

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2008

Department:Russian and Slavonic Studies

Degree:MA

Title:Recreation of Chernobyl Trauma in Svetlana Alekseyevich's Chernobyl'skaya Molitva

Little has been written about the literary methodology of the contemporary Belarusian writer Svetlana Alekseyevich. This thesis investigates how the aesthetic manipulation of factographic content in Svetlana Alekseyevich's Chernobyl'skaya molitva aids Alekseyevich in her stated goal of creating a "closer approximation to real life," while secondarily positioning Alekseyevich within the literary background of Belarusian and Soviet dissident writers of documentary prose and providing an in-depth analysis of the narrative structure of Chernobyl'skaya molitva. At the heart of the methodology of Chernobyl'skaya molitva is a bifurcated structure I call "literary traumatic space," which is a modification of Michael Rothberg's concentrationary space as described in *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. The emotional impact of Alekseyevich's Chernobyl'skaya molitva is greatly increased through multiple representations of irreconcilable trauma (as portrayed in "literary traumatic space") positioned one against another within the text. While the multiplicity of narratives would suggest that Alekseyevich's work gives a varied viewpoint of Chernobyl trauma, Alekseyevich's overwhelmingly strong authorial point of view, as seen in her "Self-Interview" and chapter titles, reinforces the sense that this text is a literature of tensions.