

## CHAPTER 52

### SLAVONIC & FINNO-UGRIAN STUDIES

#### Doctoral Theses

623. SAINI (Sonu)  
**History, Genre and Narrative : Voices From the Soviet Utopia and the Oeuvre of Svetlana Alexievich.**  
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#### *Abstract*

This work is a study of the emerging genre of 'documentary prose' in Russian literature. The study includes theoretical and analytical aspects of investigation into the said topic of research. It discusses the nature, meaning and periodization of the above-mentioned genre. The theoretical questions such as the reasons of emergence, development, and types of 'documentary prose' are discussed herein. A comprehensive study of the correlation between 'history', 'oral history' and 'memory' has been undertaken in the thesis. A brief history of the major events from Russian history such as II World War, Afghan War, Chernobyl tragedy and fall of Soviet Union is given in order to correlate it with the history as narrated by the Nobel Prize laureate Svetlana Alexievich in her works. The typological analytical part of the thesis studies the voices from various layers of the society in all five works by Svetlana Alexievich. These voices all together make a 'choir' of the victims or survivors of the tragedies. In the analytical part some other related important question are also discussed such as the specificities of imagery, role and function of author in 'documentary prose'. After studying the theoretical, historical and analytical issues, the panorama of alternative history has been obtained. In comparison with the professional Russian history and the voices collected by author in the concerned literary works, an alternative version of the history emerges. It may be added that the present research work is a unique attempt in the field of Russian 'documentary prose' and also a pioneering work in India. The supervisor and scholar of this research work were engaged in debate and discussion with the author Svetlana Alexievich for more than 5 years. The recent Nobel Prize in literature to Svetlana Alexievich enhances the relevance of the study.

#### *Contents*

1. Introduction. 2. Documentry Prose : Specificity, genre and periodization. 3. History of the Soviet Utopia. 4. Analysis, imagination and role of author in the works of S. A. Alexievich. 5. An alternative history. Conlusions, bibliography and annexures.