

The Enactivist Dimension of the Book “Captivity” by Valeria “Nava” Subotina

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Abstract. The lack of temporal distance from the works of contemporary Ukrainian literature, devoted to themes of the Russian-Ukrainian war, necessitates the search for adequate methods for the effective analysis of non-fiction literary works. The purpose of the article is to propose an algorithm to interpret texts like V. Subotina’s book *Captivity*. The hermeneutic method and an enactivist approach were used to achieve the goal. The algorithm for analysing Subotina’s book considers such corporal correlates as pain, hunger, and touch since the core phenomenon of the enactivist approach is the body. The conclusion is that the corporal correlates of pain, hunger, and touch can become not only a means of suffering and unfair deprivation of personal freedom, but, paradoxically, a source of inspiration to live, fight, and create. In the proposed context, the enactivist approach shows its potential in view of the functional use of relevant corporal correlates and can be applied in further studies of various genres of non-fiction literary samples.

Keywords: Valeria Subotina; Russian-Ukrainian war; non-fiction literature; enactivist approach; corporal correlate.

Introduction

The events of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which Russia launched in 2014, have determined the writing of numerous books, many of which deny the well-known truth about the silence of muses when guns are “speaking” and indicate an attempt to record

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the non-trivial experience that Ukrainians gain under these circumstances. The lack of temporal distance to the events described also leads to a certain genre limitation, with lyrics and nonfiction literature clearly dominating among these works. One example worth analysis is a book by Valeria Subotina, a poet and press officer of the Azov regiment, who participated in the defence of Mariupol and Azovstal, which were besieged by Russians in spring 2022. Who, after her release, wrote the book *Captivity* about 327 days in Russian internment.

The selected book is of particular interest for a few reasons. First, it correlates thematically with similar texts that describe the experience of being in captivity in a Russian concentration camp, for instance, the book *The Bright Path: The Story of a Concentration Camp* by Stanislav Aseyev, a Shevchenko Prize laureate (Aseyev, 2020) or *Putin's Prisoner: My Time as a Prisoner of War in Ukraine* by Aiden Aslin with John Sweeney (Aslin, Sweeney, 2023), and others. Second, in terms of genre, Subotina's book correlates with the corresponding genre of books by Annie Ernaux, a recent Nobel Prize for Literature, who defines her own kind of documentary genre of auto-fiction as "auto-social-biography" (Het'man, 2020, p. 94; Romanova, 2022, p. 45, and others). Third, the nature of the text in Subotina's book suggests that an enactivist approach can be applied to its analysis.

Given the fact that there are fairly any adequate methods to interpret various genres of documentary prose effectively, the objective of this paper is to propose an algorithm for studying texts which are analogous to V. Subotina's book *Captivity*. This will be achieved through the utilisation of a hermeneutic method and an enactivist approach. Additionally, this paper will determine the capabilities of this approach in the context of literary study.

Thus, since the core phenomenon of the enactivist approach is the body, consistent and at the same time interconnected consideration of corporal correlates, such as pain, hunger, and touch, will make the basis for an algorithm for analysing Subotina's book. It must be emphasised that the enactivist methodology is not solely limited to these correlates. This paper analyses a specific literary work, the ideological and thematic content of which can be interpreted relatively fully using these three corporal correlates.

1. Between autofiction and ...evolutionary epistemology (The methodological basis of enactivism)

To begin with, it should be noted that Subotina has a degree in journalism. After graduating from the faculty of journalism at Mariupol State University, she began her career teaching journalism and PR at her Alma mater and later defended a PhD thesis on social communications. Hence, her job as a press officer for the Azov Regiment (2015–2016), then for the Donetsk Border Guard Detachment (2017–2020), as well as her writing the book, were not accidental.

It is true that not every journalist takes up writing books, even in the genre of memoir. Moreover, not every author's text goes beyond memoir to turn into something more meaningful and significant. Yet Subotina was able to go beyond memoirs in her book,

although it is full of openly journalistic escapades. However, these journalistic inclusions sometimes contribute to the creation of a broader semantic context, owing to which the ontological basis of the book is realised through such specific and socially important manifestations. That said, the main content of the book concerns the comparatively more vital aspects of the text. We assume that their disclosure is possible through the application of the enactivist approach.

The formulated hypothesis is based on the assertion that, as detailed in her book, Subotina describes how she, with her sistren and brethren, left the underground bunker located under the Azovstal plant because they were ordered to surrender by the commanders. She was held captive in Russia for almost a year in conditions akin to those of a concentration camp, rather than a camp for war prisoners, where neither her dignity nor physical survival was guaranteed.

In other words, the author of *Captivity* recounts the experiences of herself and her military fellows during their period of captivity in Russia. From this perspective, the facts and events presented in the book are deemed to be authentic. Nevertheless, the figure of the narrator-protagonist consistently evinces characteristics of autofiction, defined by Serge Dubrovsky as “the granting of a literary character to myself through myself which I, as a writer, has decided to bestow on myself” (1988, p. 77) and, in the terminology of Vincent Colonna, as “a literary work through which the writer invents a personality and existence for himself, while preserving his real identity (his real name)” (2004, p. 200).

The previous mention of Annie Ernaux is highly relevant, since Valeria Subotina “invents” her identity not so much by immersing herself in the psychological depths of her inner world as by constantly inhabiting the extremely sociologized space of the concentration camp. It is about the fact that Ukrainian prisoners, turned into concentration camp prisoners by the Russians, are deprived of the right and opportunity of any privacy. Therefore, the “blind spot” behind the toilet in a Taganrog prison cell, “where one could hide for a while” (Subotina, 2024, p. 165) is perceived as an unreal-of, albeit short-lived, comfort.

What is more, when the narrator-protagonist shares her feelings, most of them relate to external circumstances – either her current existence in captivity or memories of past vicissitudes from her childhood and adolescence, and personal facts that preceded Russia’s large-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. In such a perspective, the theoretical foundations of enactivism become quite topical.

Enactivism (derived from English to enact “to put something into action”) is a fairly recent theory which emerged within the framework of contemporary “cognitive science and epistemology” (Gallagher, 2017, p. 5), although in fact the basis of enactivism is a set of ideas that took shape in the second half of the twentieth century, and it is defined within the scope of what is known as evolutionary epistemology. If we provide a brief overview of the ideas suggested by various scholars, including the epistemologists Karl Lorenz and Jean Piaget, the psychologist Henry Plotkin, the biologists Charles Lumsden and Edward Wilson, and the philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre, we can gain insight into the enactivist perspective. We may therefore conclude that, in

the process of mental epigenesis, the substance of culture is transformed in such a way that consciousness is constituted with appropriate content (for further details, refer to Shteinbuk, 2007, pp. 212–258).

In contrast, enactivism was primarily developed in *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. A Chilean neuroscientist Francisco J. Varela, Canadian philosopher Evan Thomson, and American psychologist Eleanor Rosch (1991) elaborate these ideas and establish their paradigm on three cornerstones: consciousness ↔ body ↔ environment. The relationship between these phenomena is dialectical, and “due to the integrative function of corporality, consciousness is embedded in the surrounding reality, thereby eliminating the distinction between external and internal, interoceptive and exteroceptive aspects of the individual’s consciousness” (Borodij, 2022, p. 13).

This understanding of enactivism has the effect of radically changing the status of corporality. As a result, corporality shifts from a marginal to a pivotal phenomenon, significantly affecting both the content of consciousness and the nature of the environment. For all that, the problem lies in the fact that, as Rucińska aptly points out, “even though enactivism is difficult to operationalise, it does not mean that it cannot serve as a research programme” (2019, p. 9). The practice of applying the enactivism approach substantiates the aforementioned statement, as evidenced by the paucity of studies devoted to the consideration of information issues (Beskaravaynyy, 2025; Petrushov, 2017, and others), pedagogy (Aleksandrov, 2017; Horbunova, 2017, and others), medical ones (see, for instance, Fuchs, 2019; Nesprava, 2025, and others), and translation studies (Tatsakovych, 2021) issues. Even so, to the best of our knowledge, no literary studies have hitherto been conducted based on the enactivist approach. For that reason, we hypothesise that our research is one of the first of its kind.

Besides, as one of the central concepts within enactivism, corporality does not exist as such; it manifests itself through a range of corporal correlates. Some of them appear to be more epistemological in nature. They include organic correlates of pain, hunger, and touch (for detailed information, see Shteinbuk, 2007, pp. 231–258). These correlate largely underpin the principal range of themes in Valeria Subotina’s book *Captivity*.

The deprivation of liberty, suffered by those held captive in Russia, is not merely a restriction of freedom; rather, it is a condition and foundation for the entire complex of abuses perpetrated against the prisoner. The core elements of this complex are hunger and pain, with the latter inflicted primarily through touch.

2. Between reality and symbolism (Poetic features of *Captivity* by V. Subotina)

When viewed from this perspective, corporality becomes at least ambivalent, since human existence is possible only in bodily form; on the other hand, this mode of existence determines all the suffering one is forced to endure, deprived of freedom in the hands of the enemy. There are two particularly expressive episodes in Subotina’s book, which are realistic and at the same time highly symbolic.

The first episode concerns the situation when the narrator-protagonist, along with other prisoners, found herself in a colony in Olenivka, a village in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. She recalls the episode when she was made undress during registration in the colony only to realize that her “clothes no longer belong to [her]”, that “they [clothes] do not protect [her]”, and that she is left with “arms and legs. Some hair. A body”, simply “just a body. Nothing else at all”, and she felt as if she “stood on a scaffold, without the ability to defend herself” (Subotina, 2024, p. 27).

The second episode reiterates the themes and motifs of the first, yet it also imbues the narrative with a profounder significance through its symbolism. The mention of the scaffold is preceded by a description of “three wooden crosses with Jesus crucified and two robbers standing outside the gate [of the colony]” (Subotina, 2024, p. 21), which serves to contextualise the episode within a broader narrative framework. However, the conclusion drawn by the narrator-protagonist from this obvious parallel is not only an attempt to sacrilegiously resemble the Son of God; contrariwise, in such desperation, she blasphemously reproaches God the Father Himself, because, in her opinion, “the Christian God, as was always his custom, watched and remained silent. He was silent, watching what would happen”, but she had no doubt that “nothing, God, would come out of it. Nothing good. No deep philosophy. Only pain, blood, and suffering” (Subotina, 2024, p. 21).

The awareness of one’s helplessness in an unjust world returns to the narrator, who, when a child, experienced the feeling through her father and later believed, for a while, that justice was potentially possible (Subotina, 2024, p. 195). It is noteworthy that her belief in justice is also related to her bodily sensations caused by her love for her husband Andrii Subotin, a border guard, whom she married on 5 May 2022, while defending Azovstal. Unfortunately, on 7 May, two days after their marriage, Andrii Subotin was killed. Consequently, in the book under review, the memories of him acquire an artistic, hence objectively symbolic, meaning, which correlates significantly with both the image of an ideal father and that of the Heavenly Father.

Primarily, the narrator-protagonist perceived herself to be “protected by him” (Subotina, 2024, p. 53) even in captivity. She asserts that “only Andrii knew her true identity” as she “revealed her innermost thoughts to him” (Subotina, 2024, p. 165). Also, “he was such a person who could see the good in anything, and [she] tried her best to look at that terrible world through his eyes”, for this reason, “every little miracle, some little good things seemed to [her] like a gift from Andrii” (Subotina, 2024, p. 47).

The semi-divine qualities are indirectly proved by the attitude of Vita, the narrator’s fellow sister and cellmate, towards Andrii. The narrator-protagonist even “envies Vita” because the latter “does not care that Andriusha is not here. It does not bother her that she has never met him in her life”. Nevertheless, Vita “tells him what is going on. She addresses him, looking out of the window”, and says: “I do believe Andriusha!”, thus assuring the protagonist that Andrii “will not let [her] be offended for anything in the world” (Subotina, 2024, p. 166), which for some reason makes the narrator believe it as well.

The result is that the whole complex of images from the three crosses with crucifixes to the latent attribution of divine traits to the deceased lover gives the above description

of Nava (Valeria Subotina's military call sign) a distinct metaphysical character. However, the blasphemous connotations still give way to the narrator's attempts to find opportunities and strength to confront and fight against Russian tortures in inhuman conditions of existence, first in the Olenivka colony, then in the Taganrog prison. In this regard, we can talk not only about enactivist motives, but also about enactivist determination. On the one hand, it determines the emergence of symbols that allow one to withstand constant humiliation, pain, hunger, and other maltreatment. On the other hand, it contributes to adaptation to the terrible circumstances, providing metaphysical or, at least, figurative reasons that enable one to consciously habituate themselves to a hostile environment. For example, "at some moments, despite the horrors and complete absurdity of the situation," she nevertheless begins to relax, "because she has partially gotten used to what seems impossible to get used to. She has adapted" and "she is already living this stupid life for herself" (Subotina, 2024, p. 209).

Thus, the paradox reveals that something, which "seems impossible to get used to", acquires the opposite or rather, an adaptive meaning, based on the core enactivism element, which is the narrator's body. Hence, the body itself becomes the medium through which artistic expression is conveyed.

3. Between pain and hunger (The enactivist nature of correlates of pain and hunger)

At the same time, one cannot help but notice that Nava's experience of pain began long before she was imprisoned later, because she encountered it as a child. What is more, the pain was inflicted on her by her closest people, especially her father, who was "broken by the wars of the Soviet Union" (Subotina, 2024, p. 14), and the nature of the traumatic experience was immediately detected through physical and mental dimensions.

In this context, it would be appropriate to recall the position of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who argue that the movement of the subject towards definitive disappearance is nothing other than a movement toward silence or, in their terminology, towards "deterritorialization" of the language. To put it differently, under certain circumstances, "language ceases to be representative in order to move towards its limits, towards extremes", but most importantly, "this metamorphosis is accompanied by a connotation of pain..." (1986, p. 23).

The paradigm proposed by the mentioned philosophers can be quite adequately extrapolated to the story of Nava in the book *Captivity*, because the plot, except for the end, demonstrates the movement towards death, accompanied by pain. It transforms from external to internal at the beginning of this path, namely in childhood (see Subotina, 2024, p. 15), forming a strong and unbreakable personality and enabling her to withstand, among other things, prolonged and varied torture during captivity. Moreover, this strength does not let Nava give up or break down even though "what [she] feels here every day, what she experiences every moment is a terrible slow death in agony" Subotina, 2024, p. 195). It empowers her with a potential, gained in such an appalling way, to produce

the discourse of the book, which was published in February 2024, less than a year after Valeri Subotina's release from captivity in April 2023.

It should be emphasised, however, that it is impossible to view this situation from an exclusively optimistic perspective, since, despite being released from captivity and gaining physical freedom, Nava still claims that "nothing will ever be enough to release [her] pain..." (Subotina, 2024, p. 201). That is, the experience of pain is non-linear because of the ambivalence of this correlate, characterised by its inherent dimensions. For this reason, even if the physical sensations subside, once the pain is no longer inflicted from the outside, the internal sensations of pain are virtually insurmountable. They keep returning because they become part of the inner world of a person who is forced to live with this experience, which inevitably affects both consciousness and attitude toward the world around.

If these reflections are radicalised to the extreme, we can cautiously conclude that a person who has encountered pain will never forget this experience. In addition, everything that happens to them, everything they do in the future, will be determined by their former experience of pain. Nevertheless, the ramifications of the distressing ordeal can prove to be constructive, as exemplified by Valeria Subotina's literary work. It is imperative to recognise that her publication is not a conventional narrative of consolation, but rather a candid account of her ordeal as a captive in Russia. Despite its potential for therapeutic benefit, even such a publication cannot erase the indelible impact of the excruciating experience attained from the author's consciousness^{1*}.

The narrator states that they "all went through hunger, and it was really dreadful", noting that even six months after the exchange, they still feel it (Subotina, 2024, p. 79). Besides, the epistemological dimension of this correlate is evident in its manifestation as a significant factor that primarily stimulates memory in a distinct manner. For example, Sigmund Freud emphasised the special role of memories that correlate with "the two most powerful motivating forces – hunger and love" (1963, p. 243). It is apparent that the authors used to discuss hunger solely as an anthropological trait and a fundamental biological need, which must be fulfilled, before the Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and the guidance of Lev Trotsky, set a chain of concentration camps, with hunger as one of the tortures.

Under such circumstances, unfavourable or even threatening conditions of an individual's existence stimulate the latter to seek ways to escape from a dangerous situation. Therefore, based on these circumstances or experience, an adaptive mechanism is activated, which cannot be achieved without the phenomena of memory and memories. Consequently, hunger, as a specific organic state, demonstrates the capacity to regulate the perception of the surrounding environment to maintain its own fundamental physiological processes. Simultaneously, it functions as a causal phenomenon that is implicated in the comprehension of Being in its totality.

¹ One of the authors of this research happened to meet V. Subotina personally during the "Book Arsenal" event, which was held from 29 May to 1 June 2025 in Kyiv, to witness both the remarkable inner strength of that courageous woman and the fact that, within herself, she had to carry the insurmountable pain of the experienced captivity.

In turn, the capacity to grasp the concept of Being is contingent on the fact that, as with the experience of pain, it entails the absorption of the external, the transformation of this external into the internal, and the representation of this internal as external in an adapted form. Inevitably, in such circumstances, this internal representation acquires an ambivalent status, encompassing both external and internal elements in an appropriate proportion.

In this manner, the mechanism operates in natural circumstances. However, if an individual, such as Nava, is placed in a concentration camp with artificially created conditions aimed at limiting the prisoner's ability to eat, the consequences will be radically different from the natural course of events. The procurement of sustenance in natural conditions will become a means of subsistence for an individual, who will simultaneously gain experience in providing for vital needs in the future. In contrast, in a concentration camp, it is impossible to overcome the limited availability of food, and random exceptions cannot significantly change the situation. This, in turn, forces an individual to focus on mere survival rather than on living, with no useful experience to employ. But it may lead either to the degradation of a human, turning one into an animal, or, in contrast, to deliberate introspection to identify internal resources that can be utilised to adapt to hostile and/or unfavourable circumstances.

Furthermore, it is quite common for food to lose its status as a necessity of life and instead become its antithesis due to its poor quality in a concentration camp, which hugely complicates the situation one is confronted with. To illustrate, the narrator-protagonist notes that during her tenure at the bakery in the Olenivka colony, she noticed that the quality of the flour declined. The flour "was likely to be infected with a bacterium that caused bread to turn clumpy and unfit for consumption", inducing prisoners' stomach disorders, exacerbated by the lack of access to medical resources and the unsanitary conditions – "one toilet in the form of a hole for a bunch of people and no pills" (Subotina, 2024, p. 64).

We can argue that hunger, as an ambivalent factor in conditions of freedom and unfreedom, becomes a horrible yet extremely effective way of turning people into an animal state, confined to cages or barracks, waiting for food from those who control its distribution. Moreover, the enactivist dimension in such is not oriented towards the external world, namely the world of tormentors, but rather towards the realm of self-absorption and self-cognition. However, it is hardly a question of introspection into the spiritual layers of one's own personality. On the contrary, the reflections are mainly concerned with whether or not the narrator-protagonist can cope with her weakness, because "in a Russian prison, when [she] walks in circles in an iron cage or is bent and humiliated for interrogation, [she] thinks of nothing but her pain", she therefore "cannot cry, cannot allow herself to suffer utmost. Only at night, with her face buried in the pillow, she can voicelessly cry out in pain" (Subotina, 2024, p. 195). Based on the above passage, one may infer that the narrator-protagonist writes not only about her physical pain, because the pain she experiences is obviously determined by both hunger and another important organic factor, namely the correlate of touch.

4. Between touch and touch (The tactile dimension of the captivated subject)

It is noteworthy that, following her release in one of the prisoner-of-war exchanges and subsequent rehabilitation in a hospital, the narrator-protagonist acknowledges that she “will call the ward a cell and dread touching for a long time” (Subotina, 2024, p. 253). One may posit that such reactions are primarily the memories of the physical violence she recurrently suffered from in captivity. Yet this does not appear to be the sole concern. As Canetti observed, “A man always tries to avoid the touch of another”; what is more, “an unexpected touch at night or in the dark can turn this fear into panic” and “even clothing cannot guarantee sufficient security because it is very easy to tear it, very easy to get to your bare, smooth, defenceless flesh” (1985, p. 127).

The fear stems from the fact that touching the body renders it an object to a greater extent than the gaze directed at it. Touch causes the body to undergo a profound metamorphosis, namely a transition from subjectivity to objectivity. This leads to the destruction of the seemingly unshaken status of the subject, who was previously aware of themselves as observers. Such an understanding of the enactivist dimension of touch and its significance for further functioning of the individual is fully proved in the book under review.

Accordingly, Nava’s actual period of captivity commenced with her arrival at the so-called “Headquarters” of the Olenivka colony, where “a woman was hatefully pulling [her] clothes. She took pictures. She questioned me. Then she ordered me to take off my clothes. All of them”, ignoring the fact that “there were men there” who were “looking at” her, and she simply “did not know what [she] should do” (Subotina, 2024, p. 27). Hence, she complied with the order, stating that “it was all so damn scary” and feeling “like on the scaffold, with no way to defend herself” (Subotina, 2024, p. 27).

The above passage shows that the lack of clothing and the stares of others were instrumental in depriving the defenceless woman of her subjectivity. Subsequently, this process was further aggravated through direct physical violence and a comprehensive system of mocking techniques that intensified Nava’s perception of losing subjectivity. Another powerful tool that served this purpose was the requirement of the Taganrog prison “administration” to tilt the head and torso forward and downward and not to look into the eyes of their executioners (Subotina, 2024, p. 106). This was in stark contrast to the torturers themselves, who asserted their undivided power over the prisoners only because they were able to, and certainly used this opportunity to observe the prisoners around the clock.

Consequently, the unrelenting gaze that continually monitors the captives everywhere has a deteriorating effect on Nava’s mental state and “you find yourself in an even more terrible world, full of desperate fear” (Subotina, 2024, p. 149). In fact, the fear even changes the capacity of the bodily functions, and “over time ... vision becomes dull, but hearing becomes acute” (Subotina, 2024, p. 149), and mentally Nava cries out to her tormentors, pleading “don’t come in, don’t look” into her cell because she “no longer wants to share [her] personal space with anyone!” (Subotina, 2024, p. 151).

The problem, however, is that the torture Nava endured did not stop even when she was not being interrogated, verbally abused, beaten, or watched. At the beginning of her captivity, all her clothes, including underwear, were taken away from her. Instead, in the Taganrog prison, she was given "only a pair of underpants, sized 56", which she "had to wear for seven months", which "someone had obviously worn [them] before", and which, "due to the fact that soap was rarely given out, she washed [them] every other day", although "they looked awful right away – huge floral 'parachutes' that [she] twisted on both hips so that they would not" fall off, especially during her periods (Subotina, 2024, p. 122).

Gradually, the hygienic restrictions, as well as the general bodily suffering experienced by the narrator-protagonist, made her realise the paradoxical truth that "it was Russians who taught [her] to hate herself" (Subotina, 2024, p. 188). It means that in the enactivist dimension, Nava faces an extremely challenging task to overcome not only her executors, but also herself. The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk postulates that only tactile contact, only "the body as an organ of contact with the world" (2002, p. 12) can provide consciousness with the material from which it emerges, and from which it subsequently creates its own world-discourse. With the assistance of the "body as an organ of touch", consciousness then begins to transform the surrounding world with remarkable persistence in accordance with its discursive phantasms, chimaeras, and monsters. The book under analysis interpreted in this way, we can state that the text was created both to testify to the crimes of the Russians, and to address, at least partially, the consequences of the crimes committed against the author of the book.

Conclusions

The conclusions are as follows: pain, hunger, and touch, given the enactivist understanding of these bodily correlates, paradoxically become not merely a source of suffering and unjust deprivation of personal freedom, but also a source of inspiration, namely, inspiration to live, fight, and create. In turn, these corporal correlates can form the basis for an algorithm for evaluating works of art and for the productive analysis of works in the non-fiction genre. Specifically, the justification of the facts disclosed in the relevant discourse leads to their transformation into phenomena endowed with an undeniably richer content than facts, in particular artistic and philosophical content.

Concurrently, the enactivist foundation of even the most factual content renders it possible to transcend the boundaries of a singular text. In this approach, the body is identified as the central phenomenon, guaranteeing the functionality of an individual within the world both through their corporal presence and through their conscious awareness of it.

Having transposed the above conclusions to Valeria Subotina's book *Captivity*, we can say that the writer's goal to tell the world about the horrors committed by the Russian authorities, as well as the Russian people against Ukrainians, has been achieved. However, the text cannot be called a testimony to be used in a court because the enactivist approach suggests that the book is primarily about a woman traumatised by torture and humiliation

who does not surrender in captivity, who does not want to accept the post-traumatic consequences after her release, who, despite her apparent physical weakness, shows great strength of resistance and continues to fight, using words rather than weapons, and who in this way demonstrates and asserts her indestructibility, precisely because she has overcome the weakness of her body through the power of her consciousness.

The enactivist approach, as outlined above, demonstrates potential in the utilisation of bodily organic correlates, such as those associated with pain, hunger, and touch. The approach can be employed in further studies of diverse genres and literary works.

Author contributions

Feliks Shteinbuk: conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing – review and editing.

Yulia Gordiienko: conceptualisation, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, review and editing.

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