

Ruined lives: some considerations on the Motherhood and Femininity in the period of repressions in Soviet Union¹

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*«Victims of trauma are left to pick up the pieces of a blown apart self and reassemble them together
into something similar to a former self.» A.Cavalli*

*“Time had not faded my memories (as I had prayed to God it might),
nor had it healed my wounds as it is said always to do.
I began each day with the hope that the next day would be better,
my recollections a little less pointed, but I would awake to the same pain,
as if a black lamp were burning eternally inside me, radiating darkness.”
Orhan Pamuk, The Museum of Innocence*

Introduction

I am aware that many traumatized people could repeat saying from Pamuk. Strong psychic pain keeps memories vividly sharp and alive and trauma melodies sound in the stories of our patients, as well as in our own stories, though for following generations it may take a long time to recognize them. In the traumatic moment time stops in the impossibility to think and to take in an unbearable, unhuman experience. To return back to the flow of time, i.e. to restore it, requires an effort to overcome a defensive wish to not know, to not elaborate and integrate the traumatic experiences. It seems that for many families, so as for many nations, it is still a not yet finished task.

The period of the sharpest political repressions lasted from the October Revolution in 1917 till the end of the Stalin era in 1953. Motherhood and Femininity were violently impaired by the consequences of the Great October Social Revolution. It was a modernistic project, that cruelly and bloody destroyed the old world for an idealistic illusion of a better world for everybody. An attempt to create a new society of social justice, equality and fraternity in continuation with the French Revolution ideas, a new world with new human heroes, a kind of supermen and superwomen, actually led to the creation of the monstrous, repressive, totalitarian Soviet Regime, similar to the one depicted in Orwell's "1984"². To all this were still added the enormous traumas of the two World Wars.

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² Since 1917 it started with the merciless and cruel destruction of the «Old world» of the Christian Monarchic tradition, by shooting the Tsar's family with all their children and approximate persons, the annihilation of elites, killing or expelling famous personalities and minds (on "The Philosophers' steamboat" were expelled abroad among many others also Nikolai Berdyaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Ivan Ilyin, Nikolai Lossky, Pitirim Sorokin, Fyodor Stepun), the best composers (S. Rachmaninov, I. Stravinsky) and writers (I. Bunin, V. Nabokov). The aim was to build a new happy world where «who was nothing

I would like to point that in this moment in Ukraine it would be hard to perform a research on this matter, as in the East of Ukraine since 5 years there is an ongoing war, though now partially frozen, between two parts of the former USSR: Russian Federation and Ukraine. Emotions, of course, are now very intense on both parts and also interpretation of the past is often used as a weapon against the other part. Present traumas often overlap the past ones. Therefore, I will present just some thoughts, hypothesis, that could perhaps in future be developed into systematic, structured and deep researches.

My personal experience

I belong to the third generation of those, who were severely traumatized during the period of repressions. I would like to dedicate to my grandparents and parents this modest, but very sincere contribution to such an important and hard topic.

For many years I had kept in my mind questions on my family story. I still think about why even in our home intimacy important facts and events of the family story where not spoken. My father kept secret to me that his father, a hussar officer in the tsar's army, in 1929 was accused to be a foreign spy, jailed and sent to a Siberian gulag from where he never returned back. He was executed in 1938 and rehabilitated only in 1994. The youngest daughter of my grandfather never met him. My father, being only 13 years old, became responsible for the whole family with three more children, his mother, grandmother and aunt and started to work. Till the end of the Soviet Union I did not either know that my grandfather's parents were from a noble family owning lands, houses etc. My father kept this secret even to my mother and only in 1980s, during their trip to Leningrad, he dared to show her a beautiful house, which had belonged to his grandparents. He disclosed to me that his father and mother were from noble families only at the end of the 1980s. Such secrets were an attempt to protect himself from the pains of the past, but also from the fear and real danger of persecution for himself and for his family members. It also means that he had lived all his life fearing a possible further social and political persecution as "son

became everything». According to the different historical research from 1,4 to 5 millions of former citizens of the Russian empire left the country from 1917 – 1924 years. Being seduced by the communist ideas, political cleansing liquidated all considered or damned as the "enemies" with enthusiastic feeling of fulfilment obligation. With the collapse of the old world the nation got into darkness of the «wish to not know» and it's going to hate more the light of knowledge and truth.

Many soviet generations gave themselves to darkness and many embraced soviet mythology with Bolsheviks slogans because this kept them away from the pain and depression of guilt and responsibility. But this led the society to a compulsive repetition of tragedies (cruelty, abusive and inhuman treatments) through vicious circles of projections and introjections and sado-masochistic interplays.

Since then Soviet dissidents were persecuted and sent to internal or external exile (I.Brodsky, M. Rostropovitch, G. Vishnevskaya etc).

of a peoples' enemy”, nevertheless becoming at the same time an important functionary of the communist party (the party which had destroyed his pre-revolution life and killed his father) in charge for building electrical power stations and other important constructions all over USSR. He devoted his life to this work for the community, being very modest in his personal life. To what a splitting he had been compelled! Anyhow this made impossible the elaboration of his traumas for him, so as for those who had been also affected by them (family members, relatives). More recent psychoanalytic explorations proved also how next generations could not be protected from the transgenerational transmission of traumas.

It is symbolic, that I was born in Kazakhstan, where my father was sent as an engineer on the construction of the Karagandinskaya hydroelectrical power station, near one of the largest Gulags: Karlag – Karagandinskyj camp, where there were a lot of political prisoners. As it was after Stalin’s death many of them were released, but not allowed to leave Kazakhstan. My parents had there, as most close friends, four families of former political prisoners with whom they kept friendship during all the rest of their life. In this way I was involved in an atmosphere of friendly relationships with very well educated, nice people, brilliant professionals and artists.

My mother's father was also innocently jailed in 1937, when my mother was just 9 years old, and sent to Siberia, leaving at home his wife and 8 children, who could survive thanks to the only cow they had and to their very hard work. The 9th little daughter died already during the famine in 1932 (as she couldn’t tolerate to eat grass as others did to survive). Fortunately, this grandfather was released and rehabilitated in 1939.

Then for decades, in my family as in many others, fears and secrets were present under the surface of an apparently normal, peaceful life. But fear and threat for life are also traumatic in themselves, as they require a constant state of control and sharpened attention to not touch the “mines” for which one can never know where they could be. What mechanisms are active so that neither children, who are often so insistent with any kind of curiosity and questions, perceive that there are issues that should not be touched?

What had helped that families to survive, what provided their resilience? In both families, great-grandmothers and grandmothers, who were guardians of family and cultural traditions and values, set the tone for the relationship. Both families were raised on Christian values and respect for others and work. Due to their influence in the families, mutual affection, friendly, warm relations, mutual support, and cooperation were provided. In both families, everyone shared love for reading, which was the main pleasure and leisure.

Theme of repression traumas in my clinical practice

Paolo Fonda, former Director of the Han Groen Prakken Psychoanalytic Institute for Eastern Europe, told that during 25 years of his involvement in training of East Europeans, interviewing candidates and supervising their patients, he could give a deeper look in almost 200 life stories. He was astonished realizing in how many of these lives (especially from former USSR) had been present repressed (killed, deported or persecuted) parents or relatives. Similar observations were reported also by Gary Goldsmith, another teacher of the Institute.

After I have become more aware of the traumatic story of my own family and of its consequences, I developed an increasing interest to explore in deepness the phenomenon of Repressions traumas in the Soviet Regime, and of their transgenerational transmission.

I felt more and more interested also in life stories of famous personalities: scientists, artists, poets, writers and their attempts to elaborate and integrate their traumatic experience in a subjective and coherent form into their self and their lives narrative. They represent what is called a 'bearing witness'.

While "diving" in the deep dark area of repressions and massive traumas, I started to discover traumatic events also in many stories of my patients.

Clinical vignettes

The "Dead princess"

A young professionally successful woman was in analysis for 7 years. She represents the 4th traumatized generation. She came for her anxiety, fear of running out of money, fear of breakdown, suicidal thoughts, feeling not fully alive, partly dead, like a "dead princess", fear of loneliness, feeling empty inside, incapable to love, miserable and "nothing". She felt, as if she would not had lived her own life. She had difficulty to separate from her mother, looking constantly for maternal objects in her friendships and in love partners.

Little by little the pieces of the puzzle of her story began to gather and took shape a narrative in which also a transgenerational transmission of old traumas appeared.

The first generation of traumatized by repressions

My patient's grand-grandfather, who was repressed as a "kulak", lost all his property and was deported to Siberia.

His wife, almost deaf from her youth and who has suffered massive famine during the 1932-33, remained alone and depressed after her husband's deportation. She raised her newborn daughter in an emotionally closed and cold atmosphere.

The second generation

This daughter, my patient's grandmother was successful in her profession, she did many abortions. When my patient's mother was born - her father, awaiting a boy, did not want to take his wife with a newborn girl from the hospital.

The third generation

This baby, my patient's mother, hardly survived severe pneumonia as an infant and at age of 10 months was sent to her grandparents in a village, where she lived till 3,5 years and she did not either remember anymore her mother and father.

Anyhow she became a successful University teacher, though very anxious, fearful, insecure, paranoically preoccupied to become poor, often expressing strong anger and impregnating her family members with negative feelings.

She too made many abortions and at the beginning of the pregnancy, which gave birth to my patient, she also hesitated whether keep her or abort.

So, starting with the massive starvation in 1932-1933 and life threat during times of repressions that family was pervaded by strong fears of poverty, starvation, misery and helplessness. These feelings, mainly acted, had been transmitted through generations: my patient's mother still gets panicked if she does not have lots of food in her home and she is obsessively overeating.

Insufficient motherhood inherited by three generations led my patient to great difficulties in separation and individuation. For many years she stood with her mother in a symbiotic relationship though full of hate and rage. Only very gradually during her analysis she separated from her, developed her own business, structuring now an autonomous relationship with her mother.

My patient had a dream that seems to illustrate the fate of these generations – a river flows down and looks nice, but there are areas where it disappears and there is a space with dry ground only, then the river reappears and again a dry ground appears which she compares with a bald hair/hairless head that she connects to lifelessness. She associates this to periods during which she felt not alive-partly dead and then her associations come to her family traumas produced by the repressions, when “life stopped”, “children were not born”, when the flow of the river of life was drained, stopped.

The scared boy

A male patient in his early 40s in 10 years of psychoanalysis showed similar difficulties to separate from his mother, complained of being incapable to have relations with women, being very anxious, vulnerable and hypersensitive to any slightest sign of absence of interest toward him. He lived all his life till 40 years with his mother, who was traumatized by her mother's early death followed by her father disappearing in a Gulag. Later her elder brother was killed by Nazis, their house burnt and she was separated from her elder sister. Then she spent part of her childhood in a nursery.

My patient experienced his mother as not warm or loving, but cold, rigid, distant, demanding, not reachable, always busy with her work. At the same time, he had shared the same big bed with her till his 12 years. In this symbiotic relationship, in his unconscious fantasies was predominating an omnipotent unit - he clung to his

mother - that made him incapable of any serious relation. Only after 4 years of analysis he could find his first sexual partner and married her.

The damage, caused by the parents' traumas on their children (second generation) could be understood also through the basic trust violation and transmission of fear, insecurity, emptiness and despair. There are constant enactments linked to the maternal deprivation and to the incapacity of the traumatized, depressed mother to contain and respond adequately to the infant's emotional needs. (A. Green)

Children of traumatized mothers grow up with an emotionally 'dead mother' and that child ends up living in a 'deadly deserted universe' (A. Green). Such a child feels abandoned by his/her mother and this makes his separation-individuation difficult to reach. In such cases of my patients I observe a lack of sense of time, a kind of symbiotic timelessness and incapacity to order, process experiences and to use sufficiently the symbolic function. Introjection of such models of object relations by the child creates determinants for further transmission of trauma in subsequent generations.

It is really difficult to talk about trauma primarily because it is a completely specific mental phenomenon devoid of structure and meaning. A number of authors, referring to mental trauma, point to its extraterritorial nature, metaphorically describing it as a "mental hole" (Reemtsma, 1996). By this is meant that, because of its pain and intensity, the traumatic experience goes beyond the subject's capacity to process this experience; the essence of processing is the attribution of meanings and meanings to what is happening. As a result, the injury is outside the system of values, i.e. somewhere in a place where values (no longer exist) or never existed. Thus, trauma implies a loss of meaning and a loss of symbolizing.

As E. Kalmykova (2010) pointed out "The task of psychoanalysis is the restoration and healing of the traumatic experience, i.e. giving it meaning by symbolization. To transform injury, i.e. the step-by-step building of its intrapsychic representation, takes place by constructing and reconstructing the psychic reality in the course of analysis."

A comparative study on the prevalence of Postpartum Depression

In the longitudinal research on Postpartum Depression in the Kiev's Institute of Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology of the Ukrainian Academy of Medical Sciences we replicated a research of the Marien's Hospital and Institute of Psychotherapy in Stuttgart (Germany) on the prevalence of Postpartum Depression, to have also the possibility to compare the results. The Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale was used.

The results of the comparative longitudinal study are presented in the table.

The total number of respondents (women in period 3-6 months after deliveries)	Kiev's Institute	Stuttgart Marien's Hospital
	153	772
Scores higher then 9 according to the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale	56 (36,6 %)	132 (17 %)
Postpartum Depression	29 (18,95 %)	28 (3,6 %)

The results show a significantly higher (5,26 times more) prevalence of Postpartum Depression among women in Kiev in comparison with Stuttgart.

Social and psychological traumatic risk factors were widely represented in the Kiev' sample. Psychodynamic investigations revealed the prevalence of early separation and loss in 57% of respondents with Postpartum Depression (PPD) in comparison to 10% in a comparison with a group of healthy women in Kiev. Consequently, conflicts of separation – individuation were in 59% of women with PPD. In few single case studies of women who suffered from PPD were present transgenerational transmission of cumulative massive traumas: losses of relatives in the periods of famine (1932 - 1933), Stalin's repressions, Second World War, losses in the 1990s (poverty, job loss by parents, instability, early separations etc.).

It could be interesting to furtherly sharpen the methods of research to focus the role of the transgenerational componet of the traumatization.

Why is so difficult to face such traumas?

It took such a long time for me to discover – I mean to get emotionally involved besides some intellectual information - to what extent Soviet people, including myself, my colleagues and patients, were traumatized by that 70 years of sufferings during the Soviet regime. Why is it so difficult to face traumas of massive persecutions happened within the society in which you are living? As most of others, I was in a too insecure weak position to open the door behind which there were endless sufferings, “moaning and gnashing of teeth”, fear and despair. The collusion of silence was necessary to protect individuals and families/groups against an overwhelming anxiety and unbearable pain because there were not available any objects that may help to contain and elaborate such contents. Though I've read my first book about Gulag A. Solzhenitsyn's “*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*” when I was 10 years, I still do not dare to read Varlam Shalamov's books – former prisoner and brilliant writer, whom my mother read several times as he describes in an especially realistic way the dreadful violence against innocent victims in the Gulags.

There are conditions in which splittings are indispensable to survive, to protect some split space in which it could be still possible to love, give birth, raise a child and trust for a better future. But it is expensive in terms of other parts of the self that are disconnected by the split.

What other solution could be possible when a total powerlessness is felt in front of an omnipotent, omnipresent and extremely cruel state power, which deeply penetrates also the minds, being often also successful in weakening and paralyzing them. (A dream of the second patient, presented earlier – “he feels defeated in a battle with somebody, he is on the ground, in mud, dirty and helpless and a big dog (sheperd) approaches him and starts to rub his crotch and brings him to orgasm. He feels disgusted and harmed by this dream and in his associations, he stressed a dreadful fear – he could not move, and could not get rid of that dog, he felt paralyzed by fear. He associated sheperd with German Sheperds, dogs which Soviet jailers and Nazis used to slay/set on prisoners”.)

In such a situation how concrete may become phantoms of *Rodina's* (in Russian it means Homeland, but is a feminine word connected with giving birth) - *Mother's* infanticides, like in Dionysian orgies, where women in ecstasy “tore their children apart and devoured the bleeding pieces. This was the sacramental *Omophagy*”. *Father's* motivation for infanticide was “unwillingness to give up their absolute superiority for the benefit of their growing children”. (Wellisch, E. 2001) “*The Revolution that devours its sons*”.

Fairbairn (1943, p.67) expressed the terrible truth that “The infant persists in his love of bad objects because **bad objects are better than no objects at all.**” (*bold mine*) And still Fairbairn (1944, p.113): “But if the infant persists too long in attempting to wring love from the unloving mother, he will suffer disintegration and [...] imminent psychical death”.

How to disclose the legacy of terror?

There was and still is a legacy of enormous traumas, horrific crimes, guilt of the perpetrators, of those who collaborated or just remained silent and didn't want to know.

In analytic therapy we are in general very careful in assessing the right timing for interpretations-disclosure of painful contents. Sometimes we wait years, **until the cohesion of the self is strong enough** to bear some almost annihilating painful truths. We keep great attention to what and when could be disclosed-interpreted in order to promote elaboration and reparation – what means progression, instead of provoking annihilation or destructive acting – what means regression. A similar dynamic seems necessary for groups.

In a certain way secrets may be also understood as a need to hide, froze, something that for the moment is unbearable, to delay its elaboration to when the conditions will allow this, when the self will be strong enough.

To attribute the guilt just to few criminal leaders is also a defense: they can be individuated and condemned, but this is only a partial truth. To call as accomplice a large part of the population, or the whole population, though with various degrees of responsibility, is rather difficult, though it may correspond to truth.

Therefore, there appears as a defense, just a paranoid elaboration of mourning: “*They* - just a split part of our society - are guilty, while *we* are innocent.”

Conscious of this easy way out Marguerite Duras wrote: "If the Nazi horror is considered a German destiny, not a collective destiny, the man from Belsen will be reduced to be the victim of a local conflict. Only one answer for such a crime: turning it into everyone's crime. Sharing it. Like we share the idea of equality, of fraternity. To bear it, to tolerate the idea, share the crime."

Similarly, Erik From taught his students to keep in mind that “nothing human can be alien to me” (*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*, Terentius) to understand how some repulsive, terrifying aspects in others may raise in us a rejection and we could be prone to deny of having any dark sides inside ourselves.

Large groups, like nations, need to wait the right time to disclose some terrible horrors of their history. Almost all European nations are “discovering” after decades what their citizens, their army, their governments committed during World wars, Colonial or other wars. Almost always decades must pass waiting for the right moment to disclose such secrets. Or better, to integrate in the representation of the group what was already more or less known, but had remained emotionally split for decades.

Groups at first need to foster their cohesion to become strong enough to face their own sins. If there is an unbalance: too heavy negativity on a too weak self, the group could react with a dangerous strong paranoid defense to face the risk of disintegration. (Schizophrenic patients who recover after a delusional crisis are often on risk of suicide, as their narcissism is so damaged that they cannot bear to live on. Mothers, who killed their babies, mostly cannot bear their guilt, often they may just kill themselves or retreat from reality into a chronic psychosis.)

Leo Tolstoy may help us to better understand why responsibility and guilt should be enlarged to all. In 1869 he wrote (having in mind Napoleon):

“There are two sides of life in each person: a personal life, which is the freer the more abstract are its interests; and a primordial life, the pack one, in which humans unavoidably fulfill the laws prescribed to them.

Consciously man lives for himself, but unconsciously he becomes the tool adapt to achieve the goals of history, of the human community.”

“The higher a person stands on the social ladder, the larger the number of people with whom he is connected, the more becomes evident the predetermination and inevitability of each of his actions.”

“The king is the slave of history.”

“History - that is the life which is unconscious, common, of the pack, of humanity - uses every minute of the kings’ lives as an instrument for its own purposes.”

“... as long as the sea of history is calm, the one who directs the fragile boat, being attached by a hook to the ship of people and, therefore, moving too, could have the

impression that it is his effort that makes move the ship to which he is attached. But it is enough that a storm rises, an excitement of the sea or that the ship moves faster, and the error immediately becomes evident. The ship continues its autonomous and powerful movement, the hook of the boat no longer reaches the ship, and who is controlling the boat suddenly switches from the role of a dominant, a source of power, to the role of an insignificant, useless and weak man." (War and Peace: PART 3, CAP 25, Part 2)

60 years after Tolstoj, Freud wrote something similar in "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" (1921, p.123):

"We must conclude that the psychology of groups is the oldest human psychology; what we have isolated as individual psychology, by *neglecting all traces of the group*, has only since come into prominence out of the old group psychology, by a gradual process *which may still, perhaps, be described as incomplete.*" (my italics)

The Role of Culture – The Second Skin of Culture

"The word dies last"

A. Tarkovsky

Individuals need other individuals and groups to be contained and helped to elaborate what is too heavy for their single minds. But groups also need bright geniuses – like poets and scientists - to take in and "interpret" what is hidden in the darkness. On large group level, the level of nations, we may suppose that **culture plays a sort of maternal – psychoanalytic role**: holding and containing, sometime trying to realize also a paternal superegoic role re-establishing laws of truth and ethics.

As culture plays a role of healing and giving meaning to traumatic experiences by symbolization, in Soviet life full of traumatic experience **culture played an important role as a second skin** both on individual and group/social levels. As Ester Bick (1968) pointed out: "The need for a containing object would seem, in the infantile not integrated state, to produce a frantic search for an object — a light, a voice, a smell, or other sensual object — which can hold the attention and thereby be experienced, momentarily at least, as holding the parts of the personality together. The optimal object is the nipple in the mouth, together with the holding and talking and familiar smelling mother. [...] this containing object is experienced concretely as a skin.» This sounds also particularly appropriate if we consider the regression induced by persistent massive traumatization.

It is task of culture to investigate and research the truth that at the beginning very few are eager or strong enough to know. But then it must come a moment in which a larger part of the population becomes able and willing to know, elaborate and try to repair.

Dissidents wrote about repressions already at the very time they happened or soon after, but they were published only abroad and only much later in Russia.

In Post-Soviet space, on the large group level, this still goes slowly, though lots of documentaries, movies, books, theater pieces dramatically show these events.

There is a volunteer's movement and organization who investigates archives and puts information on victims in open websites. There is a group on Facebook - "Immortal Barak" – with numerous stories on victims and also persecutors. There is a precedent when a grandson of a persecutor apologized to grandchildren of the victims. Now several brilliant books about that period are in school programs on literature in Russia, but, as elsewhere, there is also a strong passive resistance to know more.

What had allowed to women in Gulags and women whose fathers, husbands, sons were in Gulag, to survive? Sometimes their personal resilience seems to have been based on some essentials, like a powerful connection to culture, namely Literature and Poetry, which remained alive as deeply rooted in family traditions and family relations.

Femininity and Motherhood suffered numerous heavy attacks by the totalitarian regime, but survived due to the preservation and transgenerational transmission of good enough maternal objects inside the individuals' psyche and somehow in the common culture.

Culture and family traditions were kept and transmitted also by grandfathers but mainly by grandmothers, who were born and raised before the revolution and who contributed to preserve families keeping a continuity and a certain constancy. All this has formed a nurturing ground not only for new generations of artists and intellectuals, but also for a large number of users - beneficiaries of culture. Arts and culture provided containment, creative symbolization and a fertilizing effect that allowed individuals and culture to survive and develop. Maybe just for this function Culture had been under such a strict control. Non-conformist Arts and Culture, though persecuted, succeeded to preserve a certain potential space for individuation and personification.

The fine arts offer connectedness, a feeling of being in contact with good objects, so to say a separation in the presence of others.

At that times this happened despite the general predominance of an intense paranoid-schizoid position, which was sometimes close to a psychotic group functioning. This was fostered by the fact that in times of totalitarian regimes people belong to a large group that shares the same destiny and feels equal in front of a common future, what increases feelings of fusion.

There is a great importance of art, theater, music, literature as a holding function and a way of individuation in times of solitude, being lost, humiliated and repressed by a regime. Connectedness to the Great Russian Poetry and Literature symbolically meant revitalizing relations with an introjected good maternal object.

It was a nourishing, reanimating experience – reading by heart the whole Poetry from beloved poets – A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov, N. Nekrasov, A. Block, J. Mandelshtam, B. Pasternak, A. Akhmatova, M. Tsvetaeva.

Joseph Brodsky believed that, Homo sapiens should naturally evolve into Homo Poeticus: “Poetry is a tremendous accelerator of consciousness, both for the writer and for the reader. You discover connections or dependencies, given in language, speech, that you didn’t suspect. This is a unique tool of knowledge”. Poetry has become that magic crystal through which a contemporary could distinguish his own features.

Our intimate experiences, our doubts and forebodings, our spiritual drama, “upbringing the ear” — that is, actually, the upbringing of feelings, were embodied in the poetry with piercing depth. The poetic picture of the world is mysteriously connected with the moral world. No wonder F. Dostoevsky pointed to A. Pushkin as our historical justification and purpose. If this is not the case, the “species target” is postponed indefinitely. As the modern philosopher and writer Gleb Smirnov pointed: «The invariable quality of Russian literature is its famous confession (that is, it reproduces the sacrament of repentance), as well as its accusation, that is, it also inherits the mission of the Old Testament prophets to correct the ways of men. »

Soviet and Russian literature continues to work out the difficult, painful events and experiences of the Soviet past: A. Akhmatova, B. Pasternak, A. Solzhenitsyn, V. Grossman, E. Ginzburg, V. Shalamov and others in the 20th Century followed by modern L. Ulitskaya, E. Vodolazkin, Z. Prilepin, G. Yahina.

Ogden compares the language of analysis with the language of literature. Good analysis, like good literature, should be interesting. And Ogden considers this interest as a linguistic effect, as a talented work that comes from a sincere experience. Therefore, an unexpected chapter on Robert Frost’s poetry appears in Ogden’s book, so he talks about the sense of language exercises that he did when he was a college student.

Psychoanalysis is also poetry, and it must have its own poetics. As it is known, Freud received the Goethe Prize as an appreciation of his literary gift.

Pavel Florensky, an extremely brilliant universal scientist and philosopher, executed in 1937, wrote: “The word, the product of our whole being in its integrity, is really a reflection of a person. [...] In a word, the genes of my personality come from me, the genes of that personal genealogy to which I belong. And therefore, by entering into another person with my word, I conceive a new personal process in it ”.

AS APPENDIX

There is a long list of outstanding personalities, women, who survived that nightmare period and who left us examples of courage, resilience, dignity and honesty, as they had internalized capacities to deal with traumas, to heal their injuries and to help others.

*I would like to put as an example the life and work of the great Russian poet **Anna Akhmatova**, whose Requiem is a heartbreaking poem about years of Stalin's repressions:*

*«My husband is in a grave,
My son is imprisoned,
Pray for me, please».*

Her husband, the father of her son, the famous Russian poet Nikolay Gumilev was shot by Bolsheviks in 1921. Her son, Leo Gumilev, was imprisoned in 1935 and released thanks to a personal letter of his mother to Stalin. In 1938 he was imprisoned again and spent in a Gulag for 5 years. Then he fought for 2 years against Nazis in the Red Army, but was imprisoned again in 1945 till 1956.

To avoid a persecution by Stalin, Anna Akhmatova burnt her writings and to preserve some her poems a circle of friends learned her poem "Requiem" by heart.

This Requiem was published when she was still alive abroad, but not in her home country, where the poem continued to circulate only underground and was published only in the 1989, when Akhmatova was officially rehabilitated by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Reading her Requiem now anybody is deeply impressed by its powerful images, by the voice that registers the effects of terror in everyday life, by the snippets of overheard conversation arranged in individual vignettes that create a powerful effect of despair and resilience. Anna Akhmatova, Nikolay and Leo Gumilev are now among the beloved authors for many of soviet and post-soviet people.

*Another amazing destiny is that of **Eugenia Ginsburg**. She was a happy young, well-educated woman, professional journalist and University teacher, communist party adherent, wife of a Soviet leader in Kazan, mother of two boys of 12 and 4. She was expelled from the Communist party in 1934, jailed in 1937, when she was 30, and spent 18 years in prisons and Gulags.*

After she was released in 1955, her book of memories on that years «Journey into the Whirlwind» was first published in 1967 in Milano, so as also Pasternak's «Doctor Zhivago». This is a highly impressive document of great literary value. Her brilliant memory of poetry and literature and her own poetry allowed her to survive and to write then a great book. She had learned all Pushkin's and Block's works by heart. She created her own poems and learnt them by heart, as also did Akhmatova's son – Leo Gumilev.

«My judges were in such a hurry that they did not answer any of my questions and declarations."^[7] In one of the most revealing chapters of her autobiography, Ginzburg expressed great relief upon hearing the verdict, because she had feared up to that very moment that she would be condemned to death:

To live! Without property, but what was that to me? Let them confiscate it – they were brigands anyway, confiscating was their business. They wouldn't get much good out of mine, a few books and clothes – why, we didn't even have a radio. My husband was a loyal Communist of the old stamp, not the kind who had to have a Buick or a Mercedes... Ten years!... Do you [the judges],

with your codfish faces, really think you can go on robbing and murdering for another ten years, that there aren't people in the Party who will stop you sooner or later? I knew there were – and in order to see that day, I must live. In prison, if needs be, but I must at all costs live!... I looked at the guards, whose hands were still clasped behind my back. Every nerve in my body was quivering with the joy of being alive. What nice faces the guards had! Peasant boys from [Ryazan](#) or [Kursk](#), most likely. They couldn't help being warders – no doubt they were conscripts. And they had joined hands to save me from falling. But they needn't have – I wasn't going to fall. I shook back my hair curled so carefully before facing the court, so as not to disgrace the memory of [Charlotte Corday](#). Then I gave the guards a friendly smile. They looked at me in astonishment.”

She never saw his eldest son who died from starvation in Leningrad in 1942. When she met her youngest son 12 years after her being imprisoned they spent the whole night reciting by heart their beloved poetry. Her son Vasilyj Aksenov was one of the famous writers of the generations of the 1960s.

*The last example is the poet **Marina Tsvetaeva** – another great Russian poet and writer, daughter of Prof. Ivan Tsvetaev, founder and creator of the Russian Fine Arts Museum in Moscow, named after A. Pushkin. Her husband Serge Efron was shot by KGB, her young daughter died from starvation in 1922, her eldest daughter Ariadna was imprisoned in a Gulag from 1939 till 1955. Marina's sister Anastasia – also a writer, was imprisoned in 1937 and was in Gulag and exiled till 1959. Marina Tsvetaeva committed suicide in August 1941, while her son Mur died during the Second World War.*

This shared treasure of the common beloved poetry connected members in many Soviet families. My parents loved and knew by heart a lot from our beloved poets and books and poetry accompanied them till their last days.