Svetlana Alexievich: a Polyphonic Writer in Translation

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Abstract

This thesis is an explorative study into polyphony and its transformation in translation. It aims to identify individual voices in Alexievich's polyphonic writing in Russian and by analysing changes they undergo in the existing translations into English to compare how voices transition and polyphony is portrayed from the source texts to the target texts. In doing so, this work seeks to contribute to the discourse surrounding the translation of Alexievich's works and provide future translators with a tool to reflect the multivocal nature of her narratives. To do so, it develops a new methodological framework for identifying and analysing individual voices which offers a systematic approach to translating polyphonic texts.

First, this thesis to understand the specific nature of polyphony in Alexievich's writing and explores a range of attitudes towards that polyphony in the source-text culture(-s) and society(-ies), where her writing challenged a well-established representation of historical events as well as of the places where those events unfolded. To devise an appropriate research methodology, this thesis looks at Alexievich's polyphonic texts through the prism of the Bakhtinian polyphonic approach supplemented with a range of theoretical scholarship to shape a conceptual understanding of the written polyphonic voice. The methodology establishes four dimensions of voice which are applied to the two-stage comparative textual analysis.

The analysis identifies polyphonic voices in the Russian-language source texts then explores their transformation in translation into English. The source-text analysis confirms the presence of polyphonic voices distinguishable at a textual level. They come across as diverse, unique and different from each other. The subsequent analysis of the voices in the existing translations has identified shifts and alterations that lead to changes of those in various ways, as well as the presence of the voice of an individual translator. The outcome of this research is that some characteristics of individual voices could be preserved in translation if the dimensions of voice devised in the research methodology are applied during pre-translation analysis.

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List of Abbreviations

SL – source language (the original, here Russian)

ST – source-text (text written in the source language)

SLC – source-language culture (culture in the source-language societies/countries)

TL – target language (language of translation, here English)

TT – target-text (translated text/text written in the target language, here English)

TLC – target-language culture (culture in the English-speaking societies/countries)

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1. Introduction: background to the research, research question, aims, structure, focus and key concepts

This thesis is an explorative study into polyphony and its transformation in translation. It aims to analyse individual voices in Alexievich's polyphonic writing in Russian and the changes they undergo in existing translations into English to compare how polyphony is portrayed and transitions from the source texts to the target texts.

My journey into polyphony in translation began during my Masters when I discovered Mikhail Bakhtin and his polyphonic approach to the analysis of Dostoevsky's novels.[1] My Masters dissertation was a feasibility study into preserving polyphony in translation. It applied the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony to a translation context. Bakhtin was at the core and Svetlana Alexievich's writing served as a case study. In this thesis, Alexievich's polyphonic writing is foregrounded and the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony becomes a way of accessing the multivoicedness in her works,[2] and studying its transformation in translation. While polyphony represents only one aspect of Alexievich's writing, I see it as central to the understanding of her works because multivocality allows the reader to go beyond stereotypes. In this thesis, I strive for a deeper understanding of the polyphonic aspect as opposed to seeing polyphony as merely a literary effect that might be deemed as less relevant in translation.

Svetlana Alexievich is a Belarusian writer and journalist who, in 2015, won the Nobel Prize for Literature with the ascription "for her polyphonic writings, a monument to

[1] Bakhtin considers the novel to be a continuously evolving genre with a considerable plasticity of boundaries. (Bakhtin, 1975 etc). Within this genre in Russian tradition is often observed influence of hagiography. Dostoevsky's writing serves as a vivid example to this. For Bakhtin, and in Russian tradition, soul is always part of a novel, and Bakhtinian polyphonic approach still forms major part of this thesis. Later I introduce the concept, discuss it and build methodology around it.

[2] Polyphony, multivocality, multivoicedness and multitude of voices are used interchangeably in this thesis, as they all refer to the presence of many voices and apply to Alexievich's works.

suffering and courage in our time" (Nobel Prize in Literature, 2015, no page). The Swedish Academy which awards the prize, classified Alexievich's writing as polyphonic, to wit, consisting of many voices (multivocal), and made an assumption that suffering and courage form two fundamental components in Alexievich's polyphony. In this thesis, I scrutinize this assumption. While suffering and courage can be attributed to some voices in Alexievich's books, this is by no means a limit of their expressive range. In a polyphonic work voices are diverse both emotionally and ideologically, and while some of them might express suffering others might not, some of them might be courageous, others might not. This diversity is at the core of polyphony and becomes the core of the linguistic exploration in this thesis. Moreover, voices transform in time, and Alexievich's books serve as evidence to their fluidity and ongoing transformations, which is valuable not only in the geopolitical space they come from but to outsiders who might want to understand the humans behind the Soviet regime. This is why Alexievich's polyphony needs to be preserved in translation.

Alexievich's writing is centred on the USSR and its successor state(s), and at the core of it is a polyphony of voices of people who lived through the Soviet years and beyond. She hypothesises that the collapse of the USSR has left as its legacy a specific "breed" of humans, *homo sovieticus.* Yurii Levada considers *homo sovieticus* to be a "person changing over time" (Levada, 2004, no page). He spent many years exploring these changes at Yurii Levada Analytical Center. Initially the term, *homo sovieticus [гомо советикус]* was invented by Alexander Zinoviev in his book *Гомо советикус [Homo sovieticus],* first published in 1981. According to Gulnaz Sharafutdinova "it is clear from the introduction to the book that he responded in his writing to how the Soviet people were seen in the Western media" (Sharafutdinova, 2023, p.35). She comments on duality of the attitudes to the term in Zinoviev's writing (ibid.), adding that

> Zinoviev never joined dissident circles in the West, […] never supported perestroika (coining a new term for it, 'katastroika' in a different book) and took the Soviet collapse as a big tragedy. In a 1990 exchange with Boris Yeltsin on a French TV channel, Zinoviev confronted Yeltsin suggesting that the West wants the Soviet Union destroyed and that 'Gorbachev and Yeltsin get a pat on the back because the West thinks they are destroying the country (Sharafutdinova, 2023, p.33)

The complexity of Zinoviev's personality and his internal conflict can be traced in the way he saw Soviet people when he created and used the term, and one can speak of *homo sovieticus* as a complex and multifaceted representation, or even an attempt to comprehend these people and how they evolved. His controversial attitude to Soviet and post-Soviet politics and society can be seen as a *mirror* of the controversial and inconsistent nature of *homo sovieticus* and how he/she is seen by themselves and outsiders.[4]

The term is widely employed by Alexievich: "[w]e bid farewell to the 'Red Empire' of the Soviets with curses and tears […] The 'Red Empire' is gone, but the 'Red Man [sic] [Human]', homo sovieticus, remains" (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.6). She uses the concept of *homo sovieticus* with the question mark. This is part of her quest to understand the human behind the system, and how and whether the Soviet system affected those who lived within it. She mentions the concept many times but rather than insisting on unity of the characteristics of this "human breed" she introduces the diversity of voices. This research endeavour to understand and unveil the person within the system expressed through her polyphony can lead to an interpretation of *homo sovieticus* as a multidimensional polyphonic character.

For this reason, even though Sharafutdinova warns against "[t]he 'group attribution error'" (Sharafutdinova, 2023, p.2) and believes that "[t]he revival of discussions about *Homo* Sovieticus in the context of contemporary Russia […] is a sign of […] biases and stereotypes born in the cognitive process" (ibid.), the concept of *homo sovieticus* is important within this research as a representation of the complex and multifaceted fabric of the so-called (pseudo)collective image of a Soviet person. *Homo sovieticus* in this thesis is not so much represented by a collective image, on the contrary, it is seen as polyphonic and represented by complicated multitude of beings each with their individual logic, mentality and ideological mind frame. In reality, not even ethnicity unites them.

[4] The concept of mirror is discussed further in this thesis as part of Bakhtin's understanding of polyphony.

Indeed, according to Alexievich, these people reside in many parts of the former USSR, including Russia, which was its centrepiece (Alexievich, 2015b, p.6). While former republics of the former Soviet Union are now sovereign states that have a thirty-year history of building and restoring their national identities, many people still identify themselves as Soviet citizens. The melange of ethnicities across this geopolitical space creates an illusion of unity across the borders. Yet, this unity might be seen by *homo sovieticus* as a manifestation of power and strength even though this unity might exist only in their imagination. Speaking of her own complicated identity, Alexievich laments the fighting between Russians and Ukrainians and attributes it to the desire to have a strong country.[5] In this sense, Brigid O'Keeffe underscores, "for Lenin, ethnic identity was of little if any personal concern. His primary allegiance was to socialist internationalism and his first priority was revolution." (O'Keeffe, 2022, p.1) To that she adds that in the formative years of the USSR "[n]ationality policy […] would help […] to reach this destination both as a vehicle of non-Russian peoples' assimilation to the new Soviet way of life and as a bonding mechanism that would hasten the interethnic harmonization of the USSR's diverse peoples." (O'Keeffe, 2022, p. 111) This research underlines the illusory nature of the concept of one country that comes from the idea of unification and unity which resonates with the notion of seeing *homo sovieticus* as a unified race. For all that, *homo sovieticus* exists not as a homogenous being but under the polyphonic umbrella that encompasses illusion of unity but represents multivoicedness and diversity of the Soviet people during and after the era of the USSR. O'Keeffe points out to certain "disillusionment"

> in the aftermath of the multiethnic Soviet Union's demise […] as those who experienced the Soviet Union as non-Russians often looked back on the Soviet past with measured appreciation and even gratitude—for not only the Soviet insistence on modernization in general, but also the so-called national development under the red star of socialism. (O'Keeffe, 2022, p.114)

[5]"I will take the liberty of saying that we missed the chance we had in the 1990s. The question was posed: what kind of country should we have? A strong country, or a worthy one where people can live decently? We chose the former – a strong country. Once again we are living in an era of power. Russians are fighting Ukrainians. Their brothers. My father is Belarusian, my mother, Ukrainian. That's the way it is for many people." (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.19)

These people might still be haunted by their Soviet past, but some of them, as this research will demonstrate, to a certain extent have been living in a state of transition of self-identifying as part of the old unified Soviet space and self-distancing from it in attempt to find their places in the new reality. Their memories are not necessarily grim recollections of suffering and suppressed people. Their utterances do not necessarily represent well-shaped ideological positions,[6] but those might be contemplations that allow readers to see a process of metamorphosis rather than anything definitive and conclusive.

In sum, this research maintains that even though there are unifying traits and features that unite *homo sovieticus* through shared memories and life experience, the people remain polyphonically diverse and each is unique in their personalities and ideologies. In any society or any settings those who lived through the same experiences would inevitably share memories and to certain extent would have the same collective narrative that belongs to that part of their lives. The Soviet imperialism affected lives of several generations of people who lived within that regime. Their experience of everyday life, their ways of dealing with reality to certain extent created a shared discourse, shared narrative and shared memories. Nevertheless, the concept of *homo sovieticus* is polyphonic and this thesis seeks to look through and beyond the illusory unity to access the multicoloured vocal fabric of the Soviet and post-Soviet society as represented through voices in Alexievich's writing. Ultimately, polyphony in Alexievich's writing helps to avoid de-humanising *homo sovieticus* by counteracting pre-existing public narratives,[7] assumptions and biases that might exist in the post-Soviet or the Western worlds.

In this thesis I seek to answer the question of how Alexievich's polyphony is transferred from the ST to the TT and with appreciation of the fact that Alexievich's books have been translated into 35 languages, have inspired the creation of plays, films and other works of art in a variety of societies, the scope of this research is limited to the Russian STs and

[6] Ideology is at the core of Bakhtinian understanding of the polyphonic voice and is discussed later in this introduction.

[7] Public, state, personal, ontological and collective narratives comprise Mona Baker's system of narratives (Baker, 2010, 2018 etc) and discussed later in this thesis.

existing English translations.[9] Discussing the reception of her works in SL and TL societies, this thesis explores transformations and differences which might have affected polyphony and compares to which extent the translated books remain a platform for the original voices. In this sense, Stuart Hall discusses "the notion that audiences actively bring something to, rather than simply being spoken by, texts" (Hall, 2019, p.41) emphasising the influence of the Bakhtinian dialogic idea and the significance of the dialogue with the audience and of the "reader-response" in the process of "encoding/decoding" (ibid.). Such encoding and decoding becomes part of the fabric of the analysis in this thesis. Likewise, Wolfgang Iser places the reader's imagination as a means of making varieties of perceptions concrete (Iser, 1974, p.71). This positions interpretation within this research as an interactive dialogical process of decoding voices through the mirror reflections of the ST and TT readers.[10]

That is why the first aim of this work is to analyse the presence and specific nature of polyphony in Alexievich's writing. The second aim is to study how polyphonic voices are presented in the ST, and the third aim is to analyse what happens to the polyphonic voices when they undergo translation into English and subsequently to compare how polyphony is portrayed in the ST and in the TTs. A large proportion of this thesis is theoretical, except for Chapter Five which comprises a two-stage comparative textual analysis and one section in Chapter Three which conducts a comparative analysis of two ST editions. The corpora for the comparative textual analysis of the polyphonic voices in Chapter Five are selected from various works of Alexievich in Russian and from their existing translations into British and American English. The corpora for the comparative analysis of two ST editions in Chapter Three is formed by a selection of voices from 1997 and 2013 editions of her book *Чернобыльская молитва: хроника будущего [Chernobyl prayer: chronicle of the*

[9] Official site of Svetlana Alexievich (2021r) http.//Alexievich.info.

[10] As mentioned before, mirror/mirror reflections form part of Bakhtin's understanding of polyphony (1979 etc.) and discussed further in this thesis.

future].[11] The latter is marked as authorial edition. Comparing the differences between two ST editions in Chapter Three and the changes Alexievich introduced, to an extent, gives an insight into which features of the transcribed voices she considered important by preserving them in the later edition, and which ones she cut out or altered. These are taken into account in devising the research methodology in Chapter Four and in the two-stage comparative textual analysis in Chapter Five.

To address the first aim of analysing the presence and the specific nature of polyphony specific to Alexievich's works, Chapter Two explores a range of attitudes to Alexievich's writing in two geopolitical spheres, tentatively referred to as "home" which includes ST readers and "the West", which encompasses Anglophone TT readers looking at her writing from Europe, USA and Canada. Raymond Williams assigns the uses of "the West" to the domain of "international political description" (Williams, 1988, p.333). In this thesis, the division between "home" and "the West" has linguistic interest at its core. It forms part of the pre-translation analysis,[12] which helps to identify potential differences between ST and TT public and state narratives,[13] as well as cultural and linguistic boundaries that might exist in reception by the ST and TT audiences. This brings forward the role of the reader and reader-text interaction, which are emphasised by Iser (1978, p.166) and considered as important to understand in order to analyse the transformation of the linguistic and socio-cultural flavour of the ST polyphony in translation. The emotional fabric of ST voices is culture-bound, which is crucial to the understanding of the context and the confused but powerful messages of the speakers.

Chapter Two also explores reception of Alexievich's works by the Anglophonic translators who serve as facilitators of linguo-cultural transfer an become key figures in the process.

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[11] All Russian titles are given in Cyrillic script to help the reader locate the sources. My translation follows each title in square brackets.

[12] Pre-translation text analysis is an integral part of an efficient translation procedure. In fact, it focuses on collecting intra-textual and extra-textual information on the text under translation (Gasparyan, 2020, p.117).

[13] For the classification of narratives see Mona Baker (2010, 2019) and discussion further in this thesis.

Their input is assessed through shifts, alterations and potential biases rather than through a system of losses or gains. This research considers loyalty to the source text to be part of translator's fidelity to their own professional ethics and values but takes into account the human factor. That is to say, translators make decisions on what to preserve in translation, and the shape of the target text is determined by their interpretation of the source text through the network of narratives they submit as individuals.[14]

To achieve a better understanding of the nature of Alexievich's polyphony, Chapter Three looks at the concept through the prism of her own understanding. By grasping Alexievich's position towards her own writing, this thesis seeks to identify what appears to be valuable in a voice to her, and what aims she follows in her works. As Alexievich explains: "[a]ll of history misses out on the history of the soul. Human passions are so often not included in history. […] It is the canvas of a single soul that has always interested me; after all it is there that everything happens." (Kuruvilla, 2016, no page). In a voice she seeks to understand a human soul, which is why this thesis uses the Bakhtinian notion of *consciousness* to access a soul in each voice of her writing, and to see how it might be possible to preserve it in translation.

Bakhtin asserts that "the soul as a given, the whole artistic experience of the inner life of the hero is trans gradient to his/her mental direction in life, to his/her self-consciousness" ["…душа как данное, художественно переживаемое целое внутренней жизни героя трансгредиентна его жизненной смысловой направленности, его самосознанию"] (Bakhtin, 1986, p.95).[15] Jostein Børtnes believes that "Bakhtin speaks of the inner life of another as his soul" (Børtnes, 2002, p.146). Following Bakhtin who "translated his Russian soul into theory and practice" (Pesmen, 2000, p.265), [16] this thesis strives to explore the

[14] Baker's system of narratives (Baker, 2018) and their impact on translators is discussed further in this thesis.

[15] Here and further in this chapter translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

[16] "Bakhtin wrote that conditions of soul and worldviews cannot be analyzed. People cannot be defined or even fully perceived. They speak in voices and have dialogues. That is how they reveal their life. One can only, Bakhtin writes (1984, p. 68), relate to things; "otherwise they turn to us their objectivized side.. fall silent, close up, and congeal into finished, objectivized images.' This is a brilliant description of an aspect of *dusha* [soul]. By treating Bakhtin as a Russian

souls of the individual voices in the polyphony by relating to the inner world of the speakers. Bakhtin connects to soul and inner world the consciousness of a person.[17]

To address the second aim of how polyphonic voices are presented in the ST, Chapter Four explores Bakhtin's and other theoretical approaches to polyphony and voices with reference to Alexievich's writing and devises a research methodology for the analysis. The understanding of polyphony and voice in this research is shaped by the works of Bakhtin who sees a polyphonic voice as "ideologically authoritative and independent, equal to that of the author [writer]" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.5). This brings up *ideology* as one of the key research concepts. Contrary to William's understanding of ideology in "popular argument" as "mainly a term of abuse" (Williams, 1988, p.157), the scope of the term for this thesis draws on the works of Bakhtin and the Bakhtinian Circle, where ideology is perceived as a manifestation of meanings and a way of interpreting the world through a system of signs "where a word is a tool or a signifier that serves the purpose according to some ideological function" (Morris, 1994, p.50). Ideology in Alexievich's polyphonic context reflects the viewpoints of the individual voices and rather than being a political concept, it is shifted to the domain of everyday life and termed domestic or kitchen ideology.

The methodology devised in Chapter Four shapes voice by *four dimensions*: *ideology*, *identity*, *personality* and *consciousness*, each based on the explored theoretical concepts with emphasis on the Bakhtinian works. The methodology considers the scope of each voice as a *snapshot*. This is because in Alexievich's books we can only have a brief encounter with each voice and cannot make any conclusions with respect to the four dimensions on a scale larger than one utterance. Subsequently, a snapshot of each voice is

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I am in no way implying that his work is relevant only in Russian contexts. But ways in which this virtuoso of his culture translated his Russian soul into theory and practice help me examine both that soul and how one individual pursued his "own" agenda in dialogue with his culture." (Pesmen, 2000, p. 265)

[17] Depending on the context the words *human* and *person* are used interchangeably in this thesis, and both refer to the Russian concept "человек" (a human/person – individual of any gender).

all we have for the analysis. It becomes an audio footprint of a voice in a given moment of time. Alexievich's polyphony is a collection of vocal snapshots, audio footprints left by the speakers and presented to an audience. The term *snapshot* refers to the instantaneity of each utterance and the limitations of the scope of this analysis, meaning to say it is an extract recorded by Alexievich that gives the readers a glimpse of each dimension of voice considered in this research.

Chapter Five involves a two-stage comparative textual analysis based on the methodology devised in Chapter Four. The first stage aims to analyse how voices are presented in the ST and the second studies what happens to the polyphonic voices when they undergo translation into English and compares representations of polyphony in the ST and in the TTs. Analysis applies linguistic and textual markers to establish whether and how voices can be distinguished as different from each other within the text, seeking to identify the presence of polyphony, in other words noticeably distinct voices in Alexievich's ST. Can we find textual markers that make each voice "audible" as different and unique within the Russian text? The answer to this question creates a framework for studying the TT voices which forms the second stage of the analysis and seeks to answer the question of how the ST voices metamorphosise in translation. To establish whether the polyphonic aspect is present in translation, potential alterations, semantic shifts and their impact on the TT reader are discussed. The comparative analysis of the ST voices with their counterparts in existing translations draws on the potential implications of how Alexievich's writing is seen "in the west" and how this is different from the reception of her works "at home". The outcomes of the comparative textual analysis demonstrate the extent and nature of the transformations the polyphony undergo in the existing translations of her works into English.

Transposing Edward Sapir's position of a human being at the heart of understanding the language to the context of transformations of text from one language system into another,

[18] this research places a human soul to the core of a human and of a human's voice, and in Alexievich's polyphonic writing, as it was written in Russian, it is connected to the concept the Russian soul.[19] The concept of the Russian soul is deeply embedded in the shared discourse of the country and arouses affection. Many Russians believe that the concept is at the core of their ethnic identity.[20]

Bakhtin is a Russian scholar, and he links soul to consciousness but differentiates between the soul and the spirit. Here, he sees a possibility of internal conflict between the spirit and the internal body,[21] yet he believes it to be impossible to have a conflict between the soul and the body.[22] In other words, the desires and needs of a physical (biological) body can present a conflict with the spiritual side of a human, as well as on the level of understanding the needs and desires of someone else's physical body. This could lead to a conflict of values. Nevertheless, following from this Bakhtinian concept of the impossibility of a conflict between the soul and the body, this research maintains that the soul and the body are built on the combination of individual and shared values which are innate to one person but can be shared with another. This creates a possibility for the unity

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[18] Edward Sapir places "the study of man[sic] [human]" at the heart of understanding the language as "a cultural and social product". (Sapir, 1970, p.vi)

[19] "One concept which illustrates the complex interrelationship of Russian and European […] thought is the idea of 'the Russian soul' ('Русская душа')[…] as the collective possession Russians and a source of future greatness rather than a legacy of p virtues demanded a language which neither the statist nor populi traditions of nationalism could provide". (Williams, 1970, pp.573, 575)

[20] Russian soul is widely present in Russian folk and fairy tales, vast majority of Russian classics including Dostoevsky explored the concept in their works. Writers up-to-date explore this concept, e.g. Andrey Kurkov in his review *Love, death and the Russian soul.* (Kurkov, 2005)

[21] Bakhtin refers to the person's own physical body as "internal body" as opposed to "external body", i.e. the body of another person. Internal body for Bakhtin is significant as it encompasses the unity of the person's internal desires and needs, whereas the desires of "external body" are fragmented and cannot be fully comprehended. (Bakhtin, 1986)

[22] "There can be conflict between the spirit and the internal body, but there cannot be conflict between the soul and the body, because they are formed within the same value categories and express the unity in the attitude to the core of the human being." ["Может быть конфликт между духом и внутренним телом, но не может быть конфликта между душою и телом, ибо они построяются в одних и тех же ценностных категориях и выражают единое отношение, творчески активное, к данности человека.] (Bakhtin, 1979, p.120) (my translation)

and harmony of the soul and the body, meaning harmony between the intangible spiritual self and the biological physical body of the same person, as described by Bakhtin (1979, p.120). Following on from Bakhtin, in Alexievich's polyphony, voices externalize their consciousnesses as their souls reach out for understanding of the others through dialogue, they seek harmony between the soul and the body, yet internally they might suffer a conflict between their spirits and their external bodies, to wit, the way they are reflected in the eyes of their interlocutors. This becomes a complicated entanglement of our inner selves for every polyphonic voice.

As a tool to evaluate our inner selves, Bakhtin introduces a concept of mirror. By means of mirror we create "the other" within ourselves which becomes our starting point of self-evaluation (Bakhtin, 1979). Bakhtin suggests that as a skilled artist cannot produce an accurate self-portrait, since ethical and aesthetical objectivity require "a mighty external fulcrum" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.33).[23] In other words, no one can possess a lever that would be sufficient to elevate themselves to the level of the complete understanding of their own consciousness and produce its accurate reflection. For this we need to see our reflections in the eyes of the other. A dialogue, whether real, perceived or imaginary, facilitates some level of self-understanding. Here, even a monologue in an empty room is a dialogue with the self, as the inner self is still externalized and voiced.

In Alexievich's polyphony these mirror reflections could reveal some dimensions of voice but conceal others. The consciousnesses of the voices in her books are reflected in each other and in her, as well as in the readers who become their imaginary listeners and to whom they direct their intimate stories. The speakers do not see the readers but are informed by Alexievich of their presence in the future. The stories shared with these listeners in mind, the listeners that are not present but assumed and create a pseudo-dialogue with imaginary mirror-reflections. These reflections create mirror-imprints which can be seen as audio-self-portraits created by the speaker through their statements.

[23] Here and further quotations of Bakhtin (1979 and 1986) are given in my translation

Alexievich acts as a primary mirror that allows speakers to evaluate themselves, her function is unique in that her task is to preserve the authenticity of the voice she listened and recorded for the reader.[24] She is an artist, and is a photographer who allows the reader to assess the inner world of the voices through her representation.

In her books Alexievich creates a correlation between the "self" of the voices and the era she writes about, acting as "the other" to help the voices express their inner self and to act as a means to transpose the meaning of their messages to the external listener, that is readers of her works. Bakhtin underscores the complexity of the evaluation by "the others", asserting that we become aesthetically false and alien towards the subject. The result of our evaluation becomes an optical illusion. He calls it "a spirit without a place, a participant without a name" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.34). Yet, he concludes that there is a correlation between "self" as a subject and the rest of the world through the perception of "self" by "the other" (ibid). The voices speak and question looking for answers. While giving voice to people, Alexievich listens to their selves. They try to find their own reflections in her, but she also is trying to find her own self by lending a compassionate ear and making reflective comments along the way. This is an attempt by both parties to find themselves through the other. Readers become mirrors for both, as Alexievich the writer joins the polyphony of voices in her books.

Alexievich's books are written in Russian, the language which is still spoken by many former Soviet people regardless of their country of residence. While the USSR no longer exists, the language might be considered the colonial Soviet past where it served as a unifying factor for *homo sovieticus*. Voices in her original books speak in Russian and convey their messages directly to Russophone readers. Thus, her books in the source language (SL) become a platform for the polyphony of voices of *homo sovieticus*. The ST

[24] "I don't just record a dry history of events and facts, I'm writing a history of human feelings. What people thought, understood and remembered during the event. What they believed in or mistrusted, what illusions, hopes and fears they experienced. This is impossible to imagine or invent, at any rate in such multitude of real details." (Alexievich, 2021e, no page)

reader could be seen as a primary mirror where all ST voices are reflected. In this respect, each reader makes his/her own unique and individual journey.

Translation moves individual stories into the TL settings which could be very different for each reader or groups of readers. Understanding SL settings and how they are interweaved into the lives and mentalities of the ST voices is part of the translation challenge, which is why the umbrella term *homo sovieticus*, while channelling the reader towards certain stereotypes, could also provide a framework for accessing certain aspects of dimensions of the ST voices. The translatability of *homo sovieticus*, on the one hand, lies within the understanding of the term's unifying characteristics, but on the other hand, and it is contradictory, stretches beyond the very concept of *homo sovieticus*. To wit, the very human aspect within the ST voices might be deliverable in translation without attaching them to any ST framework. This contradiction asks for translation to be based on the elements of universal understanding which make us all human and which make any translation possible per se. If the concept of "love" is understood differently by different cultures and society, and indeed might be expressed through different metaphors, it is the universal element of this feeling which makes translation of the concept possible and relatable in translation.

Translators as readers also make their own individual journeys, and each translator becomes a mirror for each voice of the ST. Yet when translators re-create the text for the target-language reader, they create their own mirror-reflections. They add to the multitude of the original reflections and as a result the TT reader sees a reflection of a reflection through a secondary mirror. This reflection contains the translator's interpretation of the original reflection. This thesis argues that in order for readers to perceive a text as polyphonic, it is necessary to give them the possibility of making their own personal discoveries, interpretations and reflections. This is one of the key challenges of translating a polyphonic work.

Laurence Venuti speaks of the translator's *invisibility* as "an illusionistic effect of discourse, of translator's own manipulation of the translating language" (Venuti, 2018,

p.1). He links the fluency of translation with the invisibility of the translator,[26] and he disputes it in another work where he underscores its interpretative nature,[27] with reference to Umberto Eco's semiotic theory whereby a translator "turns a source text into a translation by applying interpretants, factors that are formal […] and thematic […]" (Venuti, 2019, p.2). By formal he means equivalent language and style and by thematic – ideology, values, beliefs and "representations affiliated with particular social groups" (ibid.). In this thesis, the former is perceived as the domain of the translator's creativity which should be applied to preserve the latter. According to Jean Boase-Beier style is language-bound and culture-bound,[28] and equivalence tends to be a variable factor (Venuti, 2019). Nonetheless, ideologies, values and beliefs form the core of the dimensions of voice in this research methodology, and this thesis argues that a common ground can be found to deliver them in translation. This thesis maintains that translators' creativity including flexibility of style and variable equivalents could be channelled to preserve the ST ideology, values and beliefs, as these are deemed as significant in the context of polyphonic works where they are presented in their diversity and multivocality. This is why this research methodology suggests four dimensions of voice that are deemed as important to preserve in translation.

Venuti's affiliation of values, beliefs and ideologies of particular social groups (ibid) can be linked to the system of narratives discussed by Mona Baker who defines narratives as "public and personal stories that we subscribe to and that guide our behaviour" (Baker, 2019, p.19). These lead to reframing in translation.[29] This research seeks to establish by

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[26] "The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more invisible the writer or meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti, 2018, p.1.)

[27] "translation as an interpretative act that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning and effect according to the intelligibilities and interests in the receiving culture" (Venuti, 2019, p.1.)

[28] "Increasingly, style has ceased to be viewed only in terms of its linguistic features and has come to include contextual issues such as history and culture, linguistic peculiarities of a specific language and possibly universal ways of conceptualising and expressing meaning. To pay attention to style in the study of translation means to consider how all these factors are reflected in the text and its translation." (Boase-Beier, 2020, p.2)

[29] Discussed in Sections 2.3. and 4.4.

means of comparative analysis whether reframing can be identified and mitigated because in the ST voices the ontological narratives,[30] which carry innate values, ideologies and beliefs,are significant. These ontological narratives can be connected to the personality of a voice, and personality forms one of the dimensions of the research methodology.

Every ST voice possesses a unique and independent personality. It is important to distinguish between culture and personality as the two are not the same even though the former affects the latter. Personality to a large extent is shaped by interpersonal interactions and uniquely individual evaluations of events.[31] While culture might remain within the boundaries of one language and have to be negotiated in translation,[32] personality travels across cultures and societies. Even if it comes across as alien and at times incomprehensible, unacceptable or controversial, it still has an element of universality which could be aimed to preserve in translation.

The subtlety of a translator's position is that she or he needs to be creative in order to transpose the ST into the target language and culture. Yet at the same time, this creativity needs to be channelled towards another creativity, "the other", for whom, using Bakhtinian terminology, the translator becomes a linguistic mirror of the ST voice, since through translation the translator re-creates a voice by painting its portrait. This portrait, although it rests in the domain of the written word, seeks to evoke the sound of the original voice and the imagery then comes it. This will be presented to the target readers in lieu of the

[30] "Ontological narratives are personal stories that we tell ourselves about our place in this world and our own personal story. These stories both constitute and make sense of our lives" (Baker, 2019, p.28)

[31] There is a very real hurt done our understanding of culture when we systematically ignore the individual and his types of interrelationship with other individuals. It is no exaggeration to say that cultural analysis as ordinarily made is not a study of behavior at all but is essentially the orderly description, without evaluation, or, at best, with certain implicit evaluations, of a behavior to be hereinafter defined but which, in the normal case is not, perhaps cannot be, defined. (Sapir, 1970, pp. 199-200)

[32]Today the movement of peoples around the globe can be seen to mirror the very process of translation itself, for translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator (Bassnett, 2002, p.6)

original. In the polyphonic context such voices are many, the authors are multiple. The translator in this context faces almost an impossible task of self-converting into the multitude of mirrors in order to project the polyphony to the TT readers. This thesis argues, that if translators are made aware of the existence of the multiplicity of the voices within the source text and are provided with a realistic methodological framework to identify and analyse voice through a set of linguistic markers and characteristics, this will help them transfer the individual messages of the polyphonic voices across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

To answer the question as to how Alexievich's polyphony is transformed in translation this thesis moves beyond the domain of translation studies, as I have not been able to find a congenial translation studies theorist to support the argument presented here. At present translation studies does not propose practical solutions that might enable translators to identify individual voices within the source text at the textual level and preserve them for the target readers, so each translator is likely to transmit to the TT readers his/her own singular interpretation of the ST voices. In musical terms, by approaching a polyphonic source text an integral piece of work, translators transpose polyphony into a solo piece of one melody that reflects one interpretation by one performer, whose personality is then superimposed on the multiple polyphonic voices. As a result, while in the source text voices sing their own unique melodies, in the target text they sing to the tune of the translator, for that reason, the multiplicity of perspectives in Alexievich's polyphonic discourse becomes unavailable to the target reader. This thesis aims to tackle this problem by addressing the issue of identifying and translating individual voices in Alexievich's polyphonic writing. If some characteristics of individual voices could be preserved in translation if the dimensions of voice devised in the research methodology are applied during pre-translation ST analysis.

2. Reception of Alexievich's polyphonic writing

2.1. Attitudes towards Alexievich's polyphonic writing by ST readers

According to Umberto Eco, "the reader approaches a text from a personal ideological perspective, even when he [she] is not aware of this" (Eco, 1984, p.22), which is why attitudes towards any writing are likely to be affected by personal ideologies of the readers. These, in turn, might be partly shaped by the collective and state narratives emerging from the socio-political backdrop of the society where they live. In the USSR and post-Soviet Russia, attitudes towards Alexievich as a writer and as a persona can be divided into several periods: the late 1980s after Gorbachev came to power, which saw the publication of her first book *У войны не женское лицо [The war's face is not feminine];* the 1990s immediately after the collapse of the USSR, expressly the Yeltsin era, when she became known as the writer of a polyphonic book on the Soviet war in Afghanistan, *Цинковые мальчики [Zinky boys/Boys in zinc]* and was working on a collection of testimonials about the Chernobyl disaster, published in 1997; the first twelve years of the new millennium, marked by the change of power to Putin, that she spent writing her most recent work *Время секонд хэнд [Second-hand Time];* and the latest period, which commenced with the re-election of Putin in 2012, followed by the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Alexievich's Nobel Prize award in 2015, and the war in Ukraine from 2022.[33]

The three categories of ST readers: journalists, general readers and scholars, who are united by two factors. They have personal experience of living within the collective and public narratives imposed by the Soviet Union. While this does not necessarily categorise them as *homo sovieticus* it does mean they are likely to offer an insider's perspective on life and events in that society and to have some emotional connection with polyphony of narratives in Alexievich's books. These narratives can be referred to as ontological

[33] All her books discussed further in this section are Russian source texts, their English translations are discussed in Section 2.2. The titles of the books are given in the original Cyrillic script followed by my translation of the titles provided in square brackets.

narratives. Linda Stalker believes that ontological narratives are "akin to life histories" (Stalker, 2009). This study explores the transformation of personal understandings of history through the multitude of eyes of *homo sovieticus*, an umbrella concept that in this thesis encompasses the polyphony of voices of Soviet people.[34] Each type of reader is contextualized within the SL culture and respective periods of publications of her works.The first category of ST readers, particularly the press, are informed and proactive but by no means independent, they carry the potential to shape public narrative, and their attitude towards Alexievich's writing is the most apparent as they have the biggest platform to publicise their views. The second category, the scholars are likely to be cautious due to the existing state narrative, as discussed later. The third category, the general reader, is represented by a random range of literary and other amateur forums, which are not easily evaluated. What follows is a brief history of transformation of the mass media within the SL society, which may help to understand certain attitudes of the Soviet/post-Soviet press.

In this context seems relevant research conducted by RUSI,[35] which remarks on the gradual transition of Soviet journalism from "the mechanism used to promote values, disseminate ideas and encourage the masses" (Simons, 2007, no page) to the tool "used by the administration of Gorbachev as a means to uncover 'injustices' and wrongdoings committed during the reign of communism." (ibid., no page). Even in the years of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the position of the press was somewhat contradictory "on the one hand supporting the Gorbachev administration while undermining the basis upon which the government was built and its source of legitimacy" (Simons, 2007, no page). This is

[34] Discussed in Introduction to this thesis.

[35] "The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) is the world's oldest and the UK's leading defence and security think tank. Our mission is to inform, influence and enhance public debate to help build a safer and more stable world". (source: https://rusi.org/)

important in the context of the attitudes towards Alexievich's first book *У войны не женское лицо [The war's face is not feminine]*.[36]

Further to that, as Vladimir Entin points out, the start of the 1990s was marked by new legislation that secured freedom of the press and prohibited any repression in respect of journalists (Entin, 2005, no page). Still, after a brief period of relative freedom from 1991 to 1993 that "came to be known as the 'golden years' of journalism" (Simons, 2007, no page), the new economic realities of the 90s pushed the media outlets to seek "political patrons who would protect them from any interference and in return would act as their patron's voice" (Simons, 2007, no page). Reflecting on the freedom of speech based on the public opinion surveys conducted by ROMIR-Monitoring, Entin remarks on the divided attitudes towards the freedom of press at the start of the new millennium

> [a]ccording to public opinion surveys conducted by ROMIR-Monitoring, more than half or Russians consider that there is freedom of speech in the country, while 80% of the surveyed journalists think differently.[37]
> [{c}огласно замерам общественного мнения, проведенным компанией ROMIR-Monitoring, больше половины россиян полагают, что в стране есть свобода слова, а вот 80 % опрошенных журналистов считают иначе.] (Entin, 2005, no page)

While journalists even in the 90s felt some degree of suppression of freedom of expression, society appeared content that there was freedom of speech. According to the same survey

> citizens, being unhappy with some specific manifestations of freedom of speech, in their majority consider it reasonable to introduce censorship (that was met by over 60% of surveyed journalists with categorical opposition).
> [граждане, недовольные конкретными проявлениями свободы прессы, в своем большинстве считают введение цензуры целесообразным (с этим, правда, категорически не согласны свыше 60 % опрошенных

[36] My translation of this title reflects my attempt to stay close to the Russian original. All original Russian titles provided in Cyrillic script and accompanied by translation into English in square brackets.

[37] Here and further in this chapter, my translations, unless stated otherwise. The original Russian text to most translations is provided in square brackets.

журналистов)]
(Entin, 2005, no page)

The fact that Russian society of the 90s did not fully accept freedom of speech might be significant to understanding attitudes of post-Soviet general readers and journalists living in the first decade after the collapse of the USSR towards Alexievich's writing. From the results of the public opinion surveys conducted by ROMIR-Monitoring, as stated above, it can be deduced that Russian general readers of that period saw it as reasonable for the printed word to be confined to some limits imposed by censorship. This coincided with some legislative restrictions on the press introduced by the Russian Civil Code in the first years of the new millennium that allowed "individuals to sue the media, with many cases being decided in favour of the plaintiff. […] The threat of this hanging over journalists can make them think twice before covering a story." (Simons, 2007, no page).

In the 1990s in addition to the economic pressure, political oppression was still present and journalists became deliberate targets of various interest groups.

> According to the Russian Union of Journalists, since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, some 250 journalists have been killed. This is compared to 433 journalists killed since 1991 in territory of the former USSR, except for the Baltic countries. (Simons, 2007, no page)

Conversely reflecting on the same era, Yassen Zassoursky expressed an opinion that "[p]ress freedom is deeply entrenched in Russian society and is viewed as axiomatic by Russian citizens at all levels" (Richter, 2007, p.310). Indeed, that might have been the case in the first decade after the collapse of the USSR to which DW refers as "the golden 90s" (Breuer, Boutsko, 2022, no page) stating that

> [a]fter the end of the Soviet Union, there was an enormous demand among the Russian population for independent reporting. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that many new print media emerged within a very short time. Not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but throughout the country," Ulrike Gruska, press officer at Reporters Without Borders, told DW. "The media scene was very lively and reported openly about the end of the Soviet Union, but also about the communist past."(ibid.)

Nonetheless, the same source underscores disintegration of Russia's free press "since Vladimir Putin took office in 2000" (ibid.) Commenting on the later development of the

situation of the post-Soviet press , Oleksandr Yaroshchuk underscores that, as of today, "[t]he post-Soviet space remains one of the most dangerous regions for journalists and journalism in general. […] journalists cannot work independently and, what is perhaps most worrying, they increasingly face physical threats" (Yaroshchuk, 2018, no page).

With regards to the second category, namely academics, Gregory Androushchak and Maria Yudkevich argue that "[c]ontemporary Russian higher education remains influenced by the Soviet past. This historical tradition in general makes change and improvement more difficult" (Andrushchak, Yudkevich, 2012, p.1). Following this historical tradition, scholars in Russia are likely to be cautious in selecting subject matter for their research.[38]

Alexievich's official recognition by the general reader in her homeland predates the collapse of the USSR and goes back to 1984, when her first work *У войны не женское лицо [The war's face is not feminine]* was published in the Soviet magazine *Октябрь [October]* and as a book in 1985, after Gorbachev had come to power. By her own account, the manuscript had been shelved for two years, and published in a heavily censored format (Alexievich, 2020c, pp.22-23,25). The book is a collection of testimonials by Soviet women-participants in the Great Patriotic War,[39] and it offers a multitude of female viewpoints on a major tragic event of the twentieth century. Many of those stories do not fit into the official heroic "masculine" narrative that existed in post-war Soviet society. Her representation of the war was uncomfortable to many, and it is not surprising that the manuscript faced considerable resistance from the publishers.[40]

[38] The scholarly articles on Alexievich that I have managed to obtain are few and cover a relatively brief period mostly post-dating her Nobel Prize award.

[39] Great Patriotic War is Soviet/Russian reference to the part of WWII that took place on the territory of the former USSR and further on proceeded to Berlin, between June 1941 and May 1945. This term is different from WWII because USSR was invaded 22 June 1941, almost two years after the start of the WWII.

[40] She describes her conversations with editors in the writer's preface to the Russian original of the book (Alexievich, 2020c)

Despite its seemingly controversial nature, the work was well-received by the press and by general readers to the extent that its title has since become a catchphrase and a regular topic for school essays on the Great Patriotic War. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any scholarly works from the late Soviet and early post-Soviet periods with reference to that book, which corresponds to the hypothesis by Androushchak and Yudkevich regarding the prevalence of the historic reference combined with the cautious attitude to anything new within Soviet and post-Soviet academia. The first mention of this work in Russian scholarship appeared in 2018 when Karolina Gurska and Alexander Kovalenko explored Alexievich's writing in several articles.

Kovalenko and Gurska place conflict and incompatibilities at the heart of her work arguing that "the diverse material is founded in the conflict of the incompatibility of cruel war with the destroyed world of a human, women's or children's consciousness" ["многообразный материал опирается на конфликт несовместимости жестокой войны с разрушенным миром человека, женским или детским сознанием"] (Gurska and Kovalenko, 2019, p.57). Conflict and incompatibility pave the way to understanding of the networks of polyphonic complexity in Alexievich's writing. Each woman or a child reflects the internal conflict and the destruction that is at the core of every war, which is embedded in their consciousness alongside peaceful everyday existence.

In another paper, Gurska emphasizes that the inhumanity of war experience unites different stories and destinies reflected in the testimonials of the book (Gurska, 2018, p.201). This view does not take into account the notion of polyphony but is valuable in identifying common traits of ST voices as perceived by this SL reader. Gurska refers to the image of "Великой Матери" ["Great Mother"], which, according to her, can be seen across with the world and in relation between the inner world of the woman and the outer world we live in, connecting humans with nature, earth and family, but the apogee, is in the image of the mother sending off her daughter to fight (Gurska, 2018, p.203). Oleg Riabov links the metaphor "Mother Russia" to a gender-based national identity, in which devotion to the country is almost equal to that of one's family and love rather than loyalty is at the heart of Russian patriotism (Riabov, 2001, p.43-44). The concept of the Mother is inseparable from Russian culture. The Motherland in Russian is feminine, often referred to as "Mother-Russia" ["Родина-мать"]. Oleg Baleevskih points out the special attitude to motherhood in

Russian culture which is manifested through a spiritual Russia and a connection between the country and sacred femininity (Baleevskih, 2007, p.32). He places divine motherhood at the heart of Russian spirituality (ibid.). To contrast the sacred feminine nature of "life" ("life" is a feminine noun in Russian), the noun "war" in Russian is feminine too. Such cultural reference to the sacredness of the feminine as the source of life creates an effective juxtaposition between motherhood, womanhood, their incompatibility with the war and the reference to the war as "she", in the title and serves as a unifying thread throughout the polyphonic range of female voices.

Ever since her first publication and up to the present day, people have remarked on the truthfulness and honesty, for example, one of the readers Lety commented on "style, truthfulness, realism" ["слог, правдивость, реализм"] (Lety, 09.10.2015) in Alexievich's book. Some of the comments below, gathered from a range of social media platforms, further demonstrate approval of the book from the readers.

> This book changes {you}. It purifies {your} soul and mind from superficial stupid worries and pastimes. It teaches to see a person in the other and in the self.
> [Эта книга меняет. Очищает душу и разум от наносных глупых тревог и увлечений. Учит видеть человека в другом и в себе.]
>
> (Labyrinth, 2019, no page)

> It seems to me that the Nobel Prize was given to each one {of those}, whose line is {words are} in this book. To each one who cut off her hair and stood up alongside men. To each one who worked on the home front, hungry but feeding the front. To each one who was waiting and whose sons, daughters, husband, father returned or did not return home from the war.
> [Мне кажется, Нобелевская премия была дана каждой, чья строчка есть в этой книге. Каждой, кто срезала косы и встала в строй рядом с мужчинами. Каждой, кто работала в тылу, голодая, но кормя фронт. Каждой, кто дождалась или не дождалась сыновей, дочерей, мужа, отца.]
>
> (Readly, 2021, no page)

This book has been reprinted several times, and by 2015 the cumulative total of circulation in Russian exceeded two million copies (tut.by, 2015, no page). In 1985, the book brought Alexievich two literary awards, Nikolai Ostrovskii Literary Prize [Литературная премия имени Николая Островского] and Konstantin Fedin Literary Prize [Литературная

премия имени Константина Федина]. Those were followed in 1986, by the prestigious Lenin Komsomol Award [Премия ленинского комсомола].

In the wake of her success, in 1986, she published her second book *Последние свидетели. Книга недетских рассказов [Last Witnesses. A book of unchildlike stories],* another collection of war-related stories. This book sheds light on the accounts of contemporary adults looking back at their childhood memories of the Great Patriotic War. Both books were published in the Soviet Russia as well as in her native Belarus (in Russian), and republished in Moscow in 1989 by *Sovetskiy pisatel'* as one volume. Both books have been reprinted several times, including by the publisher , Moscow.

Her third book, *Цинковые мальчики [Zinky boys/Boys in zinc]* appeared in 1989, two years before the collapse of the USSR, and in 1991 it was reprinted in several editions, in Russian, published by *Molodaia gvardiia*, as well as by *Izvestia* in Moscow, and in Belarusian by *Belarus'* in Minsk. The book is a collection of narratives that tell the story of the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) through the eyes of the young men who fought there and through the voices of their relatives, in particular, mothers, wives and sisters. Alexievich personally went to the warzone (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015, p.11), which makes her a first-hand witness to the events described by these voices. The book made a profound impact on the society and quickly developed a reputation for being controversial.

The Chechen scholar Khava Temaeva remarks in this context

> a major writer is always an insult to his/her people. Nobody ever loves being told the truth to their face. She writes not in Russian, she writes in the language that Svetlana Alexievich invented.
> [{к}]рупный писатель – всегда оскорбление для своего народа. Никто и никогда не любит, когда ему говорят правду в лицо. Она пишет не по-русски, она пишет на языке, который придумала Светлана Алексиевич.]
>
> (Temaeva, 2021, p.103)

This statement reflects the nature of the attitudes towards the book in places affected by that war. Discontent about the content of this work was growing and in 1992, in her native Belarus, in the city of Minsk, she had to answer numerous lawsuits filed against her in relation to its content. The internet source *Together with Russia [Вместе с Россией]*

contains a transcription from the court hearing where she was accused of exposing to the world personal and highly traumatic stories, of being biased and of making money on the back of human drama and death. Below are representative extracts from the courtroom:

> — We defend the honour of our killed children. Give them back their honour! Give them back their Motherland! The country is ruined. The strongest in the world!
> [Мы защищаем честь своих погибших детей. Верните им честь! Верните им Родину! Развалили страну. Самую сильную в мире!]
>
> — It was you who turned our children into murderers. It was you who wrote that horrid book… Now they don't want to make museums in schools in memory of our children, they took down their photographs. And they were so young, so handsome. Do murderers have such faces? We taught our children to love the Motherland… Why did she write that they were killing over there? She was writing for dollars… And we are – penniless… No money to buy flowers for the grave[s] of our sons… not enough to buy medicine…
> [Это вы сделали наших детей убийцами. Это вы написали эту жуткую книгу… Теперь не хотят делать в школах музеи памяти наших детей, сняли их фотографии. А они там такие молодые, такие красивые. Разве у убийц бывают такие лица? Мы учили своих детей любить Родину… Зачем она написала, что они там убивали? За доллары написала… А мы — нищие… Цветов на могилу сыновьям не на что купить… На лекарства не хватает…]
>
> — Leave us alone. Why do you throw yourself from one extreme to another – first everyone was portrayed as a hero, and now we all have become murderers? We had nothing apart from Afghanistan. Only there we felt like real men. Not one from us regrets that [he] was there…
> [Оставьте нас в покое. И почему вы бросаетесь из одной крайности в другую — сначала изображали всех героями, а сейчас все сразу стали убийцами? У нас ничего не было, кроме Афгана. Только там мы чувствовали себя настоящими мужчинами. Никто из нас не жалеет, что там был…]
>
> — This is such a scary truth that it sounds like a lie. It benumbs. You don't want to know it. You want to protect yourself from it.
> [Это такая страшная правда, что она звучит как неправда. Отупляет. Ее не хочется знать. От нее хочется защищаться.]
>
> (*Vmeste s Rossiei*, 2018, no page).

These statements do not contest the truth of the content of Alexievich's books, they contest the exposure of that truth to the public. The plaintiffs wanted to protect the intimate space of the beloved voices which they felt were exposed to criticism and judgement. While the

speakers and their relatives clearly recognized themselves and were able to identify with their voices in the book, they protested against being made into public figures.

Moreover, their statements represent attempts to protect both personal identities of and the national identity, which they considered to be threatened by the book. As discussed above, national identity is interwoven into their concept of self-identification. Any criticism of Russia they see as a personal insult towards the speakers in the book. Being a man means to protect the motherland, and by criticizing that war and foregrounding the human tragedy, Alexievich was daring to dismantle the mystique of masculinity and the divine image of the defender of ”Mother Russia” [“Родина-Мать”].

This raises the question of ethics, the right and the responsibility of a writer when working with sensitive material. Do writers have a right to reveal the most intimate parts of the human soul and consciousness of speakers? Discussing the ethical side, Gurska states that the question behind the court case was that of “the competency of the author and of the boundaries that [the author] has the right to cross, as well as of the truth in art and life [“о компетенциях автора и о границах, которые тот имеет право переступить, а также о теме правды в искусстве и в жизни”]. (Gurska, 2017, p.296). The decision of the court was an attempt to make peace between the claimants and the respondent. While it was recognized that the testimonials were not supported by factual evidence, the court did not consider those to be defamatory (*Vmeste s Rossiei,* 2018). Alexievich never accepted responsibility for the nature of the testimonials published in her book. “It is not me that should be called to answer in court. You confused me with the Ministry of Defence and the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union” [“не меня надо звать в суд. Ты перепутал меня с Министерством обороны и Политбюро КПСС”] (*Vmeste s Rossiei*, 2018). In her defence, Alexievich said:

> What am I supposed to defend? My writer’s right to see the world the way I see it. And [the fact] that I hate war. Or am I supposed to uphold that there is truth and there is semblance of it. […] […] This is a document and at the same time it is my image of time. […] I do not invent nor deduce anything. I organise the material within the same reality. I am writing, recording modern current history. Living voices, living destinies. Before becoming history, they are still someone’s pain, someone’s scream, someone’s victim or crime.
> [Что я должна отстаивать? Свое писательское право видеть мир таким,

> как я его вижу. И то, что я ненавижу войну. Или я должна доказывать, что есть правда и правдоподобие […] Это — документ и в то же время мой образ времени. […] Я не выдумываю, не домысливаю, а организовываю материал в самой действительности. […] Я пишу, записываю современную, текущую историю. Живые голоса, живые судьбы. Прежде чем стать историей, они еще чья-то боль, чей-то крик, чья-то жертва или преступление.]
>
> (*Vmeste s Rossiei*, 2018, no page).

She felt that it was her right to reflect the world and the people living in that world and affirmed that there was nothing added. She merely organized the material within the frame of reality. She considers the book to be a document and an image of a time made audible through voices. She does not make history, she merely records it.[41]

Scholars have attempted to define her genre. Gurska explains that "apart from the term 'documentary literature', in literary criticism there have been such concepts as 'fact-literature', 'human document', 'non-fiction literature', 'ego/self-document', 'fiction-documentary literature'["кроме термина 'документальная литература', в литературной критике закрепились также такие понятия как 'литература факта', 'человеческий документ', 'литература нон-фикшин', 'эго-документ', 'художественно-документальная литература'"] (Gurska, 2017, p.294). Multiple interpretations of the polyphonic ST lead to the formation of an attitude towards Alexievich's work as a human document as well as a self-document. They also represent a quest for identities, including Alexievich's own that transpires through this book in Russian. While she does not create history, the way she organizes the material, in the Bakhtinian sense, creates her mirror-reflections of the ST voices.[42] The ST voices are able to perceive these reflections of themselves through her eyes. When those reflections are recorded and printed in Alexievich's books, voices are able to look back in time and evaluate their audio self-portraits, which might look different to what they imagined, especially as time lapses. This

[41] Alexievich's understanding of her own works is discussed in Chapter Three.

[42] Chapter Four focuses on Bakhtin's polyphony including his concept of mirror reflections of voices in a dialogical interaction.

discrepancy of mirror-reflections and potential mismatches in how they perceive their own self-portraits might create internal conflicts in the polyphony of the ST. Readers take polyphony beyond the pages of the book, back into the world of reality where it originated, which completes the circle.

Gurska argues that "the art of Alexievich should be considered as a documentary prose created on the basis of 'alien' stories. […] The role of the author is to listen and record the stories, letting them {speak} through the self of the author" ["[т]ворчество Алексиевич следует рассматривать как документальную прозу, созданную на основе «чужих» рассказов. […] Роль автора заключается в том, чтобы выслушать и записать рассказы, пропустить их сквозь себя"] (Gurska, 2017, p.295). What is important here is that detached and cold factual documentary becomes transformed into a collection of emotional personal narratives. These narratives go beyond what facts could offer, they connect with the inner emotional worlds of the readers, resonate on the personal level through their lived experience. In this framework the facts shift to the background of emotional experience which in turn becomes the focal point of evaluation of each narrative, as presented by each speaker in this polyphony.

Despite the tribunal, the attitudes towards the book by the general readership has been positive. For example, on the review/opinion website *Otzovik*, 85 % of users recommend it as an important reading material (*Otzovik*, 2020, no page). One of the readers commented on the tribunal: "There were no real culprits in that tribunal, none of those who organized that war, there were only those who suffered [from it], those who had their own truth, so different [one from another], but a truth" ["На этом суде не было истинных виновных, которые организовали эту войну, были лишь пострадавшие, у которых своя правда, такая разная, но правда."] (LiveLib, 2022, no page). The reference to subjective truth is significant here. First of all, it shows that ST readers see the multitude of the ST voices of

the book as polyphonic. It resonates with Alexievich's quest to find subjective truths through the voices of the speakers.[43]

After its first publication, it was not reprinted in Belarus until 2018, when it came out in Belarusian as part of the series Галасы Утопіі [Voices of Utopia], issued by a private publisher Логвінаў [Logvinai]. The reasons are likely to be political, as the President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko has been a longstanding subject of Alexievich's criticism (Alexievich, 25 October 2015, p.1). In 2021, her books were removed from the Belarusian school curriculum (Iushkov, 2021, p.1), and she currently resides in Germany, after leaving Belarus following the persecutions of the opposition by the Belarusian government (Iushkov, 2021, p.5). Recently, Lukashenko openly accused Alexievich of treason (Intex-Press, 19.03.2022, p.1).

The press took a hard line towards this book: for example, she was accused of "dancing on the bones of the dead" (Matvienko, 2018, no page). It could be argued that the sensitivity of the topic and the scale of trauma of those who shared their stories and later regretted it, made the book controversial, also that Alexievich could be blamed for a lack of sensitivity; but the raw truths of the SL accounts and even subsequent disclaimers by their authors, made the book particularly important to the ST reader as an emotional polyphonic account of that controversial war. The intimacy of those traumatic memories was so dramatic that even the original speakers were shocked to see their own stories in print.

The emotional subjectivity of those personal stories combined with the violent resistance to their publication indicate that the nature of the ST content was too close to the private space of both speakers and readers. The raw temporal proximity of the events described prevented some readers from distancing themselves from the content. Having said that, the value of these accounts for the ST reader, SL culture and society is hard to overestimate.

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[43] In Russia, the book was republished in 1996 by another publisher *Vagrius*, and later by *Vremia*.

This book is a vivid warning against any involvement in any war. It is also a testimony to the devastating effect of state propaganda on the souls and minds of the young men who were just starting their adult lives, who bought into the cause of killing on the basis of the official narrative and the "heroic" shared memory of the Great Patriotic War.

Alexievich's next book offered a polyphonic account of the Chernobyl disaster and is entitled *Чернобыльская молитва: хроника будущего [Chernobyl prayer: chronicle of the future]*. It was published in 1997 in Russia, eleven years after the catastrophic event and voiced the testimonies of those who took part in the process of decontamination of the nuclear plant. In Ukraine, the book was published in 1998, and according to Alexievich's official website, this was her only book published in Ukraine before 2014, which was the year of the start of pro-Russian unrest in the east of Ukraine. It could be argued that while building their own identity, Ukrainian readers might have preferred not to explore Alexievich's notion of *homo sovieticus,* which would link them to the Soviet past. In Belarus, *Chernobyl Prayer* was published in 1999 in Russian, 21 years later it was collectively translated into the Belarusian language by many volunteer translators and published by a private publishing company Логвінаў in Minsk, as part of the series Галасы Утопіі [Voices of Utopia]. The project, including the translation into Belarusian was financed through crowdfunding (Vremia, 2018, no page). Alexievich waived her fees for this publication but insisted that books were to be translated into contemporary Belarusian (Mitskevich, 2019, p.5). The books were distributed free among the country's public libraries and, interestingly, two Belarusian regions rejected the books (Mitskevich, 2019, p.1), which indicates that reception of her work was not universally positive in contemporary Belarus.

Referring to *Chernobyl Prayer*, Sonu Saini draws a parallel with a post-WWIII apocalypse (Saini, 2013, p.18), whereby the speakers within the work become "voices-destinies of individual people" ["голоса-судьбы отдельных людей"] (Saini, 2013, pp.18–19) speaking polyphonically. I relate the allegory of voice as a destiny to the metaphysical concept of the connection of voice. Here, the Bakhtinian concept of the inner truth, of the self connects the reader to Alexievich's journey to unveil and understand *homo sovieticus.* Through that journey together with her readers she tries to discover and comprehend her

own identity.[44] In an attempt to understand and to show readers the "'mystery' of Chernobyl" ["'тайну' Чернобыля"] (Saini, 2013, p.19), Alexievich joins in with ST voices. She revives for the readers and for herself the catastrophe which affected everybody in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Here, Saini suggests that for the immediate survivors of Chernobyl life stopped, and it was as if the soul had died (Saini, 2013, p.20), Saini also mentions "the interview of the author with herself" ["интервью автора с самим собой"] (Saini, 2013, p.20). In other words, Alexievich is engaged in an internal dialogue with herself as she conducts her interviews with the speakers. This covert but audible dialogue connects the ST reader to Alexievich's and the speakers' quest to find "the self" and "the other" and "the inner truth".[45]

The positive reaction on the book in literary critical and journalistic circles in the SL followed the initial publication of *Чернобыльская молитва: Хроника будущего*, in 1997, when Alexievich won the first non-state literary award, the Triumph Award [премия «Триумф»] for her contribution to the legacy of the Motherland.[46] In 1998, Alexievich was named "The most sincere person of the year" by *Glasnost Foundation* (Glasnost, 2002, 2016, no page).[47] One could say that the award and recognition by the Foundation

[44] For the detailed discussion see Chapter Four.

[45] These Bakhtinian concepts discussed in Chapter Four.

[46] The award is worth a separate mention. It was established in 1991, just after the collapse of the USSR, it was first awarded in 1992, and it ceased to exist in 2012 (Igumnova, 2012, no page). The dissolution of the award committee and the closure of the award coincided with the third re-election of Vladimir Putin as Russian president. The re-election was in contradiction to the article 81.3 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which allows only two terms for any president of the country (Constitution, 1993) and caused a significant wave of protests which were heavily suppressed by the regime. The closure of the Triumph Award was never explained and as of now there is no independent literary award in Russia that would recognise significant contributions of writers and journalists to democracy, freedom and honesty.

[47] *Foundation Glasnost* was founded by former Soviet dissidents and focused on recognition of humanitarian and human rights activities. Since Putin became president, the foundation failed to extend its registration, was forced to close down and open under a new name "Фонд защиты гласности" [Foundation for defending *glasnost*]. Similarly to the Triumph Award, it ceased to exist in 2012. These two awards became the last tokens of recognition that Svetlana Alexievich received in Russia.

served as an acknowledgement by society of the democratic freedom and honesty expressed through her writing. While the theme of the book is significant, the way it penetrates the private space of readers through personal accounts by individuals, is down-to-earth and relatable on the human level.

Her next book *Время секонд хэнд [Second-hand Time]* was published in 2013, in Moscow, the first time she was nominated for the Nobel Prize but she did not win. This caused some disappointment among her fellow journalists, and articles about her from that period show support and disappointment, as well a recognition of her talent (Rossiiskaia Gazeta, 2013, no page). Notwithstanding, the mood changed two years later when she eventually became the Nobel Laureate. The receipt of the Nobel Prize coincided with Putin's intervention in Syria and annexation of Crimea. Alexievich, and the Nobel Prize Committee were subjected to a wide range of accusations in the Russian press. The Nobel Committee was blamed for its political bias, for giving the award on the basis of Alexievich's anti-Putin attitude, in other words that she spoke negatively about Putin's politics, expressed her standpoint against the annexation of Crimea and against the Russian-fueled war in Syria. Oleg Pukhnavtsev from *Literaturnaia Gazeta* was convinced the award was politically motivated arguing that in elevating the status of Alexievich, "bloody Putin's regime" would be criticised by a writer of the highest calibre (Pukhnavtsev, 2015, no page).

Alexievich was blamed for Russophobia, for her criticism of the Russian government and for playing up to the West (Pikabu, 2018, no page). Matvei Slavko, for instance, wrote a highly critical article entitled "Fancy a Nobel Prize? Shit on your Motherland!" ["Хочешь Нобелевку, Обгадь Родину!"] (Slavko, 2015, no page) where he stated that though devoid of any literary talent, Alexievich received her Nobel Prize only because she played up to the anti-Russian rhetoric of "the West". (Slavko, 2015, no page). Even the question around her genre was used as a weapon against her. Aprominent Russian writer Tatyana Tolstaya claimed

> With this decision, the Nobel Committee said that raw tape recordings, barely edited, unattractive texts are currently of value. […] This characterises the cultural level of the Nobel Committee per se.
> [Этим решением Нобелевский комитет сказал, что сырая магнитофонная

> запись, малообработанные, непривлекательные тексты сейчас ценятся. […] Это характеризует культурный уровень самого Нобелевского комитета.]
> (Pankovets, 2016, no page).

Political bias affected the attitudes of the mass media towards Alexievich's work. The polyphony of her books was pushed to the background in favour of this politicised narrative, the content of her books became almost irrelevant.

Nevertheless, scholarship after the Nobel did not reflect the negativity of the official state narrative. Accordingly, Gurska and Kovalenko affirmed that

> thanks to purposeful selection of 'human documents', confessions by the ordinary people […] the author realises in the book 'Second-hand Time' the conflict of two epochs – Past and Present, and of two places – that of the USSR and of Russia.
> [[б]лагодаря целенаправленному отбору «человеческих документов», исповедей простых людей […] автор воплощает в книге «Время секонд хенд» конфликт двух эпох — Прошлого и Настоящего и двух пространств — Советского Союза и России]
> (Gurska and Kovalenko, 2019, p.54).

Two important themes to consider here are the following. Firstly, the notion of the "human document" continued from *Zinky boys/Boys in zinc* and *Chernobyl Prayer*,[48] it and can be seen as a way of accessing the nature of Alexievich's polyphony, which is significant because it links the subjective human element of each voice to the term "document", implying authenticity and commonly belonging to the idea of objective representation of facts. Gurska and Kovalenko acknowledged the emotional component in the books as part of the factual information provided. Saini, on the other hand, was more interested in literary value and considered Alexievich's genre to be "fiction-documentary prose" ["художественно-документальная проза"] (Saini, 2013, p.21), which implies creativity and accepts adjustments to the content as part of the genre. Their second idea was conflict as innate to all Alexievich's works. Exploring the concept, they remark on the complexity

[48] Discussed earlier.

and multilayered nature of conflict in art and on the presence of "micro-conflicts ["микроконфликты"] within "fragmented confessions ["фрагментах-исповедях"] (Gurska and Kovalenko, 2019, p.54). Here, I place these conflicts into the Bakhtinian framework of the internal struggle of each voice.[49]

Saini discusses confession as a way of categorizing Alexievich's works. Confession is a deeply religious concept. It refers to the sincerity of the intimate stories, as the nature of confession is to relieve the soul from sin by sharing the burden of memory. At the same time, it could position the narratives within the frame of Orthodox Christianity, which pre-dates the USSR and, as Russia was officially a Christian country since 988, this religion has been the underlying element of society, even though throughout the Soviet era the atheistic narrative that was imposed on the people by the state forced faith and religion into a clandestine form. Saini refers to confession in the context of the "mystery of Chernobyl" (Saini, 2013, p.20) whereby a human "should come out of the limits of the self"(ibid). He refers to prayer as a way of accessing this limitless space. He believes that communism tried to replace God but it disappeared, and only God remains for people (ibid). Further on Saini affirms that "in this situation of dehumanization of the world […] especially important is the idea of repenting and praying to the Creator about saving the world and humans" ["{в} этой ситуации расчеловечивания мира, по мысли писательницы, особенно важным становится идея покаяния и молитвы, обращенной к Творцу, о спасении и сохранении мира и человека"] (Saini, 2013, p.21). The history of the soul, in his opinion, sees prayer as the most ancient form of the cry from the soul. This is hope for salvation and a dialogue between Human and God (Saini, 2013, p.21). While prayer and religious confession are different, both refer to dialogue with the Creator, hope for redemption of sin and for purification of the soul. The spirituality, which is at the core of

[49] Internal struggle of voices and polyphony as "[a] plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.6), introduced in Section 1.2. and discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

prayer and confession can be a link to the inner world of the speakers in their pursuit of their self-identities through expression of their consciousnesses.

Confession as a story of suffering, doubts, trauma and resistance is important to Alexievich's works, according to Gurska and Kovalenko (2019, p.55), whereas Temaeva argues that Alexievich introduces Biblical themes through a process of complex transformations that lead to contradictions and conflicts. She juxtaposes "the image of the Son [from the New Testament] left without support in the chaos of a world of animosity" [образ Сына […] одинокого, оставленного без поддержки в окружающем его враждебном хаосе"] and "the image of the Mighty Power that abandoned him and caused his death" ["образ Высшей Силы, которая послала героя на исполнение его миссии и затем […] покинула его, стала причиной его гибели"] (Temaeva, 2021, p.107).

According to Temaeva "Svetlana [Alexievich] gave voice to the unhappy people to whom nobody wants to listen or to hear" ["Светлана дала выговориться несчастным людям, которых никто не хочет слушать и слышать"] (Temaeva, 2021, p.106). They are the bearers of the soul of *homo sovieticus* that Alexievich empowers in her books. "I'm interested in the history of the soul" (Alexievich, 2015b, p.7) which remains and endures even if the Red Empire is gone (Alexievich, 2015b, p.6). The argument, the dissonance continues, the chorus with no one but many melodies continues as each voice becomes a singer in attempt to articulate their own truth.

The presence of polyphony is reflected in the attitudes of ST readers, and despite the highly politicised attitudes to Alexievich and her writing, readers are still able to form a range of independent opinions. In order to understand how attitudes to Alexievich and her writing are transformed in the inter-lingual and inter-cultural transfer, the next section discusses the attitudes towards Alexievich's writing by TT readers in the West.

2.2. Attitudes towards Alexievich's polyphonic writing by Anglophone TT readers

Iser underscores that unlike other forms of social interaction, in reading "there is no *face-to-face situation*" (Iser, 1978, p.166). In the absence of personal experience, the views of the readers on the messages of the voices become subject to individual interpretations and are influenced by a range of external factors, and in translation such factors multiply.[51] General TT readers form the largest group, and like ST readers they are affected by public and state narratives of the societies where they grew up. The press in the TL societies serve as catalysts of public opinion and could play a pivotal role in transmitting and popularising these narratives among the general readers. Although all characters in Alexievich's books are citizens of the former USSR, a country that no longer exist, in the Western societies there is still presence of the Cold War narrative, which is why there might be some expectation of oppression with respect to the citizens of the geopolitical space once occupied by the Soviet Union coming from the TT readers and fuelled by the TL press. While preconditioning might be a strong term to use in relation to the Western attitudes, public narrative in the Anglophonic Western societies towards ex-Soviet geopolitical space is underlined, for instance, by Alexei Yurchak who refers to "certain problematic assumptions about Soviet socialism, which are implicitly and explicitly reproduced in much academic and journalistic writing today" (Yurchak, 2006, pp.4–5) whereby, as he asserts, there are

> binary categories to describe Soviet reality such as oppression and resistance […]. These terminologies have occupied a dominant position in the accounts of Soviet socialism produced in the West and, since the end of socialism, in the former Soviet Union as well. (Yurchak, 2006, p.5)

Such binary attitudes can lead to the creation of a binary public narrative in the TL societies, which could lead to some degree of simplification and stereotyping in the process of the evaluation of events and people within "the Soviet system". This, in turn, feeds the

[51] Translations of Alexievich's works are discussed in Section 2.3.

long-standing stereotypical image of the Soviets as suppressed and suffering people that made a "courageous" effort to exist and survive within the system.

That is why before focusing on the three groups of TT readers, to contextualise the positions of the TL press towards Alexievich's works and address the first assumption stated in Chapter One, expressly as asserted by Karpusheva "[t]he nature and structure of this narrative, […] resemble a continuous, collective mourning […]" (Karpusheva, 2017, p.259), I give a brief insight into the current and historic state of British and US mass media and how they perceive the SL culture and society. The content of the ST polyphonic ontological narratives is entangled in the SL culture, society and politics and may be assumed by the SL readers as an element of the shared discourse. Howbeit, this is not the case for the TL readers who have to re-imagine the SL socio-cultural background.

The rhetoric of the TL press historically and currently is anti-Soviet and is dominated by a binary Cold War rhetoric. According to Andrei Tsygankov, the Western press still perceives Russia as a country built on "a neo-Soviet 'autocratic' political system with elements of totalitarianism" (Tsygankov, 2015, p.1). Moreover, he points out that

> [s]truggling to understand the country's transition from the USSR, Western media commonly describe Russia in terms of its fitting with the old pattern. Contemporary Russian politics is assessed not on the scale of how far it has gotten away from the Soviet Union, but, rather, how much Russia became a Soviet-like 'one-party state' driven by a 'KGB mentality' and dependent on the use of propaganda, 'Cold War rhetoric', and repressions against internal opposition in order to consolidate state power.(Tsygankov, 2015, p.1)

Tsygankov underscores the consistent presence of this kind of narrative in leading American newspapers, with a particular emphasis on the binary narrative that "juxtaposes and contrasts the vision of a morally inferior neo-Soviet Russia with that of a superior American system"(Tsygankov, 2015, p.1). The prevalence of this narrative in the American society is significant.

Here, it is important to note a difference in reception of her works by Anglophone and broader non-Anglophone readerships. Attention to her works in the non-Anglophone world came immediately after the publication of her first book *У войны не женское лицо [The*

war's face is not feminine], which was translated into several foreign languages soon after the first publication. According to Alexievich's official website, these first translations were in 1985 into Bulgarian and Chinese, followed by a Czech translation in 1986 and Vietnamese translation in 1987. In 1987 a second Bulgarian edition was published, as well as the first German edition. In 1988, the book was translated into Finnish. The first translation of Alexievich's works into Swedish was her fourth book *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* in Swedish *Bön för Tjernobyl: en framtidskrönika,* was reprinted the following year as a pocket edition. Her first book *У войны не женское лицо [The war's face is not feminine]* was published in Swedish in 2012, followed by *Second-hand time [Tiden Second Hand]* in 2013, in standard and pocket edition. In 2015, *Последние свидетели [Last witnesses]* was translated into Swedish, and it has been the last of her books translated into that language up to the present.

Despite the wide recognition of Alexievich's works in several countries, the first English translation of *У войны не женское лицо [The war's face is not feminine]* that was published in 1987, in Moscow by Progress Publishers as *War's unwomanly face*, remained largely unknown and inaccessible to English-speaking readers. The first English edition appeared in 1992, and it was *Zinky boys/Boys in zinc*. The pre-Nobel Prize period of Alexievich's writing went almost unnoticed, whereas the prize generated considerable attention within all three groups of TT readers. Her pre-Nobel English-language publications then attracted some level of attention, and within that relatively modest scope it could be argued that the recognition of Alexievich's writing in the TL societies happened in three waves. The first wave came in the 1992, after the translation of *Цинковые мальчики [Zinky boys/Boys in zinc]* and while the events take the reader back to the Soviet-Afghan War of the 80s, the publication happened during the early post-Soviet period when Russia was seen and evaluated through the prism of Yeltsin's politics. The second wave came in 1998 after *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl Prayer]* was first translated into English but according to Masha Gessen

> [o]ne of the most remarkable facts about Chernobyl is that the narrative vacuum had persisted for that long, and, in fact, it has persisted since: Alexievich's book came to prominence, both in Russia and in the West, only following her Nobel Prize win (Gessen, 2019, no page).

The third wave started in 2015.

Zinky boys/Boys in zinc was translated twice, for the UK and the USA markets, published by Chatto&Windus in London and by W.W. Norton in New York respectively. It triggered a review by John Lloyd in the *London Review of Books* that came immediately after the translation was published. The review is tinted with prominent Cold War rhetoric, which is indicative of the public narrative that existed in the TL society in the early 90s towards the USSR. As the subject matter of the book was the Soviet war in Afghanistan, Lloyd positioned the polyphonic stories in the Cold War environment. His anti-Soviet approach is apparent from the first paragraph where he refers to the erosion of "the imperial reflexes of a militarized state to the extent that no strategy – whether sticking to the forms of orthodoxy or Communist reformism – could pull it out of the crisis?" (Lloyd, 1992, p.1). The review ignores the differences between ST accounts and instead presents one homogenous narrative. As discussed earlier, the book was seen as controversial and even unacceptable within the SL society, which is why Alexievich had to answer numerous lawsuits.[52]

Alexievich's next book translated into English was *Voices from Chernobyl*, published by Aurum Press in 1998.[53] Looking back from the post-Nobel Prize period, Masha Gessen from *The New Yorker* points out that

> [f]or her other books, Alexievich interviewed people about their experience of the Second World War, the Soviet war in Afghanistan, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For all of these other events and periods in Russian history, there were widely adopted narratives, habits of speaking that, Alexievich found, had a way of overshadowing actual personal experience and private memory. But when she asked survivors about Chernobyl they accessed their own stories more easily, because the story hadn't been told. The Soviet media disseminated very little information about the disaster. There were no books or movies or songs. There was a vacuum. (Gessen, 2019, no page)

[52] See Section 2.1.

[53] Translations and translators of Alexievich's books int English are discussed in Section 2.3.

Gessen's journalistic perspective is unusual in that as an émigré from the USSR, she shares both ST and TT cultures and this understanding of multiple narratives might originate from her knowledge of Russian as her mother tongue and Soviet/post-Soviet culture where she grew up and worked as an adult.[54] Her brother Keith Gessen translated the book into English in 2005.[55] She discusses the book in the context of the HBO mini-series *Chernobyl* released in 2019 which she believes to have successfully recreated the domestic environment of the USSR of the 80s and 90s but "[i]n the absence of a Chernobyl narrative, the makers of the series have used the outlines of a disaster movie" (ibid.). The film focuses on the Chernobyl catastrophe and its consequences, it creates its own polyphony that might follow the rules of the genre.[56]

Both books have reviews dating back to the late 1990s and the first decade of the current millennium. According to Goodreads the book was well-received by general readers with 4.4-star rating, which is 88 %, and the figure corresponds to the 85% rating on the Russian platforms (Goodreads, 2007, no page). The reviews indicate that English-speaking readers were receptive to the polyphonic aspect of the narratives and wanted to assess every voice as an independent personality, that is "some narratives were more interesting than others" (Goodreads, 2007, no page). Readers were also sensitive to the quality of translation: "[t]he translator's foreword explains that this book has stories that are grotesque. And they are, but they are REAL […]" (Goodreads, Lisa, 2008, no page); "Svetlana Alexievich's latest, very much in the tradition of her earlier 'Zinky Boys' (the English translation of which was

[54] Contributor profile of Masha Gessen, New Yorker. (Gessen, M., [no date])

[55] Discussed in Section 2.3. and this translation forms part of the comparative analysis

[56] Miniseries is outside the scope of this thesis, as it is highly interpretative audio-visual version only loosely based on the translated book. The mention of it is only useful in the context that it might be indicative of attitudes by the TT general readers who took to read the book in translation following the success and the popularity of the mini-series.

lousy- - the translated excerpt in Granta, *Boys in Zinc* was much better)" (Goodreads, John, 2008).

The post-Nobel Prize reviews from Goodreads indicate that the interest in her books was as vivid as it was when the book was first translated into English, in particular, readers seem to appreciate the personal aspect of the narratives, e.g. "very touching voices and an important experience" (Goodreads, Ana Carolina, 2022). Some readers have left quite profound comments "who am I to rate human suffering?" (Goodreads, Chai, 28 February, 2022). Reviews from the general public demonstrate that people, although susceptible to the public narrative and Cold War rhetoric, are open-minded. They read Alexievich's books to find answers to their questions about life in ex-USSR and Russia, they want to understand *homo sovieticus* and they want to connect emotionally and intellectually with the stories recounted in those books.

The first major scholarly interest to Alexievich's writing in the Anglophone world can be traced back to 2017, when the academic journal *Canadian Slavonic Papers* dedicated almost their entire edition to essays focusing on a range of aspects related to her oeuvre. Helen Coleman in her preface to the issue introduced Alexievich's works in the context of "an account of the Soviet experience of World War II" (Coleman, 2017, p.193). Although she points out that "the official version of the war remained an incomplete "men's" version" before Alexievich's book (Coleman, 2017, p.193), her reference to the book as "an account" appears to have dismissed its polyphonic aspect, as Alexievich's writing is represented by many accounts. This nuance is important in the context of Alexievich's writing because her books present multiple accounts representing a range of experiences of WWII. Their value is in the polyphonic diversity and multifaceted representation of women's experience in that war.

Angela Brintlinger brings to the forefront the theme of mothers, fathers and daughters in *The Unwomanly Face of War* commenting on the changing nature of publishing and censorship since the first publication of the book in Russian in 1984 (Brintlinger, 2017, p.196). She argues that "Aleksievich wrote herself into the fabric of World War II history,

forging relationships of kinship with female veterans" (Brintlinger, 2017, p.196). [57] This resonates with the SL notion of motherhood suggested by Gurska and Temaeva (discussed in Section 2.1.) but it loses the sacrality of the concept and takes a practical down-to-earth view that encompasses universality of womankind. The paper suggests that Alexievich "deliberately chose [Adamovich] as mentor and guide […] [i]n her pursuit of knowledge about World War II" (Brintlinger, 2017, p.197). Alexievich mentions him many times as a father figure and credits him with many of her achievements (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b).

In the same journal, Daniel Bush categorises Alexievich's writing as "the culmination of a representational strategy" (Bush, 2017, p.214) which, he believes, originates from Soviet writers and represents an attempt at "'truthful' depiction […] and the recovery of experience" (Bush, 2017, p.214). This foregrounds the writer as a figurehead who uses the speakers to depict which, presumably, to her, is "truthful". Bush argues that to understand Alexievich's work, critics have "more often turned to anthropology, history and moral philosophy" (Bush, 2017, p.215), and he is critical of her choice of vocabulary, as the notion of "truth", "pain", "men's" and "women's" war which to him are not self-explanatory (Bush, 2017, p.226). He believes "conditioning is also part of her story" (Bush, 2017, p.229). While there is no direct reference to polyphony in this statement, it implies the presence of Alexievich's voice behind the narratives of the participants of the book. Inevitably, this leads to the question of how independent (or polyphonic) voices are in either ST or TT. The analysis in Chapter Five of this thesis looks into this question.

Anna Karpusheva, discussing *Voices from Chernobyl*, underscores that "the speech of witnesses of the Soviet past is hardly a mere historical project" (Karpusheva, 2017, p.259). According to her, Alexievich converts history into story using her techniques to create a dramatic effect (ibid). Karpusheva represents one view of the Western scholarship, but as a

[57] Canadian academic spelling of the writer's name is different from the widely accepted spelling that can be seen on the cover of her books, as it follows the Library of Congress rules of transcription.

Russian speaker,[58] she would have access to the ST, and rather than not seeing the polyphony and diversity of emotions by ST voices as a TT reader might miss, restricted in their access to translations, she acknowledges the presence of individual emotional stories but sees them as a technique to create a dramatic effect. In this thesis, I argue that the emotional aspect of the narratives by witnesses is not a superficial effect but it forms inseparable part of the Soviet legacy and should be considered in this context, as discussed earlier. Sincerity is at the heart of Alexievich's writing. She states "I handle two kinds of falsehoods—the falsehood of totalitarianism and the falsehood of history as a science that sanitizes human life till it becomes a dispassionate extract in a history book. My wish is to humanize history." (in Kuruvilla, 2016, no page).Consequently, I approach ST accounts as sincere in their emotional expression.

To conclude this overview of *Slavonic Papers*, Johanna Lindbladh classifies Alexievich's writing as a "polyphonic confession novel" (Lindbladh, 2017, p.282). This resonates with the notion discussed by Gurska,[59] and brings in the spiritual-religious dimension. Confession is an important concept in understanding voices in Alexievich's books. Spirituality and sincerity are at the heart of the emotional power behind the narratives. While it is difficult to imagine Alexievich acting as a priest, in her own words she asserts "I build temples out of our feelings… Out of our desires, disappointments. Dreams. Out of which was, but might slip away." (Alexievich, 2017a, p.xxi) The level of trust that speakers develop towards her certainly transpires through the intimacy of their testimonies. Moreover, Lindbladh brings in the concept of "implied author (Lindbladh, 2017, p.283) which fits into the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism, as discussed in Chapter Four and applied to the analysis in Chapter Five.

Irina Marchesini brings into her argument the notion of the "little human" as the main focus of Alexievich's literary journey. She points out that such narratives engage "a new

[58] https://www.linkedin.com/in/anna-karpusheva

[59] See Section 2.1.

dialogue with the audience" (Marchesini, 2017, p.23). Here, in the TL domain the dialogue, according to Marchesini, includes the TT reader, who, like the ST reader, joins the complex polyphony of voices in Alexievich's books. She underlines that "[a]lthough focused on specific national traumas, Aleksievich's narratives speak a universal language […]. As a result, priority is given to humans, rather than to facts" (Marchesini, 2017, p.23). This notion of universality could be seen as an attempt to understand the speakers as humans rather than cogs within a complex Soviet system.

Since 2015, every year new research has been emerging that contributes to the discussion of Alexievich's writing in a variety of ways. Mateus Passos explores her writing as "a peculiar literary journalism produced by Slavic women" (Passos and Marchetto, 2020, p.51). Though interesting, the classification of literary journalism as "Slavic" does not take into account the polyphonic aspect of the works, strictly speaking does not consider women as different categories/personalities, whereby every woman, including Alexievich, is a personality irrespective of her ethnic roots. Indeed, this generalization, although referring to the ST cultural aspect, is problematic as it perpetuates a divisive stereotype drawing a boundary between "Slavic" and "Western" woman, which takes the reader away from the notion of the universality of suffering.

Aliaksandr Novikau believes that Alexievich writes "honest and raw books based on carefully documented eyewitnesses accounts" (Novikau, 2017, p.314) and states that she "hurried to document that epoch by recording the impressions and emotions of the witnesses of the late Soviet Union" (Novikau, 2017, p.316). Novikau refers to the militarism and women "as bodies of war" (Novikau, 2017, p.321) and points that "pain and suffering are the central topics of all Alexievich's books" (Novikau, 2017, p.323). This evaluation, although accurate, does not taken into account nuances of the individual voices. Even in the most traumatic accounts one can find more than suffering.

The connection Novikau makes between the document as historical evidence and recorded emotions in the eyewitness accounts resonates with the concept of metahistory introduced by Hayden White as a way of looking at historical events through emotions and feelings, accepting subjectivity as part of historical evaluation of events and people within those events (1973). Metahistory in Alexievich's books could be seen as a network of

ontological narratives where each voice represents a personal understanding of history through everyday life.

Helga Lenart-Cheng discusses personal and collective memories within the works of Alexievich (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.9) and highlights the "narrative turn" as an experience of "putting memories into words" (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.83). Her research focuses on the process of collecting the testimonies and on the role of Alexievich as a listener and of the speakers as narrators who are not certain of their narrative power. (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.94). She refers to the phenomenon of "'memory wars' and 'contested memories'" (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.96) which, according to her, has gained popularity since the 1990s (ibid). Lenart-Cheng emphasizes

> Many argue, for example, that while in Eastern Europe the ideal of democratic reeducation prompted many to refashion their autobiographical stories, in post-Soviet Russia there was no such collective effort to make sense of the past because the population is more deeply torn on how, from what shared perspective, to rewrite their history. Alexievich's works both reflect and contribute to these memory wars (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.96).

This is important for understanding how identities of the speakers interact with each other. There is no new collective identity offered to replace this understanding of *homo sovieticus,* and voices depict the reality of what happens when people are left on their own to resolve the personal and collective problems. In the absence of a clear collective future, speakers cope with their memories and identities independently from each other, often enter into the conflict with each other's ideologies.

Lara Choksey places Alexievich on the map of the Human Genome Project (Choksey, 2021) and discusses the narrative of emergency in the context of *Chernobyl Prayer*" Choksey, 2021, p.149). She refers to the "writing and narrating community, self and ecosystem after environmental disaster, the hyper-militarization of governmental responses to ecological crises, and the convergence of postgenomic imaginaries with theorizations of care, endurance, responsibility and relationality" (Choksey, 2021, p.151) and calls for the "new forms of political action and citizenship" (Choksey, 2021, p.153).

In the TL articles on Alexievich's works there are several recurring themes that divide academics in respect of the genre to which her work belongs, the representation of the past, notions of truth and pain, women's voices, and also the changing nature of censorship, writing from within the system. Some scholars interpolate the polyphonic aspect in her writing with collective testimony relating both to trauma, empowering voices of everyday people and delivering an alternative account of history that does not fit the official state narrative. Some comment on the multivoicedness of the narratives but then dismiss this aspect. They accord her the power of masterminding the stories but do not credit the individual speakers as separate authors, which might indicate they do not perceive polyphony at all or see it differently from the SL readers. Others associate her view of the events as imprinted on the collective of the individual voices. Withall, academics display a diversity of attitudes, and the question here is whether the Western scholarly analysis of Alexievich's works based on the reading of the translated or original material and subsequently, in the case of those scholars that read Alexievich's works in translation, whether their analysis is reflective of how the books have been translated. Whilst it might not be possible to be certain as for which language served as a vessel for Western Anglophone scholars to access Alexievich's writing, the transition of voices from Russian into English is indeed of interest in this thesis. That being the case, Section 2.3. discusses the attitudes towards Alexievich's writing by the most meticulous readers, the group that is meant to bridge SL and TL cultures and society, in other words translators of her works into English.

2.3. Anglophone translators and specific challenges in Alexievich's polyphony – the stance of this research

Certain changes during translation are inevitable and come from a degree of incompatibility between languages and cultures whereby "cultures or cultural levels are translated into terms that allow for an interchange between what is foreign and what is familiar, or when entropy is controlled, or when 'reality' is to be conceived in terms of interacting systems" (Iser, 2000, p.6). At the same time, as this research maintains, there is an element of universality between languages and cultures, and that makes translation possible. Translation opens many different ways of communicating the ST meaning to the TT audience. Translators are at the heart of the translation process and while they navigate between languages and cultures, they apply their personal unique understanding of the ST to produce an optimal outcome for their TT readers.

When debating on translation, especially of the polyphonic texts, it is worth mentioning Iser who places duality as "the hallmark of hermeneutic interpretation" (Iser, 2000, p.47) and sees the latter as a process of reducing the gap between the foreign and understanding of it (ibid). Here understanding is regarded as "diminishing misunderstanding" (ibid.). While translators go through the same process of interpretation, it is reasonable to assume that their professional approach to understanding of both SL and TL cultures enables them to assess critically potential misunderstandings and evaluate what in their view could be relevant in translation and to which extent it could be done. Discussing what is a "relevant" translation, Jacques Derrida affirms "[a]t the word go we are within the multiplicity of languages and the impurity of the limit"(Derrida, tr. Spivak, 2016, p.vii). The fuzziness of boundaries in translation begins with the impurity of limits in the source text. Derrida underlines that "[j]ust as all men have not the same writing so all men have not the same speech sounds, but mental experiences, of which these are the primary symbols" […], are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images" (Derrida 2016, pp.11-12). While within a singular language the choices of words to express concepts and emotions could be very distinct, our mental experiences are processed through primary symbols. These primary symbols are externalized in a variety of ways but at the core they carry a universal value. Images and emotions are universal, even though they could be triggered by culturally-bound reflection on events. It is the notion of

universality across languages that enables the act of translation. While finding equivalents in the target language, translators might be looking for the universal links to the source text. Their affinity to the ST culture and society helps to find equivalents in translation.

Being human, each translator adheres to a certain system of values and beliefs. These values might originate from their childhood or may have been acquired through life. They may accept or reject the values of their native land, or incorporate parts of them into the complex fabric of their thoughts and feelings. These values Baker calls the "system of narratives" (Baker, 2010, p.113), namely public, state, collective, personal and ontological narratives that interweave and find their way into translation. This applies to English-speaking translators, [60] who also operate within the systems of pre-conceived values and public narrative that exists in their target-language culture (TLC) and society. To facilitate translation as inter-cultural and inter-lingual transfer, translators navigate between cultures. In this connection, Baker's argument about how translational choices can be seen as

> the interplay between personal and public narratives is particularly interesting in the context of translation and interpreting. Although they ultimately remain focused on the self and its immediate world, personal stories are constrained by and in turn constrain shared, public narratives in a variety of ways. (House, 2014, p.162)

This melange of narratives becomes part of a translator's journey in reading and interpreting the ST voices. As Anglophone translators grow up and share the public narratives of their native languages, they are not immune from these narratives and risk introducing, consciously or subconsciously, an element of their attitudes into their translations. Baker underscores this point

> [o]n the one hand, the scope for elaborating personal narratives is constrained both by the range of symbols and formulations derived from public narratives, without which the personal would remain unintelligible and uninterpretable, and by the blueprints for social roles and spaces that the public narratives in

[60] English is one of the domineering languages of the anti-Soviet narrative, as it is spoken by its main ideological antipodes, the USA and the UK, this is discussed in Section 2.2. and 2.3.

> which we are embedded allow us to inhabit. At the same time, personal narratives feed into and can undermine the elaboration and maintenance of shared public narratives, hence the investment by powerful agents such as the state, political lobbies and religious institutions in a range of initiatives and policies designed to socialise individuals into the political, religious and social narratives of the day. (House, 2014, p.162)

As translators' narratives in combination become a subconscious or conscious part of translators and form part of the reasoning applied to the ST in translation, the ST text in translation might be reshaped beyond what would be necessary to accommodate linguistic incompatibilities. Baker refers to this as reframing of the original frames, whereby translators either passively or actively interfere with the ST stories to alter the narrative in accordance with their personal attitudess and based on the stories with which they grew up and to which they submit. She argues that

> [l]anguage users, including translators and interpreters, can also exploit features of narrativity (temporality, relationality, selective appropriation and causal emplotment) to frame or reframe a text or utterance for a set of addressees. Translators of written text can do so in the body of the translation or, alternatively, around the translation. This distinction can be very important in some contexts because of the key role that the notions of accuracy and faithfulness tend to assume in the context of professional/and particularly politically sensitive/translation. (Baker, 2007, p.158)

In the context of translating Alexievich's works into English, using various features of narrativity, translators can frame or reframe ST voices to adhere to the TL system of narratives. As TT readers translators would have their own personal Cold War narrative which might be a combination of a range of public or state narratives processed through the mind of a translator at different stages of life and professional journey. Anti-Soviet Cold War public narratives to a large extent still dominate TL societies. Either as individuals or being under pressure from publishers, translators cannot avoid becoming part of these narratives even though the collapse of the USSR took place more than thirty years ago. That is why reframing is expected in translation of Alexievich's works into English.

In relation to this, Baker's understanding of framing

> is closely connected to the question of how narrative theory allows us to consider the immediate narrative elaborated in the text being translated or interpreted and the larger narratives in which the text is embedded, and how this in turn allows us to see translational choices not merely as local linguistic challenges but as contributing directly to the narratives that shape our social world. (Baker, 2007, p.156)

Translators, including those of Alexievich's works, may intentionally or subconsciously introduce ideological, stylistic and other changes through their choice of lexis, syntax and other textual means. They might do so for several reasons. Initially, they might choose a textual embodiment that is aligned with their personal interpretation of the source text narratives(s). This interpretation is affected by their conscious effort to understand the original work. Be that as it may, it is also affected by their own point of view regarding the events described, their personal attitude towards the voices, their narratives and the settings for the source-text narrative(s). Each translator originates from within their own socio-cultural setting, they are part of the collective, shared and public narratives where they live. In this context, biographies of the translators of Alexievich's books, their viewpoints and personal ideologies, become important.

Translators have to consider a highly complex network of stakeholders, id est publishers, editors, and other parties, before their translations even reach their prospective target readers, as Cecilia Alvstad (2017) points out

> [t]he agents who read and shape translations – authors, publishers, translators, editors, copy editors, critics, librarians, and "non-professional" readers – express themselves in a variety of channels, such as introductions, letters, and reviews. […] Voices in and around translated texts mix and blend in intricate ways that reveal how translation is a matter of circulation of and confrontation between voices, and of constant negotiation and re-negotiation of meaning (Alvstad, 2017, p.3).

To wit, these stakeholders are unlikely to affect the complexity of the polyphonic texture which largely remains the domain of translators.

Lina Mounzer refers to translation as "transplanting a feeling, a way of seeing the world […] A seedling from soil to soil. But also an organ from body to body." (Mounzer, 2016, no page). She underlines that "[t]he procedure must be as delicate, as cognizant of the

original conditions of creation in order to nurture and ensure a continuation of life" (ibid.). Such a delicate attitude to the ST accounts is particularly significant in the case of Alexievich's works, as they also provide a larger look at Soviet and post-Soviet history. Therefore, the loss of the polyphony in translation raises many concerns, including those of ethical nature.

Discussing the issue of loss in translation, on the one hand, Emily Apter maintains that the

> primal truisms of translation: to wit: something is always lost in translation; unless one knows the language of the original, the exact nature and substance of what is lost will be always impossible to ascertain; even if one has access to the language of the original, there remains an x-factor of untranslatability that renders every translation an impossible world or faux regime of semantic and phonic equivalence. (Apter, 2005, p.159)

This research sees the concept of loss as subjective. What is loss for one could be a gain for the other. For this reason, this thesis studies metamorphosis of ST polyphonic messages in translation to include ideologies, identities and other dimensions of each voice. Such metamorphosis could be seen as a loss or a gain but inevitably it shifts from the ST and distorts the ST message. Thinking of the Bakhtinian concept of mirror,[61] this mirror gives a distorted image, which can be seen as a loss or a gain.

Tal Goldfajn, in turn, raises concern regarding an application of the terms "loss"/"loss-aversion"/"loss-gain" to the context of translation (Goldfajn, 2020, pp.82-95). The scholar laments that "translation is often presented as a disaster" (Goldfajn, 2020, p.83) and poses the question of why many discussion in translation studies "involve the notion of 'loss' and embrace the assumption that perhaps there is no translation without loss?" (Goldfajn, 2020, p.83). She proceeds to connect the notion of gains and losses to the field of economics (ibid.). This research avoids evaluating translators' decisions through the prism of gains and losses, instead it refers to shifts and alterations and maintains that translatability of the concepts, views and emotions is possible by the power of translators' expertise and

[61] Discussed later in the research methodology.

creativity. The question is not what is lost or gained but how the ST is transformed by translators.

This thesis opts for such terms as *shifts*, *alterations* and *metamorphosis* rather than gains and losses. The aim of this research is to analyse what happens to the polyphonic voices when they undergo translation into English and to compare how polyphony is portrayed in the ST and TT. Shifts sometimes indicate biases and reframing rather than untranslatability. The biases could result from personal, public, collective and ontological narratives (Baker, various sources) affecting translators, editors and other stakeholders of the translation process. The reason ST and TT are compared in this research is because the position of the author of this thesis is that translation is not an independent work and despite the creative input of the translator into every word of the TT, the title page of the translated text still bears the name of the ST author. This creates a strong and inevitable link between the author and the translator, the ST and the TT. With that comes the responsibility and duty of loyalty to the ST and to the author of the ST. In the case of the polyphonic texts, especially those containing testimonies of real people, in addition to the writer of the ST, the responsibility and ethics goes towards each person whose voice is amplified by the ST writer. Speaking in the language of the 21st century, the position of this research is such that shifts and metamorphosis introduced in translation should not result in photoshopping the original content to fit a range of narratives or satisfy a range of translation stakeholders that might exist in the TL society(ies).

Alvstad's ethical concern regarding multiple stakeholders affecting the outcome of the TT for the readers connects

> [t]he process of unearthing and disentangling voices in translated texts and surrounding texts has various sociocultural, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions, […]The ethical dimension concerns among other things the way in which translators have often been regarded as the only ones responsible for possible problems and errors and consequently left to "weather the storm" alone when a translation is criticized (Alvstad, 2017, p.3).

Such ethics require translators to bear the responsibility for the outcome which means making informed choices during the translation process and educating other agents who are involved in bringing a translation to readers on the reasons behind their choices. In the

polyphonic context, it is important to understand the polyphonic delivery and strive to move across the cultural and linguistic boundaries the multiplicity of disjointed ST voices.

At that, Emily Apter states that "[t]ranslation studies typically frame the ethics of textual infidelity in terms of a translation infelicitous rendering of an original (measured as lack of accuracy, formal and grammatical similitude, literary flair or poetic feeling), or in terms of the target text's dubious connection to its source; its status as pseudo or fictitious translation". (Apter, 2005, pp160-161). The scholar brings into the her discussion the notions of pseudo-translation, false translation and textual cloning (ibid., pp160-167).

This research sees every text as unique and maintains that every translation, as stated by Nord (2005), has a purpose which is tailored to both the receiver of the translated text and the nature of the original text. In this translator becomes a mediator between ST producer and TT receiver, and the readers of the TT. Fidelity is therefore double-edged, or in case of a polyphonic text, is multifaceted. It becomes a complex entangled and messy network of interweaving individual ST voices with the TT reader. There is a question mark over a feasibility of fidelity to multiple agents at the same time. It is possible nonetheless to speak of translator's fidelity to her/himself and to her/his own principles, professionalism and emotional understanding of the ST. This is not a question of substituting emotions of the ST voices by the emotions of the translator, but rather allowing the translator apply his/her own understanding of each ST voice and reconstruct those to the TT reader as decoded and interpreted by the translator. This research aims to draw translators' attention to the dimensions of voice deemed significant in the context of Alexievich's writing to empower translators make creative choices and exercise their own professional judgement insofar as how to apply those. This research maintains that it is not possible, neither it is necessary to clone ST to produce ethical and effective rendition of it in translation, yet it is possible to translate ST conveying the meaning of the ST messages delivered by each ST voice.

Translations of works from Russian appear to Anglophone readers in the context of a long-standing history of Cold War propaganda that was initially imposed on the Western world by the secret services. That being so, in the words of Sonor Saunders, there was concern that Western cultural pluralism would appear to be fragmented in the face of the unity of the Soviet ideology, leaving Western democracies vulnerable to exploitation by the latter.

In this climate the CIA convinced Western intelligence agencies to adopt intervention practices to combat this "Cold War battle for political, military and also cultural domination" (Saunders, 1999,pp.47-56).

As Emily Lygo explains, there was a strong fear of communism spreading to the Western societies and that led to formation of state narratives within them, which were highly critical of anything that came from the USSR and not overtly against the Soviet ideology.

> They feared it would use Western left-wing and communist groups to promote communism and portray the West as culturally and politically inferior and inadequate. Led by the CIA, they intervened in the process of translation and publishing to a remarkable degree in their efforts to promote Western political values and denigrate Soviet communism. (Lygo, 2018, p.9)

For this reason it could be argued that the Cold War produced a certain narrative among translators, as Lygo states

> [w]hile Western literature translated in the USSR was almost always published at home, literature from the USSR translated and published in the West was often unpublished in the USSR. The desire of Western translators, publishers and readers to discover suppressed voices of the Stalinist period and in particular of the Gulag, was a genuine and understandable response to the propaganda, censorship, distortion of history, and human rights abuses of the USSR. (Lygo, 2018, p.14)

While this refers to what was read in the USSR as opposed to how it was translated, and while this factual information belongs to the Soviet period, it is still relevant to this argument because translators growing up in Western societies during the Cold War were could have encountered material that would have shaped their opinions. Whether translators of Alexievich's works emigrated from the USSR or were brought up in the West, they would have been trained within the system that is part of that narrative, and as Lygo underscores,

> [w]hat emerges from on both sides, is that much as government and intelligence agencies may have tried to manipulate translation and translators for political gain, ultimately translators were also able to use their agency to pursue their own aims and interest. The significance of translation in the Cold War cannot be confined to the sphere of politics alone. (Lygo, 2018, p.20)

It is possible that translators who emigrated from the USSR or post-USSR Russia moved as a result of their opposition to the Soviet narrative and would be likely to embrace the Cold War narrative of the Western propaganda as a viable alternative. For example, Masha Gessen said that their parents emigrated from the USSR to the USA in 1981 because they did not want their children to live "there", referring to the USSR which they believed would exist forever (Gessen, 2014) and experience anti-Semitism which they believed was present in the USSR (Ivanov, 2023).

The first English translation of entitled *Zinky Boys [Цинковые мальчики]*,[62] which appeared in 1992 by Julia and Robin Whitby (Alexievich, 1992), was published in New York by Norton&Company. In the only review of the book available, Lloyd points out that in the book "[p]eople speak for themselves" (Lloyd, 1992, p.2) which suggests some presence of the polyphonic diversity in the TT despite the fact that writing within the TL society of the early 90s.[63] Lloyd states that such independence of expression "was neither a Soviet nor a pre-Soviet literary practice" (Lloyd, 1992, p.2) and credits Alexievich with the fact that she "has managed to escape from the leaden disciplines of Soviet journalism in which she must have been trained, to discover this mode of presenting her material, and has used it well, if at times repetitiously"(ibid.).

In 2017, the book was re-translated by Andrew Bromfield as *Boys in Zinc* and published by Penguin Modern Classics for British readers. In 2023, it was re-published by Norton&Company under the same title *Zinky Boys*, for the American audience. Bromfield is a British translator who graduated from the University of Sussex and lived a few years in Russia (Alexievich, Bromfield, 2017b, p.5). While years in Russia would have given the translator some knowledge of Russian society, as someone who was born and grew up in

[62] According to Alexievich's official website, first translation into English appeared in 1987 in Moscow. It was a translation of *У войны не женское лицо [The war's face is not feminine]* and it never reached the Western reader.

[63] I have not managed to obtain any information on that translation and its translators.

the UK, Bromfield would bring his own network of personal, ontological and social narratives into his translation.

Чернобыльская молитва: хроника будущего [Chernobyl prayer: chronicle of the future] was first translated into English by an American translator of German origin Antonina W. Bouis under the title *Voices from Chernobyl. Chronicle of the Future*. It was published in 1999, by a London publisher Aurum Press. I have not been able to find any information on Antonina W. Bouis. In 2005, Keith Gessen produced another translation of the book, and it was published by Dalkey Archive Press and appeared under the title *Voices from Chernobyl*: *The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*.[64] The same translation was re-published in 2006 by Picador, New York and was reprinted by Dalkey Archive Press in 2019. Gessen is a Soviet-born translator who was born in 1975 and in the 80s, as a child, emigrated to Boston, USA with his family (Schuman, 2020, p.1). He grew up as a second-generation Soviet émigré with vague memories of his Soviet childhood, thus acquiring knowledge of the source-text culture and society from his parents and the community of ex-pats living in the USA. Educated at Harvard University, Gessen is a notable writer and a journalist. He is a columnist for the *The New Yorker* and has published several books (Gessen, K. [no date], no page). His complex personal identity is embedded in the translation, as the analysis will demonstrate. He has a distinctive style, and removed, altered, edited or abridged many voices and added a "Translator's preface" where he advised readers how to interpret the book as a whole:

> […] as these testimonies also make all too clear, it wasn't as if the Soviets simply let Chernobyl burn. This is the remarkable thing. On the one hand, total incompetence, indifference, and out-and-out lies. On the other, a genuinely frantic effort to deal with the consequences. (Alexievich, Gessen, 2006, p.xi)

He pre-empts readerly attitudes towards the individual voices: "Much of the material collected here is obscene." (Alexievich, Gessen, 2006, p.ix); "Some of the interviews are

[64] The same year this book in Gessen's translation received The National Book Critics Circle Award in the category General Nonfiction Winner, unfortunately Gessen's name does not appear on the website of the awarding body (The National Book Critics Circle Awards, 2005, no page).

macabre." (ibid, p.viii). Gessen's voice is overtly present in the book and pre-conditions his readers. He does not hide, he is visible and he uses the book to express his own position towards the catastrophic event. In 2016, British translators Anna Gunin and Arch Tait produced another translation of *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* which was published by Penguin as *Chernobyl Prayer: A Chronicle of the Future*.

Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky translated two books: *У войны не женское лицо [The Unwomanly Face of War]* and *Последние свидетели [Last Witnesses]*. This couple have two entirely different backgrounds and attitudes to the source text. Larissa, of Soviet origin, compares translation to "restoring a painting" where "you can't overdo it, but you have to be true to the thing" (Remnick, 2005, p.9), transmitting the "sense of fidelity" (ibid). Her knowledge of Russian culture and society is likely to be profound but as a non-native speaker of English who did not have that language from birth and in her formative years, she is unlikely to be in a position to deliver all the nuances. Nonetheless, her husband and co-translator Richard Pevear, according to an interview with the couple, does "not really speak the language […] ha[s] not spent much time in Russia—just one three-week trip to St. Petersburg to meet his wife's old friends and family" and "has never been curious to see Russia" (Remnick, 2005, p.16). "Should I be?", he questions (ibid). According to Pevear, he picked up his Russian "by listening to Larissa talk with her émigré friends in Paris, by reviewing thousands of small matters of translation"(ibid.) 'but, as he admits "not its outlandishly rich vocabulary, the complicated grammar, with its maddening various verb conjugations, shades of tense, reflexivities, cases, endings, gerundial gymnastics"' (Remnick, 2005, p.16). Consequently, whilst Pevear's contribution is likely to be significant for delivering linguistic fluency to the TT readers, Larissa's input into this translation process is likely to be fundamental for understanding the nuances of ST culture and society.

Alexievich's most recent book *Время секонд-хэнд [Second-Hand Time*] was translated in 2015 by Bela Shayevich, who was born in the USSR to Soviet parents and emigrated to New York as a child (Anderson, 2018, p.1). Her memory of living in the Soviet Union appears vague, as she says "[…]my parents don't take my memories seriously. These are the kinds of passions that made up my life, while they were out there scrambling up a sheer cliff…" (Shayevich, 2022, no page). Having grown up in the USA, she would have a

second-hand experience of the source text culture through the stories of her parents (to wit community and shared narratives) and grew up with the US Cold War/post-Cold War. Her personal position is likely to originate from a mix of source- and target-language cultures.

Looking at the backgrounds of the translators helps to identify and understand the nature of potential reframing, including shifts, biases and alterations introduced into the translation process. Each translator might also have an image of their prospective readers, though the editor might be the deciding power as whether to accept that translation for publication. As Wayne Booth asserts, "the author creates…an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement" (Booth, 1983, p.138). This happens irrespective of the "real beliefs and practices" of the reader (ibid). By creating an imaginary reader, translators would inevitably tailor what they produce to that reader, who will be very different from the source-text reader. In the polyphonic source text, each voice initially might have his/her own imaginary receiver.

In compiling the voices into her books, Alexievich acts as a "human ear".[65] By detaching herself from the speakers, she also detaches herself from pre-conditioning the readers of her books. This makes a significant difference between her and translators who transfer her works into English because while Alexievich compiles and transcribes the voices in the same language and for the same audience, translators have to re-create each voice in English and with a completely different reader in mind. To do so they have to interpret every voice, which makes it very difficult to remain detached, as in order to interpret a translator has to achieve a semantic and emotional understanding of the ST voices.

Images created by the multitude of SL speakers go through translators' attitudes before they reach the TL reader. New frames introduce alternative interpretations of the voices, where voices become one, which contradicts the Bakhtinian representation of "hero [voice] as a point of view" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.7). In analysis of a polyphonic text he emphasizes the

[65] Discussed later in Chapter Three.

importance of "utterly special methods of discovery and artistic characterization" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.48) and suggests the focus should be not on the work as a unit but on each individual voice as a unit in its own right (ibid). Bringing this notion into the process, the translation of a polyphonic work should be addressed as a compilation of multiple units where each voice forms a separate focus of attention.

By stating that in translation "[m]ost changes occur unconsciously and unintentionally but sometimes these changes are consciously, intentionally and purposefully" (Kazemi, Sanei, 2020, p.1), Fatemeh Kazemi and Dianoosh Sanei suggest that "reframing" can be seen as "a strategy […] that is used to change some dimensions of translated text" (ibid). Indeed, strategy is controlled by a set of actions/conscious purposeful efforts to achieve an expected result. Subsequently, if a strategy can alter some dimensions of a text, it could, arguably, be aligned with certain dimensions from the source text, to preserve some pre-established elements of it for the target-language reader.

While it is impossible for translators to detach and de-personalise themselves from the ST voices, such involvement could be directed towards delivering to their readers the multi-facetedness of those voices as they appear in the original. While translators operate in between cultures, each translator is likely to draw on their personal narratives in interpretating the source text. As a result, the ST voices may be overpowered by a translator, which leads to shifts and substitution of the range of the original polyphonic voices by that of the translator. Consequently, the multitude of the source-text meanings and the polyphony of personal narratives that is present in the source text is likely to become homogenised during the translation process.

While addressing the question of how polyphony in Alexievich's writing can be preserved in translation, Susan Bassnett provides a salutary reminder "what is wonderful about knowing other languages is that you can do different things in different ways in different languages […]" (2011, p.13); and while she believes that "social practices vary from culture to culture, expectations vary and what is permitted varies" (2011, p.3), there also something universal in all cultures and languages that unites us as a species, as human beings, which makes translation and any inter-cultural and inter-lingual communication possible. Bassnett places value on "the objective and purpose of the source text" whereby

"the translator has to create a text that will render for target readers the objective or purpose of the source text" (Bassnett, 2014, p.148). This I see as the fundamental basis for translating Alexievich's polyphony, whereby the objective is to re-render for the TL reader the ST voices and the purpose behind their individual meanings and messages. In doing this it has to be done in a different way, in a different language but preserving the objective and the purpose of the statement produced by each ST speaker facilitating the inter-cultural and inter-lingual communication of the ST polyphonic messages to the TT readers.

Bassnett underscores the complexity of translating culture explaining that

> you make the foreign seem familiar by approaching it into your own culture, and you find parallels that will appear meaningful to the listener who does not share your acquaintance with the source language and culture […] But in so doing, do you run the risk of diminishing cultural difference somehow? (Bassnett, 2011, p.89).

I believe this is a crucial consideration for any translator working with a polyphonic source-text because such parallels become unique and different for each voice. The diversity of the objectives and purposes embedded in the source-text messages and the multitude of source-text meanings conveyed by the individual source-text voices require each individual voice to be considered as distinctive. If this is incorporated into the translation process as a starting point, the decisions by a translator on the combination of the elements from both cultures could help in decoding source-text voices and find universality in certain signs.

In translating voices, understanding a person as well as culture and society forms a significant element. In translating the polyphonic voices the challenge is that there are many persons that need to be understood in the context of their own culture and society. As pointed out by Mary N. Layoun:

> [a] more leisurely (and privileged) tempo of that movement "in between" and "across" has recently acquired a particular and even fervent resonance in the citation of the post-, the trans-, and the multi- as appropriate spatial and temporal markers of translation. But here there is a tendency to ignore or collapse the time-and space- between, the interstices of, languages and cultures (Dingwaney, Maier, 1995, p.270).

Discussing the importance of preserving the original narratives in translation, Oksana Maksymchuk and Max Rosochinsky assert that

> there's much that Alexievich does capture in her masterful transcriptions of the interviews, and that the translator has to be careful to convey: the special change of tone at the moment of the break, of the separation, when the person interviewed abandons the self-historicizing narrative that afforded her comfort and protection, and faces the discomfort, the disruption, the radical individuation that recollecting her experiences confronts her with […] (Maksymchuk, Rosochinsky, 2017, p.63).

This raises the question of inter-cultural compatibility between the source- and target-text audience and the place of translators in this process. Gabriel Motzkin expresses concerns about "cultural homogenization" that might "result in the survival of only one universal culture" (Motzkin, cited in Budick, Iser, 1996, p.265). He emphasises the danger of a situation in which "culture will be increasingly defined in terms of the relation to some other and less in terms of one's own cultural tradition" (ibid). Risto Alapuro, Arto Mustajoki, and Pekka Pesonen point out that [t]here is something mysterious in the behaviour of Russia as a state; the Russians tend to surprise us at the very moment when we start to think that they have changed and become like us (Alapuro, Mustajoki, Pesonen, 2012, p.13).

These attitudes are problematic. They originate from the way Russia is made accessible to the West, including by means of translations. I maintain that translations should pay particular attention to the differences between the cultures in order to create bridges of understanding. With this in mind, even translating a monophonic voice presents a challenge of positioning the source-text narrative into the target-text society and preserving the valuable components for the target-text readership. The way emotions and views expressed by voices are captured by Alexievich is unique and source-text culture dependent. Understanding how and why the multitude of voices in here books made Alexievich a controversial and uncomfortable figure in her homeland and in the post-Soviet Russia, is important for this thesis.

Some Western scholars with proficiency in Russian comment on some significant disparities between the originals and their English translations. For example, Karpusheva

laments the difference between the Russian and English texts and blames the English translation for "aligning the book more with the genre of a traditional oral history project" (Karpusheva, 2017, p.263). Here, she suggests as a "direction for future research […] to compare the stylistic and artistic composition of the Russian original with its numerous translations" (Karpusheva, 2017, p.276). Whereas, Lindbladh points to some problems with English translations of Alexievich's books, for instance, "[u]nfortunately, the recurring use of the present tense in the Russian original […] is not always reflected in the English translations […] contributing to diminishing the effects of the hesitant, ambivalent interior monologue" (Lindbladh, 2017, p.298).

In the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Brendan O'Neil speaks of "anti-Russian hysteria" (O'Neil, 2022, p.1). This public narrative of the Cold War Age is now fuelled by the real war. Alexievich believes that

> today Putin's Russia is a humiliated empire, and such states are capable of horrifying actions. An example to this – the Nazi Germany of 1930-s [сегодня путинская Россия представляет собой униженную империю, а такие государства способны на страшные действия. Пример тому – нацистская Германия 1930-х годов] (Alexievich, 2022, p.3).[66]

In her works individual storytelling delivered by many voices matters. For the reader these voices allow access to the uniqueness of each story, and those many stories create a complex polyphony. This can help to avoid stereotypes and open up access to the complexity of a human soul and mind. There is always something in each person that appeals to someone else. The value of Alexievich's books is in that they give each reader an opportunity to shape her/his individual opinion on the events and people. Readers are not provided with a clear guidance from the writer as to how to interpret events. Instead, they are given the messy complexity of life and can make up their own minds in evaluating

[66] In this chapter Russian quotations are presented in my translation into English, unless stated otherwise

the multivocality of accounts. How to preserve this messy complexity of the source-language voices for the target-language readers is a challenge for translators.

3. The voice of Alexievich and other voices in her polyphonic writing

3.1. Alexievich's stance on her own writing

A writer might not be the best judge of her or his writing, and as Wolfgang Iser speaks of the subjectivity colouring the perception (Iser, 1974, p.66), at the very least the writer should be given a voice in this matter. Alexievich's perception forms the foundation for the analysis in Chapter Five.It is important to understand what by her own account lies at the heart of her literary journey, what is her main "research question"; and here the first point to consider is that Alexievich locates her works in the domain of emotions.

> History is interested only in facts, while emotions are left out. It is not appropriate to admit them into history. I look at the world with the eyes of a humanitarian, not a historian. I am marvelled at a person…[67]
>
> [Историю интересуют только факты, а эмоции остаются за бортом. Их не принято впускать в историю. Я же смотрю на мир глазами гуманитария, а не историка. Удивлена человеком...]
> (Yakovleva, 2013, no page)

The ephemeral nature of emotions, desires, disappointments and dreams, all that constitute the building bricks of her artistic temple, makes the boundaries fuzzy and open to a multitude of subjective interpretations. The subjectivities, nevertheless, are at the heart of Alexievich's work, whereas the contradiction that is woven into the polyphonic fabric of the diversity is a thread that links the colourful segments of her patchwork quilt.

> I am told: well, memories – they are neither history nor literature. This is just life, littered and unrefined by the artist's hand. The raw material of speaking, every day has an abundance of it. Those bricks are scattered everywhere. But bricks are not yet a temple! But for me, it is all different… It is exactly there; in the warm human voice, in the living reflection of the past; that is hidden the primeval joy and is exposed the irrevocable tragic element of life. Its chaos and

[67] In this chapter all translations from Russian into English are mine, unless stated otherwise.

> passion. Singularity and inconceivability. It is there, that they are still untreated. Genuine.[68] (Alexievich, 2020c, pp.15-16)

As Solomon built his temple to symbolise hope, trust and forgiveness (Cataliotti, [no date], no page), Alexievich builds truth out of human stories, memories, voices. Through the singularity of individual emotions and spiritual pursuits, of the primeval desire to survive voices narrate multiple ideologies and understandings of reality. They contradict each other and, in their abundance, echo each other, but also clash and disagree. Regardless of her personal position, Alexievich is keen to preserve for her readers each narrative as she receives it. "As a person myself, sometimes I disagree and argue with my interviewees, asking them 'why you did it'[…] but I am impartial in publishing them" (Alexievich, 2019ai).

In order to understand the importance of such honesty and desire to preserve the messages of the source-text voices in translation, I would like to draw on an example from conversations on the streets of Krakow during the liquidation of the Ghetto, cited by Elwira Grossman when she said that "Hitler is doing all the dirty work in killing the Jews. That will leave only those who are like us" (Grossman, 2002, p.xii). Here, Grossman mentions "subtle forms and degrees of assimilation and 'Otherness'"(ibid). She analyses otherness in the Polish context, there is an overt reference to the antisemitic ghost hanging around in post-war Poland. Alexievich's quest is to look for the ghosts within the ex-USSR space. In doing so, she collects subjective accounts in an attempt to establish self and otherness within herself as *homo sovieticus*. The "otherness" of every voice for her becomes an internal struggle between her own self and the other just as it is for her speakers, and perhaps also for those readers who share the burden of *homo sovieticus* through experience.

Just as Grossman challenges the myth of "homogeneous Polish society" (Grossman, 2002, p.xi), Alexievich endeavours to destroy pre-conceived myths of *homo sovieticus.* She uses

[68] My translation

the multiplicity of voices is to break this homogeneity. She exposes polyphony of *homo sovieticus* and the struggle of multiple identities of the self and the other as articulated by the voices.

To Alexievich, the subjectivity of every voice represents a singular but highly valuable part of reality. To reconstruct a whole picture, the contribution of every person and their experience of life becomes vital.

> I do not expect objective truth from my voices. Every person sees and experiences only a part of reality[…] and if you think that there is no one single reality […] i.e. what we see and hear is supplemented by what we guess, and sometimes we cannot even guess […] We can only access the top layer of reality[…] but for me this is enough to access a person. (Munipov, 2020, no page).

Seeking to access the past through the eyes of the ordinary people, she assigns each person the unique role of a bearer of an individual subjective layer of history. She explores the complexity of events through the prism of human feelings, logic and behaviour.

> In my books these people tell their own, little histories, and big history is told along the way. We haven't had time to comprehend what already has and is still happening to us, we just need to say it. To begin with, we must at least articulate what happened.
> (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell 2015b, p.6)

She shapes her work through the voices that she collects. She also acknowledges that "[w]itnesses are not impartial. In telling a story, humans create, they wrestle time like a sculptor does marble. They are actors and creators." (Alexievich, trans. Gambrell, 2015b, p.5). The creators in her books are the people similar to those among whom she grew up, who surround her on the streets, people who were at the core of the big events, living their everyday lives, coping with the Soviet system. In those voices and in their suffering, she hopes to find what a person stands for (Alexievich, 2015c, no page). Through the polyphony of subjective accounts she is writing "a book of time", affirming herself as "a historian of the human soul" (Alexievich, 2020c, p.15). In doing this, she operates with reference to a specific country and a very specific "'breed' of people" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7) who once endured the same official ideology and forcibly imposed values.

The stories Alexievich collects are what she refers to as *living voices* or *novels of voices.*[69] "I make books from the voices of life. Rather than inventing, I select from the voices of life and I call it like this: novel of voices. This is not journalism." (Svetova, 2019, p.1). She refers to this in her interviews, such as the one with Alexander Gordon (2015) and this is stated in the Russian version of her official website "… And I have chosen the genre of human voices" (Alexievich, 2021e, no page). Collectively, voices join a polyphonic chorus with many melodies and many variations on the same theme. This aspect is fundamental to understanding her work. By creating her novels of voices out of life that surrounds her, she utilizes the polyphony of subjective views on reality to reconstruct a collective history of what she sees as the "Russian-Soviet soul" (Alexievich, 2021e, no page).

For Alexievich, her concept of the *novel of voices* brings the reader closer to reality as captured by life. To her, the artistic representation of people that lies in literary fiction is subject to bias and lacks understanding of human nature:

> Today, when the world and the human have acquired so many faces and versions (art is increasingly admitting its powerlessness), the document in the art is becoming increasingly interesting […] It brings us closer to reality, it captures and leaves the originals of the past and of the present. Having been working with documented material for more than twenty years, and having written five books, I keep repeating and I am convinced more than ever: art neither suspects nor could even guess so many things in a person, and then, what is undiscovered is lost forever. (Alexievich, 2021e, no page)

She argues that the complexity of people and their understanding of reality cannot be dealt with by of the existing literary genres. The reality of life is far more original and interesting, emotions in their raw form as expressed by real people carry significantly more

[69] Russian term "novel"["роман"] refers to a substantial work with focus on lives of people at a certain historic period. Its characters and story are complex and multidimensional (Gasparov et al. 2001) and reflect spiritual development of a person that takes place against the backdrop of public life and influence of external events on the spiritual development are at the core of the concept, where a private life could be seen as a "mirror into the world" (Khalizev, 2004, no page). The spiritual world of heroes (characters) and the significance of the work are at the core of the novel as a concept in Russian culture and society. Contemporary novels are not necessarily a fiction, as the boundaries of the genre are fuzzy and encompass, for example, a documentary [novel], a diary or an autobiography.

value than artistic re-creation. Living people, their suffering and their subjective evaluation of what is happening around them is precious and is at the heart of her books.

> Ten novels will not say about the war as much as one tiny episode, a recollection of a boy [who survived the burning of the village by the Nazis] […] about the words of his four year old sister who asked their mother: "Why did you put rubber shoes on my feet, they will make my feet burn for longer". (Alexievich, 2019, p.4)

Her philosophical lifelong journey is shaped around the survivors of the dramatic events from the Soviet era, around those who "unite the world" where literature and art become helpless, such as "the stories of the old people who bring forward the understanding that can be lacking at all levels of humanity" (Alexievich, June 2019).[70]While for every book she chooses a theme, for example, the war the way women see it, or the clash of two worlds, the feminine (especially the mothers who lost their sons) and the young men who fought and survived, overall, she defines two big themes that run through all of her works, which are "the collapse of the empire and the human in the midst of it" (Alexievich, DW, 2016). Her book about the Afghan war is not a critique of the authorities who sent young adults to fight but it is about how people "are forced to kill and how they want to survive and come back to their mothers, it is about the intensity of human feelings and human relationships" (Gordon, 2016, no page). As a legacy, she wants to leave an encyclopaedic history of the communist utopia. "I am studying a utopia… I am writing one book, one large book. For thirty years I have been writing an encyclopaedia of the red utopia" (Alexievich, 2016aid, no page). Her "encyclopaedia" is a collective history of the USSR as told by its survivors.

Her lifelong journey is to understand the human soul and share this quest with the readers. "I am interested not only in the reality that surrounds us, but also our internal reality. I am

[70] Here, Alexievich refers to a tradition of story-telling by the elderly that exists in Russia. Older people share their lives with younger listeners. Such stories often are unprompted and rarely taken seriously but to those who are prepared to listen they could give numerous rich insights into life and society. This is a unique oral heritage.

not interested so much in the event as in the soul of the event." (Alexievich, 2020, p.16). Here, the boundary between those realities and truth is in the feelings of the "little" people. "I am interested in little people. The little, great people, is how I would put it, because suffering expands people. We are afraid of doing that, we're not up to coping with our past." (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p 6)

The depth of the human soul and the impossibility of accessing that intimate space open a wide range of interpretations with regards to the boundaries of her works. Rather than producing definitive answers, she explores a range of perspectives offered by many voices. "My books are like rays that scan everything and shine light on some things but it is impossible to cover everything, therefore not everything is in my books" (Alexievich, 2016aid, no page). More specifically, her books reflect her attempt to understand those people who survived the USSR. She writes about the "red person" (Alexievich, 2016aid, no page), "*homo sovieticus*" (Alexievich, 2016, p.7) whom she believes to be a special "breed" with distinctive features that are distinguishable from other species (ibid).

> Twenty years ago, we bid farewell to the 'Red Empire' of the Soviets with curses and tears. […]The "Red Empire" is gone, but the 'Red Man', 'homo sovieticus', remains. He endures.(Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.4).

In her quest to understand the everyday [ex]-Soviet person, she goes beyond his/her "social or ideological substance" (Gordon, 2016), exploring a human being through their fear and suffering. As she states, "I am also interested in the biological person." (Alexievich, 2020c, p.24). Notably, when deliveringher Nobel Prize Lecture, Alexievich took the audience back to her childhood, connecting her work with her roots. She credited the complexity of her formative years with shaping her professional path and her personality.

> The road to this podium has been long – almost forty years, going from person to person, from voice to voice. I can't say that I have always been up to following this path. Many times I have been shocked and frightened by human beings. I have experienced delight and revulsion. I have sometimes wanted to forget what I heard, to return to a time when I lived in ignorance. More than once, however, I have seen the sublime in people, and wanted to cry. (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.2)

She was born in 1948, three years after the end of the Second World War, known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War, which is still a major point of reference, political, ideological and highly emotional, across the former USSR. Her own account reflects how deeply felt that war was by everyday (ex-)Soviet people.

> My Ukrainian grandad, mother's father, was killed in battle and is buried somewhere in the Hungarian lands. My Belorussian grandmother, my father's mother, died from typhoid while she was a partisan. Two uncles served in the army and went missing during the first months of the war. Out of three sons of my Belorussian grandmother only one, my father, came back after the war. Eleven relatives were burnt alive by the Nazis. That makes me a typical representative of my epoch. It was like this in every family. We did not know the world without war. I still do not know another world and other people. (Alexievich, 2020c, p.8)

Alexievich grew up in a family of Soviet teachers, who had to convey the official ideology. "Teachers are always dependent on the state ideology", she explains in one of her interviews (Munipov, 2020, no page). Her father "believed in the idea of communism, he thought people spoiled the idea, but that the idea was beautiful" (Alexievich, 2017, no page). She attributes the complexity of her own mentality to her triple identity. Like many of her compatriots, she feels she belongs to more than one motherland. Her heart is divided between three places, whereby she is Ukrainian through her mother, Belarusian through her father and Russian by cultural heritage. She names Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as major influences on the way she sees the world (Alexievich, 2015b).

After graduating as a journalist, she was looking for words that would be able to "convey what I hear […] for a genre that would [co]respond to the way I see the world, to the way my eyes and ears work" (Alexievich, Official Website). One day she came across a book by Ales Adamovich and Yanka Bryl *I am from the Fiery Village*, which left a profound impression on her. "That kind of shock I felt only when reading Dostoevsky" (Alexievich, 2017, 14:57). The novel, which was compiled from the testimonies of the survivors from a village burned by Nazis, resonated with her artistic need. It was "gathered from voices of life itself, from what I had heard as a child and what I hear now on the streets, at home, in a café, in a trolleybus. […] I realized that I had found what I wanted. Adamovich became my teacher." (Alexievich, 2020c, p.9).

She became interested in the human voice. She wanted to become a human "ear", to listen and give voice to ordinary people talking their own views of the big events.

> Flaubert called himself a human pen; I would say that I am a human ear. When I walk down the street and catch words, phrases, and exclamations, I always think – how many novels disappear without a trace! Disappear into darkness. We haven't been able to capture the conversational side of human life for literature. We don't appreciate it, we aren't surprised or delighted by it. But it fascinates me, and has made me its captive. I love how humans talk … I love the lone human voice. It is my greatest love and passion. (Alexievich, 2015b, p.4)

She collected hundreds of individual voices that delivered their subjective emotional ontological narratives. She recorded testimonies, memories, stories of everyday life from those whom she considered to be first-hand witnesses of the Soviet era. She believed they represented fragments of history, each being the perspective of one specific individual. She strove to convey the multiplicity of those representations of life. As Helga Lenart-Cheng states, "[b]eing a good listener means having an ear for what others do not hear, cannot hear or do not want to hear" (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.84). In Alexievich's books, the reader is faced with a challenge to decode raw life stories. Interpretations of every narrative create their own polyphony, and, significantly, there is no help from Alexievich as a writer in decoding the meaning, there is no guidance. Readers are left with the material on their own, and it is up to them to make sense of the messy reality externalised by the voices within her books.

Her writing process follows a complex multi-stage pattern. When preparing for her next book, the first two years before taking to pen and paper Alexievich reads and thinks. Later she starts meeting people and recording their stories. She does not call such meetings interviews. Instead, she refers to them as "chats with a dictaphone". She believes that a dictaphone is the only way to ensure the stories genuinely belong to the people who shared them, whereas, using pen and paper subconsciously adapts the stories to the rhythm and melody of the listener (Gordon, 2016). She emphasizes the importance of detaching herself from the accounts of her interviewees.

> I try to forget everything I know and have read on the topic before I go to talk to people, I also have long conversations to make sure they speak in their own

> voice. Because to begin with, they quote what you see in the newspapers, the convention that exists in the society. To go beyond that convention it could take several hours or even days of chatting over a cup of tea. (Alexievich, 2016aid, no page)

She collects the everyday feelings, thoughts, and words and through that she tries to understand the human history of ordinary citizens of the USSR. “I collect the life of my time. I’m interested in the history of the soul. The everyday life of the soul, the things that the big picture of history usually omits, or disdains.” (Alexievich, tr Gambrell 2015b, p.5). She dismisses accusations about potential artistic editing and embellishing of the stories before publication, pointing out that with so much art in life the challenge is to catch it in the human speech and in the narrative of the event (Alexievich, 2019aib).

She affirms “[t]here is no room in my books for moral evaluation. I do not pass judgements. It is easy to judge out of time, out of context. We can all be nice and correct when we live in our comfort zone” (Munipov, 2020, no page). She maintains that the accounts of the witnesses as narrated to her should remain in the context to which they refer. Speaking about their honesty, she argues that “pain melts and destroys any falseness. The temperature is too high! […] I am taking my readers through the experience of the soul. The details that people share are impossible to invent. And the sincerity of suffering”. The material is heated to the boiling point. All the lies get burnt out. One cannot exaggerate horror…” (Alexievich, 2020c, p.11)

In her books, Alexievich steps back. She almost disappears in the polyphonic chorus “sung” by the voices. Her deliberate effort is to make the audience hear the diversity of the conflicting accounts, the contradictory emotions of life, the suffering and nostalgia. Her attempt is to remove a singular bias and replace one subjective narrative with the multitude of subjectivities in order to recreate a collective history of *homo sovieticus.* “People often say there is not much of me in my books. I always reply to this that next to this kind of material any text will lose. Whatever you do you cannot become equal to those voices. Only by juxtaposing those different truths alongside each other can we get a new text, which will never be possible to create as artwork. Only living life itself can produce such crossroads” (Alexievich, 2020c, p.1). By collecting feelings, dreams, desires and disappointments, she is preserving for the world a legacy of the soul and spirit of *homo*

sovieticus, the "breed" of humans which, to her, is unique and which is vanishing together with the last survivors of the land she classified as the red utopia.

It seems proper to finish this section with her words:

> I wanted to write about a Russian version of the Communist utopia. I felt like drawing a line under what had happened and how a little person survived that. As no one gave them a voice. But now, when they speak, one feels fear and pity… Nobody but Russians had that idea to create a paradise on Earth. And here we go, this paradise ended up in blood. It was important for me to show the stages of that journey
>
> [Я хотела написать про коммунистическую утопию в русском варианте. Мне хотелось подвести итог того, что произошло, как это пережил маленький человек. Им же слова не давали. Но теперь, когда они говорят, и страшно, и жалко… Ни у кого не возникла идея, кроме как у русских, сделать рай на земле. И вот рай кончился кровью. Мне было важно показать этапы этого пути.]
> (Gabrielian, 2016, p.5)[71]

[71] My translation

3.2. *Chernobyl prayer [Rus]:* comparative analysis of 1997 and 2013 ST editions

This analysis is based on two Russian editions of Alexievich's book *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* – the first edition of the work published in 1997 in Moscow by *Ostozh'e* , entitled *Чернобыльская молитва (хроника будущего) [Chernobyl prayer (chronicle of the future)],* the second (revised author) edition published in 2013 (and reprinted in 2016) in Moscow by *Vremia*, under the title *Чернобыльская молитва: Хроника будущего. [Chernobyl prayer: Chronicle of the future]*. Alexievich confesses

> [i]n 2012-13, I supplemented all of my books. I understood that I had left out something important, something that my internal censor had left out. For instance, the book *The Unwomanly Face Of War* was not published for two years, not till (Mikhail) Gorbachev came to power. I was tried *for The Zinky Boys. Chernobyl Prayer* has never been published in Belarus. It is no secret that there was censorship, some parts would be simply eliminated. I remember asking one of my heroines what she took with her to the front line. And she started laughing and said: "A suitcase full of toffees. I had received my last pay and bought a suitcase full of toffees." And the censors struck this out, telling me, "Do you understand that these women defended the motherland, and you go on about some toffees." (Kuruvilla, 2016, no page)

The major focus of this analysis is an attempt to understand what Alexievich values and wants to preserve for the reader in the individual voices by studying her own author alterations of the ST voices from one edition to another.[72] The outcome of this analysis feeds into the methodology regarding the scope of the dimensions and parameters of a voice for the purpose of the comparative analysis, showing which of the dimensions are deemed necessary to preserve in translation in what Alexievich considered important.

[72] According to the insert, 2013 (reprint 2016) is author's edition that benefits from inclusion of 30% of the new text and restoration of the fragments that were removed from the previous edition by censorship (Alexievich, 2016b, insert).

Alterations in the title

The first alteration appears with the title: *Чернобыльская молитва (хроника будущего) [Chernobyl prayer (chronicle of the future)]* (1997) compared with *Чернобыльская молитва: Хроника будущего. [Chernobyl prayer: Chronicle of the future]* (2013). The second part of the title "хроника будущего" ["chronicle of the future"] in the 1997 edition appears in brackets which disappear in the 2013 edition where instead, it is preceded by a colon. This change in punctuation, although small, is significant as it introduces a new meaning to the title and suggests a new angle of understanding for the ST reader. In Russian, brackets are auxiliary punctuation marks "brackets […] can be considered not main but auxiliary punctuation marks" ["скобки […] можно считать не основными знаками, а вспомогательными […]"] (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.19),[73] and one of their key functions is to clarify or explain the idea of the main sentence.

> In the contemporary Russian language brackets are used for inserted structures that add or explain the content of the main sentence or a single word within it; inserts that represent sideline comments of the author or carry connecting character…
> [В современном русском языке скобками выделяются вставные конструкции, которые дополняют или поясняют содержание основного предложения или его отдельного слова; вставки, представляющие собой попутные замечания автора или носящие присоединительный характер…]
>
> (Rozental, 2004, pp.219 – 221)

In the 1997 edition, the part of the title "chronicle of the future", enclosed within brackets provides additional information, it explains the idea of prophetic time travel into the gloomy future, but such an idea is suggested as a hint in a form of an additional, sideline comment. This nuance is Alexievich's subtle addition.

Conversely, the colon, which replaces the brackets in the later 2013 edition might evoke a different interpretation by the readers through semiotic and semantic aspect. Ekaterina

[73] Here and further in Section 3.2. all translations are mine unless stated otherwise. The Russian original for each quote is provided in the square brackets.

Ishchiuk divides Russian punctuation signs onto two categories: formal and semantic. The latter includes the colon which bears a designated syntactic and semantic role within a text (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.20). She argues that

> […] among the most expressive punctuation marks are the colon […] (which is applied to strengthen a semantic nuance or in a capacity of a purely "authorial" marker) […]
>
> […] среди наиболее выразительных знаков двоеточие […] (применяется авторами для усиления оттенка смысла или как чисто «авторский» знак) […]
>
> (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.36)

The subtitle "chronicle of the future" in the 2013 edition can no longer be seen merely as a sidelined comment or a nuance. Instead, it is foregrounded and directs the readers both semiotically and semantically. As "expressive punctuation mark" and "author's mark" (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.36) it is visual and compelling. Here it serves to emphasise Alexievich's prophetic warning. Sixteen years after publishing the first edition, she shouts that warning from the rooftops. The message is there to set the tone to way the voices come across within the book.

Supratextuality[74]

Indeed, supratextual elements in the text lead to ideological, expressive, semantic and semiotic alterations which in turn might affect viewpoints, emotional undertones and meaning and could be seen as part of "linguistic prescriptivism" (Veselica-Majhut, 2022, p.99). Alteration in the semiotics of the title in the later 2013 authorial edition can be seen as a supratextual element that provides an interpretative guidance through emphatic stress created by altering punctuation. This raises the question of whether the title might diminish or even erase the polyphonic diversity. The answer is "yes" and "no".

[74] In Translation Studies refers to "the degree of linguistic prescriptivism, the nature and expectations of potential readers, the nature and the aims of the initiators" (Veselica-Majhut, 2022, p.99)

The title is the voice of the writer. “Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]” as a title is highly evaluative of the book’s content. It evaluates what is inside the book and it guides the mind of the reader. Alexievich expresses her viewpoint and uses her authority as writer to make an emotional impact on the reader. Despite that, even if this striking start is likely to precondition the reader initially, it is unlikely to overrule the impression the reader will receive upon the direct encounter with the individual voices within the book. The power of the individual stories is likely to prompt re-evaluation of any preconditioning that might be there to begin with. While the two titles give different angles to the overall attitudes the book, none of them is more or less likely to interfere with the polyphonic fabric of the individual narratives than another. Such attempts to influence the reader can be considered as supratextual, scilicet they are there alongside the voices but they do not belong to any statement of the voices within the book. They may or may not set the tone, because each reader has the relative freedom and mind power to evaluate any additional information supplied within the book. The key point to consider here is that the narrative of each voices remains intact and is there to create a polyphony of stories. With this title, Alexievich invites the reader to adopt a viewpoint but she does not insist on it, as voices within the book might contradict the title and overpower this position.

Another example of supratextual alteration is the quote from Mamardashvili which serves as an epigraph, “Мы воздух, мы не земля...”[75] [We are air, we are not earth…]. In the 1997 edition it precedes the heading of the chapter entitled “Historical background” and appears on the same page, whereas in the 2013 edition the quotation has its own designated page. Such is another example of an emphatic, expressive alteration to draw attention to the quote and perhaps direct the minds of the ST readers before they read the actual voices. As this is the authorial edition, it is safe to assume that it is the writer who decided to give more emphasis to that quote in a later edition, and this affects the reader’s attitude and feeds into the overall polyphonic discourse.

[75] In the analysis I place the original quotes first followed up by my translation in square brackets.

On a separate page, it makes a convincing semiotic impact. The quote is allowed to breath, it is given more space, surrounded by blankness of the white page. Perhaps, it is there to evoke a pensive state of mind in the reader, to prepare for the book. Let the reader tune into it. There is a possibility that the reason behind this alteration is merely pragmatic, as the 1997 edition may have been printed as a pocket edition (the book is quite small), and the idea might have been to reduce the number of pages. In any case, such supratextual prompts appear in many parts in-between, before and after the voices. This is a prominent feature that is found in all Alexievich's books. This is her voice coming across alongside other voices that give the "real" power to her works. These prompts are thought-provoking but do not damage the polyphonic fabric of the text. Instead, they supplement it as extra voices. In this specific example. while the writer's voice and the voice of a Georgian philosopher might be perceived as more authoritative and given more semiotic prominence, the nature of the polyphonic discourse is that all voices are equal and there is no authority or hierarchy whereby one speaker could overrule any other voice within the polyphonic work.[76]

Expansions

The 2013 edition is considerably longer, which corresponds to the explanation provided in the insert to that edition, unsurprisingly as thirty percent of the original 1997 edition had been censored and was restored in the later 2013 edition. As the new edition represents an expanded and updated version, in addition to the new voices we could expect additional text within each voice. Alexievich recorded her interviews on tape, and only parts of many hours of recordings were included into her books, therefore there is always a possibility of expansion using the original authentic recordings of the voices.

Still and all, on analysing such expansions, many of the sentences can be seen as explaining the narrative or clarifying certain moments. Here, the first story of the book entitled by Alexievich as "Одинокий человеческий голос" ["A lone human voice"]

[76] This is in line with the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Four

belongs to Liudmila, a wife of a firefighter who was one of the first on-sight responders to Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station disaster. There are numerous expansions introduced to her story in the 2013 edition. For example, in the 1997 edition we have “Пирожные лежали на лотках...” [“The cream cakes were lying on the trays..."] (1997, p.9), as opposed to the 2013 edition expanded version “Пирожные лежали на лотках... Обычная жизнь. Только... Мыли улицы каким-то порошком…” [“The cream cakes were lying on the trays… Ordinary life. Only… They were washing the streets with some kind of powder…”] (2013, p.13). This addition emphasizes the contrast between the pseudo-normal life and the disaster. Perhaps, it is not part of the 1997 edition because of the censorship,[77] but it could also be Alexievich’s attempt to use these extra sentences to make more explicit the story of Liudmila. The recorded story, probably, would have been a lot longer and some parts did not fit into the 1997 edition but were added to the 2013 edition, following the success of the first edition. Another reason might be the time lapse, namely while in 1997, a reader might have a relatively vivid memory of the first-hand coverage of the disaster and might not need an additional explanation to see the grotesque element in the image of the cream cakes lying uncovered on the trays on the streets where radiation was running high; whereas, a reader in 2013 needs to be given that extra context. Some additions give add emotional touch, for instance by adding expressive utterances like “Миленькая моя” [“My Dear Darling”] (2013, p.14) into the speaker’s narrative.

Ellipses

Ellipses represent the major/key challenge in this comparative analysis. In the 2013 edition many ellipses are omitted, perhaps, to help the flow of the narrative(s). As a result, voices sound more polished and less abrupt. This alters the emotional impact on the reader in comparison to the 1997 edition. The effect of the ellipses are quite cogent. Whether these changes were introduced by the writer or the editor of the book, they affect (although not necessarily diminish) the polyphonic fabric of the work because ellipses help the reader to

[77] See insert to the 2013 (reprinted 2016) edition

decode the message semiotically and phonetically. By re-creating pauses in their minds, the readers access the meaning and connect with the voice emotionally and spiritually.

To explain the significance of the ellipsis as a punctuation mark within the Russian-language discourse, I refer to Ishchiuk's understanding of ellipses, whereby, "ellipsis is used in texts with a significant emotional intensity" ["многоточие употребляется в текстах с большим эмоциональным накалом"] (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.63). She explains that for many Russian authors ellipsis becomes a compositional device and is favoured as they intensify meaning in a highly effective manner (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.85). She also points out that ellipsis is a characteristic of expressing verbal discourse in writing and to mark spontaneous transition from one thought to another, as well as in-between-the-line-ness of the utterance (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.104). In this analysis, we have to trust the interpretation of the verbal discourse on the part of Svetlana Alexievich, who had access to the original audio recordings and expressed in writing the verbal markers in accordance with her understanding of the ST voices.

As noted by Ishchiuk, in the contemporary Russian language "ellipsis conveys an emotionally agitated speech" ["многоточие передаёт взволнованную речь"] (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.36), as well as "a pause, transition from one thought to another, interruption in the speech, and while imitating a conversation in writing"(Ishchiuk, 2015, p.41). It also indicates

> transition from externalising an internal state to external events […] Ellipsis as a sign of silence in depicting pensiveness, a hint, ellipsis as a sign of emotion, as a sign of symbolism, an allegory, a parable and a hyperbole
>
> [переход от показа внутреннего состояния к внешним событиям […] Многоточие как знак умолчания при изображении раздумья, намёка, многоточие как знак эмоции, знак символики, иносказания и гиперболы]. (Ishchiuk, 2015, p.42)

Ellipsis in the middle of a sentence could indicate a "nervous" rhythm of the text (Skoblikova, 1993, p.205 in Ishchiuk, 2015, p.46).

Ellipsis is a potent literary device, of which Alexievich, as a professional journalist, is very well-aware. For all that, her books are transcriptions of recorded conversations. The

ellipsis is likely to indicate her way of interpreting and re-interpreting the tone, the pauses and the emotional load of each speaker based on her different "selves" with sixteen year gap in-between. In sixteen years since the first edition, Alexievich would have re-evaluated her original interpretation of the recorded ST voices, presented in the 1997 edition, and produced what she would have seen as a "more accurate" interpretation of the *audio snapshots*. For example, in the sentence that describes how the firefighter dies, the 1997 edition contains an ellipsis (1997, p.20), which was replaced by a full stop in the 2013 edition (2013, p.23). The full stop here could be seen as drawing a line under his life.

In the ST analysis of voices conducted in Chapter Five ellipses serve as one of many textual markers to distinguish between the tone and the messages of multiple voices within Alexievich's polyphonic ST. The range of elliptic patterns should help establish the differences between the speakers at various levels of analysis. Whereas, in the subsequent comparative ST-TT analysis ellipses play a major part in evaluating what might be lost in translation. It is important to underscore that unlike Alexievich, translators do not have the benefit of access to the original recordings and have to trust the ST. For translators, ellipses could be of help in following Alexievich's interpretative transcription of the ST voices.

Embellishments (stylistic improvements)

In the 2013 edition we can find certain stylistic embellishment. As it is Alexievich's direct interference in the fabric of the narrative of the individual voices, it is important to study it and understand the possible reasons for such invasive alterations. For instance, 1997: "его любимые работы" ["his favourite works"] (1997, p.8) becomes "он это любит" ["he likes it"] (2013, p.12). Here, the plural form of "работа" ["work"], which could come across as colloquial, was edited out in favour of more commonly used in the written form "он это любит" ["he likes it"].

Another example of such embellishment can be found on the same pages of the respective editions, id est "машины зашкаливают, не приближайтесь." ["the machinery is going through the roof, do not approach."] (1997, p.8), here the voice comes across as rough and colloquial, uneducated or emotionally agitated, the sentence is incomplete and abrupt. Conversely, in the 2013 edition we find "к машинам не приближайтесь, счетчики

зашкаливают!" ["do not approach the machinery, the meter is going through the roof"] (2013, p.12). The clarity is improved, the command sounds "more coherent" and orderly, moreover, we see an added exclamation mark. This sentence might make more sense to the reader but loses that element of spontaneity and roughness.

Further on, "у многих страшные заболевания, инвалидности, но станцию не бросают" (1997 p.24) versus "У всех тяжелые заболевания, инвалидности, но работу свою не бросают, боятся даже подумать об этом" (2013, pp.28-29). In 2013, "everyone" has disabilities rather than "many" (1997), also "scary/horrible" is replaced with "heavy/serious" (2013), which is less colloquial and factual rather than emotional, "station" is replaced with an abstract noun "work", which is clearer for the reader.

Belarusian Dialect of Russian

Russian language is rich in regional, ethnic and national dialects. It could vary significantly in lexis and syntactic structures from one region to another within the Russian Federation and indeed across the countries of the former USSR. Removing words in the Belarusian dialect of Russian from the 2013 edition represent another form of embellishment which deserves a separate mention. Some of the regionalisms in the later edition are replaced with the standard Russian equivalents. For example, "сню" [I dream (during sleep)] (1997, pp.10, 23 etc) is a Belarusian word inserted into the regional Russian language spoken in Belarus (Snit', 2008). In standard Russian, the word exists only in the reflexive passive form "снится". Due to the similarity between Slavonic languages, Russian and Ukrainian speakers are likely to be able to deduce the meaning from the context, as the stem of both forms remains the same. Yet, the form would appear foreign and incorrect. The 2013 edition contains the standard version of the verb "снится" (2013, p.14, p.27). Similarly, another Belarusian word "крадком" ["sneakily"] (1997, p.21) is removed from the later

2013 edition. [78]These alterations are significant as they change the perceived sound of the written form of the voices. The dialectical/regional influences form part of the audio recording and shape overall audio-portrait of the voice. The readers are deprived of this experience. To them all voices speak in the standard form of Russian.

In summary

Many such alterations make voices "sound" less colloquial, which might mean that for Alexievich voices are not categorized in accordance with the social strata of their respective speakers. This is her endeavour to understand the soul of *homo sovieticus* (Alexievich, 2013, p.23), to be specific to comprehend what a Soviet person is within and after the collapse of the Red Empire and how this transpires through his/her voice, but in this she seeks to find and reach the human soul, which is of universal value.

> People speak from their own time, of course, they can't speak out of a void. But it is difficult to reach the human soul, the path is littered with television and newspapers, and the superstitions of the century, its biases, its deceptions. (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.8)

As she follows her quest, this is reflected in how she edits her drafts for publication. The 1997 narrative is more matter-of-fact, more raw and slightly more colloquial, disjointed. Many emotions transpire through silences and cut-off sentences. The explicitness of the 2013 edition might come across a little more melodramatic, more like added artistic effects with explanations and emotional additions, which are not present in the original edition.

Even seemingly unimportant details in 1997 could be seen as added emotionally "ставила градусник и вынимала" ["put the thermometer in and took it out"] (1997, p.14) whereas

[78] Крадком: воровски — (украдкой), крадучись — нареч. крадучыся, крадком украдкой — нареч. крадком) (Skanik, [no date])

in the 2013 edition it is reduced to “ставила градусник” [“put the thermometer in”] (2013, p.19). While it is obvious that once you put the thermometer in you will take it out, this almost mechanical description creates a compelling emotional impact. The speaker is so absorbed by the emotions that words become of secondary importance. She describes the actions as she remembers them without analysing and filtering excessive details. In the 2013 edition the narrative is more coherent and details are more logical, less repetitive.

The analysis of two ST editions reveals the presence of Alexievich as an ideologist throughout both texts, however, this does not remove the polyphonic diversity, and voices are still identifiable as unique and different from each other. Her interaction with the text places emphasis in various places to draw attention of the source-text reader. Such emphasis is more evident in the 2013 edition, which comes across as more coherent, well-“explained” and exhibits clarifications and her authorial polish, compared to the edition of 1997. The new 2013 edition is considerably longer, contains numerous additions, explanations, and fewer of the abrupt incomplete sentences, nonetheless, there is frequent removal of ellipses which are present in the earlier 1997 edition. Importantly, the 2013 edition no longer contains dialectic lexis and local words that although they do not exist in standard Russian, are in wide use regionally. To conclude, the editions present two distinct narratives. Twenty years changed the voice of Alexievich. She looks at the events differently and wants to reflect it in the new edition. The original ST voices from 1997 remained unaltered within the criteria inadvertently judged by Alexievich as significant.[79] Conversely, the criteria of a voice altered by her from one edition to another will be disregarded in the analysis, with the exception of ellipses which are taken from Alexievich’s interpretation on trust, as she was privileged to have a unique access to the original audio recordings of the ST voices.

[79] These form part of the methodology (Section 4.3) and the analysis presented in Chapter Five of this thesis.

3.3. The specifics of polyphony and the polyphonic voice in Alexievich's works

Alexievich's explicitly expressed endeavour to find truth is at the heart of her polyphonic genre:[80]

> I spent a long time searching for my genre – in order to write the way my ear hears. […] I have always been tortured {by the thought} that truth does not fit within one heart, one mind. That it is somehow shattered, there is a lot of it and it is scuttered around the world. How to gather it together?[81]
>
> [Я долго искала свой жанр – чтобы писать так, как слышит мое ухо. […] Меня всегда мучило, что правда не умещается в одно сердце, в один ум. Что она какая-то раздробленная, ее много и она рассыпана в мире. Как это собрать?]
>
> (Aleksievich, 2016a, p.500)

The polyphony in her writing, therefore, reflects her vision of truth as shattered, segmented and scattered around the world. I argue that her vision of truth is polyphonic and voices represent the pieces that she is trying to put together like jigsaw puzzle and bring to the judgement of her readers. To her, polyphony is a way of accessing truth.

This opinion is disputed by Magdalena Horodecka who believes that the polyphonic style in Alexievich's writing is a journalist technique to create an impression of spontaneity and transparency:

> A collection of about forty monologues provides us with the impression of plurality of experiencing Chernobyl, a diversity of styles, and expressions of

[80] Her genre is a subject of a scholarly debate, and this section takes a holistic approach to discussing the nature and characteristics of her writing, and sees it as belonging to more than one genre whereby the boundaries are fuzzy and fluid. Following on from Derrida's affirmation that "genres are not to be mixed" (Derrida, 1980,p.55), the aim in this thesis is to shape to a certain degree an understanding of the polyphonic voice in the context of Alexievich's writing for the methodology in Chapter Four rather than categorising her writing.

[81] In this section, translations are mine, unless stated otherwise. The STs in Russian follow in the square brackets.

> the horrifying phenomenon. It also creates an illusion of narrative transparency, understood here as the mimetic objective of the reporter who attempts to render the witnesses' spontaneous flow of speech in her narration (Horodecka, 2018, p.55)

She underscores the power of polyphonic diversity in Alexievich's writing in creating an emotional impact and an illusion of narrative transparency. The word illusion assumes that transparency is not real, that it is there to veil something. She claims that Alexievich "seems to disappear and concentrates on quoting different sources" (Horodecka, 2018, p.56) but while delivering emotional accounts she adds "facts, numbers, and statistics" that reveal "the writer's attitude, as she wants to create a rational context" (ibid). This attitude towards Alexievich as a writer who disappears behind the voices of others in her books, shifts her to the role of a journalist using the polyphonic voices to support her narrative. When talking about the impression of plurality an illusion of transparency, it appears that Horodecka does not believe in Alexievich's quest to find truth, she believes that Alexievich constructs her own truth using polyphony as a convincing tool to draw her reader to her side of the argument.

This thesis disagrees with Horodecka and chooses to believe Alexievich She is the key factor of extratextual analysis and her endeavour to find the truth by listening and recording multivocality of the Soviet people feeds into the skopos of the translation process.[82] Alexievich is the writer who provides the source material for translators of the books and herer name remains on the cover in translation. For these reasons her perspective on her own works is at the core of the understanding the source text and is the subject of the analysis in Chapter Five. From the point of view of translation process, polyphony in her books is comprised of a collection of ST narratives the diversity and uniqueness of which forms subject matter of this research.

[82] Author, author's intention as part of pre-translation analysis and integral part of skopos is discussed by Christiana Nord (2005, chapter II)

Horodecka points out "[q]uite often, Alexievich is a chronicler of repetition rather than a chronicler of discovery. Irony in the titles and subtitles is virtually the only tool used by the author to distance herself from testimonies" (Horodecka, 2018, p.63). In other words, the scholar admits that there appears to be very little involvement of her as a writer except for titles, subtitles and occasional monologues. The books serve as a platform for a multitude of speakers who share their stories of domestic everyday life. It could be assumed that the polyphony of ST voices in Alexievich's writing reflects a range of emotions and viewpoints, which goes beyond the focus on courage and suffering and reveal a multitude of nuances in human emotions and complexity of standpoints, as delivered by each speaker.

Volha Isakava believes that such personal stories carry "the documentary quality of the witnesses' accounts" (Isakava, 2017, p.360), their power and the value to the reader is in their multivocality.

> Although the documentary quality of the witnesses' accounts constitutes the single most important formal component of her books, these accounts also provide a larger look at Soviet and post-Soviet history and the experiment labelled "homo sovieticus". (Isakava, 2017, p.360)

Such a polyphonically presented history of the former USSR and of its collapse represent a cogent tool to counteract pre-conceived public, state and official narratives, as they do not fit into any pre-existing stereotype of any culture or society. The multitude of polyphonic voices and their messy subjective "truths" make Alexievich an uncomfortable figure for those who place value on the homogeneity of the collective, public or state narrative within the SL culture and society.

The polyphony of these narratives allows Alexievich to put under the microscope a multitude of singular human souls in which she brings forward "living tears and living feelings" ["живые слёзы, живые чувства"] (Alexievich, 2020, p.164). History of emotions is at the heart of her polyphony. Igor' Sukhikh calls these voices "collective testimonies" (Marchesini, 2017, p.313), whereas Alexievich talks of the "genre of actual human voices and confessions, witness evidences and documents" (ibid). Juxtaposing her concept of the "little big person" with the notion of a "little person" (Marullo, 1977,

p.483) from Russian classical literature, she emphasises the significance of the stories of ordinary people about their everyday lives, enduring and surviving the traumatic events imposed on them by the regime. Alexievich believes in the grandeur of the "little person" and asserts that her way of working on the "crossroads of many voices" as well as "the fever of pain burns any possible falsehood. False things are simply impossible at that temperature, they simply clean each other out" (Svetova, 2019, no page). The sincerity of those polyphonic emotions is open to the ST reader, the question remains how much of it survives the challenges of translation.

According to the *Cornell Chronicle*, Alexievich "created her own literary genre" (2016, p.1). Her writing is unique and at present there is no academic consensus on the question of her genre. Orlando Figes explores the notion of her new genre considering it to be a "new kind of history" (2016, p.1). In this context, the oral history in Alexievich's books is interwoven with emotions.

> […] I don't just record a dry history of events and facts, I'm writing a history of human feelings. What people thought, understood and remembered during the event. What they believed in or mistrusted, what illusions, hopes and fears they experienced. (Alexievich, 2021e, no page).

Her polyphony is a *history of emotions*, it places a person at the heart of history. The importance of this connection of personal and general, of subjective and objective is underscored by Hayden White who affirms "[w]hen you want to ask the question… 'what is man [sic] [human]?' all you've got is history!" (White, 1973, 2014, p.ix), and Paul Ricoeur states that "the critical status of history as inquiry is that whatever the limits of historical objectivity may be, there is a problem of objectivity in history" (Ricoeur, 1990, p.176). This brings to the foreground the importance of the individual and the subjective within a historical narrative. A subjective voice of an individual is the centrepiece of Alexievich's polyphonic style. She says "I do not stand alone at this podium… There are voices around me, hundreds of voices" (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.1).

In addition to her quest for truth, these voices represent her endeavour to find "how much of the biological man is in him, how much of the man of his time, how much man of the man" (Alexievich, 2021e, no page). Through their emotions she explores the inner worlds

of each participant through their intimate ontological narratives, whereby emotions are an externalized voice of the soul and self-identifies with this species. Thus, she becomes part of her own polyphonic quest. As she positions herself alongside the others in her polyphonic books, this makes her the subject-matter of her own research. Although her books do not fall under the category of autobiography, they can be seen as her way to understand her own complex Soviet-Ukrainian-Belarusian identity through the reflections in/of other voices.

Alexievich is actively aware of the complexity of her own identity: "my Ukrainian mother taught German in post-war Belarus, […] my Belarusian father was a teacher of history and 'a faithful communist'" (Alexievich, 2015a, p.5). She grew up reading the Russian literary classics and listening to the voices on the streets (ibid) in her effort "to catch a moment of life" ["словить момент жизни"] (Alexievich, 2016aid). Through this lifelong polyphonic journey, she endeavours to understand herself as one of those who carries the legacy of the USSR within the understanding of her own self, and in doing so to re-construct the multitude of identities of *homo sovieticus* through the polyphonic representation by voices within her books. She might be looking at her speakers for a mirror image of her own experience, in attempt to understand and evaluate history and herself.

The question here is how her own identity is manifested through the multiple narratives, without intruding upon the existing polyphonic aspect, and whether it impacts on the collective of the narratives, and on the identities of the individual voices within those narrative. In identifying herself with her vision of *homo sovieticus* (Alexievich, 2016c, p.23), she might be trying to construct, comprehend or express her own narrative identity through the multitude of voices that serve as inadvertent witnesses and living evidence of her own understanding of the identity of this "new 'breed' of humans", whom she believes to be the product of the "Marxist-Leninist laboratory" (Alexievich, 2016c, p.23).

In this context, her writing can be perceived as life-writing, because by recording the stories of other people, she records *snapshots* of their lives, and she also records a collage of *snapshots* of her own Soviet past, as reflected in the voices of the speakers. The *Oxford Centre for Life-Writing* identifies the concept as follows:

> Life-writing […] encompasses everything from the complete life to the day-in-the-life, from the fictional to the factional. […] Life-writing includes biography, autobiography, memoirs, […] oral testimony, eye-witness accounts, […] It is not only a literary or historical specialism […]. But life-writing […] can be about love and loss; it can be about family, friendship, marriage, children; it can show how history might be captured in an individual life, or how an individual life is representative of its times. Life-writing has to do with the emotions, it has to do with memory, and it has to do with a sense of identity. (Oxford Centre for Life-Writing, 2011, no page)

This definition encompasses many aspects of Alexievich's writing. First of all, speakers record their own day-to-day experiences, secondly, it is an oral testimony as well as eye-witness accounts, it is also about loss and family, about love and memory. It is a history told through personal lives, it is a search for identity by the speaker. In Alexievich's case we have snapshots of various moments in lives of the speakers. Through those snapshots of speakers/voices, it can be argued, look for their own identities, alongside Alexievich whose endeavour to find her own identity as *homo sovieticus* alongisde the others.

Jeremy D. Popkin comments on the distinction between autobiography and life-writing as "parallels and the differences between autobiographical writing and history" and draws attention "to a distinction between the modes of life narrative and history writing in terms of temporality", whereby, '[l]ife writing […] 'privilege[s] a temporal framework based on the individual author's lifespan, whereas historical narrative takes place in collective time'" (Smith, Watson, 2010, p.13). In addition, James Phelan asserts "[t]he narrative identity thesis simply doesn't correspond to my experience of my self and the plausible stories I can tell about that self " (2005, p.209, in Holler, 2013, p.12). Voices can only be analysed and interpreted through their externalised thoughts, emotions and views. Any self-evaluation, unless put into words and presented to the listener/reader, would remain invisible/inaudible and impossible to decode/understand. Alexievich is writing collective and personal narratives simultaneously, using polyphony to create a portrait of the reality she perceives. She does this in the same way as "through their self-presentation acts the young women activists […] represent a collective of endangered others, […] their identity is made up of […] two strands—individual and collective […]" (García, 2019, p.8). Through self-presentation of voices as they appear in her books, Alexievich represents the multitude of identities of the citizens of the former USSR, to put it another way the polyphonic *homo sovieticus* and within this her own individual identity, which is based on

a highly complex personal heritage. Collectively, voices in Alexievich's books can be seen as a collage of ontological narratives where every polyphonic voice evaluates history by placing under the microscope their personal space, part of their own narrative identities, of which Alexievich's is one. According to Natalie-Anne Hall, Andrew Chadwick and Cristian Vaccari, "ontological narratives play a key role in the formation of identity as people mobilize accounts of personal attributes and past experiences to make sense of public events" (Hall, Chadwick, Vaccari, 2024, p.573).

By asserting that "[e]verything that I considered important is in the book" ["Всё что я считала важным в книгу вошло"] (Alexievich, 2017aib, no page), [83] Alexievich inadvertently acknowledges that she is present in the books at the very least through her active role in selecting the stories and deciding what to include. That she, in apparent sincerity, states "I am not a judge. I am collecting time." [Я не судья, я собираю время."] (ibid), inevitably links her own understanding of life in the USSR and post-Soviet period to that of the voices she selected. In her interview with Jose Vergara, she confesses

> I often hear from journalists that I just showed up and recorded what I heard. That's it. The book is ready. That's nonsense, of course. To create these books, I have to weave together the world from a multitude of details. You have to seize the life of nature; you have to capture people in moments of upheaval. (Vergara, 2022, p.3)

While she does not change the words of the speakers, she condenses their stories by taking out what she sees as banalities. She wants to capture that natural and genuine which opens to her. In filtering information out of her books, she claims she is

> peeling off this veil of banality, because we exist in a world of banalities: newspapers, most books are like that. This banality must be peeled off a person to reach their own text, so that they say those things that other people have not said, others have not known. When they're able to see it, I have to be prepared to grow antennas to see to hear it, because to hear something new, you have to ask something in a new way. (Vergara, 2022, p.4)

[83] Here and further, own translations unless stated otherwise.

Such alterations she does not consider to be invasive, probably, because she identifies herself with her speakers not only as a listener but as a participant from the same period. While there is no unity in polyphony, there is a shared element through tonality, harmony or dissonance. She filters the voices for the tonality of sincerity and inner truth, as she feels it through her own self.

Discussing Alexievich's endeavour to establish and understand her own identity, it could be useful to draw a comparison with the same in Jackie Kay's writing. Here, it is interesting to consider Susheila Nasta's approach to life-writing as a "'hybrid vehicle' that 'can stretch and reshape the often unstable boundaries between genres, interrogate questions of subjectivity and open up the symbolic borders of new or previously contested national histories'." (Novak, Boldrini, 2017, p.106). Kay's life-writing is a wealth of stylistic diversity that encompasses a myriad of complex messages referring to the attempts of the author to find her own place at the crossroads of many cultures that shape her as a "self". Not only her works, as Palazzolo argues, "are informed by her sense of a multi-layered identity as the adopted mixed race daughter of white parents, growing up in the hostile environment of 1960–1970s Britain" (Novak, Boldrini, 2017, p.105), but they also can be viewed as polyphonic. Kaye's white parents were active members of the communist party and came from a working class background, which added extra layers of complexity to her identity. Alexievich's books in Russian demonstrate stylistic diversity but as a journalist she uses the voices of others to understand herself. She attempts to understand her own journey through serving as an ear (or a mirror) to the hundreds of the polyphonic speakers.

The multitude of identities in Kay's novels and poetry gives exactly that impression, of the presence of the multiple "self" in place of one writer. Those philosophical statements are her attempt to grapple with the complexity of her own identity and her internal "voices" are not always in harmony. In the case of Kay's writing, the polyphony is created by one person, whereas Alexievich's polyphony comes directly from the world that surrounds her. Alexievich claims that she uses the raw material of life to compile her books: "[t]he raw material of speaking, every day has an abundance of it"(Alexievich, 2020c, p.16). Howbeit, her presence within her books might be not so dissimilar to that of Kay. Voices in Alexievich's books can be seen as a reflection of her own complex identity. Although

her writing is different in that behind the voices in her books are real people with real-life identities, it could still be argued that Alexievich uses the polyphonic aspect as a vessel to express the complexity of her own identity, as part of the narrative identity of *homo sovieticus* as she sees it. independence in the ideological stance of each voice can be considered significant as evidence to support her claim of what is/ who is *homo sovieticus*. While Palazzolo claims that "[m]ost of [Kay's] works grapple with and redefine the concept and representation of home…" (Novak, Boldrini, 2017, p.105), it could be argued that Alexievich's writing grapples with the concept and representation of her home, the USSR; and is as much her "experimentation with auto/biography" (ibid., p.106) as in Kay's instance.

Alexievich's writing can be considered life-writing because she writes about herself as part of the "community" of *homo sovieticus*, using the polyphony of voices to re-construct the multitude of identities that are part of her own complex self-identification. This thesis accepts the distinction that Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson draw between life-writing and biography, in that being the modes of narrating a life where subjects write about their own lives even if they write about themselves indirectly (Watson, Smith, 2010). Watson and Smith suggest a series of concepts to aid understanding "the sources and dynamic processes of autobiographical subjectivity" (Smith, Watson, 2010, p.21). Broadly, these include memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment and agency.

With reference to *Agency*, Smith and Watson affirm "people tell stories of their lives through the cultural scripts available to them, and they are governed by cultural strictures about self-presentation in public" (Smith, Watson, 2010, p.235). In the first part of *Second-Hand Time* (in Russian) pages 7-16 include a range of twenty-two extracts that represent snapshots of Alexievich's voice at different times. Collectively, these utterances reflect the complexity of Alexievich's self-identification as a "detached" author who wishes to remain impartial, and as *homo sovieticus* who is part of the narrative and one of the speakers. The rest of the book contains voices of other people participants of the era of the USSR. Every voice, including the snapshots of Alexievich, speak to different imaginary or real audiences. The multiplicity of voices here not only implies a range of speakers but also a range of listeners, that is multiple agencies on both sides.

The voices of other people in her books are used to re-enforce authority and authenticity, i.e. as pointed out by Smith and Watson "[w]e expect particular kinds of stories to be told by those who have a direct and personal knowledge of that experience." (Smith, Watson, 2010, p.236) She provides a range of first-hand witnesses of the events and it is assumed that those people will have personal experience and authority to share their personal accounts. In this context it is worth noting that as a narrator herself, she might be "conscious about reproducing or interrupting cultural scripts" (Smith, Watson, 2010, p.236).

There are certain difficulties with answering Smith's and Watson's question "How may you distinguish among the historical, narrating, narrated, and ideological "I"s of the text?" (Smith, Watson, 2010, p.238) The clarity between voices, including Alexievich's personal contributions, is visible in the text and is audible on recreating "the sound" of the voice, in that the boundaries of her utterances and the content clearly indicate her as the author. Having said that, there is a grey area of how much she self-identifies with other "I"s in her books, as she selected the voices and yet claims impartiality, her collective "I" of *homo sovieticus* remains unaccounted and unidentified. It merges with the overall chorus of multiple voices, identities and philosophical statements.

While Alexievich distances herself from other voices and steps back in order to hear herself through others, she seeks to understand own identity through the reflections of other voices along with the complex heritage and upbringing within the former USSR. Alexievich's polyphonic writing could be her attempt to understand her own identity through the multitude of identities of *homo sovieticus*. If this is accepted as part of the argument, the sincerity of her endeavour does not raise doubts. She does not construct truth, she seeks it. In her attempt to understand a "'breed' of humans" she seeks to understand herself as a specimen of this "breed". She does not does not create her own narrative neither she expresses her own ideology using voices of others as evidence. Instead, she compiles a collective history by bringing together voices from the USSR and by telling the story of *homo sovieticus* she is sharing the story of her own life. Through subjective inner truth of the others she wants to find the inner truth of the self. This brings us to the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony.

4. Theoretical approaches to polyphony and voice in relation to Alexievich's writing and methodology for the analysis

4.1. Bakhtinian approach to polyphony as a way to interpret Alexievich's writing

Bakhtin brought the term "polyphony" from the domain of music into linguistics as a "new type of artistic thinking" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.3) in his analysis of Dostoevsky's novels, which he classed as polyphonic. He emphasizes that polyphony is a "plurality" of "independent voices and consciousnesses" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.6) and sees voices in polyphony as *externalized consciousnesses* that produce a "number of philosophical statements by several authors-thinkers" in contrast to a statement by a "single author-artist" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.5). In polyphony, instead of one author, specifically the writer, within a text there are many authors, such as heroes/characters, and each is awarded the power of producing a statement of philosophical value. This concept of consciousness is important in Alexievich's polyphonic works "in my book[s],[84] I studied how consciousness, not having any scientific foundations, was mastering a new reality.[85]" ["сво[их] книг[ах] я изучала, как сознание, не имея научных основ, осваивало новую реальность."] (Alexievich, 2019b, p.5). She contextualises consciousness within the Soviet and post-Soviet reality as part of her endeavour to understand a person within a person.[86]

There is no evidence that Alexievich prioritises one voice over another, she seems to treat her speakers as equals regardless of their views and manner of expression. Similarly, Bakhtin affirms that every voice in a polyphonic text has "equal rights and [exists] within its own world, combined but not merged" (Bakhtin 2011, p.6). Both polyphonies have

[84] Alexievich often refers to her works as one continuous book, as discussed and referenced in Section 3.1.

[85] Here and further in this chapter, translations are mine in all cases when the original follows the quote in square brackets.

[86] Discussed earlier.

more than one voice, voices are equal and each is perceived as a product of an independent mind awarded with a philosophical value. As discussed earlier, while the genre of Alexievich's works is still debated and not clearly defined, she often refers to her books as novels of voices.[87] Her books are a platform that gives voice to a number of people, and each person becomes an author of his/her personal statement which reflect her/his everyday philosophy. Every voice in her works bears equal weight and they do not necessarily express views which would be agreeable to her. She might disagree with some or many of the speakers in her books. Her works are polyphonic according to Bakhtin's definition.[88]

Bakhtin positions polyphony in terms of characters in Dostoevsky's novels, whereas Alexievich's characters come from the everyday world of reality. Yet, in both cases they become author-thinkers through the philosophical load and value of their statements. Each speaker in Alexievich's books brings a personal evaluation of the past by sharing the world of his/her memories. In doing so they open parts of their inner world to the interlocutor in the dialogue and ultimately to the reader. The factual representation of reality becomes irrelevant as their interlocutors, more specifically the readers, access their statements through their philosophical evaluation of the world. In that manner, as underscored by Iser, "[t]he readers of the novel are then forced to take an active part in the composition of the novel's meaning, which revolves around a basic divergence from the familiar" and Iser believes this active participation to be fundamental in the process (Iser, 1974, p.xii).

This shifts understanding of the content of their messages into the domain of interpretation of their consciousnesses and accessing the reality through the subjectivity of the ways they present it. As voices are independent and diverse in what they say, they give the reader a

[87] The concept of novel in the Russian context, in the Bakhtinian context and Alexievich's context is discussed earlier in various sections of this thesis and briefly in the introduction.

[88] The analysis in Chapter Five will determine whether they come across as polyphonic to the readers.

wide palette of philosophical evaluations of reality, each evaluation goes through consciousness and becomes personal. These evaluations might come across as confused and messy.

As Dostoevsky becomes a unifying factor for Bakhtin and Alexievich, he provides a common ground for exploring the human in the polyphonic context. Dostoevsky is fundamental to Alexievich's endeavour to find the truth.

> It always troubled me that the truth doesn't fit into one heart, into one mind, that truth is somehow splintered. There's a lot of it, it is varied, and it is strewn about the world. Dostoevsky thought that humanity knows much, much more about itself than it has recorded in literature. So what is it that I do? I collect the everyday life of feelings, thoughts, and words. I collect the life of my time. I'm interested in the history of the soul. (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.7).

She collects a polyphony of truths from the everyday life because, like Dostoevsky, she believes that the knowledge of humanity about itself stretches beyond any existing literature and "voices on the street" [«голоса на улице»] (Alexievich, 2013, p.5) and can offer more knowledge about the world and about a person than a carefully put together narrative by a professional writer. Through the voices of ordinary people apart from their thoughts and points of view she collects their emotions. Similarly, when quoting Dostoevsky, she admits that one voice cannot be a vessel for the truth, rather that truth comes in many shapes and forms and is certainly varied, and that is why it is polyphonic.

In Dostoevsky's novels characters are not necessarily on the same plane with the writer's philosophical statement. They might disagree or even argue with him. While they only exist on the pages of his books, they are real insofar as imagination allows them to be. In Alexievich's case, voices in her books are living beings and their independence is enshrined in reality. They exercise their right to freedom of expression and the right to disagree with her. In this, their power exceeds that of Dostoevsky's characters. They continue to exist beyond the pages of her works and have the potential to disagree with her and disagree with her account of their stories, as discussed in the previous chapter. For all that, for the reader they are confined to the pages of the books and this makes them similar to Dostoevsky's characters. Her books are a polyphony of exposed human souls that make "the history of the soul" (Alexievich, tr. Gambrell, 2015b, p.7). She seeks a multitude of

subjective and personal truths through feelings and thoughts of voices in her books. History and story in Russian are expressed through the same word "история", which implies duality of the meaning within the concept. In this context, she refers to history of her era that she studies through the intimate stories of the speakers. The polyphonic nature of Alexievich's writing and her exploration of human soul resonates with the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony.

In the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony, the notion of the self and the other exists alongside dialogism, whereby a person (the self) is only complete through reflection in the consciousnesses of the others, which in Alexievich's context means that her speakers need to see their reflection in the listener in order to fully comprehend their inner self. This leads to the audibility of an *identity* of each voice, which is linked to consciousness in the Bakhtinian understanding of the concept. Bakhtin believes that understanding of the self or consciousness necessitates a dialogue:

> [t]he non-self-sufficiency, impossibility for a singular consciousness to exist. I comprehend myself and become myself only through opening up myself for the other, through the other and with the help of the other. The most important acts that construct self-consciousness, are determined by a relation to another consciousness (to "you"),[89]
>
> [н]есамодостаточность, невозможность существования одного сознания. Я осознаю себя и становлюсь самим собою, только раскрывая себя для другого, через другого и с помощью другого. Важнейшие акты, конституирующие самосознание, определяются отношением к другому сознанию (к ты).]
>
> (Bakhtin, 1979, p.311)

Here, every voice is the externalizing inner self, and the self of a speaker is reflected in the listener, or rather in the other by means of dialogic interaction. Through the pursuit of a speaker's inner truths his/her consciousnesses moves to the domain of spiritual and philosophical interpretations that is made accessible in the form of reflections. Voices

[89] My translation

reflect in each other, and through such reflections they strive to understand themselves. This understanding is of a spiritual and philosophical nature. It is connected to the world of emotions and beliefs rather than to that of facts. It is subjective and its value is in its subjectivity.

One way to perceive this subjectivity in the Bakhtinian sense is by imagining that by externalizing the inner self a voice is building a self-portrait rather than telling a story (Bakhtin, 1979). In his approach "[t]he position from which a story is told, a portrayal built, or information provided must be oriented to […] a world of autonomous subjects, not objects" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.7). In other words, in the polyphonic discourse the externalized consciousness reflects in another consciousness, that of a reader or a listener, and this reflection produces a self-portrait that is created by the voice but audible/visible only by presence of another world of an autonomous subject. This is necessary for the voices to perceive themselves, and for us to understand the voice as the subject that is affixed to a statement produced in a moment of time.

Voices are independent and self-contained but they reflect in each other by means of dialogic interaction. According to Bakhtin, this creates mirror reflections of voices. In Alexievich's context, they are reflected in the reader and in her as primary listener. These mirror reflections are related to his concept of the self. Discussing the Bakhtinian concept of "the self" Elizabeth Kinsella argues that

> the individual is answerable to another, meaning is creatively reconstituted and shifted through dialogue, yet the individual maintains a sense of agency. The self in this conception is not reduced to a pawn constructed solely by external forces, yet neither is the individual a solitary, self-contained being. Thus, Bakhtin's views depict an evolution from the ''unitary'' self and the ''fragmented'' self to support a conception of a narrative and dialogic self. (Kinsella, 2005, p.69)

This link between the self, the dialogue and the self-contained being gives a possibility to explore the concept of voice as an externalised inner self of the speaker and the transformation that the self-contained "unitary" being undergoes through the dialogue. In the context of Alexievich's writing dialogue and any dialogical relations are presumed but imaginary. That is because even though Alexievich served as a primary listener when she

recorded the original utterances, the reader as the secondary but the most significant audience is assumed by the speakers, merely because at the point of the initial conversation with Alexievich each person was pre-informed on the prospective audience. Subsequently, while the reader is not present at the point of interview, he/she acts as an imaginary ear for each voice. This is important for the understanding of the nature of dialogue in Alexievich's polyphonic writing. The fragmented self of the speakers in Alexievich's books is partially revealed by means of this dialogue and made available for the reader. These fragments are mirror reflections that create self-portraits of each voice for themselves and for the listener.[90]

Emerson points out that in Bakhtinian polyphony

> once a dialogue of ideas […] becomes the common denominator between hero author, hero, and reader, more space opens up for the reader. Readers can participate actively […], on an equal plane – in the narrative (Emerson, 1997, p.128).

The reader becomes the key participant in the polyphonic exchange. In sum, signs are a key to deconstructing (and reconstructing) a *personal ideology* of each speaker, his or her *personality* and ideological stance. Seeing polyphony as a system of signs helps us to interpret the meaning and understand ideological viewpoint of the individual speakers in the polyphonic context, where characters are "polemicized with, learned from; attempts are made to develop their views into finished systems" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.17).

Proceeding from the notion of dialogism where independent thinkers externalize their consciousnesses, Bakhtin perceives every voice in the polyphonic discourse as author of "a fully weighted ideological conception of his own" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.5). [91]He emphasizes that "when studying man, we search for and find signs everywhere and we try to grasp

[90] Discussed in Chapter Four

[91] My translation

their meaning" (Bakhtin, translated McGee, 1986b, p.114). This is echoed by scholars from the Bakhtin Circle.[92] For example Valentin Voloshinov affirms that

> [t]he actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance and not even as the psychophysiological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances. (Morris, 1994, p.139)[93]

Voloshinov links ideology and meaning, meaning and signs (Morris, 1994). Signs allow the reader to interpret the meaning and understand the ideology of the speaker. "Without signs there is no ideology" (ibid) and "everything ideological possesses meaning" (ibid). A concept or an object is only significant within the context of the given discourse and the meaning changes depending on the context. Moreover, considering that "every human verbal utterance is" classified as an "ideological construct" (Morris, 1994, p.45), the Bakhtin Circle further linked ideology and self-awareness and saw it as a form of philosophical cognition whereby "it reflects and refracts another reality outside itself" (Morris, 1994, p.50).

Michael Gardiner underscores that Bakhtin's concept of ideology is "at some distance from the theory of reflection worked out by Marx and Engels" (Gardiner, 1992, p.70), and ideological signs for Bakhtin were not "simply empty forms […] which obligingly conveyed a unitary representation of a pre-existent reality" (Gardiner, 1992, p.70), instead Bakhtin and his followers from the Bakhtin Circle sought to problematize the very notion of referentiality itself by conceiving the sign as the terrain of contestation and

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[92] Bakhtin's polyphonic theory earned him a recognition among his contemporaries in the 1920s, scholars from the so-called Bakhtin Circle who published a range of articles in support of his thought, especially in the context of ideology and meaning. In English translation, those works appeared in 1994 under the title *The Bakhtin Reader* (edited by Pam Morris). These scholars explore Bakhtinian concept of ideology in the context of the polyphonic voice.

[93] Pam Morris in the introduction mentions the debate which attributes a possible authorship of the ideas published under the name Voloshinov to Bakhtin (Morris, 1995, pp.1-2). However, this assumption is not evidenced and Bakhtin in his interviews gives credit to Voloshinov and Medvedev for their independent publications on this matter. (Bocharov S.et al 1996, various pages)

struggle"(ibid). Bakhtin sees ideology as a personal viewpoint of each voice, a reflection on life. Contextualizing ideology to Alexievich's writing, ideology represents a multitude of subjective views on events from an everyday person's perspective, these could be labelled as kitchen/domestic ideologies and as a consequence they do not need to be justified or verified. In the context of Alexievich's writing, each voice becomes a source of a subjective truth. The value of these "truths" is in their multivocality. They carry a potential to approximate reality in its complexity and allow the reader to adopt a personal, subjective and unique understanding of the events, which might not be in agreement with the writer.

Bakhtin sees the ideology of each voice as linked ("fused") with his/her personality,

> Dostoevsky's ideology knows neither the separate thought nor systemic unity in this sense. For him the ultimate invisible unit is not the separate referentiality bounded thought, not the proposition, not the assertion, but rather the integral point of view, the integral position of a personality. For him, referential meaning is indissolubly fused with the position of a personality (Bakhtin, 2011, p.93)

Each voice is detached from the writer's and becomes integral to the speaker's personality. In the Bakhtinian understanding, for a voice "discourse about the world merges with confessional discourse about oneself", which is why "the truth about the world is inseparable from the truth of the personality" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.78). A personal ideology becomes inseparable from the story of life and carries a confessional value, which is the case for the speakers in Alexievich's books.

Bakhtin is interested in the personality of the speaker, his/her inner world rather than an external context, which becomes of secondary value. For him, as for Alexievich, and indeed as presented in this thesis, signs become the clues that lead us to the meaning expressed by voices either intentionally or inadvertently. They also assist in interpreting emotions in the context of culture and society. Bakhtin believes that when evaluating ourselves, the mirror gives us a reflection of distorted reality, and this becomes a tool to

objectify ourselves.[94] The referential meaning of each statement, that is to say the meaning per se, the thought, is converted into a system of viewpoints and into an ideology that govern a unique world/universe, meaning to say a consciousness, of each voice within the polyphonic discourse. This echoes Sapir's understanding of personality "as the subjective awareness of the self as distinct from other objects of observation" (Sapir, 1970, p.164), where its external manifestation could occur by means of self-expressive behaviour "as defining the reality of individual consciousness against the mass of environing social determinants" (Sapir, 1970, p.197).

While personality is an umbrella concept with a wide range of characteristics and manifestations, this research positions it into the dialogical context because in the Bakhtinian sense, in order for "the self" to develop subjective awareness it necessitates a dialogue, which might not be explicit but should be present. If I imagine a monologue in an empty room as a dialogue with my other self, it is still a dialogue where I become an imaginary listener (and the words might not be uttered but remain audible only inside my mind). But I still consider myself to be a listener, for I do need a listener to express my thoughts. The listener gives my speech a purpose. My spirituality, my pursuit for my inner truth is in the expressive rather than in the evocative meaning. In other words, voices are not necessarily concerned with the impact of their message on the listener or the reader. Their purpose is to externalize their spiritual self, to find a route to their souls, to comprehend their inner selves. In such a dialogue, each speaker becomes a bearer of a subjective truth

> Authentic dialogic relationship is possible only in relation to a hero,[95] which is a bearer of his/her truth, who takes a meaningful (ideological) position

[94]Dmitri Nikulin interprets this Bakhtinian concept of mirror as follows "Looking at oneself in the mirror stands for an attempt of self-cognition, in which one both recognizes and misses oneself, seeing oneself as another with no 'seamy side.'"(Nikulin, 2011, p.1)

[95] In the context of Dostoevsky's novels, Bakhtin uses the term *hero* to refer to the characters in the books. For Alexievich *heroes* are real people imprinted on the pages of her books and en masse they make up the polyphony in her works.

> [Подлинные диалогические отношения возможны только в отношении героя, который является носителем своей правды, который занимает значимую (идеологическую) позицию]
>
> (Bakhtin, 1979, p.310)

An ideological position can be seen as an externalised part of the speaker's personality, which he/she can access through dialogical interaction. Dialogical interaction in Alexievich's writing is formed primarily by means of indirect or implied communication. She serves as an interlocutor for the speakers but then the reader becomes an implied interlocutor carrying out an internal conversation with the voices. The reader replaces Alexievich's "ear",[96] but the speakers are also able to join the readers and re-assess their statements in writing. Thus, voices become their own "listeners", their own audience, as they join the ST reader. Such a situation where the same person appears on both sides of the dialogue and is able to look back at the original statement, comprises an interesting difference from Dostoevsky's polyphonic context.

The role of a listener here is to open an imaginary or implied dialogue, to spark a reflection and serve as a catalyst that would trigger the voices to externalize their thoughts, spiritual pursuits to find their inner truth and strive to understand their souls. Such imaginary or real dialogue produces a reflection that facilitates a kind of understanding by the voice of his/her own self and by the listener whose reflection of the self becomes audible through him/her listening to the voice. These echoes merge into the polyphony of multiple subjective truths that help a holistic understanding. Caryl Emerson explains that for Bakhtin "[g]enuine understanding is always dialogic" (Emerson, 1997, p.62), namely

> I come to understand something only, and for the first time, while I am attempting to explain it to you. In the process you must respond, resist, develop it in your own way, fail to get it – in short, become yourself, just as I become myself, through the exchange (Emerson, 1997, ibid).

[96] Alexievich often refers to herself as a "human ear" on her journey to collect voices from the streets (Alexievich, 2015a, etc)

In processing the content and emotional load of the stories, the reader of Alexievich's books reflects back and his/her reflections become part of the entangled polyphony. Bakhtin argues "while three areas of human culture — science, art and life — can find their unity within a person, art offers no unity between an artist and a person" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.5); Alexievich, through her writing strives to understand *homo sovieticus* and in this her own self. In the unity of psychological and social life is her quest to find "a person within a person" (Alexievich, 2021e, no page). Characters from her books live through major events of the USSR and are part of the social fabric of the state. Be that as it may, their psychological life is unique to each of them and is manifested by means of emotions. It is internal but externalized inadvertently, through sharing personal stories which open to the reader a glimpse into their inner world. In doing so voices strive to understand themselves.

Sapir distinguishes between personality and culture but emphasizes the presence of an individual within culture as a vital element for social thinking and analysis

> the concept of culture […] fragmentary and confused as it will undoubtedly be, will turn out to have a tougher, more vital, importance for social thinking than the tidy labels of contents attached to this or that group which we have been in the habit of calling 'cultures'" (Sapir, 1970, p.207)

The polyphonic aspect of Alexievich's writing offers a way of widening access to the ST culture by giving voice to individuals who share their personal subjective stories. Collectively, this creates a messy and inconsistent image of the USSR, which bears the value of the polyphonic truths. The "tidy labels" offer a big picture which creates and reinforces stereotypes. Conversely, polyphony does not offer a big picture. Instead, it gives fragments which might be confusing and incoherent but create miniature mirror reflections of the ST culture and society.

The task of the translator is to convey the ideology, identity, personality, "the self" and "the other" of every ST voice to the TT reader so that the reader could make his/her own informed decision on the level of participation in this internal struggle of voices. In order for the TT reader to be able to evaluate what voices say, imply and reveal subconsciously, what they want to say and what they say without intending to say – they should have access to the

messiness of the original voices, their confused, often incoherent, crude and illogical narratives. With this in mind, the following section, contra Bakhtin and his original polyphonic concept, examines voices in the context of Alexievich's writing with the of discovering what shapes the personalities of the polyphonic voices, what makes each one of them unique and different from another. The polyphonic voice as a unit is at the core of the research question in this thesis. In the endeavour to facilitate a polyphonic translation, we need to focus on every voice as a separate and independent object of study. Through discovering ideological signs and clues of the self and the other and using them to interpret a range of meanings within the ST voices, we seek to establish linguistic and perceived textual boundaries between each voice. To achieve that, we need to establish what a voice is and how its uniqueness is manifested in the text, it is necessary to understand what a voice is in the context of Alexievich's polyphonic works. The next section will explore a variety of approaches to voice, including but not limited to Bakhtin's.

4.2. Written voice – theories and scholarly concepts in relation to Alexievich's context

Voice is at the core of the polyphonic text and more specifically of Alexievich's writing. In in tackling the research question of whether Alexievich's polyphony can be preserved in translation, this section examines a variety of theoretical concepts of voice beyond Bakhtin to consider a range of reflections on voice by different scholars.

As discussed in Section 4.1., Bakhtin considers voice to be a reflection of self in "the other who can finalise me", as a "window into a world in which I never live" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.34),[97]and it connects it to dialogical concept. Even though, this, suggests that there might not be a direct dialogical interaction with the real world when voices externalize their thoughts. The interlocutor might serve as a facilitator (catalyst) for a voice to reach an understanding of themselves, which is never complete and might not even be accurate if applied to a wider context. It is contextual and serves as a window, a glimpse into the inner world of the speaker. This world is not the one they live in but a mirror reflection of it through the eyes/ears of the listener. In Alexievich's writing voices imply listeners, their presence might be perceived as imaginary. These imaginary listeners are the readers of Alexievich's books and are unlikely to come into contact with the speakers. Here, it seems useful to mention the concept of implied reader discussed by Iser (1974, p.xii) who "incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text" (ibid.)In Alexievich's polyphonic works these listeners/readers are necessary as an imaginary mirror for the speakers to reflect what they say and externalize their *consciousness*. There is a confessional intimacy of the environment created by Alexievich,[98] and it produces the illusion of a mirror. Like a priest hearing confession, her presence is nominal but vital. Transcribed glimpses of this subjective truth are then delivered to the ST reader who, in

[97] My translation.

[98] Discussed in Chapter Two.

turn, becomes a reflection to the voices, alongside the speakers who become listeners of their own voices.

In the analysis presented in Chapter Five I approach each voice as a "subjective reflection" of the "objective world" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.113). Reflections in the Bakhtinian sense are often inward facing where a voice is perceiving him/herself looking into the imaginary mirror. Refractions project the meaning to the target audience. This projection happens as a bi-product of their reflections, of their own attempt to see into their self by means of others, they do not adjust the content of what they say to their target audience. They externalize their inner world with themselves in mind, here the presence of a listener is nominal or symbolic. A mirror does not require an adjustment from those who decide to reflect in it, but such adjustment might be desired by those who look into the mirror, as part of self-evaluation and an attempt to understand the self.

When transposing the Bakhtinian understanding of the concept to the domain of translation, the correlation between ST and TT is seen as a multitude of reflections, whereby the ST voices reflect first in Alexievich and ST readers, and then through the prism of the translators and TT readers. In the eyes of the reader each voice becomes a reflection of reflection as it transitions through the multitude of reflections, which is to say first reflected through Alexievich as a primary listener, then through Alexievich's transcription of it on paper, and the multiple readers, and lastly, through self-reflection when speakers read their statements as voices on the pages of Alexievich's books. Here, I draw on the Derridean frame of reference. According to Claire Ellender "[a]s regard to Derrida, application of his thought can both account for subjectivity in the reading […] and assist identification of the peculiar qualities of polyphonic texts themselves" (Ellender, 2013, p.6). As discussed above, subjectivity is embedded into Bakhtin's understanding of voice. Judith Butler underscores the Derridean connection of voice and soul, asserting that

> [f]or Derrida, there is a pervasive link between sound and being, as if reality comes forth through sound, whether it is the voice of God declaring what is, bringing reality into being through that sovereign performative act, or the human voice, establishing its own being and presence through speech, and so also establishing its mimetic relation to the divine. (Derrida, 2016, p.xv)

As discussed earlier, Bakhtin links soul to consciousness and connects consciousness to the inner world of the speaker. If this link could be extended to the Derridean concept of being, then voice becomes the sound of the externalized soul or consciousness, which is brought to the reader through a performative act expressed by linguistic means and related to an individual (and subjective) mirror reflection of reality.

This is part of Alexievich's journey where she places primary value on the externalized (verbalized) voice, the importance of which is also pointed out by Magdalena Horodecka in her discussion of the dialogic interaction between Alexievich and a photographer who brought a collection of images from his trip to Chernobyl. (Horodecka, 2018) In response to Alexievich's request to tell his story he shows his photographs, which she does not deem as sufficient. She insists on him uttering words. "The story of his visit to Chernobyl starts and goes on and on. Ultimately, it is built up of words, not pictures, since Alexievich believes that 'your story' has to be uttered, 'your thoughts' should be expressed out loud." (Horodecka, 2018, p.64)

The connection between being, reality and speech is important to understanding as she emphasizes "I always want to understand how much of person is in a person. And how to protect this person in a person"["Я всегда хочу понять, сколько человека в человеке. И как этого человека в человеке защитить"] (Kurmanaeva, 2015, p.7). [99] For her (and possibly for the reader) each voice becomes a vessel to facilitate understanding so as "to protect" (ibid) a person within that person. To be understood the person should externalize, verbalise his or her experience. Voice becomes an audible expression/ impersonation /an act of performance of/by a person at a particular moment in time (or a visible expression if transcribed as a text).

[99] Here and everywhere in this section translations are mine when originals are provided in square brackets

Horodecka points out that while painting individual points of view for the reader, Alexievich is also looking to capture an image of spirituality. She affirms the importance of religion for an everyday Soviet person.

> Alexievich wants to paint individual portraits of the people she spoke to. She uses narrative tools to present their point of view, but at the same time she tries to recreate their strong spirituality. Religion was a part of human life that Communism tried to eradicate; nevertheless, many people adhered hey often showed their strong belief in God, the existence of whom was never questioned even after the trauma they experienced. This is another dimension of these individual, very intimate portraits. This perspective is crucial in understanding the importance of the word 'prayer' in the title of the book. (Horodecka, 2018, p.61)

Spirituality, which is mentioned by Horodecka, corresponds to the soul, the inner self and could be seen as a way of perceiving consciousness. Consciousness forms one dimension of voice in the analysis and corresponds to the spiritual domain and a place of the speaker within it. It is possible that the juxtaposition of Orthodox Christian identification with the official façade of Soviet atheism created a ground for an identity crisis which could be externalized by the voices. Since 988AD, Russia has gradually been converting into a deeply religious country. Religion covertly or overtly penetrated all strata of society and became part of everyday domestic life, part of Russian self-identification. Regina Elsner and Tobias Kollner underscore the increasing importance of religion in Russian identity, and refer to "ethnodoxy" arguing that in its current state religion has become embedded into the national identity and ideology of the political elite (Elsner, Kollner, 2022, no page). When speaking about voice in Alexievich's works, religion and spirituality are significant.

Another parameter of voice here is the format. Voices are transcribed, recorded. They are read rather than heard. The audibility is restored in the mind of the reader. Discussing the dilemma between spoken and written voice, Gayatri Spivak refers to Derrida for whom, as she believes, "there is no structural distinction between writing and speech" (Derrida, 2016, p.xciii). Nonetheless, she further explains that for him:

> [w]riting […] is not a degraded version of speech, but offers a nonanthropocentric way of understanding language by virtue of its distinction

> from speech. It opens up a version of language in which the decentered subject registers as a form of humility. (Derrida, 2016, p.xv)

Spivak explains that in a Derridean sense the written voice and speech can be substituted but with a difference [*différance*], i.e. "not exactly (for of course, even two uses of the same word would not be exactly the same): 'no concept overlaps any other'". (Derrida, 2016, p.xciii). While accepting the inevitable difference at each stage of interpretation of the voice, "written" voices in Alexievich's books can be considered in two ways. First, as individual freestanding written accounts taken from the speakers in which the interpretation of meanings would entail focusing on what makes voices different from each other at textual level.[100] Second, voices are considered as audible, vocal phenomena transcribed/recorded for posterity. Thus, the imaginary sounds of voices can be recreated by the reader's ear. This recreation, in turn, is also subjective and highly personal, but it is an important element of the overall interpretation of a voice and setting the boundaries between voices. The "sound" of each voice, including the tone and the emotions expressed in the tone, is different for each voice and become part of the interpretative task. In this sense, through an emotional appeal, a voice can connect with the listener/reader in a very effective/intimate way.[101]

In interpreting the signs, according to Bass, Derrida "demonstrates there is a persistent exclusion of the notion of writing from the philosophical definition of the sign" (Derrida, 2001, p.xi), and to Derrida this is a "'symptom' which reveals the workings of the 'repressive' logic of presence, which determines Western philosophy as such" (ibid). Interpretation of textual signs as part of decoding messages of each voice would bear a historic significance in a different but equal way to those expressed aurally, as a spoken word. All signs in the text are important to ascertain a meaning. While there is a difference

[100] Methods for the textual analysis in Section 4.4. discuss respective markers and clues, namely metaphoric language, syntax and stylistic individualities of each written account, alongside semantics and pragmatics of each utterance.

[101] Emotionality as part of the system of meanings is discussed in Section 4.4.

between voice spoken and voice written, such difference aids interpretation rather than serves as a hinderance.

This corresponds to the Bakhtinian understanding of voice as a system of signs rather than a "natural phenomenon" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.113). Subsequently, only signs can produce the meaning "where a word is a tool or a signifier that serves the purpose according to some ideological function" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.114). The link between the sign and the meaning by Bakhtin is direct: "when studying man, we search for and find signs everywhere and we try to grasp their meaning" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.114). Voice as a system of signs for Bakhtin represents an ideology, in other words a subjective representation of reality (Bakhtin, 2011, p.xvi). Meaning produced by each voice becomes a combination of ideology and form (ibid) because voices not only represent their "discourse about themselves and their immediate environment but also their discourse about the world" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.78). The ideological component in a voice is as significant as its connection to a sign:

> [t]he speaking person in the novel is always, to one degree or another, an ideologue, and his words are always ideologemes. A particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance. It is precisely as ideologemes that discourse becomes the object of representation in the novel, and it is for the same reason novels are never in danger of becoming a mere aimless vermal play. The novel, being a dialogized representation of an ideologically freighted discourse (in most cases actual and really present) is of all verbal genres the one least susceptible to aestheticism as such, to a purely formalistic playing about with words (Bakhtin, 1988, p.333)

The reader, and, ultimately, the translator has to decode signs. Understanding a person begins with the study of signs, and Bakhtin asserts that "the voices (in the sense of reified social styles) are" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.112) "transformed into signs of things" (ibid). Identification of voice as a sign or a system of signs, at textual level and through linguistic markers/clues voice as a sign could be a way to it. Through a system of signs, voice could be perceived as a *snapshot* of speaker's *personality*. It could intentionally or inadvertently expose emotions and reveal something intimate in the personal self-contained narratives that are confined to the boundaries of their emotions.

Wayne Booth refers to the Bakhtinian ideology as a mysterious concept that has direct correlation to the complexity of truth in a philosophical sense (Bakhtin, 2011, preface). He

sees Bakhtin's polyphonic voices as a means of "deleting the boundary between art and life" that allows to "treat every work as direct, primary experience" (Bakhtin, 201, p.vii). Ideological and emotional load of a story/narrative/account delivered by each voice is directed towards the imaginary (and invisible) interlocutor, the one that ultimately is able to understand the speaker and help the speaker to understand her-/himself. I suggest that voices can be perceived as speaking consciences. Ideology within a voice can be seen as an attempt by the speaker's conscience to achieve an internal moral/spiritual equilibrium. It is a desire to connect with the listener and to connect the listener to the truth as perceived through the speaker's subjectivity.

Exploring voices as ideologies in a wider sense, Jan Blommaert sees ideology as a range of "processes and practices at several levels of consciousness" (Blommaert, 2005, p.172) and also connects it to a "specific set of symbolic representations (discourses, terms, arguments, images, stereotypes – serving a specific purpose)" (Blommaert, 2005, p.158). Symbolism is a way of encoding the ideological meaning within each voice, which could be unravelled through signs and clues derived from the text, to put it another way, in translating a polyphonic voice every choice of grammar and lexis made by a voice either consciously or subconsciously, at each individual utterance and expressed textually becomes significant and necessary to preserve in translation. In order to decode the ideological message of a voice at the level of conscience, we need to interpret its symbolism.

Juxtaposing the Bakhtinian concept of ideology to the notion of symbolism as means of interpreting a message of each voice, I refer to Sapir who emphasizes the presence of the cultural and societal element is symbolism.[102] In systematic analysis of the polyphonic text it could help to take into account such elements of Sapirian understanding of symbolism as

[102] [p]roblems of symbolism, of superordination and subordination of patterns, of relative strength of emotional character, of transformability and transmissibility, of the isolability of certain patterns into relatively closed systems, and numerous others of like dynamic nature, emerge at once. We cannot answer any of them in the abstract. All of them demand patient investigation and the answers are almost certain to be multiform. (Sapir, 1970, p.206)

emotionality, stereotypes and other cross-cultural elements in their multiplicity but separately for each voice. As Sapir believes symbolism to be one of the characteristics of language, he considers our direct experience of life to be substituted by language, which creates virtual identity and something that he calls "the magic of spells"(1970, p.8), and he refers to the difference between objective reality and our linguistic symbols of reference to it (Sapir, 1970, p.8).[103] This holistic assessment could become part of each voice on a human level and contribute to shaping and then re-shaping in translation a unique personality of each speaker rather than creating a Frankenstein, or something that is deemed as innate to shared culture and forms part of public, state or shared narrative by the respective voice.

Exploring the concept of voice in a wider sense, I refer to Charlotte Bousseaux who believes that "voice is presence" (Bousseaux, 2007, p.198). While this can indirectly can be linked to Bakhtin through the notion of consciousness, in Alexievich's context such presence is, among others, ideological and emotional. In translation, voice as presence is just as important for the TT reader, especially if such presence is part of the polyphonic diversity.

Blommaert sees voice as "the capacity to make oneself understood" (Blommaert, 2005, p.68), which he links to the capacity "to generate an uptake of one's words as close as possible to one's desired contextualization" (ibid) and "the capacity for semiotic mobility" (Blommaert, 2005, p.69). In turn, mobility becomes "itinerary across normative spaces, and these spaces are always somebody's space" (2005, p.71). Blommaert connects these capacitiesto the Bakhtinian dialogical frame whereby "the speaker himself is oriented […] towards such an actively responsive understanding" (Bakhtin in Blommaert, 2005, p.73).

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[103] It is this constant interplay between language and experience which removes language from the cold status of such purely and simply symbolic systems as mathematical symbolism or flag signalling. This interpenetration is not only an intimate associative fact; it is also a contextual one. It is important to realize that language may not only refer to experience or even mould, interpret, and discover experience, but that it also substitutes for it in the sense that in those sequences of interpersonal behaviour which form the greater part of our daily lives' speech and action supplement each other and do each other's work in a web of unbroken pattern (Sapir, 1970, p.9)

Here, voice "orients towards […] a 'superadressee'" (2005, p.73) that could be God, absolute truth or human conscience (ibid). In Alexievich's works, voices act as immediate listeners and later the readers can be seen as "superadressees".

In a pragmatic sense, Roland Barthes associates voice with the right of the person to be heard (Barthes, 1982, p.10), which takes the notion of dialogism even further, indicating a demand in addition to necessity. This continues across linguistic and cultural boundaries and is still relevant in translation. ST voices are given the right to express themselves by the writer, this right should be respected by translators. From this perspective, voice can be perceived as an expression of liberty. According to Derrida, "voice always gives itself out as the best expression of liberty" (Derrida, 2016, p.182), which echoes the Bakhtinian understanding of voices as "philosophical statements by […] several author-thinkers" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.6). While the former focuses on the connection of voice to the inner self and expression of consciousness, the latter emphasizes the externalization aspect of voice. Those statements create a "series of disparate, contradictory philosophical stances, each defined by one or another character" (ibid). In this context, "[t]he very act of understanding becomes […] an affirmation of one's own self and… a right to one's own point of view" (Emerson, 1997, p.63).

As previously discussed, within a written polyphonic work voice is an independent author of his/her own independent narrative. This authorship should be preserved for the TT reader ."Among these also figure, but far from first place, the philosophical views of the author himself" (Bakhtin, 2011, p.5). Voice as an alternative view on reality coexist in the universe of the synchronised worlds. The author of the polyphonic novel is allocated a democratic space among voices and has no authority to overrule their ideologies. Alexievich in her books is not the overpowering voice but only one voice alongside other voices. For her works to remain polyphonic in translation, translator's voice should fit alongside rather than superimpose upon other voices, this means translation should project ST voices rather than serve as a platform for a translator and to avoid using other voices as a means of projecting his/her own voice.

Davied Lewis believes that in translation "a plurality of worlds must be posited hypothetically, to exist, if the rules of the language allow for it" (Apter,2005, p.160).

Lewis's plurality of worlds link Bakhtin's polyphony to the domain of translation where interlingual transfer can be seen as an added layer of polyphony which now exists in two galaxies, that of SL and of TL. Both galaxies have a myriad of worlds-voices. The task of the translator here becomes that of transposing the ST polyphonic voices into the TL galaxy.

Conversely, Horodecka underlines that "[w]hen reading the book we interpret the stories of the witnesses from their point of view but, simultaneously, we perceive the fictional universe through the interpretative frame created by the author." (Horodecka, 2018, p.55) Alexievich employs supratextual and paratextual elements, including headings and subheadings, yet in the body of the text her voice is positioned as equal to the other speakers. The frame introduced by Alexievich is unlikely to affect ST voices significantly because the ST testimonials appear alongside each other as free standing units and do not merge with the others. It is, therefore, possible for the ST reader to distinguish between Alexievich's input and the words of each ST voice and draw an independent intelligent and emotional conclusion.

Still and all, there is an element of duality within self-perception by the ST speakers, meaning to say at the point of speaking (immediate reflection) and at the point of reading the published work (the aftermath). While immediate reflection may be likely to focus on the content of the utterances, the aftermath may assume a re-assessment of the original message, leading to a change of position. As discussed in Section 2.1., this could lead to confrontation of the speakers with the author and demonstrates that voices continue to live, argue, disagree and be in conflict not only with each other but with themselves at different points of time. While tracing the aftermath of the voices' reflections and their temporal shifts do not form part of methodology, nonetheless, the temporality and polyphony within one speaker is considered in the context of multiple snapshots of Alexievich's voice that she included into her books at different points of time.

Reflecting on Horodecka highlights an element of bi-vocality in each ST speaker, strictly speaking polyphony might be present within one SL voice. This is related to the potential multiple identities within one speaker, which are either superimposed or naturally present and relate to ethnicity, ideology or social/cultural belonging. Such complexity can produce

a struggle and multivoicedness within one person.[104] An internal clash of identities is innate to everyone due to the complexity of life experiences and environments.

The clash of identities produces "the self" and "the other" within each voice. Elwira Grossman, in relation to otherness, emphasizes that when "encountering 'the Other(s)', external as well as internal elements precondition the 'meeting' and become equally significant" (2002, p.6). She cites Derrida "who 'contrives to dismantle our preconceived notions of identity and exposes us to the challenge of hitherto suppressed or concealed 'otherness' – the other side of experience […] " (Grossman, 2002, p.5). The otherness within each speaker could lead to internal polyphony, even heteroglossia, to be specific disagreement of voices, within one person. A voice could become a manifestation of one identity, either "the self" or one of "the others". Speakers might attempt to suppress the undesirable and attempt to create a façade, but the in-betweenness might become audible between the lines and in the subtle subtone of the otherness that is trying to break through. The otherness as opposition to homogeneity is at the heart of polyphonic writing. Interesting in this context is Grossman's juxtaposition of "other[ness]" and identity:

> All of us belong to various groups, categories, tribes, generations… We may often say that we see some problem from the point of view of a man, a woman, an engineer or a lawyer, as a believer or non-believer. When we say this we do not think of ourselves as "the Other". We do not view ourselves then as people with a split, double or multiple identity. It is only when we touch upon certain concepts like race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity that some complex, double and/or multiple identity begins to manifest itself clearly and painfully. We see ourselves more or less through the eyes of the beholder. (Grossman, 2002, p.xii)

Voices could be seen as a way of expressing "the otherness" in relation to the events that affected the speakers. Due to the multitude of identities within every voice, the second identity might be covertly present and the speaker might not consciously realise its presence. The double identities (the self and the other[ness]) within one voice may or may

[104] Potential multitude of identities within each speaker becomes part of the methodology (Section 4.3.) and analysis (Chapter Five).

not be in conflict, and if there is a conflict, it could be interpreted in multiple ways. The actual presence of this complexity is a challenge to preserve in translation.

Although this thesis explores voice beyond "courage and suffering", it is necessary to recognise that trauma is present in many ST voices. The analysis requires an understanding of how long-lasting emotional stress may have affected the way they represented their perspective on the events and told their life stories. LaCapra in his monograph *Writing History, Writing Trauma,* explores the ways voices are narrated the context of trauma. He draws on the references to the survivors of the Holocaust and discusses ways of re-rendering the voices of the victims and perpetrators (LaCapra, 2001, p.199). This thesis considers the trauma of individual voices as one aspect of their self-expression and might be part of the individual attempts to express inner truth on the level of human experience. While traumatic events are factual, their understanding by individual participants is personal and unique, and for this reason forms part of the subjective inner truths expressed by every voice.

Trauma and suffering are also analysed by Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*. Her cross-disciplinary study explores "the enigma of the otherness of a human voice that cries out from the wound, a voice that witnesses a truth that" the voice "himself cannot fully know" (Caruth, 2016, p.2) and draws on Freud's understanding of " traumatic experience" (Caruth, 2016, p.3). Here, she uses a combination of linguistic and psychoanalytical tools to interpret stories narrated by voices in the context of trauma. She identifies a phenomenon of the "other voice […] to represent the other within the self that retains the memory of the […] traumatic event of one's past" (Caruth, 2016, p.8) and she refers to the presence of "the other" within "the self". "The otherness" brings this exploration of the theoretical concept of voice back to the Bakhtinian understanding of a polyphonic voice and underscores that one way of perceive voice is to see it as a reflection of the self in the others and interweaves trauma into the multiplicity of voices within one speaker.

This raises another important question, as to whether the individual voices within Alexievich's polyphonic writing can be classed as testimonies. If they are, it could be argued that testimonies deserve careful ethical consideration, including their preservation in translation. Testimonies rely on memory. Avishai Margalit draws on the ethical

importance of remembering (Margalit, 2004). Peter Davies in the context of translating the Holocaust, says that "[a] particular issue for translation is the fact that the act of composing a testimony has come to be seen as an ethical act in its own right" (Boase-Beier, 2017, p.25) and proceeds to state that "[t]the value of a text is in the individual nuance, and in the way it bears witness to the possibility or impossibility of articulating experience in language" (Boase-Beier, 2017, p.25). Commenting on this, Susan Bassnett points out that

> [w]hereas in Holocaust Studies what matters above all is to show sensitivity to the voices of Holocaust survivors, to allow them to speak out with authenticity, the emphasis in Translation Studies today is to focus on the creative role of the translator, as the principal agent in a network of other agencies. Both fields are engaged with ethical questions, but in very different, possible even contradictory ways. (Bassnett, 2017, p.45)

Susan Bassnett underscores the importance of sensitivity to the voices in the context of Holocaust and foregrounds the creative role of the translator. Acting as the principal agent in the translation process, the translator becomes an active vector of ethics. In interpreting the sensitive material, while translation inevitably is the output of their personal understanding of ethics, they apply understandings of ethics as perceived in both SL and TL societies. Serving as bridges between languages and cultures, translators continuously mitigate and negotiate between the SL and TL worlds and cultures.

Voices in the polyphonic discourse are at the core of its diversity and imply potential disagreement between individual speakers, i.e. testimonies. This means the absence of a singular line of argument, there is no one underlying cause to defend a claim. Each voice makes her/his own individual claim independently from other voices. Unlike memories of Holocaust, the spectrum of opinions with regards to the era of the USSR could be wider and more polarised. In Alexievich's books, the diversity of the polyphonic aspect is to contrast the superficial and superimposed so-called unity of the Soviet Union as a geopolitical formation that was the living space and socio-cultural environment for the source-text voices. Within that collective setting each voice narrates his/her own story. The uniqueness of each voice and their diversity create multivoicedness, i. e. polyphony. The diversity of accounts by voices opens many ways of accessing the reality hidden behind the iron curtain of the past and could facilitate a deeper understanding of the present.

Such collective setting of diverse individual voices creates a challenging context for translators and needs to be assess from the position of TL readers, their culture and society. As Susan Bassnett underlines:

> Any evaluation of a translation needs therefore to be made in context, with the translation benchmarked against the norms of a particular literary system at a given moment in time. This means also that translation is a continuous process, with each generation establishing different criteria for the quality of the translations it requires. (Bassnett, 2014, pp.176-177)

Translations are constantly changing. In the same way as Alexievich's original work on collecting and recording in her books voices of *homo sovieticus* represent her lifelong journey and is a still work in progress, translating those voices is also an ongoing experience where translators discover and re-discover the multitude of ST messages in the ST narratives. While the target language and culture create a benchmark for a translator, the ST polyphony and embedded complexity of the speakers' identities, ideologies and consciousnesses, as well as that of Alexievich, create another benchmark and another set of criteria to consider in translation. The diversity of source-text voices shapes the reading experience and contributes to contextual understanding through the multitude of perspectives on the same period of history. The source-text claims to be a collective history, and this remains important in translation. While word-for-word or even sense-for-sense translation is unlikely to be able to address the complexity of the cultural setting and bridge the gaps between source- and target- language, contexts re-creating in translation the multitude of source-text meanings in a manner that would make those accessible for the target-text readership, is an improbable task for a polyphonic translator. The choice of lexis, syntactic deviation and other shifts from the source text only become a problem when they remove, alter or suppress the polyphonic chorus of the original.

Bakhtin emphasises the importance of stylistic diversity (Bakhtin 2017, p.6) and asserts that in seeking stylistic unity, there is a danger of "filtering out the elements which do not fit into the norms of the unified linguistic system but that clearly express the linguistic individuality" of each voice (Bakhtin, 2017, p.9). In translation, as Jean Boase-Beier underlines, style is "central to the way we construct and interpret text" (Boase-Beier, 2020, p.1). She asserts that style, being "characteristic of a particular author" is "unique to a text"

and is there to "express an opinion, or attitude, or have emotional effect on the reader" (Boase-Beier, 2020, p.1) and that it is "the outcome of the choice" (Boase-Beier, 2020, p.59). She argues that such choices can be "rediscovered by the translator" (ibid), who consequently introduce the "translator's meaning" (ibid), in other words "the meaning ascribed to a source text by a translator who is reading it with a view to translating it" (ibid). Therefore, style is innate to each author and to each translator: "the translator's style will become part of the translated text" (Boase-Beier, 2020, p.1). Translators see "authors' statements and suggestions" as" simply another source of information, like dictionaries or background reading" (ibid., p.2). That is why in the translation process it is the translator's style that becomes an indispensable ingredient and a vehicle to convey the ST meaning to the readers. Restricting translators in their stylistic creativity might impede the quality and readability of the outcome for the TL readers.

I believe that style is a vessel to deliver messages of the ST voices to the Anglophone audience. Withal, stylistic choices in translation belong to translators who use them as a tool to shape the uniqueness of ST voices. Verdonk defines style as a "distinctive manner of expression, through whatever medium this expression is given physical shape" (Verdonk, 2018, p.3) and emphasises the importance of the distinctive effect, context and persuasion (Verdonk, 2018, p.7). Subsequently, style becomes a "motivated choice" (ibid). Translators exercise stylistic creativity to reflect the polyphony of the ST voices and the internal composition of a voice in accordance with the Bakhtinian understanding, id estthrough its ideology, externalized inner world, expression of consciousness.[105]

The methodology for the comparative analysis of voices outlined in Section 4.3. is constructed from the position that while ST and TT language systems are different, they are by no means incompatible. As in any language, there are equivalents, which enable cross-cultural and inter-lingual communication, and voice is innate to humans, which is why it is universal. Joanna Thornborrow distinguishes between

[105] Discussed in Section 4.1.

"normal/ordinary/everyday" and "deviant/literary" language (Thornborrow, 2005, p.50) as opposed to "marked and unmarked" (ibid, 51), whereby "marked forms of language use can be found in conversational context as well as in literary contexts, when speakers want to create particular effects or meanings." (ibid. 51). As "'[g]rammar' can also be used to refer to the knowledge that every speaker has of the language they speak" (Thornborrow, 2005, p.52), which means each voice can be seen as represented by its own variation of grammar – in translation these can be substituted by the grammatical variations introduced by a translator.

Alexievich's books can be regarded as recorded conversations. David Crystal referred to a conversation as "an art, a mind-reading exercise, a game, a battle […] a conflict between minds or wits" (Crystal, 2019, p192). This definition links TT voices embedded into the TL language and culture with the Bakhtinian polyphonic concept which is used in devising the methodology for the ST analysis.

In arguing the universality of emotions in translating ST voices into English, I do not assume that the same events evoke the same attitudes which can be transferred across cultures and societies. On the contrary, suchattitudes vary widely within the same society and cannot be predicted at the linguistic level. Howbeit, the emotions of different people in different cultures are probably compatible. As a result, it should be possible to find emotional equivalents for the TT readers by re-creating the source-text in such a form that would have a compatible appeal. I will be looking at the target language, using linguistic tools and parameters set by the target-language culture and conventions. Re-storing/re-creating the linguistic verbal symbols of the source text in the target text inevitably leads to distortion of the original message/meaning. However, by creating a mental imagery, the mind of the translator can convert such imagery into the verbal linguistic form of the target language in a way that conveys emotions and feelings, rather than words that symbolize physical things and abstract concepts.

In Alexievich's writing, symbolism is expressed by words and emotions, which are more significant for the target reader than individual facts. Her speakers refer to the subjective understanding of big and small events and she aims to record a history of emotions rather than facts. In translation these emotions could help to connect the TT reader to the

individual worlds of the ST voices. This link: source-text subjectivity – emotions – empathy – co-understanding on the level of feelings – target-text subjectivity could serve as a bridge between source- and target-language culture and society, and it is at the core of understanding the transition between ST-TT voices in Alexievich's polyphonic writing. Section 4.4. considers methods to facilitate the relevant comparative ST-TT textual analysis of voices.

Discussing the universality of voices further, Jaanika Anderson and Maria-Kristiina Lotman underscore that "when we compare the art of copying to the translation of literary texts, we have to keep in mind its essential character" (Anderson, Lotman, 2018, p.11). It could be argued that it is true also for non-literary texts, such as Alexievich's books and of course "no matter how accurately a copy tries to imitate the original, it is extremely hard to achieve completely identical items." (Anderson, Lotman, 2018, p.22). Besides, by moving away from an attempt to recreate an identical item towards keeping the essential character of the original voices, the shape of these voices should appear as true to the target reader. This also includes moving away from facts towards emotions, as "[f]acts are unlike to speakers whose language background provides for unlike formulation of them" (Whorf, 2012, p.235). As Alexievich emphasises "I write not about war, but about human beings in a war. I write not the history of a war, but the history of feelings. I am a historian of feelings." (Alexievich, 2017a, p.6) Facts become irrelevant in the analysis of voice, instead, voice is an external manifestation of emotions expressed through the dimensions of consciousness, ideology, personality and identity.

Benjamin Whorf compares grammatical bonding in different languages to chemical reactions that create chemical compounds or mechanical mixture (Whorf, 2012, p.237). In this metaphorical framework each voice becomes a chemical compound. When they interact they could lead to a variety of chemical reactions. In translation, their characteristics should be preserved to keep the bondage of chemical compounds.[106] While

[106] This pertains to the research methodology outlined in Section 4.3. as it reveals how imagery helps our mind create logical connections and explain abstract concepts, based on our pre-existing background knowledge. In the analysis in Chapter Five I look for such connections, either chemical or mechanical or

the mind of Whorf created images based on his background as a chemical engineer, those who do not belong to that field, are able to understand/access the meaning, restore it in our imagination based on his prompt. Similarly, a snapshot of a voice that was prompted by imagination, could be transmitted to the reader regardless of his/her background, or rather based on a very generic knowledge of the subject.

other, which will be determined by the individual or shared narratives of the source-text or target-text voices.

4.3. Methodology for the analysis

The methodology facilitates two principal aims of the textual analysis in Chapter Five, firstly, to establish the distinction between individual voices in the ST that makes them come across as polyphonic for the SL reader, secondly, to assess to what extent this distinction is preserved in the translations into English. Voice is considered to be a unique combination of the so-called domestic or *kitchen ideology* of each speaker, a manifestation of *personality* and *identity* or of multiple identities that arise from the struggle between "the self" and "the other/the otherness" within one speaker. Voice is a mirror-reflection of *consciousness* that is made available to the external world by means of a dialogic interaction (either explicit and overt or implicit and covert, implied and not necessarily real).

Following from the Bakhtinian concept discussed in Section 4.1., the first phase of the analysis corresponds to its first principal aim and focuses on ST voices. It considers voice as a portrait of a speaker in a given moment of time, a temporal reflection of reality, which is why it is an *(audio)snapshot* of a person, a brief glimpse into all four dimensions of voice. This snapshot is transcribed and presented to the reader who can then re-create it in his/her mind. The analysis looks to identify each snapshot as different from another using the four dimensions, discussed in Sections 4.1. and 4.2. and demonstrated by the Figure 4.3.1.

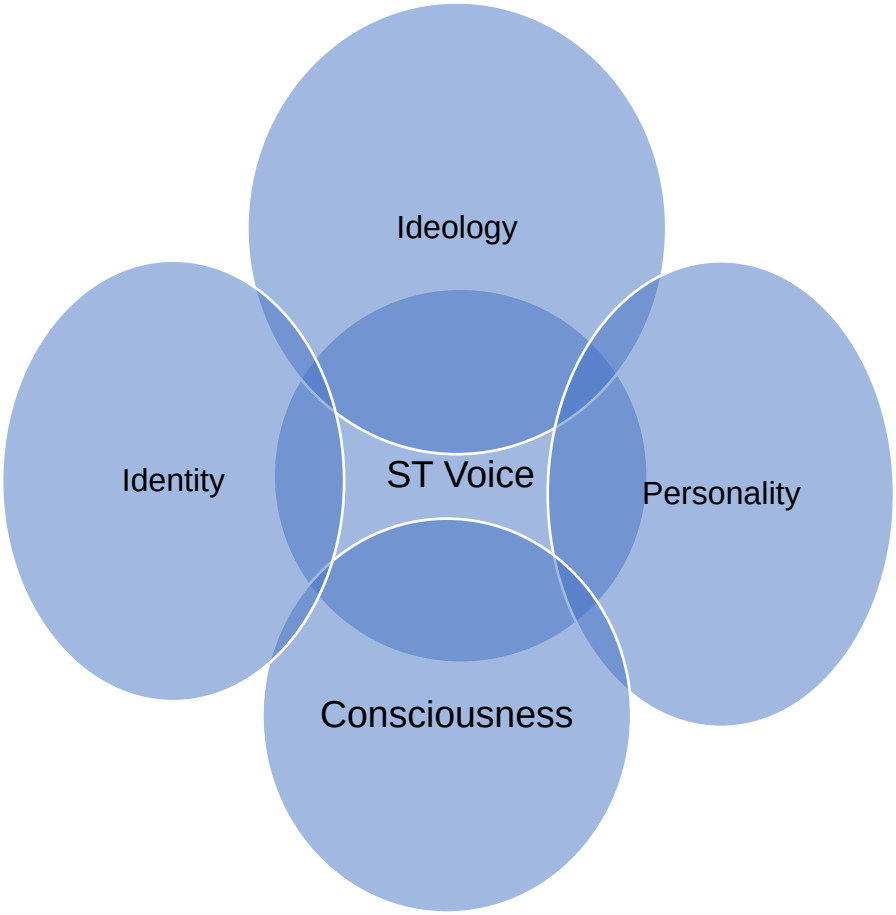

Figure 4.3.1. Preliminary set of dimensions of a ST voice

As Figure 4.3.1. demonstrates, all four dimensions overlap and present fuzzy boundaries, which means the same characteristics of voice fall into more than one dimension. Despite the absence of clear-cut distinction between the dimensions, if applied jointly, they provide a framework for establishing the uniqueness of ST voices for the purpose of this analysis.[107]

[107] Textual parameters allocated to each dimension are discussed in Section 4.4. "Methods for the analysis", whereas here I focuse on building the theoretical model and follow on from Sections 4.1. and 4.2.

Temporality is a defining factor, which is why rather than talking of a complete textual representation of a voice, this thesis refers to a snapshot of voice. As discussed earlier, snapshot indicates instantaneity. If a mirror could be transposed from the visual to the audio plane, using Bakhtin's understanding of a voice as a mirror reflection of consciousness,[108] each represents a snapshot captured at a particular moment of time. Voices are not static, neither are *personality*, *consciousness* and *identity.* They undergo continuous shifts and transformations. Therefore, a snapshot of a voice at one moment in time allows us to access an impressionist sketch of a voice fixed in time and presented to us.

Including temporality establishes the boundaries for this research, which does not seek to claim that each voice is a definitive representation of its speaker. Snapshots of audio self-portraits in a given moment of time, as recorded by Alexievich, become the subject matter for the analysis in Chapter Five. The purpose here is to examine one recorded unique imprint of a speaker, what I call a "voiceprint". The process resembles an Impressionistic work of art,[109] for while we cannot study or comprehend nature in its completeness, we can perceive a snapshot of it as recorded by an artists at a particular moment of time rather than an accomplished concept. Voice as a snapshot is represented in Figure 4.3.2.

[108] Discussed in Section 4.1. with reference to Bakhtin.

[109] "Impressionism is based on the practice of painting out of doors and spontaneously 'on the spot' rather than in a studio from sketches". (Tate, [no date], no page)

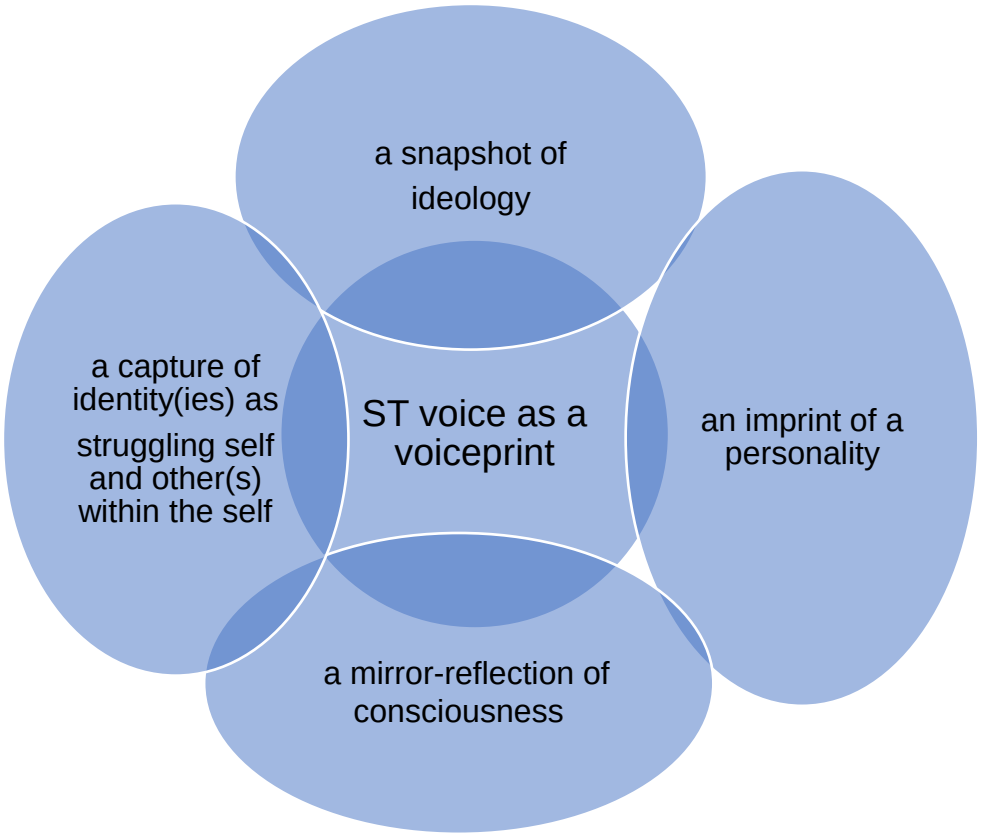

Figure 4.3.2. Temporal structure of ST voice.

Voice undergoes stages in its journey to the SL reader. Firstly, it is externalized by the speaker. Each speaker addresses Alexievich but the real listener is more likely to be imaginary or perceived persons, whereas Alexievich serves as a substitute in flesh for the imaginary others. The audience for every voice is perceived rather than real, and Alexievich acts as a mirror reflecting voices to readers. A snapshot of a voice is selected by Alexievich from a longer recording and transcribed. As a self-portrait, it reflects the speaker's understanding of the world, the Other and the Self. It contains the speaker's ideology, reveals self-identification and personality, and this is a snapshot of a consciousness. The next stage represents the clash of the speaker's inner world with three categories of ST readers. The first category of these is Alexievich who compiles and edits the voices and shapes them by means of subheadings and personal inserts (her voice). In Section 3.2. I compared two ST editions of *Chernobyl prayer* to see how she shapes and re-shapes the polyphony before presenting it to the ST reader. Section 3.2. demonstrates that the supratextual and paratextual inserts do not affect the polyphony but might pre-

condition the reader as they carry their own ideological narrative. This revealed that the personality of the writer and constitute her identity and consciousness quest that takes place alongside that of the other speakers. The analysis in Chapter Five takes this into consideration. The second category consists of the speakers who see their recorded statements in print and look back at their snapshots from a different temporal point. By then their voices and self-perception might have changed and they might have produced alternative, different statements. The third category comprises a wide range of readers (including the press, scholars and general readers, as discussed in Section 2.1). Their views create reflections on the voices, as each reader interprets the ST in a unique way.

As this analysis is conducted by one ST reader, it also provides a singular interpretation through the prism of the author of this thesis. A singular perspective, nonetheless, does not invalidate this analysis, for it is grounded in the theoretical framework and shared culture and discourse with the ST society, for I am also a *homo sovieticus.* The multitude of reflections and snapshots become the focal point of the methodology for the analysis in Chapter Five, as according to Bakhtin, voices can only perceive themselves through their reflections in the eyes of the listener (or perceived listener, as discussed above).

The second phase of the methodology outlines the theoretical model to assess to what extent the distinction between ST voices is preserved in translation and what alterations and shifts can be found in the existing translations into English. Here, the comparative analysis looks at the transformation of polyphony and seeks to explore whether anything could be done in translation to preserve the originality of the ST voices according to the four dimensions as outlined in the Figures 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.

In the analysis of the translated polyphonic voices, I look for the alterations in comparison with the ST voices. ST voices serve as a base for the analysis, and any semantic, pragmatic and other shifts are considered as affecting polyphony in translation. Consequently, all dimensions applied in the ST analysis remain the same for the comparative analysis, i.e. I study shifts in the ideological dimension within the translated voices, alterations in their personalities, the presence of consciousness and how it is different from that in the respective ST voice and manifestation of a potential struggle of identities within one voice,

if it is present in the ST counterpart. Textual clues and markers assigned to each dimension are discussed in Section 4.4.

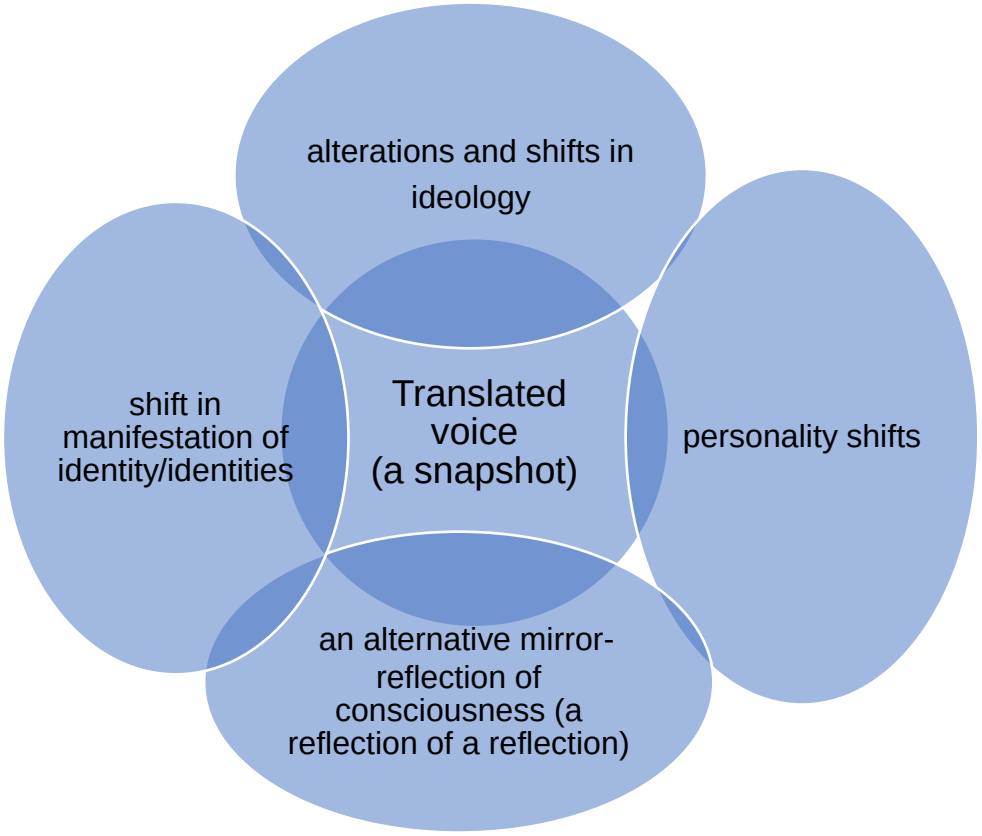

Figure 4.3.3. A snapshot of a voice in translation

As seen in Figure 4.3.3., the model for the TT voice is very similar to that of its ST counterpart. The comparative phase of the analysis evaluates ST voices against their TT reflections in English.[110]

[110]An independent analysis of the TT voices does not form part of this thesis because while it is true that I assess whether polyphony can be preserved in translation, in this research I am interested in a very specific polyphony, i.e. the ST polyphony in Alexievich's writing. This thesis places value on the diversity of the ST voices and the analysis of translation is conducted with ST voices as the benchmark.

In sum, this methodology assigns the following same set of dimensions to ST and TT voice (a snapshot of a voice), as demonstrated on Figure 4.3.4.

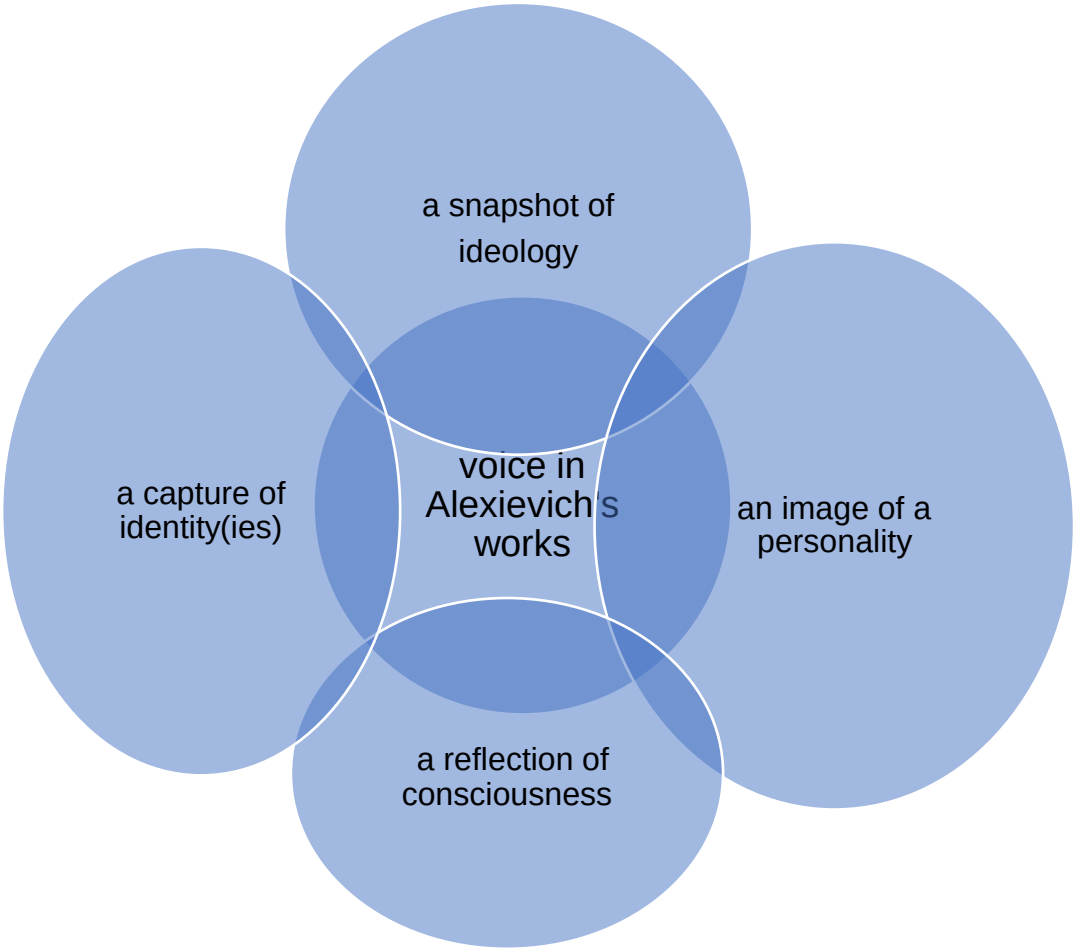

Figure 4.3.4. Dimensions of voice in Alexievich's works: theoretical framework

4.4. Application of methodology: methods for the analysis

The methods applied to the two-stage textual analysis presented in Chapter Five derives from the dimensions of voice discussed in Section 4.3. For the purpose of this analysis, every voice is a statement of one speaker at one point in time and is treated as one complete textual unit, i.e. a *snapshot*. If the same speaker appears in the book several times, every appearance gives a different snapshot of voice and for the purpose of the analysis is treated as a different textual unit, and is considered to be a separate voice. Some voices are represented as blocks of text visually separated from other voices by additional blank lines before the beginning and after the end. In other instances, each speaker produces only a singular narrative.

Methods for the application of the first stage of this textual analysis have been devised to suit the purpose of a comparative textual analysis based on a selection of ST voices from the Russian originals. The purpose here is to establish what makes each voice unique and different from another, and how this is manifested by textual markers. To distinguish the difference between voices I look for textual markers to apply to the set of four dimensions outlined in the previous section,[111] i.e. in accordance with those dimensions, a voice in Alexievich's works is considered as a snapshot of ideology (ideological dimension), an image of personality in time (personality dimension), a mirror reflection of consciousness/inner world of a speaker as externalized through his/her voice (dimension of consciousness), and the capture of multiple identities within one speaker (dimension of identity). These markers allocated to each dimension provide a frame to show uniqueness of each voice and draw boundaries between voices.

Figure 4.4.1. represents the ST voice through four dimensions with their designated textual markers. This forms the practical framework for the purpose of this ST analysis. The dimensions and their textual markers are adjusted to take into account Alexievich's perspective on what she sees as significant in each voice, as discussed in Section 3.2.,

[111] See Section 4.3. and Figures 4.3.1., 4.3.2, 4.3.3.

whereby, based on the outcome of the comparative analysis of two editions of the same book *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]*, it was established that regional language, dialectical lexis and colloquialisms were altered in the later edition. The analysis in Section 3.2. demonstrated that the more recent edition did not retain the fluctuations in register of different speakers, i.e. the utterances that did not conform to the norms of standard written Russian were "embellished" to comply with such norms. These elements in writing may have been subject to the editorial restrictions on the part of publishers and so they cannot serve as indicators of the originality of each voice. This analysis excludes regional variations as well as dialect, colloquial words and fluctuation of register. The analysis of such components of a vernacular language within each voice would be better analysed directly from the unedited original audio recordings.

Figure 4.4.1. Textual markers for dimensions of a voice in Alexievich's works for ST analysis

As indicated by Figure 4.4.1., textual markers for the ideological dimension include allegories and metaphors, parables, cultural and social references of shared discourse. All these indicators help to interpret the pragmatics and semantics of the ST voice. The emotional load forms part of the ideological message, and that is why it is important to look for textual markers to assess emotion, i.e. qualifying adjectives, ellipses, syntactic variations etc. Textual markers to identify the presence of several identities within one voice, i.e. the struggle of the self and the other(s), incorporate fluctuations in the self-reference pronouns, such as “I”, “we”, “they”, which reveals a potential struggle of the speaker to position him-/her-self or identify his/her role in the narrated story.

Any internal discontent within one self could transpire through a sudden change of syntax within a sentence, or the use of ellipses as well as through duality of ideological messages within one voice. Another dimension, i.e. a personality snapshot of a voice, is manifested through the textual markers indicative of the speaker's syntactic patterns (length and structure of the sentences), embedded ideological messages, allegories and textual markers indicating emotionality. The fourth dimension refers to a voice being a mirror-reflection of a consciousness, i.e. an externalized expression of the inner world of a speaker. Such an external version of a snapshot of a soul could be manifested by a voice either intentionally or subconsciously, as conversations with Alexievich often were perceived as intimate with high degree of trust built in between the interlocutors. This dimension at the textual level transpires through complete or incomplete sentences, ellipses, adjectives, metaphorical and allegorical language, emotional markers and textual markers indicating self-evaluation. Ellipses,[112] which are indicative of the originality of each voice and as such appear as important textual markers of all four dimensions and, as can be seen from the above

[112] See 3.2. for detailed discussion on ellipses

breakdown of textual markers by dimensions of voice, represent a crucial part of this study, even though they might carry an element of Alexievich's interpretation.

Both parts of the analysis draw on concepts from *Практическая стилистика русского языка [Applied stylistics of the Russian language]* by Ditmar Rozental. The book, although written a few decades ago, is still considered the definitive explanation and interpretation of rules of Russian grammar and what constitutes one style in Russian language. In particular, it focuses on the literary devices used in journalism (Rozental, 1977, p.36) and the convincing effect of colloquial language when used in writing (Rozental, 1977, p.40-41). Rozental's concepts are applied to draw on compatibility between SL and TL linguistic systems and their perceived impact on the target audience, which makes close translation from Russian into English possible through the application of deviant literary language to expand boundaries and allow source-text messages flow into the target text. In this context, referring to the journalistic style ("газетный стиль"[newspaper style]) Rozental argues the following:

> The language of the newspaper is multistylistic, for all styles of the literary language co-exist in a newspaper column […] Another case is – "newspaper language" with the understanding that has been attached to it. […] To write in "newspaper language" means to write simplistically, business-like, economically, widely using standards of speech and clichés.[113]
>
> [Язык газеты многостилен, так как на газетной полосе уживаются все стили литературного языка […] Другое дело – «газетный язык» в том понимании , которое за ним закрепилось. […] Писать «газетным языком» – значит писать просто, деловито, экономно, широко используя речевые стандарты и клише.]
>
> (Rozental, 1977, p.39)

Alexievich is a professional journalist but in transcribing voices she preserves the originality of each voice and the multivoicedness of her writing also becomes multistylistic, which, according to Rozental, is fully acceptable within journalism. In

[113] Here and further in 4.4. all translations are my unless stated otherwise

assessing translations of those voices, similarly, I look for "multistylisticity", which would correspond to the polyphonic effect. In other words, what is labelled by Rozental as "newspaper language" in Russian is examined in translation.

In analysing the style, Joanna Thornborrow suggests breaking down the whole text into parts and study relationship between those parts to increase understanding and appreciation of it:

> [s]tylistic analysis of a text allows us to […] examine the workings of a text. This breaking down of the text into component parts enables us to analyse each component on its own terms, and understand how it fits together with other components. When it's put back together again, into a sentence, or a set of sentences, we can then see more clearly the relationships between them which will increase our understanding and consequently our appreciation of the text as a whole. (Thornborrow, 2005, p.50)

In polyphonic discourse, such deconstruction could be applied to each voice which in turn could be seen as part of the whole. A voice becomes a text and relationships of its parts are studies within its completeness. After deconstructing a voice in this manner, individual elements of style could be used to determine dimensions of voice to serve as a framework for reconstructing the meaning in the target-language text. Moreover, Thornborrow states that contemporary stylistics incorporates linguistic theories but also takes into account the awareness of "the contextual factors, which influence interpretation and make it possible to extract several different meanings from the same text" (Thornborrow, 2005, p.7). At the core of Alexievich's works is the polyphonic aspect that produces multiple styles as a means of delivering a multitude of messages and meanings that externalize ideologies and the inner worlds of the speakers.

Thornborrow is making an important point by insisting on contextual factors as well as linguistic ones. This is why stylistics is distinct from linguistics. As discussed earlier, style is innate to each author, including translators who alter the style of the original and in the polyphonic text, if they manage to produce a polyphony which is distinguishable and audible for the TL reader, it will be a polyphonic effect, i.e. a superficial element of polyphony. In this analysis I am interested in the core of the messages, the meanings produced by each ST voice. I assess style as a form given to a meaning. If the ST meaning

is preserved but the style is homogenous as a result of being produced by one translator I would find it acceptable. Notwithstanding that . if textual analysis determine a superficial presence of polyphony but the ideologies are shifted, the identities are lost and the consciousness no longer express what they did in the ST, this would be considered as a substitution of polyphony by one homogenous voice, following the Bakhtinian concept.

Ellipses form part of the system of clues and markers devised by these methods for the analysis and feed into the framework of the theoretical concepts just as Alexievich's way of recording silences represents her stylistic input as a transcriber of stories. As stated by Lenart-Cheng,

> [t]he idea of the 'unspeakable' has since become a key paradigm of memory studies and trauma studies. The inadequacy of language to express and the failure of reason to comprehend trauma has often been used as an explanation and even valorization of silence. Alexievich's stories, too, are punctuated by long silences, marked by frequent ellipses in the text (Lenart-Cheng, 2020, p.85)

This indicates Alexievich's attempt to preserve the tone and the pace of the voices as she heard them. While her techniques might be the same across different voices, they allow access to the individuality of each speaker through the dimension of consciousness, which is linked to the *spiritual world* of the voices.

Another linguistic marker linked to the dimension of consciousness, as well as to the dimension of ideology is metaphor. Andrew Goatly believes that metaphors demonstrate "in an exaggerated way, how all language-based classification constructs a representation of experience on the basis of selective perception and selective ignoring of the aspects of the world" (Goatly, 2008, p.3). Through metaphor voices externalize their personal experience and shape their perception of the external world and the events with their audience in mind. Metaphors are valuable in this analysis as not only do they give insight into the speakers' inner worlds but they might help to distinguish between voices serving as makers of difference.

In my aim to determine the presence of polyphonic voices, this analysis is positioned as a hybrid, which means a combination of systematic and non-systematic approaches. While

looking to establish whether there is a clearly distinguishable difference between individual voices in the source text, it examines whether voices appear different through textual markers. In so doing, the analysis looks for textual clues to correspond to the dimensions of voice and apply the method outlined in this section. At the same time, in order to avoid pre-conditioning the analysis by no means is confined to the pre-set characteristics of voice. Instead, it keeps an open-minded approach and maintain flexibility in hopes of discovering possible additional characteristics and parameters which might be present and distinguishable within the source-language text. In combination, the dimensions pre-set by the methodology regarding Alexievich's priorities in preserving voices in her editions, and any other non-systematic characteristics of voice that transpire in the course of analysis should help to answer what is voice in Alexievich's writing and what is it within each voice that could be classed as important to preserve in translation. The ST analysis paves the way to the second stage, of. what happens to voices after they undergo the process of translation.

At the second stage, voices are selected and compared from two original editions of Alexievich's works to the corresponding voices in their translations into English considering how much of the original voices were preserved or omitted in translation and how this affects the polyphonic aspect by means of analysis which is conducted on the parallel textual pairs compiled from the randomly selected ST voices from the two editions and their English translations. The analysis looks into the nature and extent of the potential shifts and alterations introduced in the process of translation, including as a result of reframing.[114] Any changes are compared and contrasted against the four dimensions and assigned to them corresponding textual markers. The comparative analysis aims to establish in which way polyphony of the TT voices is different from their ST counterparts.

[114] Reframing is discussed in detail in Sections 2.3. and 4.3. of this thesis and refers to translators altering the meaning of the ST narratives in accordance with their own personal, public and state narratives to which they submit.

The textual analysis of ST-TT voice transition derives on the classification of lexical meanings in translation suggested by David Cruse (1986) and detailed by Mona Baker (2011, p.11). They include propositional meaning, expressive meaning, presupposed meaning and evoked meaning (Baker, 2011, p.11). Propositional meaning is a direct explicit message conveyed in semantic and pragmatic terms. It can be perceived as the most straightforward and the least dependent on cultural boundaries, as it relies on the referential meaning of words that can be verified in a bilingual dictionary. "When a translation is described as 'inaccurate', it is often the propositional meaning that is being called into question" (Baker, 2011, p.11).

Conversely, as Baker asserts, expressive meaning "cannot be judged as true or false [… as it] relates to the speaker's feelings or attitude rather than to what words and utterances refer to" (Baker, 2011, p.11). The emotional load of the messages, ideological standpoint and other subjective elements within the utterances fall under the category of the expressive meaning. Conveying this meaning in translation is open to multiple interpretations but is important to this analysis, as it forms part of a personality of a voice and could also aid in establishing multiple identities within one voice. Textual clues leading to decoding meaning and its shifts in translation are assigned to all four dimensions of voice in the context of this thesis.

Presupposed meaning refers to the limits imposed on a translator due to the collocational and selectional restrictions determined by the TL (Baker, 2011, p.12). As the norms and standards of the respective languages, are partly conditioned by syntactic variations between languages, English-specific analysis helps to understand the restrictions that translators have to navigate. Here, this analysis employs certain elements of the frameworks provided by Noel Burton-Roberts (2022) and Mick Short (1996). Burton-Roberts discusses English syntax in great detail (2022), whereas Short looks at the textual analysis through the prism of grammatical and literary devices in the context of different forms of English writing.

Short's approach to stylistic analysis through description, interpretation and evaluation (Short, 1996, p.3) is useful to interpret implicit utterances by means of explicit justification. For instance, comparing normal and abnormal paradigms (Short, 1996, p.7) in

the course of interpreting the contextual meaning of a metaphor used by a speaker is helpful to analyse shifts and alterations in expressive meaning. Short suggests textual analysis through grammatical parallelism (1997, p.23), semantic, lexical and grammatical deviations (1997, pp.43-47), lexical deviations. He also looks into the links between sound, meaning and effect (Short, 1997, Ch.4), which is important in understanding how translated voices "sound" and can be perceived in their written form by the TT reader. Short's approach to linguistic analysis and Burton-Robert's syntactic analysis of English sentences help to bring textual clues into the linguistic context in the course of assessing the presence and transformation of polyphony in translation.

The evoked meaning in Cruse-Baker's classification refers to the dialect and register (Baker, 2011, p.13). As revealed by comparative analysis of two ST editions of the same book (see Section 3.2.), regionalisms, dialect words and register underwent some significant transformations from one edition to another and for that reason are disregardedfrom both stages of this analysis. It is accepted in this thesis that Alexievich may have prioritized some aspects of voice and dismissed its other aspects or the abovementioned characteristics of voice that form evoked meaning may have been edited by the publisher to comply with norms and rules of the standard literary Russian.[115]

[115] This is discussed and analysed in detail in Section 3.2.

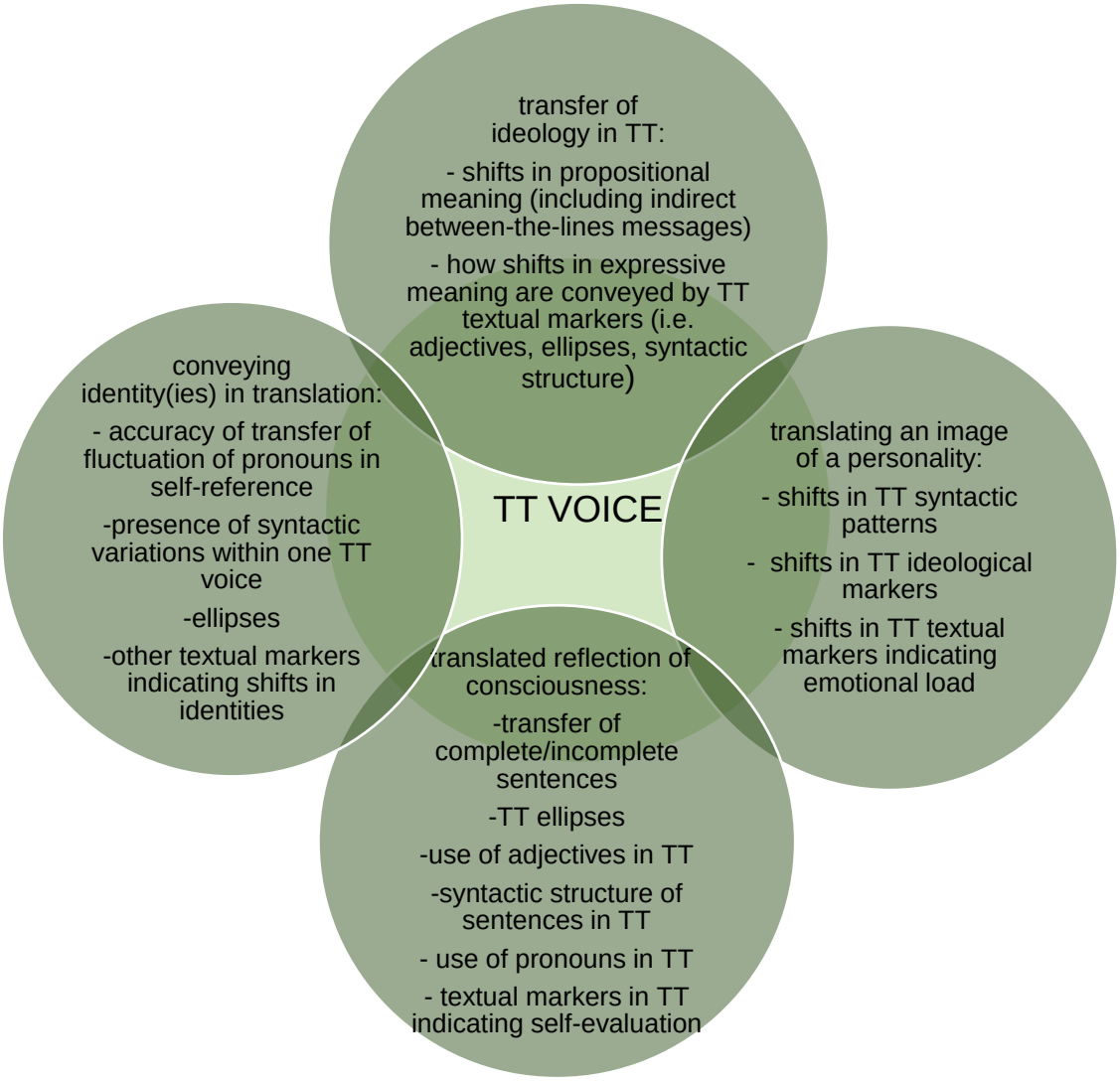

Figure 4.4.2. Textual markers for the four dimensions in a translated voice in Alexievich's works for the comparative ST-TT analysis.

Discussing ways of assessing the presence of voices in translation, I refer to Basil Hatim and Ian Mason who underline the necessity "to elaborate a set of parameters for analysis which aim to promote consistency and precision in the discussion of translating and translations" (Hatim, Mason, 1990, p.5).The criteria found in the source text should serve as markers and parameters to shape the analysis of the target text with the purpose to achieve consistency and precision for each voice in translation, to reflect the endeavour of Alexievich's lifelong journey to understand *homo sovieticus* and share her understanding with the reader. In addressing the challenge of translating voices, Nida's "principle of equivalence of effect on reader of the target text" (cited in Hatim, Mason, 1990, p.7) could

offers a potential solution where the effect on the target-text reader is balanced against that of the source-text reader. To put it bluntly, something that is likely to make the ST readers sad should not be converted into something that would make the TT readers laugh. To navigate from this over-simplified scale towards nuances, some mitigation between ST and TT might be necessary in respect of the differences in the norms of both languages and culture. This does not negate the need and the possibility to look for translational solutions that would have an equivalent effect on the readers on both sides of the linguo-cultural border.

The ST-TT analysis assesses four dimensions of voice in translation. As Figure 4.4.2. shows, textual markers for each dimension of TT voices assume a connection to their respective ST parallel pair and are there to assist with the comparative aspect of the analysis. Exploring the transfer of ideology in translation, the analysis looks for potential shifts in the propositional and expressive meaning, including messages embedded between the lines, as well as how shifts in expressive meaning are conveyed through the TT textual markers, such as adjectives, ellipses, syntactic structure and others. The snapshot of a personality can be conveyed in translation by markers indicative of the TT speaker's style, as well as syntactic patterns and textual markers related to the ideology and emotional load; whereas shifts in the dimension of consciousness in the TT can be manifested through complete vs incomplete sentences, ellipses, adjectives and overall syntactic structure in every TT voice compared to his/her ST counterpart. Pronouns and other textual markers indicating self-evaluation also play a significant part in this analysis. To evaluate how identities are conveyed in translation, it is deemed necessary to assessthe transfer of the fluctuation of pronouns in self-reference, i.e. the fluidity of self-perception by a voice expressed through a range of pronouns. Here, the analysis also looks for a presence of syntactic variations within one TT voice, as well as ellipses and other textual markers indicating shifts in semantics.

The comparative analysis explores the translation of the ST metaphors which are culture bound and represent a challenge. Potentially, when translators look for equivalents to

metaphors in the TL, [116] they might deviate from ST propositional meaning either due to the non-equivalence problem or because of their subjective perception of a metaphor. In the comparative analysis metaphors can be linked to several dimensions of voice. The metaphoric language in translation might give an insight into a translator's mind insofar as re-evaluation of the ST content could be exposed. In my opinion the interpretative power of translators is at the strongest and at the most creative when they deal with metaphors. Metaphors are evocative, they bring connotations which resonate with the translator's personal narratives, which is why while looking for a variable cultural equivalent,[117] translators might present the TT reader with the lexical choice based on their own frames,[118] and understanding of the ST content.

[116] For more on equivalency in translation see Nida, Venuti and other scholars in translation studies.

[117] Term introduced by Venuti (2019).

[118] See Baker for narratives, framing and re-framing, and discussed earlier in this thesis.

5. Analysis of Alexievich's polyphonic writing

5.1. Distinguishing voices from each other in Alexievich's source text

Время секонд хэнд [Rus] [Second-hand time] – comparative analysis of ST voices in 2013 edition (reprinted in 2016)

The sample includes voices collected from the sections "Записки соучастника" ["Notes of an accomplice"], "Из уличного шума и разговоров на кухне (1991-2001)" ["From the street noise and conversations in the kitchen (1991-2001")] and "Про всё" ["About everything"] in part one "Утешение апокалипсом" ["Consolation by apocalypse"], and from the section "О настоящем" ["About the present"] in part two "Обаяние пустоты" ["Enchantment of the void"].[119]

It contains two types of data. The first type represents different *snapshots* of Alexievich's voice, which looks at variations in tone and how those reflect through four dimensions of voice outlined in the methodology (Fig. 4.3.3.) and applies textual markers (Fig. 4.4.1.) to find characteristics of each dimension within the snapshots. Distinguishing her voice from voices others helps to identify multivocality, i.e. the diversity and contradictions within one speaker, as well as to demonstrate that even voice of one person is neither fixed, nor stationary nor homogenous. It changes, fluctuates and could sound different at different times and in different circumstances. These nuances become useful as they might help to understand better the nature of voice and what might be important to aim to preserve in translation. Such analysis of a range of snapshots of a voice of the same person could shed light on whether voice of the same person could "sound" differently in different temporalities and whether such *dimensions* of a *voice* as *ideology, personality, identity* and *consciousness* can fluctuate within one speaker. If they can, this might explain the reason behind the

[119] Here and further in this section translations are mine and provided in square brackets after the respective Russian originals. Published translations are considered in the comparative ST-TT analysis in Section 5.2.

decision of some speakers within Alexievich's writing to retract their statements and even sue her for defamation (*Vmeste s Rossiei*, 2018).[120]

The second type comprises a selection of *snapshots* of voices that belong to a range of other speakers who lived through the years of the USSR and its collapse. Their accounts cover over two decades, including the 1990s and 2000s and further shape the polyphony in the book. Similarly to the first type, the analysis of these voices seeks to identify differences between them and focuses on textual markers (Fig. 4.4.1.) assigned to four dimensions of voice (Fig. 4.3.3.). The analysis of every voice is facilitated by the fact that each utterance is separated from another by additional spacing which serves as a clearly demarcated visible boundary between voices. Since the visible boundaries are outlined by Alexievich and the publisher of the source text, this analysis of both types of data is able to focus on each voice without the need to establish where one voice transitions into another. In the books, each speaker is given one chance to voice their narratives. While the first type of data presents us with many snapshots of one voice, the second type provides only one snapshot per one voice. Therefore, any conclusions on the uniqueness of each voice are made on the basis of a singular encounter with each speaker, which is why the term "*snapshot* of a voice" is deemed as appropriate in this context.

First type of data

"Записки соучастника" ["Notes of an accomplice"] (Alexievich, 2016a, pp.7-16) includes twenty two disjointed extracts that represent snapshots of Alexievich's voice. Each snapshot is clearly demarcated by an additional space on either side and together they represent a compilation of her externalised thoughts at different moments in time. Each snapshot is analysed by employing *four dimensions* of voice to see if they are different in *ideology*, *consciousness, identity* and *personality*. The analysis assesses temporal variations within one voice and possible reasons for these fluctuations.

[120] Discussed in Section 2.1.

Ideology(-is) in her voice

Alexievich's ideological stance in the first snapshot is a mixture of emotionality and evidence. She is evaluative but claims authority of her personal experience as *homo sovieticus*: "Он – это я" ["He is I"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7), and she supports her statement with evidence: "Несколько лет я ездила по всему бывшему Советскому Союзу" ["Several years I spent going around the whole of the former Soviet Union"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7). Here, she is preparing the reader to accept her stance. She also gives authority to other voices in her book. The encompassing determiner "whole" here serves to outline the scope of the speakers, i.e. in gathering evidence she covered the entire USSR. She protagonises the key concepts of the Soviet era, for example "[у] коммунизма был безумный план..." [communism had an insane plan…"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7) and refers to *homo sovieticus* as a "персонаж" ["character"] (ibid.) as in a theatrical play. This is her attempt to recreate a *collective kitchen ideology* of *homo sovieticus* by positioning herself as a distant observer who is looking back at the unfolding drama of the USSR through the prism of many perspectives.

The next snapshot concerns her personal ideological stance towards the Soviet era. She shares what is important to her within Soviet socialism as a private individual: "[м]еня всегда привлекает вот это маленькое пространство – человек... один человек" ["I am always attracted to that little space – a person… one person" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8). As one of *homo sovieticus*, she includes here her own personal space to the judgement of the reader. She confesses that she might have been content living within the Soviet system: "Разочарование пришло позже" ["The disappointment came later"] (ibid) and adds apologetically "Это была просто наша жизнь" ["It was simply our life"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8). This snapshot is different ideologically from the previous one because of the increased emotionality, openness and sincerity. Her ideology becomes vulnerable to judgement. She is not providing evidence because she entrusts herself to her reader. This is her *intimate ideology*.

Other snapshots from the selected sample further represent Alexievich's ideological shifts, as she is trying to re-create for her readers her interpretation and re-interpretation of the polyphony of the "Советской цивилизации..."["Soviet civilization…"] (Alexievich, 2016a,

p.11). To her, the USSR has meant her friends, her life. She is almost sad to see it vanish: “Тороплюсь запечатлеть её следы...” [“[I am] racing to capture its footprints”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.11). She is evaluating herself and her place in the USSR, and she is evaluating the era through people who lived through it. She tries to detach herself from the narrative(s) and begins to introduce voices, for instance through questions “Что такое – Свобода?” (Alexievich, 2016a, p.12) [“What is – Freedom?”]. While looking at the events through the other speakers, like she tries on different ideologies.

Struggle of her multiple identities

Her effort to stay impartial fluctuates from one snapshot to another and reveals her internal struggle of self-identification ethnically and as *homo sovieticus.* It also demonstrates her dilemma of partiality and impartiality.

The analysis of self-referential pronouns in the first snapshot demonstrates that she switches between the collective “we”, personal “I” and impersonal statements “одни считают” [“some think”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7). She invites the reader to join her collective “we”: “Мы прощаемся с советским временем” [“We are bidding farewell to the Soviet time”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7) and includes herself through the personal pronoun “I” and, in an attempt to remain impartial, she clarifies “Я пытаюсь честно выслушать всех участников драмы…” [“I sincerely try to hear out all participants of the drama…”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7). Here she draws a line between the collective “we” of all *homo sovieticus*, of whom she is part, and herself as a listener, a “human ear” (Alexievich, 2015b, p.4) but also and importantly, as a detached observer, which is underlined by the adjective “sincerely” and the statement “all participants”. She does not avoid a subtle qualitative evaluation, by using the noun “drama” as if comparing the reality of their lives to a theatrical performance set out against the backdrop of the USSR.

She juxtaposes the impersonal tone, drawing on the variety of the paraphrased narratives: “Одни считают…” [“Some consider…”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7) with the personal and hesitant “Мне кажется” [“It seems to me”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7). Her pensive tone is consistent from the first statement to the second. In the former, it is expressed by an ellipsis, in the latter through the structure “it seems”. At the same time she counter positions herself

against the third person collective plural "some" with the intimate "I". She continues to toy with her identities as an observer and a participant because here both "some" and "I/me" draw on the same events and the belonging to the same collective/shared narrative is primary. In this first snapshot, there is a subtle struggle of two identities, that of an observer and of a participant.

In contrast, in the second snapshot, she speaks with confidence. "Меня всегда привлекает вот это маленькое пространство – человек… один человек" ["I am always attracted to this small space – a human… one human"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8). She outlines the focus of her personal, almost intimate endeavour and invites the reader to join her on her journey. Here, she also shares with the reader her intimate desire to understand as a human as well as stating her position as an observer. The *self-reference* pronoun she uses is "I". The sentence contains a *dash* and an *ellipsis*, as discussed in Section 3.2. with reference to Ishchiuk (2015) ellipsis can either indicate emotionality or embedded between the lines statement of the author. Here, most likely it is intended to indicate a pensive pause, as it is followed by a repetition of the noun "human", as if reevaluating her own thoughts on the subject. The dash underscores the importance of the concept of "human" to her lifelong endeavour. Her identity as the writer here transpires as an intimate conversation with her audience. Here we could almost speak of her externalized consciousness, as the structure of the sentence is not directed to any particular listener, it is not interactive. She is haunted by the ghost of *homo sovieticus.*

She then outlines the boundaries of *homo sovieticus* – "это не только русские, но и белорусы, туркмены, украинцы, казахи…" ["these are not only Russians, but also Belarusians, Turkmens, Ukrainians, Kazakhs…"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7). She concludes with an emotional exclamation "Узнаешь сразу!" ["You will recognise {them/us[121]} immediately!"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7), which brings the emotional undertone to the foreground. Here, she endorses every speaker as part of the same "breed" of people. In

[121] The pronoun in the ST is not used which creates an ambiguity and opens room for interpretations.

Russian, the syntax of the exclamation could imply either "them" or "us", but in the statement "[э]то была просто наша жизнь" ["[i]t was simply our life"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.7) she uses the collective pronoun "our". This confirms that her identity is inseparable from the other speakers as *homo sovieticus.* Then she switches onto the personal "I" when she states "[п]ишу, разыскиваю по крупицам, по крохам историю «домашнего ... «внутреннего» социализма" [{I} am writing, seeking by grains and by crumbs the story/history of 'domestic' … 'internal' socialism"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8). Here, she is a lot more personal and philosophical. There is a lot more poise in tone of her voice, and the tempo of her speech slows down. Nine lines of this snapshot contain three ellipses. Having said that, unlike in the first snapshot, these do not represent a change in the subject or interrupt the thought but rather to stop and contemplate, then to continue. The flow of her thinking is not abrupt, it is almost incantatory. Her sentences are long, grammatically complete, calm and factual. There is no anger, no frustration, no adjectives of extremity. This is an attempt to share and evaluate. This is a reflection. Here, she is an *explorer* of the human soul in the context of *homo sovieticus,* and of her own soul as one of them.

The struggle of identities continues but changes its form in the third snapshot. She no longer self-identifies as a detached observer but becomes a representative of a collective account on behalf of *homo sovieticus*. The collective "все ждали" ["everyone was waiting"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.9) is supported by multiple citations from Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky from the archives (Alexievich, 2016a, p.9). She continues to justify her ideology but she transforms her role. Her voice now intends to evoke horror by revealing the facts behind the formation of Soviet socialism, but it also implies hope. This is her recollection of the feelings of the Nineties and she looks back with nostalgia. "…Счастливое время!" ["…Happy time!"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.9). In this snapshot her voice is very *emotional*, full of *ellipses*, *exclamations, questions, self-interruptions.* The syntax is abrupt, short, some sentences are incomplete. There is a strong excitement. She is reviving the memory of the complex turbulent time, which to her was a happy time, a time of revelations and hope for freedom. Here, she identifies as a *vox populi*.

Externalised consciousness

A philosophical question posed by her in the first snapshot “Сколько может стоить человеческая жизнь …?” [“How much can a human life cost…?”] (Alexievich, 2106a, p.7) is emotionally powerful and can be interpreted as an appeal of her *consciousness*. Ellipsis here is likely to be an indication of cutting short a thought. This is a fundamental question for her as someone whose endeavour is to understand the soul of *homo sovieticus.*

In the second snapshot her voice comes across as almost angry. There is frustration and criticism of *homo sovieticus*: “мы полны ненависти и предрассудков” [“we are full of hatred and prejudice”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8). She is ashamed of the legacy of this “breed” of people to which she belongs.

Her personality through the snapshots of her voice

Each snapshot reveals a slightly different angle of her personality. Considering *emotionality* as one of the textual markers (Fig. 4.4.1.), her mood changes from one snapshot to another. For example, in the second snapshot she maintains a calm and pensive tone even in the shorter simple sentences. “Тогда мы мало о ней говорили” [Then/in those days, we spoke little about it] (Alexievich 2016a, p.8). It is factual with a very subtle touch of regret and nostalgia but the tone remains calm, philosophical and reflective. There are no adjectives to indicate emotional instability, only a verb and an adverb.

The *syntactic structure* of sentences in two different snapshots of Alexievich’s voice on pages 8 and 9 reveal two different personality images. The informative and reflective tone of the first snapshot shows Alexievich’s pragmatic and critically-evaluative side (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8) where she is self-composed, philosophical and calm; and the latter has an emotional tone which is involved and passionate about the subject matter (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8). For instance, the compound sentence of the first out of these snapshots “[э]то был социализм, и это была просто наша жизнь’” [“[t]his was socialism, and this was simply our life”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8) juxtaposes socialism and life. Here, Alexievich evaluates one against the other, i.e. the major historic setting against an everyday life. The conjunction “and” unites the two, opening a variety of interpretations, i.e. that the two dimensions either merge or complement each other, or just coexist on the same spatial and temporal plane.

In contrast, the second snapshot, “[м]ы – первые!” [“we are the first!”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.9) comes across as emotional and proud. It is as if she joins the voice of her father in his patriotic pride for the achievements of the Soviet Union. In this narrative she introduces her father’s ideology, and here sentences come across as Soviet slogans. They are short and sharp. Although the ideology seemingly is not hers, she does not fence off the proud statements, on the contrary, she joins in their mood. It could be interpreted both as her father’s and her own opinion. Or rather that she might be trying to re-evaluate events through the eyes of her father. She follows it by another statement with a tint of a bitter irony “Мы всё можем!” [“We can do everything!”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.9) and adds an explanation “[t]hat is how they were bringing us up!”(Alexievich, 2016a, p.9), which opens a range of possibilities as to whether those values expressed in sentences two and three come as a result of this upbringing and reflect her own personal opinion, or she is able to detach herself from them and merely quotes her father. This is a melange of her personality and an attempt to re-create that of her father.

While these snapshots could be seen as different sides of her complex personality, they overlap. Here, her ideology is mixed up with the ideology of her father and the boundary is fuzzy. Moreover, the self-referential pronoun “we” can be interpreted as ironic about the collective intoxication by the socialist ideas or indeed as self-identification with them. In the latter snapshot it appears like her father lives through her and speaks through her.

Second type of data

The second type of data consists of randomly selected voices representing a range of speakers from the section “Из уличного шума и разговоров на кухне (1991-2001)” [“From street noise and kitchen chats (1991-2001”] and from the section “Про всё” [“About everything”] of part one “Утешение апокалипсом” [“Consolation by apocalypse”] (Alexievich, 2016a). In the source text voices are separated by blank lines and appear as blocks of text enclosed by the quotation marks. In this analysis, some utterances are used more than once because the same utterance might contain markers that lead to identifying two or more dimensions of voice. The gender of each speaker sometimes can be identified through Russian grammar, i.e. by the respective endings of

nouns, adjectives and verbs in the past tense. Sometimes, the syntax of the sentences does not reveal the gender. In these instances, I apply “they/them” as a gender-neutral pronoun.

Ideologies

The tone of the first voice is overtly critical. The grammar reveals the gender of the speaker as masculine. The opening statement openly dismisses any possibility of consistency in the post-Soviet context “Я понял, что герои одного времени редко бывают героями другого времени” [“I understood that heroes of one time rarely become heroes of another time”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19). The syntax of the opening remark is pragmatic and word-efficient. There are no descriptive adjectives. The pronoun “I” clearly links the statement to its author. This statement gives an insight into his ideology, as it resonates with a “hero of our time” is a longstanding idiom in Russian culture, dating back to at least the 19th century when it was used by Mikhail Lermontov as a title for his novel and according to Anna Whinter represents “the concept of the ‘superfluous man’” (Whinter, 2010, p.1). As Lermontov’s idea of a “hero of our time” is complex, rather critical and dismissive of a concept of heroism altogether, the speaker in this snapshot might be drawing the same parallel by affixing the concept of heroism to one temporality, stating that effectively there are no heroes. Indeed, how can something be considered heroic if it is heroic today and no longer heroic tomorrow. While word “hero” could be interpreted in a variety of ways, it is unlikely that “hero” is ever used in a “heroic” context; sarcasm and irony are highly probable and would resonate with the ST audience. The speaker links the current problems to the roots of Russian culture that pre-dates the Soviet era and stretches back to the origins of the folk and fairy tales. In his evidence, he suggests that Russian fairy tales tend to have “везение” [“luck/fortune”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19) and “миг удачи” [“instance of luck”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19) as key features and that is the foundation of the Russian mentality. His ideological point is expressed with clarity and confidence. This is his verdict to the failing society that holds on to the luck and myths.

The second voice represents *an ideology of kitchen socialism*. The voice uses the collective pronoun “we” throughout the narrative, which makes the gender difficult to define due to

the particularities of Russian grammar. This indicates keeping distance from "the self" either in attempt to see "the self" as a reflection or as an attempt to hide behind the collective to gain strength of the argument and reduce sense of guilt. The tone of the narrative can be defined as ironic and sarcastic. Nevertheless, it is coated in nostalgia for "кухонная жизнь" ["'kitchen' life"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20). The irony and sarcasm might be hiding other feelings.

The third voice sees the world of his generation as of "дворников и сторожей ["streetsweepers and nightguards"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21) and juxtaposes it with the world of capitalism that replaced it. The transition he compares to the effect of a nuclear explosion "взрыв атомной бомбы" ["a nuclear explosion"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21). This tone is defensive of the old regime and rejects the new post-Soviet life. For him, the life of a Soviet streetsweeper or a nightguard allowed people to be themselves even if within their own shell, i.e. to read books and to dream. The speaker blames perestroika for ending his dream world and exposing him to a harsher reality. He repeatedly complains about money in the post-Soviet reality, about the poverty, the division of classes (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21). This voice does not want to leave the protection of the USSR.

Personality

The sentences of the first voice are abrupt, sarcastic and show frustration. Yet his speech is almost uninterrupted. The only two places where he pauses are when he refers to the "загадочная русская душа" ["mysterious Russian soul"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19) and at the end of his narrative, where he implies again that only those alien to Russian culture could be constructive in their activity (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20). There are three sets of ellipsis in the two lines of text (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19 lines 12-13). There are no other ellipses except for the concluding statement (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20 line 5). This voice is pragmatic and he does not want to accept the fuzzy presence of the "mysterious Russian soul". He is highly critical in his evaluation, he links it to poverty, and it seems that in his opinion the situation is beyond redemption: "А за душой у нас только душа" ["And there is nothing to the soul other than the soul itself"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19 line 14) and although he includes himself in the collective narrative, there is an element of almost embarrassment of such self-identification, an attempt to self-alienate, self-detach from this by means of strong criticism.

It seems that “Russian soul” is the principal object of his discontent. He sees it as flawed he does not want to be part of it. He comes across as irritated, and frustrated.

The second voice with great enthusiasm, almost like a naughty child, shares the subliminal resistance to the regime, which, although it did not lead anywhere, gave a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment. The secret conversations about politics, even in front of children (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20 line 26), listening to Vysotskii, Okudzhava, BBC (Alexievich, 2016a, p. 20), along with drinking cups of tea, coffee and shots of vodka (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20) in the company of intelligent and critically-minded friends, who would not mind a bit of a risk, such as talking to an imaginary KGB officer who might have tapped into the flat with the listening device “Вы слышите, товарищ майор?” [“Can you hear, comrade major?”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21). This snapshot is full of humour and sarcasm, and has a kind disposition, as the speaker makes reference to friendship, hospitality, and a positive attitude to the memories.

The third voice never fully adapted to the new life. He looks back with sadness and desperation. “Какая была любовь! Какие женщины! Эти женщины презирали богатых. Их нельзя было купить. А сейчас времени на чувства ни у кого нет […]” [“Oh, what love we used to have! Oh, what women! Those women scorned the rich. It was impossible to buy them. And nowadays nobody has time for feelings […]”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.22). This voice is an ode to the Soviet past, to the fairy tale that deep down he never left. He also has positive memories of the past. Unlike the second voice, this voice is not sarcastic. His fondness is straightforward and transparent. He lives in his memories and rejects the present “сейчас стыдно быть бедным, неспортивным…” [“Now it is shameful to be poor and unfit…”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21). His comfort zone is in the past, when he was able to hide from reality by inventing for himself a way of “внутренней эмиграции” [“internal emigration”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21).

The personality of the fourth voice comes through its emotional power, which is not in adjectives but rather in their absence. This voice is feminine. The verbs “не понимала” [“did not understand”], “закрывала дверь и плакала” [“{I} closed the door and cried”], “боюсь глаза поднять” [“{I} fear to lift up my eyes”] etc (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). These verbs hit the reader with the power of a bullet. They do not soften actions with embellishments. In

Russian, short and concise verbal structures like this arecogent . They seem factual and emotional at the same time. The speaker feels shame but is unashamed to share this feeling with the audience. This creates a compelling effect. Short, abrupt sentences are interrupted to allow the feelings of the source-text voice, which is full of self-directed blame.

In the narrative of the fifth voice, the speaker recollects that in their class there was a poor girl who wore the same dress for the whole year because her parents died and she lived with her grandmother. The speaker laments the lack of compassion towards the girl but unlike voice four, this voice does not take personal responsibility for the lack of compassion. Instead, the speaker generalizes "Как-то быстро стало стыдно быть бедным…" ["Somewhat quickly it became embarrassing/shameful to be poor…"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). Despite such depersonalization, there is a subliminal guilt in the personality of this voice. The emotional confusion transpires through ellipses and the indirect confession of the speaker.

Struggle of identities

The speaker of the first voice does not spare the "Russian soul" in his criticism, he does not hesitate to state that work and constructive lifestyle are alien to "us". "Заводики там строят, делают деньги. Чужие нам Штольцы…" ["Some are building factories and stuff, making money. Those alien to us Shtolts…"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20). This voice is highly self-critical of the collective "we", which to him is a representation of the "mysterious Russian soul" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19). He juxtaposes the world of dreams and fairy tales which he believes is at the core of the mentality of the collective "we" to business and constructive reality "Поговорить любим на кухне, почитать книгу" ["We like to chat in the kitchen, to read a book"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19). He blames the collective "we" for being observers rather than constructive participants: "Главная профессия – читатель. Зритель.'" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19, lines 15-16) ["The main profession is a reader. A member of the audience"]. Yet, there is a sarcasm in this voice, irony based on self-depreciation. To protect his vulnerable "self", he is wearing a mask. Reading is the source of knowledge, yet he is sarcastically sceptical about this being the main occupation of *homo sovieticus.* He sees himself as observer, reader, a member of the audience, yet he is part of *homo sovieticus.* He hides his face behind impersonal structures and the first person plural.

The “we” has no face, or looks like it could be anyone from this category of people. He is critical but the mask he is wearing allows him not to accept the liability. His mask is not part of the society that he criticises. He is a distant observer scorning the imperfections and flaws of the Russian soul of *homo sovieticus.* This speaker uses first person pronouns. Be it as it may, the way he refers to the collective “we, us” is detached and it feels almost like he does not include himself in those pronouns. His opening statement “Что я понял?” [“What did I understand?”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19) is the only time where “I” is used. This is significant, as this is the only part where he identifies with the content of his statement. The rest, i.e. what he understood makes him an observer rather than a participant. By saying “we” he does not necessarily include himself. He might not be aware of it, the internal clash of identities within him might be subconscious.

The second voice creates their own collective narrative around their personal story. Rather than positioning themselves into the collective narrative, they bring the collective narrative to their own kitchen, which takes the form “we” which disguises the vulnerable personal “I” – implied but never spoken. This voice submerges the personal self into the collective “we” of the “kitchen dissidents” (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21). There is never “I” in this voice, except for one occasion when the speaker makes the reference to his own daughter (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20) – this is a moment where the mask and “the self” become one, briefly. The descriptions of the Soviet settings including that of a substandard kitchen are sarcastic but filled with warmth and nostalgia. The adjective in the utterance, “хрущобная кухонка” [“Khrushchov-era slummy kitchenette”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20) is a cross of two words “хрущевская” [Khrushchov] and “трущобная” [slummy], which indicates the speaker’s rather critical evaluation of the place. Even though the description proceeds to describe the kitchen windowsill in great detail with generous use of diminutives “На окошке лук в баночках из-под майонеза, в горшке столетник от насморка” [“On the window [diminutive], onions [growing] in mayonnaise jars, aloe in a pot, for a cold”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.20). There is an element of fondness in this description. The whole narrative seems a recreation of that special setting where the speaker enjoyed the best time of their life in good company. The voice narrates enthusiastically and admits with a bit of embarrassment “Получали даже какое-то удовольствие от этой лживой жизни” “[we] were even getting some kind of pleasure from that deceitful life”] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21 line 4). The emotional tone is vivid with an abundance of adjectives, exclamations, ellipsis that indicate

excitement and implied hidden meaning. The speaker invites the audience to share these pleasant memories perceiving them to be a shared discourse. There is an internal struggle between *homo sovieticus* and a "new" person within this voice.

The third voice often uses second person singular (informal) pronouns, as if to invite his audience to share his nostalgic experience. His story is intimately personal. He admits that him and his wife lived in a dream-world, inventing a reality from the many books they read. He understands and accepts that they lived like "комнатные растения" ["household plants"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.21) and that the Russia they imagined existed only in their heads but that suited them and they adapted to that way of living. The struggle in this voice is not in accepting or rejecting the past but the full-scale rejection of post-Soviet reality. The voice wants to travel back in time.

Throughout the narrative the fourth voice uses the personal pronoun "I/in me" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). This is her story, her interpretation of events and she does not "hide" behind the collective "we". She does not try to detach herself from her own words. Her identity seems clear and coherent. She uses "us" only twice. When quoting Gaidar, one of the key figures of the post-Soviet economic reforms: "Гайдар: […] рынок нас спасёт" ["Gaydar: {…} the market will save us"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39); and when reporting a factual event, i.e. the decision by her employer to substitute salary in the monetary form for perfume and make-up: "Вместо денег выдавали нам духи... косметику" ["Instead of money {they} were giving us perfume… make-up"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). If there is internal struggle of identities in this voice, it is not manifested in the given snapshot.

The fifth voice is narrated in the third person using impersonal structures, which depersonalize the narrative, such as "она" ["she"], "никому ее не было жалко" ["nobody felt sorry for her"] etc. (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). The first person pronoun appears only in the plural: "у нас" ["we/us"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). The speaker self-distances from the story as if in an attempt to avoid any blame, it appears the speaker wants to remain an observer. While providing critical evaluations, she does not state whether she was part of the social group that did not feel sorry for the girl: "Так вот, её никому не было жалко" ["And well, nobody felt sorry for her"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). Indirectly, by saying "nobody", the speaker admits that she did not feel sorry for the girl either, but by implying

that it was wrong, we could deduce that the speaker was covertly compassionate. In any case, there is no direct reference to assume either possibility is correct. This uncertainty could also indicate an internal struggle within the speaker. She self-identifies with the collective viewpoint that poverty was shameful and personally remains compassionate internally on a human level. This conflict between personal and collective values is not uncommon and readers from both source-text and target-text cultures can maybe relate to it.

Consciousness

The first voice makes a reference to Russian spirituality through Russian fairy-tales. He connects the concept of Russian soul to the protagonist who is one of the most popular and controversial characters in Russian folklore, i.e. Ivan-the-fool whose foolery, as stories go, always gets him into trouble but also helps him get out of trouble and triumph over his enemies. It is Ivan-the-fool that is the winner that marries a beautiful princess and gets a kingdom as a reward. Further on, he mentions the Gold Fish, which is a magical fish that can make all your wishes come true. These he connects to the founding elements of the Russian character, whereby all our wishes must come true by magic. "чтобы всё само в рот валилось" ["that all would fall into my mouth by itself/without my effort"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19). The speaker uses the pronoun "we" when he says "Мы – мечтатели, конечно" ["We are – the dreamers, of course"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.19). He is critical of the very nature of Russian spirituality and sees it as an impediment to constructive life and progress.

The fourth voice is a narrative-confession. It is a highly personal account that shares intimate painful memories of life in Russia of the first post-Soviet decade. The speaker confesses to self-identify with the Soviet mentality "Во мне советского было девяносто процентов…" ["Inside, I was ninety percent Soviet"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). The few adjectives that could be found in this narrative add to the picture of misery and desperation: "застиранные шапочки, заштопанные пиджачки" ["worn-down from repeated washing hats, patched-up

jackets"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). The hats and jackets are not just old and worn-out but they have been repeatedly washed and patched because their owners, old people that ended up begging on the streets of post-Soviet Russia, desperately tried to preserve their dignity by keeping their clothes clean and mended. Mentioning jackets is significant here because it is an indirect reference to the old Soviet life style. A jacket was an item of clothing of the professional white-collar social class, the group that ended up having to beg on the streets or die from starvation. This voice comes across as honest and fair, even in her evaluation of the people behind the collapse of values and economic despair: "Может, они хотели что-то хорошее сделать, но им не хватило сострадания к собственному народу" ["Maybe they wanted to do something good, but they lacked compassion towards their own people"] (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). There is blame in this statement but also an attempt to understand and even justify. She allows for good intentions behind the changes.

The fifth voice narrates another story of poverty, and the speaker self-distances from the event by using a combination of 3rd person singular personal pronouns "she", "her", "nobody" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39), impersonal structures "не было жалко", as well as the collective "us" (Alexievich, 2016a, p.39). This speaker narrates of the lack of compassion and empathy. To concludeI, it is natural to observes a presence of some reluctance of the voice to take responsibility/blame for the events of the story.

Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer] – comparative analysis of ST voices in the 1997 edition

This analysis is based on three voices: two voices from the section "Солдатский хор" ["Soldiers' chorus"] (Alexievich, 1997) and one voice from the first chapter of the book "Земля мёртвых" ["The land of the dead"] (Alexievich, 1997). These represent a collection of accounts of the people who worked at the forefront of the rescue operation at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station after the explosion, and their friends and relatives.

Ideology

The ideology of the first voice is represented by a coherently flowing narrative, theme and rheme are very logically positioned from one statement to the next. This speaker does not

evaluate the events, he gives factual details “Роботы не выдерживали, техника сходила с ума. А мы работали.” [“Robots were not managing, equipment was going crazy. But we kept working”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). He is reporting, which is why the snapshot lacks adjectives. This dry matter-of-fact tone could be seen as typical of a low-rank military person who is used to follow orders in serving his motherland with pride and self-sacrifice.

The ideology of the second voice comes across as a philosophical reflection straight from the first paragraph, which is very short, containing only three lines, four ellipses and one rhetorical question “Откуда?” (“From where?”) ((Alexievich, 1997, p.63). His narrative focuses on depicting destruction cause by the catastrophe. “Заходишь в дом – фотографии висят, а людей нет” [“{You} walk into a house – photographs are hanging {on the walls} but there are no people”] ((Alexievich, 1997, p.63). This juxtaposition of personal photographs to the absence of people creates an eerie atmosphere and might transmit to the readers the speaker’s sensation of “что-то связанное со смертью..." [“something connected with death…”] ((Alexievich, 1997, p.63). There is no heroism here. This is a warning and an attempt to share the horror of the event.

The ideology of the third voice redirectsthe blame. In response to Alexievich’s question, he interrogates her with some reproach and irony “Вы взялись об этом писать? Об этом? А я не хотел бы, чтобы обо мне это знали... Что я там испытал…” [“You have undertaken to write about this? “About this? And I would not want that to be known about me. What I went through over there…”] ((Alexievich, 1997, p.28). His story is a comparative narrative where he looks back at other events comparing them across the trajectory of life “Я помню с детства” [“I remember from my childhood”] ((Alexievich, 1997, p.29). This is an experienced person who has lived a long life and has something with which to compare Chernobyl.

Identity

The first voice self-identifies with the other soldiers and “Таких как я было много” [“There were many of the likes of me”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). The narrative of this voice mostly consists of short impersonal sentences using the first person plural, e.g. “нас привезли” [“we were delivered”] (Alexievich, 1997, (p.62), “дали” [{we]} “were given”]

(Alexievich, 1997, p.63), some sentences are incomplete “Всюду с лопатой.” [“Everywhere with a shovel.”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). In some places first person plural pronoun is implied but omitted (which is permittable in Russian but not compulsory), for example “Но работали хорошо” (“But [we - implied] worked well”) (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). “И очень этим гордились” [“And {implied ‘we’} were very proud by this”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). There is a strong collective presence in this voice. This is a voice of a young (maybe naïve) soldier.

The second voice switches between the collective “we” and the personal “I”. These are two narratives: a personal story manifested by “I” and a use of impersonal structures in a singular form; and another, expressed through “we” and impersonal structures in plural. It comes across as disjointed with short statements that frequently lack cohesive elements, e.g. “Мы въехали… Стоял знак ‘запретная зона’. Я не был на войне, но ощущение чего-то знакомого... Откуда-то из памяти… Откуда? Что-то связанное со смертью…” [“We entered… There was a sign ‘forbidden zone’. I had not been to the war, but an impression of something familiar… From somewhere in the memory… From where? Something related to death…”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). This voice is rich in ellipses. As seen from the quotations, there is some evidence of internal conflict of identities, that of a soldier and of a confused philosopher. He is trying to make sense of reality and the split between his duties and him as a biological human being.

The third voice draws parallels between the events of Chernobyl and the concept of war. There are many questions in his narrative. “Помните как у Толстого? Пьер Безухов так потрясен после войны, что ему кажется: он и весь мир изменились […]” [“Do you remember, how in Tolstoy’s {books}? Pierre Bezukhov is so shaken after the war that it seems to him that he and the whole world have changed […]”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.29). There are many ellipses in the narrative. A few sentences are short and incomplete “В кошмар... В ужас... Лечу...” [“Into the nightmare… Into the horror… {I am} flying…] (Alexievich, 1997, p.29). His childhood and adulthood identities clash with his memories of the WW2, everyday life and Chernobyl disaster. He is keen to forget. “Почему люди вспоминают?” [“Why do people think back?”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.29). He is haunted by the memories of different stages of his life. These clash in his mind and he wants to forget.

Personality

The first voice comes across as a career soldier reporting an incident. At one point of the narrative there is some stumbling and repetition “Ну привезли нас… Привезли на саму станцию”[“well, {we} were delivered … delivered to that very station”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). This could indicate a shyness of the speaker when taken out of context of his military setting.

The second voice has a personality of a philosopher, a reflective thinker. The narrative is full of ellipses and dashes, which are often used to express emotionality and emphasise implicit messages. There are a many impersonal structures which are used when the subject is missing, and in the context of the narrative by this speaker the subjects of his story are people who were evacuated from the exclusion zone after the nuclear disaster. His reflective tone skilfully recreates his impression of the first-hand witness.

The third voice revives his memories. His personality here is a reflection and emotional recollection of the past. There are numerous ellipses in this narrative. Having said that, these ellipses indicate a pensive mood rather than confusion because the logical progression is intact and cohesive elements connect one statement with the next to ensure coherence and clarity of the theme/rheme. For example “Самое страшное со мной было в детстве… Это – война” [“The scariest [event] happened to me in childhood… That [was] – the war”] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). The pronoun “that” serves as a cohesive device and links the thought despite the presence of ellipses […]. The speaker is able to recollect the WW2 and compare that to Chernobyl. He is older than the previous two voices. He is an evaluative witness. He has other memories to connect to the nuclear plant disaster. As an older person, he speaks of progression from birth to death (Alexievich, 1997, p.63).

Consciousness

The glimpse consciousness of the first voice transpires through his excited attitude to the narrated events. He uses the personal pronoun “I/me” only once and that is to reinforce the sensation of heroism when referring to his personal evaluation of his own state “У меня были другие чувства. Всё наоборот. Хотелось чего-то героического” [“I had different

feelings. Everything was the other way round. {'I'-implied by impersonal structure} wanted something heroic"] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). There is a transparent notion of heroic effort and satisfaction from being part of the heroic team. "Но таких, как я, оказалось больше" ["But there happened to be more of the likes of me"] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63). The externalized consciousness here is transparent and indicative of a heroic young man ready to make a sacrifice for his motherland.

The second voice externalizes his fear and horror that fills him as he recollects the events. The sentence "что-то связанное со смертью..."["something related to death…"] (Alexievich, 1997, p.63) appears twice in the twenty lines of his narrative. On both occasions it is followed by an ellipsis. His consciousness, the biological human in him rebels against what he saw. His soul trembles before the destructive power of the nuclear disaster.

The third voice is haunted by his memories and wants to forget the nightmarish events that are interwoven into his everyday life. He is asking rhetorically why we have to remember (Alexievich, 1997, p.29). The borderline between life and death is blurry. Thinking back to his childhood he says "Я воспринимал смерть так же, как и рождение... И когда женщина в кустах убивала себя..." ["I perceived death in the same way as birth… And when a woman in the bushes was killing herself…"] (Alexievich, 1997, p.29). His consciousness externalises horror in an attempt to relief his soul from the nightmare that follows him through life.

5.2. Metamorphosis of voices. Comparative analysis of ST voices to TT voices in existing translations

This comparative analysis of voices is based on the selection from two Alexievich's books *Время секонд хэнд [Second-hand time]*(Alexievich, 2016a) and *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]*(Alexievich, 1997), and their translations into English. The first edition of *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* was translated twice, and both translations form part of this analysis. The aim of the comparative ST-TT analysis is to evaluate shifts, alterations and re-framing introduced by translators in the process of re-constructing the text for the TL reader and how they affect the polyphonic aspect within the framework suggested by the methodology (Fig. 4.3.3.), which includes *four dimensions* of a *polyphonic voice*, and with the help of linguistic clues assigned to each dimension, as outlined in the methods (Fig. 4.4.2.). This research is not aimed at qualitative analysis of gains and losses in translation. Instead it is interested in studying how voices metamorphosise in translation process, what shifts and alterations occur and how they re-shape the TT polyphony and individual voices within it.

In assessing the linguistic and socio-cultural transfer, I look for differences which are reflective of the *ideologies* of the corresponding ST voices. Any ideological shifts represent changes of the viewpoint of the ST voice are considered as altering the polyphonic fabric and are essential for the analysis. In any assessment of the transition of representation of *identities* from ST to TT, I consider whether an internal struggle between multiple identities within one voice remains in the TT voices. Identities and ideologies overlap with *personalities* of voices, and alterations to the either (or all) of these dimensions of voices insofar as possible to be assessed textually may affect the polyphony in translation. Assessment of *externalised consciousness* is the most difficult and subjective part of the analysis. While it is important, especially considering Alexievich's endeavour to understand the soul(s) of her voices (see earlier multiple references to her lifelong quest), the subliminal nature of the inner world of each speaker makes any findings and conclusions subjective and open to multiple interpretations. Any justification of the analysis of this dimension will be limited to the textual clues found in ST and TT voices.

Время секонд хэнд – Second-hand Time – comparative analysis voices from the 2013 edition (reprinted in 2016) and voices in translation by Bela Shayevich published in 2016

The sample for this comparative ST-TT analysis includes a selection of voices from the same edition of *Время секонд хэнд [Second-hand time]* as in Section 5.1. (Alexievich, 2016a), and the respective voices selected from the translation of the above book into English by Bela Shayevich published in 2016 under the title *Second-Hand Time,* by Fitzcarraldo Editions (Alexievich, 2016c).

Looking at the TT from the polyphonic perspective, there are two potential groups of alterations, supratextual and textual. In this analysis, I consider as supratextual all elements that do not directly constitute a voice, in other words headings, subheadings, prefaces and inserts. In contrast, textual alterations are those introduced into the translated utterance of each respective voice. Within this framework, the first supratextual alteration that stands out is a lengthy insertion that precedes utterances and details the chronology of key events of the post-war USSR to inform the target reader about the main events of that period, as they may not be familiar with them. Nonetheless, indirectly it carries an element of preconditioning the reader, as the translator's, editor's or publisher's judgement has been applied in the decision regarding the choice of events and of their presentation. The reader is given a classification of events as important or non-important, which could affect perception and even create a distance between the ST voices and TT readers.

As discussed in Section 3.2., Alexievich introduced a range of supratextual elements, such as headings, subheadings and epigraphs in addition to appearing in her books as a voice alongside other polyphonic voices. While self-inclusion as one of multiple speakers represents a fair and balanced polyphony, the supratextual interference stands out andis effective. In the same way as with translators' inserts, Alexievich's preconditions her reader through headings and subheadings, which stand out over the other polyphonic voices. Headings and subheadings are in bold, preceding voices of the speakers, whereas the insert is provided before readers have access to the voices. Nonetheless, the comparative ST analysis in Section 3.2. concluded that such preconditioning does not remove the polyphonic

diversity as voices are still identifiable as unique and different from each other. The supratextual elements may create certain preconceptions, but so would the personal background knowledge of each ST or TT reader. For the purpose of this analysis, it could be assumed that once the reader gains access to the speakers directly, they would exercise their individual choice to consider or ignore the supratextual preconditioning. This ST-TT analysis focuses on what happens within each voice in the process of translation by *four dimensions of voice* (Fig.4.3.3.) with the help of textual markers assigned to each dimension (Fig.4.4.2.) because the polyphonic power of the accounts comes from the impact of each voice on the reader.

In respect of the *snapshots* of Alexievich's voice, which formed the first type of data in the ST analysis in Section 5.1., some alterations are introduced by the translator into the titles and subheadings of the translated text. For example, the title of the section "Записки соучастника" ["Notes of an Accomplice"] (Alexievich, 2016a) was translated by Bela Shayevich as "Remarks from an Accomplice" (Alexievich, 2016c).[123] Moreover, her translation consists of fourteen snapshots that represent snapshots of Alexievich's voice, as opposed to twenty two that are in the ST. The alteration of the title in translation shifts the meaning into the domain of the oral discourse: while notes are written, remarks are made verbally. As the section represents snapshots of Alexievich's voice, the noun "записки" [notes] used by her in the ST refers to her as a writer and might be representative of how this section came to existence, i.e. that it appeared in the written form and was recorded by Alexievich directly from her thoughts. This also could be seen as a form of self-identification

[123] Here and further in Section 5.2 in the course of this comparative ST-TT analysis I insert my own translations of the ST in square brackets after each ST utterance, whereas *published translations are provided in inverted commas without square brackets*. My own translations are not aimed to provide a "better" alternative to those published under the pen of Shayevich, Bouis and Gessen but only aim to demonstrate very specific linguistic points related to the issues specified in the analysis accordingly.

with pen and paper. Writers "speak" through their writing. By changing "записки" [notes] to "remarks" in translation, this ST reference is no longer transparent.

The reduction of twenty two ST extracts to fourteen, while leaving the volume of the content the same, means that some snapshots were merged into one in translation, which changes the polyphonic fabric of the section. For instance, unlike its ST counterpart (Alexievich, 2016a, p.8), the second translated snapshot of Alexievich's voice does not have a preceding blank line to separate it from the previous one (Alexievich, 2016c, p.24). Although seemingly a minor point, as a result, this snapshot in the TT appears as a logical continuation of the previous narrative, as opposed to being a separate standing utterance as the respective snapshot in the ST. Whether it was Alexievich's decision to separate this snapshot of her voice, or whether it happened at the stage of editing, it creates an impact on the reader. For while we cannot speculate about the nature of this impact, as it is open to multiple subjective interpretations, it is one of those semiotic features that ought to be compatible in the cultural transfer. Here, it is lost in translation. This decision might be intentional, as the book on the whole follows the original structure, including demarcating voices as blocks of text by blank lines, or in the form of a dialogue, or it could be an omission that slipped through the editing. Whatever the reason is, the absence of the blank lines to separate some of the snapshots from other is significant as the passages no longer are perceived as separate messages but read as continuations or conclusions to the previous narratives. In the target text, they can no longer be accessed as separate snapshots of a voice, and voice is at the heart of the polyphonic aspect. Such alterations affect a few TT voices and while still are on the border of the supratextual and textual, they interfere with the polyphonic fabric of the book in translation.

As the ST analysis (Section 5.1.) demonstrated that the difference between snapshots of Alexievich's voice is detectable, this comparative ST-TT analysis acknowledges that the semiotic aspect of these snapshots is lost in translation and they can no longer be treated as a separate type of data (that is first type of data as in the ST). All voices are assessed through the textual alterations made to the snapshots which affect their meaning(s) and polyphonic diversity, and are analysed as one type of data.

Ideological transition

Within the translated voices there is a number of subtle ideological shifts that affect the overall polyphonic diversity. These stem from the lexical choices by the translator and might constitute reframing. For example, in the first sentence of the second snapshot "Это был социализм, и [and][124] это была просто наша жизнь" (Alexievich, 2016a,[125] p.8) is translated as "This was socialism, but it was also just everyday life" (Alexievich, 2016c,[126] p.24). Here ["and"] is replaced with "but" whereas ["our life"] (ST, p.8) is replaced with "just everyday life" (TT, p.24.). As a result, the voice in Russian juxtaposes socialism and life,meaning the two appear alongside each other; while in translation the two concepts are contrasted. This leads to the alteration of Alexievich's ideology. In the ST, Alexievich refers to socialism as being in harmony with life, whereas, the TT introduces an opposition between socialism and life. Minute changes like this are significant because they have a cumulative effect and superimpose the translator's narrative over the original voice, here that of Alexievich. In the same sentence "просто наша жизнь" ["simply/just our life"] (ST, p.8) from ST is replaced with "also just everyday life" (TT, p.24). I do not think that "also just everyday life" and "simply our life" represent dynamic equivalents. This translation choice shifts the ideological standpoint of Alexievich. She does not trivialize life to "everyday life". On the contrary, she almost merges the high-end ideology of socialism with life and emphasizes "our life", whereas the TT de-personalises it by removing the pronoun. In this ST snapshot of her voice, life was socialism and socialism was life. Both alterations in translation are significant as they lead to a shift in semantics and pragmatics, namely propositional meaning. The TT sentence counter-positions socialism and everyday life, while the ST does not do this. It merely states the fact, id est both existed and constituted "our" life. There is no need to detach this concept from the

[124] Here and further in this sections all insertions in square brackets are my own translations of ST utterances from Russian into English to demonstrate individual points as part of the analysis.

[125] From now on in this section referred to as ST.

[126] From now on in this section referred to as TT.

speaker in the given context. While this could lead to a variety of interpretations, the one, chosen by the translator removes a range of possibilities for the target-text readers to interpret and re-interpret. It reduces life to just one dimension, and counter positions socialism, contrary to what Alexievich wrote.

Among other aspects affecting the ideologies of the speakers in translation is domestication introduced into the TT voices by means of footnotes to clarify or contextualise the meaning (TT, pp.23-27 etc). Such clarifications are not present in the ST, while they might be needed for the TT readers, they introduce an ideology of a translator or editor voiced within the translated utterances. This voice removes a potential ambiguity that forms the "messiness" of the ST accounts. The multitude of interpretations that exists within the ST and might be intentional on the part of the ST speakers, is reduced to only one, by the translator. For example, "sovok" (TT, p.23) is explained as "widely used pejorative term for one who adheres to Soviet values, attitudes and behaviours" (ibid.). The term is complex and not always is seen as negative. For example, an online poet Aleksandr Lirikov sees it as a "noble word" (Lirikov, 2020). Alexievich on many occasions (including in the same utterance) refers to herself as "sovok". ST readers might be able to deduce their own understanding of the word by evaluating it in the context provided by the speaker. By preconditioning the TT reader to see the term as "pejorative", the translator prescribes the interpretation and deprives them of making their own judgement based on the in-text references and subtle explanations that might become obvious from the ST context. At worst, the TT reader might want to do their own research into the term and are likely to find more balanced evaluation. Such clarifications are present in multiple places and continuously "help" the target-text readers guiding them to form their opinion based on the attitudes towards the text by the translator.

The statement "I could not understand what was going on" (TT, p.66) experiences a modality shift compared to the respective ST snapshot "Я не понимала, что происходило" ["I did not understand what was happening"] (ST, p.39). In Russian, "я не могла" ["I could not"] implies inability as opposed to "я не" ["I did not"] which is a simple admission of the fact. "I could not" indicates an attempt to understand, some kind of willingness to understand and a failure to arrive at an understanding, whereas "I did not" is likely to refer to a conclusive factual statement, it does not reflect speaker's attempt to go through the process of acquiring

such understanding. This alteration might have been necessary due to the semantic variations between the SL and TL, but this also might represent the translator's interpretation of the ST voices in accordance with her personal emotions and feelings. In any case, this leads to a shift in expressive meaning and the speaker's *ideology* is substituted by that of the translator. The translator "could not understand" whereas the ST speaker "did not understand". This change is subtle but the cumulative effect of these changes is significant for the overall effect on the reader.

The propositional meaning of the following sentence might appear to be misrepresenting its ST counterpart significantly altering the ideological dimension of the voice. The translated voice states "I would run to and from work with my eyes down, afraid of looking at them…" (TT, p.67). This could be understood as the speaker hurrying past the line of beggars. The ST voice, nevertheless, refers to the speaker dashing to and from work. "Бегу на работу и с работы – боюсь глаза поднять" ["When running to work and from work – I fear to lift up my eyes"] (ST, p.39). While it is true that the speaker was afraid to look at the beggars, she was not running away from them. The rhythm of life in the nineties was very hectic, and people had to run everywhere to earn enough money to live. She is likely to have been touching on that aspect of life. The dash in the ST adds to the clarity of the message. The comma that replaces it might not be sufficient to emphasize the point This is another minor but significant alteration that brick by brick is building in the TT reader a certain pre-conditioned understanding based on the guidance provided by the translator.

There are some voices where the entire ideological message is lost in translation. The TT statement "[t]he Putinist 2000s" (TT, p.434) is more or less factual, with reference to the ruler of the country but without evaluation of this ruler. However, in the ST "Путинские нулевые" ["Putin's zeros/00s"] (ST, p.305) it implies a lack of substance. In many cultures and languages, including English, zero means the same, to wit the ST meaning is transferrable across the cultural boundary and would fit well into the TT culture and society. Preservation of zero for the TT reader would keep the expressive meaning of the ST voice, as well as the ideological standpoint. This evaluation is sarcastic and refers to the first decade of the third millennium. To characterize further the first decade of Putin's rule, this voice gives laconic statements with qualifying adjectives, which are very important. Some of them shift their original meaning in translation, and subsequently the respective TT voices suffer

ideological alterations. For instance, “брутальные” (ST, p.305) is translated as “brutal” (TT, p.434), whereas, the Russian word, being an English derivative, has a different TL meaning and in the given context is a “false friend”. In the ST it refers to exposing a superficial raw “macho”, “bullish” masculinity rather than its TT meaning of implied cruelty and violence, which is what the English “brutal” signifies. In the context of this message, this ST voice looks at Putin’s first decade of ruling as having the air of superficial masculinity where an image of a “tough-looking” but “good-natured” guy might have connotated with the same image of the country and may have been popular. By no means does the speaker refer to those years as brutal.

In the context of today’s war, this adjective brings forward an explanation that might have been related to the popularity of Putin’s “macho” image back in the first decade of this millennium. Even analytically-minded people might have not believed how serious Putin’s intentions were. They saw the superficial side of things, the superficially muscular body of the president, they listened to his “brave” speeches and laughed at his empty promises. As people did not believe his promises, they did not believe that anything else would materialize into serious consequences for the country, for the immediate neighbours and for the world in a wider sense. This could have created a foundation and platform of support for this kind of leadership. This subtle nuance is concisely expressed by the ST voice and is not present in the translated counterpart. This one adjective demonstrates the catastrophe coming undetected. This shift in the ideological dimension of a voice is among those should possible and fundamental to aim to avoid in translation. Even one word can make a huge difference.

Shifts in identities

There is some evidence of alterations in the representation of voices in translation. Looking again at TT snapshot 2 “[…] everyone is suddenly interested in that old life of ours – whatever it may have been like, it was our life” (TT, p.24). In the ST, the corresponding snapshot of Alexievich’s voice says “неважно какой она была, это была наша жизнь” [“regardless of what it was like, it was our life”] (ST, p.8). “Regardless of what it was like” in the ST might be seen as accepting the past life without critical evaluation, expressive meaning suggests through word order an emotional attachment to the events and the flow of that life. The translation shifts the emphasis on the evaluation: “whatever it may have

been like", which could be interpreted as "yes, I know it was not perfect, I critically assessed it but in the end I accepted that it was our life". The lack of such critical evaluation, the unconditional acceptance of the past by the ST voice is significant and in translation it does not suggest unconditional acceptance. The ST speaker does not critique, she ponders on it. This is a part of her internal struggle and her endeavour to discover and understand a person, an individual in *homo sovieticus.* Here, there is a shift in expressive meaning resulting in a shift of a unique ST identity in the translated voice.

The next translated snapshot preserves the personal pronouns of its ST counterpart, which means that it maintains a comparable personal touch and might aid in preservation of the ST identity to the TT reader. While similarly to its ST counterpart, the snapshot is separated from the preceding by a blank line, the blank line at the end of it disappears in translation, and the snapshot appears to have merged with the next voice. The visibility of the boundary between voices is important in Alexievich's polyphonic texts. She uses signs to facilitate clarity for the reader in identifying individual voices and distinguishing between the speakers. As voices are transcribed from the recordings, in absence of the audio prompt, such indentation in the text helps the readers to transition from one voice to another. In this case the identity of the voice is merged with the following snapshot and becomes part of another narrative.

The opening statement of another TT voice "I was 90 percent Soviet…" (TT, p.66) comes across as factual, but this perceived clarity introduces an ambiguity. It sounds like the speaker refers to the composition of her ethnical roots. The ST the respective opening states "Во мне советского было девяносто процентов…" ["There was 90 percent of the Soviet {of what is Soviet} inside me…"or even "Inside, I was ninety percent Soviet"] (ST, p.39). The word order brings forward an emotional self-evaluation, in other words, how the speaker self-identified through her set of beliefs and values. This expressive meaning is lost in translation and subsequently the TT voice could be understood in pragmatic terms, to wit by birth or through genetic composition. This alteration is significant because while semantically it may be similar, expressive meaning is different, and the potential internal identities' struggle of the speaker to find herself and the other within the self.

Alterations of personalities

A significant shift in both expressive and propositional meaning appears in the penultimate sentence of the second snapshot: "I've always been attracted to […] one person, the individual" (TT Voice 1, p.24). In the corresponding ST snapshot Alexievich says "Меня всегда привлекает […] человек… один человек" ["I am always attracted to […] a person … one person"] (ST Voice 2, p.8). The absence of ellipsis here is significant because in the ST it represents a pause, a subtle stop to reflect and ponder by the speaker. Then she repeats the same noun "человек" [a person]. TT replaces it on the second occasion with a synonym. These textual markers in the ST are important, as she stresses the same word, emphasizing the value of this word/concept for her endeavour, the emphasis is reinforced by the ellipsis.

The following snapshot in translation suffers some shifts in propositional meaning leading to alterations in how her personality is perceived by the reader. For example, the opening sentence is translated as "My father would say {that he personally started believing in communism after Gagarin was sent into space}" (TT, p. 25), whereas in the ST we have "Отец вспоминал…" ["The father reminisced {…}"] (ST voice 2: p.9). The choice of the verb "to say" in translation, as opposed to "reminisce/to recall/to think back" as per ST, alters expressive meaning as it introduces extra certainty and increases the affirmative tone of the statement, whereas ST makes explicit emphasis on the contemplative pondering about the past. In the ST, Alexievich, travels back in time to the memories her father shared with her. In the TT the statement could come across a lot more affirmative and so could the perception of a personality of Alexievich.

Another shift that affects the ST polyphony in translation refers to the difficulty in finding suitable TL equivalents for a range of ST concepts embedded in Soviet life and society. For instance, the concept of the "curly-headed boy" (TT, p.25) which was translated word-for-word is unlikely to be familiar to the TT reader. This is a reference to Lenin in childhood, the speaker refers to his image on the Little Octobrists' pin. Every primary school pupil in the USSR had such a pin. This is one of the evocative images that unites the shared memories of *homo sovieticus.* This concept, nevertheless, is very unlikely to be familiar to an English-

speaking reader. It is not the purpose of this analysis to take a didactic approach and suggest an alternative translation but just to remark that replacing the phrase with “Lenin in childhood”/”Lenin as a child” might contextualise the presence of the pin on the chest of the speaker in her childhood. As such, this particular example alters a perceived image of struggling identities within one snapshot/voice in translation because, unlike their ST counterparts, the TT readers are unable to relate to the emotional evocation of the pin and feel the nostalgia. While this might not necessarily evoke nostalgia and warmth in all ST readers, most of them are likely to have a range of associated emotions and connotations which are unlikely to have the same effect on the readers of the translated text.

A shift in propositional meaning of the translated utterance “За тонкой стенкой туалет” [“Behind a thin wall is a toilet”] (ST, p.20), which is altered to “and on the other side of a flimsy wall, a toilet” (TT, p.40) alters the propositional and expressive meaning leading to the alteration of the voice in translation. While the ST snapshot implies that through the thin walls the sound could travel a long way, which is why all conversations could be heard, there is also some presence of irony, since the toilet is behind a thin wall. Such shared humour is common for those sharing life during the Soviet era but could also have a universal appeal. The walls are thin and not only the toilet noises can be heard in the kitchen but the kitchen noise can travel. Walls have ears and the narrative delivers this message through humour and irony. The TT text here alters this semantic nuance and instead plays to the perceived collective narrative of a perceived American reader, whereby the USSR is perceived as a country where people live in blocks of flats with flimsy walls that could collapse any time. Poor quality rather than reference to sound travelling where it should not be – seems to be the message for the TT readers. Such alterations as this inevitably change not only the voice’s personality but ST ideology is replaced.

The syntactic structure of the sentences in some TT voices is represented by merging several shorter ST sentences into one long compound sentence, which affects various dimensions of the voice leading to transformation of the polyphonic aspect. Russian syntax is usually more expansive in comparison to English and on average sentences tend to be longer in Russian, which is why merging short sentences together takes the TL utterance even further from its SL counterpart. For example, “I would come home, lock the door and weep” (TT, p.66) is translated from two ST sentences, each of which in Russian grammar would be considered

incomplete, yet Alexievich as the writer decided to keep them as two. The decision on such syntax in the ST might have been to re-construct “the sound” and emotions of the ST voice in the written form, as in its expressive meaning. Alexievich may have intentionally transcribed these sentences as two, probably to account for a pause in the narrative. This full stop is emotional and can be attributed to a personality. If there is a way of preserving it in translation, this might make the TT reader more sympathetic to the speaker, or at least to connect to the narrative through emotional channels. The punctuation mark on this occasion is significant to preserve the image of personality of the ST voice in translation.

Syntactic alterations cause a personality shift in another voice. “It’s surprising how fast being poor became shameful…” (TT, p.67) is translated from “Как-то быстро стало стыдно быть бедным” [“Somehow it quickly became embarrassing/shameful to be poor”] (ST, p.39). This phrasing in the source text implies surprise but does not directly state it, whereas the target text overtly brings in an element of surprise. Such minor stylistic changes lead to the shifts in understanding or attitude towards the message of the voice.

Deviations in consciousness

The following lexical choice in translation is an example of introducing alterations into the dimension of consciousness for the TT reader. Opting for “disillusionment” (TT, p.26) as opposed to “разочарование” [disappointment] (ST, p.9) imposes on the TT audience a different image of externalized consciousness. While the two words are synonyms, disillusionment indicates a collapse of illusions and makes a stronger impact on the reader than, arguably, intended by the ST speaker, who merely mentions disappointment. As ST readers, we do not know whether her illusions were destroyed. She only speaks of a disappointment. TT readers, on the contrary, are left with an impression that everything was so bad and miserable that the speaker underwent a major breakdown.

An example of alteration in translation leading to the shifts in understanding of externalized consciousness is the personification of concepts by adding the pronoun “we/us”: “Душа трудится, страдает..."[the soul works hard, suffers…] (ST, p.19) becomes “Our souls strain and suffer” (TT, p.39). Here there are several changes. First of all, the soul becomes our souls, in other words. it is now personal and collective. The

abstract uncertainty of the impersonal form of the ST is gone as it was translated into "our souls", which could convey a different expressive meaning in the TT reader to perceive the statement as far more dramatic than it really is in the ST, namely our souls strain and suffer therefore please save our souls. The lexical choice amplifies the tragic tone, which is much more subtle in the ST. These alterations are not necessary from the point of view of grammar and norms of the target language. They are a conscious or subconscious decision of the translator. I see them as a way of reframing ST for the TL reader, in accordance with the translator's understanding of the original.

An example of the shift in how externalized consciousness is perceived in translation is the phrase "Что я понял?" ["What have I understood?"] (ST, p.19), which is replaced in translation by "What have I learnt?" (TT, p.39). This change is significant, because to understand does not mean the same as to learn. You learn something you did not know before, whereas you understand something that you might have comprehended previously, to be specific had awareness, but not in-depth comprehension. Understanding is like a mini-revelation at the level of consciousness, whereas learning is merely a process of acquiring new knowledge, and it is intellectual rather than spiritual. This shift leads to the mis-representation of the spiritual but also ideological depth of the ST voice, the dimension which overlaps with the dimension of consciousness. It leads to the simplification in interpreting the personality of the speaker. In the ST we have two persons within one: the old personality, before understanding took place and the new person that made a mini-revelation. In the TT text we have the same person throughout the narrative. This shift is significant to the uniqueness of this voice in the polyphonic system of voices.

The focus now shifts to the comparative ST-TT analysis of the next sample of voices selected from Alexievich's book *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* (1997) and two translations into English made from that edition. This analysis looks at the different translation solutions. As before, it seeks the signs of the polyphonic aspect in translation by four dimensions of voice outlined in the methodology (Fig. 4.3.4) and using textual markers discussed in the methods (Fig. 4.4.2.).

Comparative analysis of ST voices from the 1997 edition of *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* with TT voices from the 1999 translation by

Antonina W. Bouis *Voices from Chernobyl. Chronicle of the Future* and TT voices from the 2006 translation by Keith Gessen *Voices from Chernobyl. The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*

Gessen's work includes a five-page translator's preface which can be considered supratextual as it does not form part of translation and has no corresponding counterpart in the ST. It outlines the translator's viewpoint on the nature and significance of the voices as testimonies "[…] as these testimonies also make all too clear […]" (Alexievich, 2006, p.ix). While it does not interfere with the fabric of the voices, it might precondition the reader to Gessen's interpretation. Bouis proceeds straight to translating the voices. Interestingly, her translation of the title may have influenced Gessen's which appeared six years later. Both translators navigate from the ST title *Chernobyl prayer* in favour of *Voices from Chernobyl.*

The opening epigraph "Мы воздух, мы не земля..." [We are air, we are not earth…] (Alexievich, 1997) authored by Merab Mamardashvili is another example of a supratextual alteration by both translators. In the 1997 edition it precedes the heading of the chapter entitled "Historical background" and appears on the same page. Antonina Bouis (1999) dedicated it a separate page and Keith Gessen (2006) positioned it before the prologue. Hence, both translators re-focused the attention of their TL readers with regards to the quotation. As discussed in Section 3.2., supratextual interferences might precondition the reader, yet they do not directly affect the integrity and uniqueness of the polyphonic voices.

Shifts in the ideological dimension

Comparing two translations with the snapshot of the first ST voice from the selected sample, the ideology in Bouis' translation is more reflective of the ST voice, whereas Gessen appears to introduce his interpretation of the feelings about the subject matter described. For example, as the first three sentences describe the fact of the relocation of the soldiers from Moscow, both translations are almost identical, follow each other word-for-word and remain close to the propositional and expressive meaning of the ST voice. Then

the narrative progresses to describe a protest of one of the soldiers. Suddenly, we have two different solutions.

ST voice 1	TT1 voice 1 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 1 (Gessen)
Ему пригрозили трибуналом. [He was threatened with the court-martial (UK) / military tribunal (USA)].[127] (p.63)	He was threatened with a court martial. (p.56)	They told him they'd drag him before the military tribunal. (p.34)

In the sample above, the voice in Gessen's translation (TT2) opts for a drastic lexical choice which carries a qualitative evaluation and leads to a shift in expressive meaning. Subsequently, the ideology of the ST voice, which is merely reporting the fact, is converted into an emotional evaluation. This adds a nuance in expressive meaning and leads to the change in the ideological dimension of the ST voice. Gessen's attitude towards the narrated events seems to be embedded into the translated voice. Bouis follows the ST voice in that she applies a semantic translation to preserve the propositional meaning of the original voice, she does not alter expressive meaning but remains factual and neutral.

Snapshot of ST voice 2 is more philosophical and reflective. The speaker uses numerous third-person or impersonal structures. There are seven ellipses in his ST narrative, he pauses to reflect. In both translations the number of ellipses is halved, as a result the ideology of the ST voice 2 in translation moves away from pensive and reflective tone.

[127] As in the previous section, here and further in this section, translations provided in square brackets are mine.

ST voice 2	TT1 voice 2 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 2 (Gessen)
Откуда-то из памяти... Откуда? Что-то связанное со смертью… [Somewhere from the memory… From where? Something connected with death…] (p.63)	From some memory. Of what? Something to do with death. (p.57)	I remembered it from somewhere. From where? I connected it to death, for some reason… (p.34)

First of all, as seen in the above example, out of three ellipses of the ST, Bouis did not preserved any, whereas Gessen preserved one, at the end of the translated utterance. While TT1 (Bouis) kept the impersonal abstract and abrupt syntax of the sentences, TT2 (Gessen) personalised it to the speaker by inserting the pronoun "I" in two sentences. So, instead of an abstract ideology, in TT2 we are faced with a heavily personalised discourse. Moreover, Gessen includes an addition "for some reason", which is not in the ST and changes its expressive meaning.

Alterations in the understanding of identities within one voice in translations

The ST voice 1 from the selected sample for this analysis is dominated by the presence of the collective identity. His personal "I" comes out only when he expresses his desire to do something heroic (ST, p.63). Otherwise, throughout the ST narrative the overwhelming pronoun is "we/us", namely first person plural. This implies that the ST speakers self-identify with the other soldiers that were sent to deal with the consequences of the nuclear disaster. In Russian, sometimes it is possible to omit a pronoun that precedes the verb, because the grammatical form of the verbs serves as an identifier. It is harder to do this with impersonal structures, which were frequently used by the speaker of the first ST voice.

ST voice 1	TT 1 voice 1 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 1 (Gessen)
Ну, привезли нас... Привезли на саму станцию. Дали белый халат и белую шапочку. Марлевую повязку. ["[“Well, {we} were delivered … delivered to that very station. {we} were given a white lab coat and a white cap. A gauze mask.”] (p.63)	So they brought us there. To the station. They gave me a white coat and a white cap, a gauze mask. (p.56)	So, they brought us in, and they took us right to the power station. They gave us white robes and white caps. And gauze surgical masks. (p.34)

The example above indicates that two translators took completely different approaches to resolving the pronoun issue, and each solution affects the understanding of identity(ies) within the voice. While the ST voice is ambiguous in the pronoun of the recipient(s) of the protective clothing, the TT1 voice 1 (Bouis) opts for “I/me”, whereas TT2 voice 1 (Gessen) goes for “we/us”, which is in line with the pronouns used in the previous sentence. Both decisions lead to a shift from the subtle ambiguity, and the drift from the personal “I” to the collective “we”, which leads to two different views on identities.

The presence of the personal “I” in the ST might be seen as subliminal. The first sentence of the example below contains an ellipsis and a repetition of the verb “привезли” [{they} brought], that is “they brought us to the power station”. Here, the subliminal “I” emphasizes the impact that arrival at the location made on the speaker. There is a verb, a pause indicated by an ellipsis, and the same verb repeated. Considering that the whole narrative of this speaker is highly word-efficient, this repetition indicates the emotional struggle with overwhelming fear on a very personal “I” level which is suppressed by the heroic collective “we”. Bouis replaces the ellipsis with the full stop and an abrupt

incomplete second sentence. She attempts to re-create that sense of shock through the devices available within English grammar and syntax. In contrast, Gessen merges the two sentences, removes ellipses, repetitions and produces a cohesive and coherent factual statement. There is no shock, no internal struggle of the personal "I" with the collective "we". Everything seems factual and straightforward. His translation is a reportage of a journalist from the location rather that a faithful re-creation of the sensitive fabric of this ST polyphonic voice.

ST voice 2 juxtaposes himself against the backdrop of the events. His personal "I" is set against the third person and impersonal structures related to what he had to do and where he had to be. There is discontent between his personal identity of a family man, a man of duty and a thinker who cannot help but see the horror of the reality that surrounds him.

ST voice 2	TT1 voice 2 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 2 (Gessen)
Мы въехали {…} Я не понимал{…}Заходишь в дом {…} Интересно посмотреть {…} [We drove in {…}I did not understand {…}You walk into a house {…} It's interesting to see {…}] (p.63)	We drove in {...} I didn't understand {…} You'd go into a house {…} It was interesting to see {…}. (p.56)	We rode in {...} I couldn't understand {…} You'd walk into a house {…} It was interesting to see {…} (pp.34-35)

As seen from the example, ST voice uses a range of self-reference pronouns in the narrative, meaning collective "we", personal "I", implied "you", and abstract impersonal structures. In TT1, Bouis meticulously follows all pronouns but shifts the statement "It's interesting to see" into the past "It was interesting to see". So does Gessen. This alteration is significant, as it shifts the balance of self-identities of the ST voice in translations. The

main storyline is in the past, therefore such present tense insertions might indicate that the speaker is travelling between two timeframes. He either brings the story into the present tense, or moves into his memories of it. Another example of the same is the use of the present tense in the preceding sentence, to be specific ["you walk into a house"], which was translated by both Bouis and Gessen as "you'd …", thus moving the narrative into the past tense to align with the storyline. In both cases, if left in the present tense, this would create a powerful effect on the reader and contributes to the polyphonic texture and individuality of the voice. Be that as it may, this effect is lost in both translations. Gessen's translation introduces a hesitation by translating "I did not understand" as "I couldn't understand". The former is a categorical negation whereas the latter indicates inability to understand. While the nuance is subtle, this translation shift adds to the cumulative effect. Here, this change cannot not be justified by the norms of the target language, as both structures are perfectly acceptable in English.

Personality shifts in translations

The personality of the first ST voice from the sample suffered shifts in both translations, but while Bouis introduced an alteration leading to a slight shift Gessen's translation significantly altered the personality of the ST speaker in translation.

ST voice 1	TT 1 voice 1 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 1 (Gessen)
Может быть, детский порыв? [Maybe, a childish impulse?] (p.63)	Childish, maybe? (p.56)	Maybe it was kid's stuff. (p.34)

In the original sentence the ST speaker refers to his desire to do something heroic (ST, p.63) as ["a childish impulse"]. This emotional statement shows some level of evaluation or hesitation. He questions that feeling. This is one of the very few instances where his voice becomes personal rather than merely reporting the events. This emotional touch

transpires through expressive meaning, and that was altered in both translations, less so in Bouis' and more so in Gessen's. Bouis omits the word ["impulse"], which adds instantaneity to the tone of the ST voice. Impulsive decisions are something that could cause regret in the future. A childish impulse is not quite the same as a childish behaviour, as seems to be suggested by Bouis. "Childish, maybe" could imply something lasting, not like an impulse which comes and goes. Nonetheless, this decision could be an attempt to achieve natural flow of the sentence in English. Childish is more commonly used than childish impulse. It is concise and effective as a translation solution. Both ST and TT1 voice 1 preserve the question mark, which is important to convey the character of the voice. Gessen rephrases the ST sentence and removes the question mark. He paraphrases the ST and re-interprets it. As a result we have an affirmative statement rather than a question. This alters the personality of the ST voice. Another important aspect concerns the propositional meaning. While Bouis keeps loyal to the ST and delivers the semantic and pragmatic message of the ST voice, Gessen, as it seems, alters it to mean "easy-peasy" as opposed to ["childish impulse"]. [128] Gessen does not seem to connect with the emotional side of the narrative and converts it into pragmatic "easy stuff", which probably is closer to how he personally relates to the narrative. His personality is superimposed on the personality of the ST voice 1.

ST Voice 2 manifests personality throughout the narrative and it overlaps with the dimensions of ideology and self-identity(-ies). Nevertheless, the following excerpt is indicative of several personality traits, meaning to say evaluative, cautious and critical. The ST speaker comments on the visit of his colleagues to the exploded reactor to take photographs.

[128] According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, "kid stuff" is something extremely easy or simple. (Merriam Webster Dictionary, [no date], no page)

ST voice 2	TT1 voice 2 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 2 (Gessen)
Страх был и в то же время интерес непреодолимый: Что же это такое? Я, например, отказался, у меня жена молодая {…} [There was fear and at the same time an irresistible curiosity: What is it? As for me, I refused, I have a young wife {…}] (p.63)	It was a mix of fear and overwhelming curiosity: what had actually happened to the reactor, what was there? I, for one, refused to go: I have a young wife {…}. (p.57)	They were scared but also really curious: what was this thing? I didn't go myself, I have a young wife {…} (pp.35)

This ST voice does not draw a line between him and his colleagues. He uses impersonal structures "there was…" to express their decision before clarifying ["I refused"] and followed it up with ["I have a young wife"]. He is cautious and evaluative. He measures every word to make sure he does not come across as criticising those who went to the reactor. The voice in Bouis' translation preserves that impersonality but expands on the subject of curiosity, expressly the question "what is it?". There is a lengthy addition that explains the nature of the curiosity. The Russian speaker relies on the shared discourse, he almost avoids mentioning disaster-related terminology, but replaces it with abstract structures which serve as euphemisms, whereas the TT1 voice 2 spells it out. This makes the personality of the TT1 voice 2 slightly different, more direct and explicit. Gessen's translation TT2 voice 2 is a paraphrase of the ST, whereby the translator divides the statement into two camps "they" and "I". They went and I stayed, which alters the ST personality affecting the polyphonic nature of the voice.

Deviations in translated consciousness

Externalised glimpses of the inner world of the ST speaker are transformed in Gessen's translation through syntactic efficiency that leads to alterations in expressive meaning.

ST voice 1	TT1 voice 1 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 1 (Gessen)
У меня были другие чувства. Всё наоборот. [I had different feelings. On the contrary.] (p.63)	I had different feelings. On the contrary. (p.56)	I felt the complete opposite of the guy. (p.34)

While Bouis offers a semantic translation, which replicates the original insofar as it is possible within the norms of the TL, Gessen paraphrases the ST, he re-interprets the meaning in accordance with his understanding of the original speaker's narrative. As a result, there is a significant alteration in syntax whereby two sentences are merged into one and the original voice is squashed into the laconic statement. Subsequently, we no longer see the progression of speaker's feelings, his thought process and the emotional journey of his consciousness is replaced by Gessen's interpretation. Instead of having different feelings and progressing to wanting something opposite, straight away he feels the opposite. Gessen's translation here underscores that he feels opposite "to that guy", effectively, there is finger-pointing in that translation, whereas the original voice distances from blame and articulates his desire to do something heroic with the sentence "I had different feelings", which was delivered by Bouis. This example demonstrates that to a certain extent, even the dimension of consciousness, volatile by nature, can survive in translation and be re-constructed for the TT reader, if a translator is sensitive to the emotional aspects of a voice in transmitting expressive meaning across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

ST voice 2 navigates events with the help of emotions. These are manifested through ellipses and abstract esoteric language, as in the following example.

ST voice 2	TT1 voice 2 (Bouis)	TT2 voice 2 (Gessen)
{…} было ощущение, что люди вот-вот вернутся... [There was a feeling that people would come back any time now…] (p.63)	{…} there was the feeling that people were going to come back any minute. (p.56)	{…} because you sensed that these people would be back any minute. (p.35)

While the ST voice uses an impersonal esoteric structure [“there was a feeling”] which vanishes into the silence of the ellipsis, the TT1 removes the ellipsis and changes conditional modality to the past continuous, which indicates a pre-meditated action in the past. Bouis’ translation preserves the essence of the propositional meaning but shifts a nuance very slightly, subsequently losing the spontaneity. By removing the ellipsis, he introduced a shift in the expressive meaning. This affected although did not remove the dimension of consciousness in translation. Gessen’s translation redirects the feeling towards the TT reader and makes the TT reader a participant of the described sentiment by introducing an interactive pronoun “you”.

5.3. Discussion of findings

The analysis of the first type of data in the ST of *Время секонд хэнд [Second-hand Time]*, has sought to demonstrate that selected snapshots of Alexievich's voice represent her in different states of mind and emotions. In each snapshot she sounds different according to all four dimensions of the methodology. They show different sides of her personality and give different insights into her consciousness. The utterances differ through emotional fluctuation from an attempt to remain detached by providing a philosophical comment on an event to a very personal and highly involved almost intimate reference to her father. These produce different effects on the reader, the snapshots and are distinguishable. Her role in different snapshots shifts between an observer and a participant. These shifts are significant because they might reflect her own split identity. At times, it appears that she is diving into the past in an attempt to find some clues in her memory that would help her to decode reality at the point of writing.

In the Bakhtinian sense, her memories create a range of self-portraits. They can also be seen as a multitude of snapshots or transcribed audio footprints of Alexievich struggling to understand and to come to terms with the multitude of identities within herself, covered by one term that she uses so much, *homo sovieticus*. It could be argued that she is trying to understand *homo sovieticus* within herself from several perspectives: as a witness to the events, as a participant in the events, as a chronicler of the era. Such variations can also be interpreted as reflections of her self-identities, which is one of the four dimensions of voice, and reveal the chronology of the metamorphosis of her personality, which is another dimension of voice, as well as her endeavour to find her own consciousness through understanding the concept of *homo sovieticus* from an everyday person's ideological viewpoints. This is her self-portrait where she is looking at herself through the mirror of her reflections on the events and participants of the USSR in her work. The analysis of this type of data has tried to demonstrate that even within same voice there might be a polyphonic diversity and narrative inconsistency. Voices are unlikely to sound the same throughout their lives. They undergo transformation by all four dimensions even within a relatively short period of time.

As demonstrated by ST analysis of the second type of data, the difference between voices in the Russian original is manifested through a range of grammar, punctuation and literary devices. All four dimensions to a bigger or lesser extent can be found in every voice from the sample. The range of ideologies of the speakers represent personal (kitchen) ideologies, particularly viewpoints of ordinary people. These differ from voice to voice and can fluctuate within one voice. Manifestation of the nature and extent of the struggle of multiple identities within one voice also fluctuates from one speaker to another. Some are more pronounced and some speakers may suppress or disguise their multiple identities. The personality of each speaker is different, which can be seen through variations in syntax, ellipses, use of adjectives and pronouns. Each voice reveals some of his/her inner self through the dimension of externalised consciousness, revealing inner intimate space to the reader.

Similarly to the first type of data, some of the other voices struggle to find their personal space within (or outside) the collective narrative of *homo sovieticus*. Many still live in the world of the past and are haunted by their memories. The difference between voices is also manifested in what they say and how they deliver their messages, in other words the ideological viewpoint and the emotional tone through expressive meaning. Every snapshot is emotionally coloured and bears different undertones and nuances. Every ideological viewpoint is significant because each one represents the diversity of perspectives of an average person from the ex-USSR and allow the reader to move away from any stereotypical representation to see the polyphony in *homo sovieticus* and see people with their weaknesses, imperfections and everyday troubles, namely to access that universal which is embedded into every one of us, as a species. These viewpoints might seem banal but en masse they give a multidimensional perspective and empower the reader to make independent conclusions about the events and people from that era. The reader then is able to position her/him-self into the scene and answer the question “how would I act in place of this voice/speaker?”. These polyphonic voices have a power of uniting people across the boundaries of cultural and societal presumptions and misconceptions. The voices that have been chosen for the analysis come across as different to each other in all four dimensions. They range from a passionate but shocked account of a young and naïve patriotically proud soldier to a philosophical reflection by an older analytically minded speaker. The

differences are manifested through ellipsis, syntax (longer versus shorter abrupt sentences), variation in personal pronouns, and the use of adjectives etc.

The ST analysis has aimed to decode symbolism embedded in the source-text language of the speakers with the aim to understand their ideologies, consciousnesses, personalities and identities, and while transcribed snapshots of voices could be seen as virtual rather than real identities of the speakers, the linguistic symbols used to represent their narratives have provided an insight into the subjective world of each voice. The experiences of the speakers that are encoded in the linguistic patterns signal the meanings they wish to convey and that are embedded into the symbolic systems, which opens a possibility to interpret them by association and context. The findings of this ST analysis, while they represent one interpretation, nevertheless originate from the shared linguistic and practical experience and context and my interpretation is based on decoding the symbolism by means of shared culture, knowledge and discourse, as well as Russian grammar, syntax and punctuation.

The comparative ST-TT analysis sought to establish whether although Russian voices come across as polyphonic, and this can be established linguistically, their English counterparts undergo various shifts and alterations. In translation, voices have been affected by all four dimensions of the polyphonic voice.

Ideology is the most sensitive dimension and the most vulnerable in translation, as it is exposed to re-interpretations of each ST voice. Ideologies of the voices, even if domestic and personal, are susceptible to the alterations made to fit expectations of the TT reader, nevertheless, the ideological dimension is the most significant for this analysis, as ideology is at the core of the Bakhtinian polyphonic approach.[129] Alexievich's writing refer to domestic, everyday, kitchen ideologies and consequently are not expected to be justified, coherent or consistent. When speaking of the multiple diverse ideologies of *homo sovieticus*,

[129] Discussed in Section 4.2.

it is important to understand that Alexievich refers to the Soviet period with a touch of fondness. She states

> I do not like it when people disparagingly speak of the Soviet years. My father died when he was 90 years old and up until the end of his life he was a communist. When I came back from Afghanistan and told him "Dad, we are murderers", my father had no counter-arguments. He just cried. Nobody had spoken to him with such cruelty before. This idea, which seemed so beautiful, captivated actually very interesting, strong people. So, I would not undertake to cross out all those years just like this.[130]
> [Я не люблю, когда люди пренебрежительно говорят о советских годах. Мой отец умер, когда ему было 90 лет, и до конца своих лет он был коммунистом. Когда я приехала из Афганистана и сказала ему: «Папа, мы убийцы», у отца не было аргументов. Он просто заплакал. Так жестоко с ним еще никто не говорил. Эта идея, которая казалась красивой, завладела в общем-то очень интересными, сильными людьми. Так что, вот так перечеркивать все эти годы я бы не взялась.]
> (Gabrielian, 2016, p.4)

Her nostalgia and fondness are echoed by other voices in the ST and within the SL culture and society, to a large extent, it is a shared element of the discourse. This nostalgic fondness towards the USSR is the most affected in translation, as it forms part of expressive meaning. In translation, as discussed in the analysis, socialism tends to be counter-positioned against everyday life rather than presented as an integral part of it. For many ST voices this domestic socialism moved into their kitchens and became their comfort zone, something that might be difficult to convey to an outsider. Having said that, depersonalisation of the concept of socialism has led to the array of shifts in ideologies of the individual voices, thus the ideological fabric seemingly comes across as ironed to fit the TL collective narrative rather than going beyond its boundaries.

The personality of each ST voice is at the core of expressive meaning, which is subjective and cannot be proven right or wrong. Emotions can be subtle and become subjects of multiple interpretations. Personality and identity (or multiple identities) in each voice overlap and supplement the dimensions of ideology and consciousness. Textual markers

[130] My translation.

used in the analysis helped to conclude that all four dimensions are affected by translation process. The originality of each voice is replaced by that of a translator. As a result, instead of the multitude of voices, as in the ST, in translation we have each dimension substituted by the subliminal voice of the translators. In some cases some elements of dimensions were preserved by the effort of translators, which demonstrates that there is far greater compatibility between ST and TT, which is why if translators are aware of the need to preserve polyphony, a conscious effort might be made to do it and succeed.

Overall, translated voices come across as more decisively affirmative than in the source text. The subtle hesitation, pensiveness and reflective mood seems to be reduced or removed and replaced by clear-cut statement that could fall into the TL collective narrative of a suppressive regime and people within it. In some parts a speaker's understanding of a situation is substituted in translation by that of the respective translator. The syntactic structure of the voices no longer comes across as dramatically distinct from one snapshot to another, as it is in the source text. Despite the best effort by translator to preserve personal pronouns, as those appeared in the source text, the shifts in translation introduced a significant didactic interpretation of the source text for the target-language reader. Not only do the translated voices no longer come across as distinct from each other, the elements of internal struggle that are detectable for the source-text reader, are no longer present in the translated voices.

To conclude, all TT voices from the representative sample have experienced some degree of alteration through translation choices. Such reframings have led to shifts in propositional meaning and fluctuations of expressive meaning manifested through emotional undertones and clarifications. There is no internal struggle of the polyphonic identities in the TT. The alterations affected the presence of polyphonic otherness and the internal conflict of identities within every voice.

The comparative analysis has confirmed Jakobson's argument that translation becomes "a reported speech [where] a translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source" (Jakobson, 1959, p.233), and this creates a range of limitations in the outcome for the TT reader. While it might seem necessary to fit ST voices into the norms and rules of the target language and in doing so to introduce some changes, the four dimensions of the

research could help translators to mitigate the differences between source and target languages and culture so that the polyphony would re-appear for the TT reader.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has established the presence of polyphony in Alexievich's writing in Russian and explored its transformation in translation, revealing how the multiplicity of identities and ideologies transpire in ST voices and how they undergo shifts that shape the TT. This research hopes that establishing the presence of individual polyphonic voices in Alexievich's writing in Russian provides a useful contribution to the field of Linguistics, whereas the results of the comparative analysis of their transformation in the course of interlingual and intercultural transfer is aimed to serve the domain of Translation Studies equipping translators with a methodological model that could be incorporated into the pre-translation analysis. Having examined the polyphony – one of the defining characteristics of Alexievich's writing – this research has demonstrated that while voices are present and can be identified in the ST, multivoicedness is affected in existing translations into English through the introduction of shifts and alterations, including as a result of reframing by translators. To wit, polyphony, if present in the TT, is portrayed by existing translations into English with significant changes.

In the process of identifying the nature of polyphony in Alexievich's works and as a result of studying the reception to Alexievich's writing "at home", which constituted the first stage of this research, it was concluded that the attitudes towards her works in that geopolitical space are polyphonic and multidimensional, varying in different times and between distinct groups of readers within the SL societies. For instance, the media at some points were largely critical, whereas, among general readers there has been a considerable diversity of attitude and some acknowledgement of the presence of the polyphonic aspect. The few available scholarly works that discuss the Alexievich's ST acknowledge presence of the multilayered polyphonic diversity of her writing. While identifying some underlying themes within her writing, such as confessional value and spirituality, some scholars refer to the presence of polyphony and demonstrate a diversity in opinions and attitudes, including extreme criticism. In line with the Bakhtinian notion of polyphony, this thesis has argued that a complex polyphonic work that incorporates a multitude of narratives is likely to produce a polyphonic diversity of attitudes among the readers.

Conversely, in examining a range of attitudes in the Anglophone countries and societies, this thesis noted some regret in relation to the significant shifts and the lack of diversity in translation.[131] As discussed in Section 2.3., variations in attitudes "in the West" seem to lack diversity and at times exhibit homogeneity. Attitudes within the TT readership appear to be affected by the overreaching anti-Soviet public narrative of Cold War that is extended to Russia as a main successor of the USSR. While the source-language press shows some level of diversity in attitudes, the target-language media focuses almost exclusively on propagating an image of the aggressor-state and its suffering people.[132] There appears to be a suggestion in the Anglophone world whereby Alexievich's books serve as evidence of this discourse. The Anglophone academics that have been considered in this research almost uniformly identify underlying themes of suffering and trauma in the voices, whereas some scholars based in the Anglophone West point to the lack of polyphony in translation.

Discussing the reception of her works in SL and TL societies, this thesis explored transformations and differences which might have affected polyphony and to which extent the translated books remain a platform for the original voices. To understand possible reasons for these differences in attitudes, this thesis has discussed translators and translations of her works into English. Having explored the translators' backgrounds in relation to the translations they produce, this research suggests that translators can become hostages to the personal and public narratives they submit, which could be reflected in their translations. In the case of the Anglophone translations Cold War narrative seems to be prominent and interferes with the polyphonic diversity compared to the ST. The analysis in Chapter Five has demonstrated how translational choices alter nuances in the TT and direct the target-language reader away from the propositional and expressive meanings of the ST voices. The translated books seem to exhibit monophony that leans towards the rhetoric of the collective and public narrative that exists in the domain of the

[131] See end of Section 2.3. for discussion on this.

[132] Discussed in Section 2.2.

TT. This thesis concluded that Alexievich's books in translation are turned into a monophonic chorus of misery and lamentation set against the backdrop of the totalitarian regime, first Soviet, then Putin's.[133]

While exploring Alexievich's own perspective with regards to her own works, this research suggests that her position differs from many of the TT attitudes but also from the media ST attitudes. A human in her polyphony is both a spiritual and biological being, and through this she seeks to find the truth and strives to understand the soul of *homo sovieticus*.[134] She sees herself as a human ear and positions herself alongside her speakers, she is detached from them and her books become a platform for the ST voices. This thesis has linked her polyphony to the Bakhtinian understanding of the concept and suggests that an attempt to understand soul in pursuit of truth is close to both Bakhtin and Alexievich.

In the course of the comparative analysis of two ST editions of *Чернобыльская молитва [Chernobyl prayer]* in Section 3.2. this research argues that Alexievich's corrections introduced into the later Russian edition of *Chernobyl prayer* seem to place a higher value on the internal composition and ideologies within the messages of the voices rather than on stylistic accuracy, hence some alterations included stylistic embellishments, expansions and removal of dialect. She also introduced some supratextual alterations which, although important, do not affect polyphony in the same way as in-textual changes to each snapshot. On the whole, her amendments seem to be related to the shape and style rather than the four dimensions of voice, though it appears that she aimed to preserve what she saw as the core of each voice. This is why in the later edition she would often expand the snapshot to give a voice a bigger platform to externalize the inner world, express an ideology and complexity of identities. In her books she is the listener, the reader and one of the polyphonic voices. This research suggests that her attempt to look at human nature through the polyphonic network of kitchen ideologies alongside her endeavour to write a history of

[133] Discussed in Sections 5.2., 5.3.

[134] Chapter Three

emotions is another link that connects Alexievich to the Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony.

After establishing the specific nature of Alexievich's polyphony and voice within it in Chapter Three, this thesis has used the Bakhtinian understanding of the polyphonic concept. To do so, it develops a methodological framework for identifying and analysing individual voices which offers a systematic approach to translating polyphonic texts while considering ideological, cultural and other shifts. Contextualizing it to Alexievich's writing and exploring theories on the written voice in the original and in translation, Bakhtin's view on polyphony has been supplemented by Derridean discussions on the nature of the written voice and has served as a basis for establishing this research methodology, employing four dimensions of voice (ideology, consciousness, identity and personality) by means of textual clues and markers.

While ideologies externalize speakers' subjective views on everyday life in a historic context, the Bakhtinian understanding of consciousness in the polyphonic concept is connected to the inner world of each speaker where each personality might encompass multiple identities. A struggle of identities within one person is part of Alexievich's polyphony. The personality of each voice is expressed through a combination of emotional polyphonic messages and comes into contact with three other dimensions. Ideology, consciousness and multiple identities collectively contribute to the personality of the speaker, who reaches the readers through their recorded stories. A range of textual markers and clues have been allocated to each dimension to facilitate the two-stage textual analysis. The Figures 4.4.1. and 4.4.2. represent the model which has been applied to the textual analysis in Chapter Five.

This thesis has applied this newly devised model to the ST analysis scrutinizing an assumption of the Swedish Academy that sees human suffering as a dominating theme in Alexievich writing. The sample of voices selected for the analysis demonstrated that the diversity of emotions expressed by voices stretched far beyond the notion of suffering and exhibited the full palette of feelings, while suffering was not necessarily one of them. These findings have been of prime interest to this research and prove that voices in the ST

are identifiable at textual level as distinctive from each other with the help of the four-dimensional research model devised by this research methodology.

Through the two-stage textual analysis the presence of the polyphonic voices has been identified in the ST, and it is argued that in the course of their transformation during translation the polyphony has been lost and voices have undergone shifts in all four dimensions. The first stage sought to establish a clear and distinctive presence of the polyphonic voices in the selected sample, which can be identifiable textually by the four dimensions. Textually the differences are manifested through the elliptical patterns, syntax, use of emotionally loaded adjectives. Some voices come across as pensive and phlegmatic, some are agitated and passionate. Many of them manifest covert sarcasm and self-directed irony and criticism. Some voices attempt to self-distance from their stories and their narrative fluctuates between 1st and 3rd person pronouns. In many cases the collective "we" is used to express an attempt by the respective speaker as means of self-defence to reduce personal responsibility. Some narratives are abrupt and unfinished. There is an element of suspense when a story breaks off for the ST reader. Collectively, voices do not transmit any single narrative, each reader is likely to find some stories more relatable than others. There is no single message within the books, based on the analysis. This corresponds to Alexievich's statement that she is not there to provide answers.[135] Indeed, she herself is looking for an answer. This messiness of the ST polyphony becomes evident through a closely focused textual analysis.

The results of the analysis demonstrate that the polyphonic voices are present and distinguishable in the source text. Each voice is differentiated by ideology, emotional expressiveness, stylistic variations and juxtaposition of the self and the other. Alexievich is represented by multiple snapshots of her voice, each reflecting different aspects of her complicated and multilayered identity. Her voice in different places varies by style, manner of expression, including grammar, punctuation and other textual markers, which suggests

[135] Chapter Three for further discussion on this.

different states of mind and emotions in each snapshot, leading to variations in her ideological position. These differences show that she is exploring her own identity, which is why this is also her life-writing. While analysing others she also takes a close look at herself in the context of *homo sovieticus.* In the Bakhtinian sense, ST voices create mirror reflections in their readers, as the latter recreate them in their minds and become imaginary interlocutors, and polyphony becomes extended to the readers. In the meantime, ST voices also become readers and look back at their own snapshots they re-evaluate their statements, they participate in the dialogue that extends beyond the temporality of the book. The ST polyphony is interwoven into the fabric of the everyday and metamorphosizes in time and space.

The second stage of the textual analysis has applied the new model devised in the methodology of this research to assess shifts and alterations of the ST voices as introduced in the process of translation using the same four dimensions. The comparative analysis has been supplemented by the Cruse-Baker framework of meanings deriving the propositional and expressive.[136] The analysis of the TT voices in the translations highlights considerable shifts in the nuances of the original voices. Each voice in the analysed sample has experienced shifts and alterations in all four dimensions with voices in translation often substituted by the voice of a translator. The most significant shift has been observed within the dimension of ideology. The interpretation of the ST by the translators has led to changes in the ideological load of the ontological narratives of each voice. The original kitchen ideologies have been polished in translation and mostly aligned with either the collective narrative present in the TL Anglophone culture and societies, or a personal narrative of a translator, or both.

The dimension of identity has been affected in all voices of the selected sample. The subtle presence of more than one identity within one speaker has often disappeared in translation. The internal clash of multiple "selves" of "the self" and "the other" has not been observed

[136] See Section 4.4.

in translation. The dimension of consciousness has also been altered. Speakers no longer externalize their inner truths or inner selves, instead, the TT reader is faced with a different discourse adjusted through the prism of translation. Individual personalities are gone in translation and the TT is no longer polyphonic. Here, it is important to re-iterate that the polyphony in the ST is both stylistic (effect) and internal (aspect). The comparative analysis has demonstrated that both the external effect and internal aspect disappeared in translation.

Additionally, there is evidence of domestication of the translated text for the target readership and of the presence of the translators' personal input. These are in-text inserts and footnotes that leads to a situation where ST voices disappear in translation and the polyphonic aspect is replaced by the voice of the translator. This re-narration not only diminishes the polyphonic aspect but makes the translation appear more homogenous and coherent. The voices are still separated visually by an additional space between the lines but these do not follow the ST pattern, and the voices sound the same in their dimensions of ideology, consciousness, identity and personality.

Although this thesis is about translation and has used some elements of existing scholarship from that field,[137] to devise its research methodology it navigated beyond Translation Studies because at present the discipline lacks a polyphonic translation model that would be as helpful in the process of identifying and translating Alexievich's polyphonic writing in Bakhtin's understanding of the concept.[138] Thus this research has shifted Bakhtinian understanding of polyphony into the domain of Translation Studies into the context of translating Alexievich's polyphony into English. To wit, while Bakhtin applied polyphony to the monolingual analysis in the context of Dostoevsky's novels deemed by him as polyphonic, this thesis has taken polyphony to the context of translation

[137] These include, among others, Mona Baker's system of narratives, Susan Bassnett's approach to culture in translation, Venuti's variable equivalence etc., discussed throughout the thesis.

[138] Discussed earlier in this thesis

of the polyphonic texts and devised a new model based on four dimensions of voice shaped in this research methodology, more specifically consciousness, personality, identity and ideology. This new model is aimed to help linguists identify voices in the ST for the purpose of textual analysis as well as to help translators shape polyphonic voices in translation by identifying their key dimensions at the stage of pre-translation ST analysis.

This research sought to contribute to the discourse surrounding the translation of polyphony in the context of Alexievich's works as well as provide future translators with a linguistic tool to explore the multivocal nature of her narratives. Alexievich's works are polyphonic and rely on a multitude of distinctive voices, each representing unique ideologies, personalities, consciousnesses and identities. As the polyphony evident in Alexievich's writing and is identifiable in the source text, homogenising it in translation could have significant implications for the TL readers and their reception of the TT. This research has argued that it could be possible to transfer some elements of the ST voices to the TL readers, if the key dimensions established in this research methodology could be adapted to a translation process at the stage at pre-translation ST analysis. This could help to minimize shifts and alterations and deliver the ST voices for the TL readers in a structured way with polyphonic awareness.

This thesis suggests that the variety of ST ideological viewpoints, the spirituality of each consciousness, the clash of identities and a wide range of emotions are a lot less culture-bound that is assumed. This research maintains that the majority of the shifts that have been identified in translation are neither language nor culture bound. Subsequently, the ST polyphony could reach the TT reader in its multiplicity where every voice could be "heard" if the translators were to focus on establishing what each speaker is trying to convey and split the message of each voice into four dimensions. Translators express multiple ideologies, consciousnesses, identities and personalities using their own individual styles and manners. The important point to consider here is that even if a translator's individual style might affect how the polyphonic effect comes across to their readers, translators could still follow four dimensions of ST voice and maintain the multivoicedness of the ST books in translation.

To conclude, this thesis aimed to establish whether it would be possible to identify individual voices in the ST and having successfully done so to draw translators' attention to the multivocal dexterity in Alexievich's writing by providing a new four-dimensional methodological model that could be applied during pre-translation text analysis to distinguish between voices with the aim to foreground in translation what is deemed important within each polyphonic voice. Even though this research has analysed transformation of polyphony in existing translation, implementing the newly devised model to new translations and to assess how it works in practice in translation process remained beyond the scope of this thesis. Subsequently, this thesis suggests that a future study could apply this new methodological model to a translation of Alexievich's and/or a wider range of the polyphonic texts to test how it assists the interlingual transfer of polyphony and to verify in practice the theoretical outcomes of this research.

Albeit the scope of this research was limited to Russian STs and their corresponding existing English translations, future research would be useful to apply the methodological framework devised in this thesis to existing translations of Alexievich's writing into other languages to assess by means of comparative ST-TT analysis the presence and transformation of polyphony during interlingual and intercultural transfer. Another limitation of this research is that the term *snapshot* encompasses only individual extracts recorded by Alexievich in one given moment of time, which means that it gives the readers only a glimpse of each dimension of voice considered in this research. Studying a transformation of *snapshots* in temporality could demonstrate how the same voice changes in time and which factors affect it. The chronological aspect could become a subject matter of another research. The scope of the following study could be widened to include other polyphonic writer(s) to test the relevance of this research model outside of the context of Alexievich's works. These writers could include authors of fiction but more importantly, it could be of relevance to those writers who focus on shaping testimonies and polyphonic memories. Last but not least, while this research has covered a significant layer of scholarly material from the fields of linguistics and philosophy, a future study of the dimensions of a voice could be supplemented by an additional inter-disciplinary research to incorporate scholarship from the fields of psychiatry and psychology to achieve a better understanding of the dimensions of consciousness, personality and identity, as well as exploration of the self and the other within the self.

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