect of trauma.

H. Dunmore also manages to create the persuasive image of the machine that works through its agents – the security men, the party officials, and transforms them into working parts of it too. The administrative positions require watchfulness, attention to those with undesirable origins, those with relatives abroad, those with unusual sounding last names, those with a “special interest” whatever the field might be. A repressed sense of helplessness and guilt transcends practically all the novel's actions, creating a new human condition – the overall social madness, which Anna comments on: “...it's like an infection” [Dunmore: 133].

Both the authors show love as a desperate compensatory reflex for the trauma of loss and deprivation. Thus, in *The Betrayal*, after Anna's father and his wife die in the Siege, she takes care of her brother like a mother would. Her love for Andrei is more like a refuge, a safe place to be. Any moment alone is precious beyond measure. Whenever the central characters appear to enjoy this quiet isolation, the author gives vent to the expressions of their restrained tenderness and affection.

A speaker from *Secondhand Time* muses:

“You have to ask how these things coexisted: our happiness and the fact that they came for some people

at night and took them away. Some people disappeared, while others cried behind the door. For some reason, I don't remember any of that. I don't! I remember how the lilacs blossomed in the spring...” [Alexievich].

Both writers thus manage to capture a mature and positive defence against trauma, which may be a form of compensation.

The decades-long cultivated trauma – unconscious and subtle – revives in psychologically unforeseen circumstances: mental clinics overflowed with patients – so many became mentally deranged. The trauma of deprivation conjures behavioral distortions and aberrations. According to Sigmund Freud, traumatic experience is never fully assimilated. “The real traumatic moment,” writes Freud, “is that in which the conflict thrusts itself upon the ego and the latter decides to banish it. Such banishment does not annihilate the opposing presentation but merely crowds it into the unconscious. This process, occurring for the first time, forms a nucleus and point of crystallization for the formation of a new psychic group separated from the ego, around which, in the course of time, everything collects in accord with the opposing presentation” [Freud: 54]. The characters in *Secondhand Time* have grown up among executioners and victims. They reiterate, like a mantra, in a form of ritualistic repetition, that Russia needs an iron hand, that all those new-thinking citizens must be shot or imprisoned, thus rational-

izing the horror of contradictory mental experience. “It’s possible to survive the camps, but you can’t survive other people” – a gulag survivor concludes. As Andrei, Dunmore’s fictional character bitterly observes, “Nothing wasted. That’s how it should be. Only people are to be wasted” [Dunmore: 154].

Dunmore fictionalizes the historical fact, using documentary evidence, while Alexievich documentarizes live narrative, turning living memory into document. Healthy (compensation through experiencing love) and harmful (displacement, acceptance of horrors, humility, introjection, repression, rationalization) defences are employed. Fictional and biographical characters appear to share the same Stalinist legacy: Dunmore shows similar signs in the characters’ traumatized psyche with those exposed by Alexievich, to the same effect of proving a person’s mental health is harmed and personality is disfigured. Narrativization of collective trauma in fiction definitely brings about the healing power through re-living (compulsion to return to) the traumatic experience of the nation.

References

- Alexievich, S. (2016). *Secondhand time: the last of the soviets*. Jonathan Ball Publishers. Retrieved from <https://www.perlego.com/book/3066343/secondhand-time-pdf> (date of access: 20.02.2022).
- Bayer, G. (2009). World War II fiction and the ethics of trauma. In S. Onega, & J.-M. Ganteau (Eds.), *Ethics and trauma in contemporary British fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 155–174.
- Bion, W. R. (1963). *Elements of psychoanalysis*. London: Heinemann.
- calford@umd.edu. (n.d.). *Bion’s trauma and trauma theory*. Retrieved from: <https://traumatheory.com/bions-trauma-and-trauma-theory/> (date of access: 20.02.2022).
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: trauma, narrative, and history*. London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Dunmore, H. (2010). *The betrayal*. London: Penguin Books.
- Erikson, K. (1976). *Everything in its path*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Freud, S. (2017). Studies on hysteria (A. A. Brill, Trans.). *The collected works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)*. East Sussex: Delphi Classics, 12–311.
- Kohlke, M.-L., & Gutleben, Ch. (2010). Bearing after-witness to the nineteenth century. In M.-L. Kohlke, & Ch. Gutleben (Eds.), *Neo-Victorian tropes of trauma: the politics of bearing after-witness to nineteenth-century suffering*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1–34.
- Kurtz, J. R. (2018). *Trauma and literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mucci, C. (2018). *Beyond individual and collective trauma: intergenerational transmission, psychoanalytic treatment, and the*

dynamics of forgiveness. New-York: Routledge.

Tange, A. (2013). *Literary and visual representations of traumatic memory of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile* (Master of Arts

Thesis). Retrieved from https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/1826?utm_source=ecommons.luc.edu%2Fluc_theses%2F1826&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages (date of access: 20.02.2022).

Для цитирования: Рогачевская, М.С. Травма диктатуры в художественных текстах Хелен Данмор и Светланы Алексиевич // Практики и интерпретации: журнал филологических, образовательных и культурных исследований. 2022. Т. 7. № 1. С. 34–47. DOI: 10.18522/2415-8852-2022-1-34-47

For citation: Ragachewskaya, M.S. (2022). The persisting trauma of dictatorship in the fictions of Helen Dunmore and Svetlana Alexievich. *Practices & Interpretations: A Journal of Philology, Teaching and Cultural Studies*, 7 (1), 34–47. DOI: 10.18522/2415-8852-2022-1-34-47

ТРАВМА ДИКТАТУРЫ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫХ ТЕКСТАХ ХЕЛЕН ДАНМОР И СВЕТЛАНЫ АЛЕКСИЕВИЧ

Марина Станиславовна Рогачевская, доктор филологических наук, профессор Минского государственного лингвистического университета (Минск, Беларусь); e-mail: marinara-gachevskaya@gmail.com

Аннотация. В статье представлен сравнительный анализ художественной репрезентации одного из видов коллективной травмы – травмы диктатуры. Две современные писательницы – англичанка Хелен Данмор и белоруска Светлана Алексиевич – исследовали дух послевоенного советского (и постсоветского) времени. Х. Данмор художественно воплотила исторический факт – печально известное «дело врачей», опираясь на документальные подтверждения; С. Алексиевич, в свою очередь, документализировала живой нарратив, превращая память множества повествующих голосов в документ. Обе писательницы художественно представили механизм диктаторского подавления, приводящего к массовой травме, основным инструментом создания которой является страх в его различных проявлениях. Травматический дискурс в обоих произведениях обладает характерными качествами: прерывистость, умолчание и искаженность, при этом в сюжете и повествовании авторами реализованы такие механизмы психической защиты, как смещение, принятие, покорность, интроекция, подавление и рационализация.

Ключевые слова: травма, диктатура, страх, защитные механизмы, травматический дискурс, советское, память

