

4 Who's Responsible? The Politics of Language

Metonymy and Russian Responsibility

In examining the discursive construction of national identity, De Cillia *et al.* (1999) find that one of the linguistic devices upon which people draw when focusing on an imagined national identity (rather than an individual) is that of metonymy. As they state, 'metonymies enable the speakers to dissolve individuals, and hence volitions and responsibilities, or to keep them in the semantic background' (De Cillia *et al.*, 1999: 165). Furthermore, Rattcliffe (2005) finds that this dissolving of individuals through metonymy is exactly how many people discursively construct the 'other' or out-group. Much of the discursive construction of allies and enemies that occurred in the interviews in fact drew upon metonymy. Rather than mentioning all of the politicians, policy makers, generals, etc. of (most frequently) the Russian Empire, participants usually referred to 'Russia'. As an alternative to 'Russia', interviewees also frequently referred to 'Putin' as a figurehead, using the current Russian president to represent political corruption and deviousness in Russia. Interestingly, in this creation of allies and enemies, while 'Russia' was used to refer to the many referenced political and military villains, 'Ukraine' was much more often used to refer to the citizens and general population of Ukraine.

An example of metonymy where Putin is named in place of all forces behind Russian aggression is given in the interview excerpt below. In this example, Lesya (28 years old, from Western Ukraine, living in the United States) discusses her feelings and frustrations about the Ukrainian war, including who she feels is responsible for the war.

Corinne: Um and so what are your feelings about the- the current war in Ukraine?

Lesya: Well ((laughter)) my feelings about the current war, um I just really wish that Putin would ah disappear, you know, because as soon as he- as long as he is in power, Russia is going to back him up.

I mean his- his support is something ridiculous,
 I don't know,
 it's like ninety-nine percent or-
 I don't know what it is,
 but everyone is unanimous in supporting his actions,
 and without Putin,
 this war wouldn't have happened.
 Ah yeah, so I'm extremely frustrated,
 and when everything just started I was angry.
 I was- you know,
 so many-
 like it's kind of hard to believe that in the twenty-first century,
 and ah this- this could happen, you know?

While Putin is arguably acting in a very powerful position in the Russian government, it is important to keep in mind that a single individual cannot enact a war without others willing to follow orders. However, as Putin is in the top leadership role and has never shied away from claiming responsibility for the political decisions that are made, he has come to symbolize all actions taking place on behalf of the Russian government. In this way, Putin's name functions as a metonym for the Russian government and underlying political bodies. Therefore, when Lesya says, 'I just really wish that Putin would ah disappear, you know,' she may in part mean the actual man himself, but she is also referring more broadly to political corruption and scandal that has been associated with his regime. Similarly, when Lesya says, 'as long as he is in power, Russia is going to back him up,' she is referring to the general population of Russia, not of the land itself. In this instance, the use of 'Russia' in this way means Russian citizens, including politically and military affiliated individuals, as they are from where Putin's power comes.

By using metonymy in this way, it is also easier (psychologically and linguistically) to relegate a category of people to the other who is also the aggressor (cf. Rattcliffe, 2005). Therefore, 'Russia' and 'Putin' become seen as responsible for the Ukrainian war, instead of the individual citizens in Russia who support the Russian government's actions, and the political and governing bodies who pass orders and laws allowing for the resources which are used in aggressive acts against the Ukrainian people. This use of metonymy is not uncommon in people's discourse. This especially makes sense in highly straining and emotional events where cognitive function may already be strained (Beliaeva & Seals, 2019). Additionally, as narratives are told again and again, they are simplified

through common literary devices such as metonymy, which allows a bundle of intertextual information to be encoded within a single word. This is precisely what makes them such a popular device for media outlets, which further spread these metonymous discourses (Catalano & Waugh, 2013). Thus, all of the events, feelings and prior and anticipated discourses associated with the Ukrainian war are compressed, and responsibility is assigned to metonymous actors.

Another function of metonymy in the interviews is that it allows emotions and human characteristics to be drawn upon without naming any specific names. In this way, collective identities are able to be formed and referenced, as demonstrated in an excerpt from an interview with Lilia (27 years old, from Western Ukraine, living in Canada).

Lilia: Er... I hope that the war ends tomorrow,
and everyone goes home and continues with their peaceful life,
but... that's ((laughing))- that's not happening.
I- I think the war will... continue on,
because Putin does have a lot of people he doesn't care about,
and can send to get killed in Ukraine.
And... No one- no other... s- er... world leader... seems to understand
the threat,
and, er... willing to... ((smacks lips)) openly... er... step into this...
conflict.
So Ukraine is basically there on- on- on its own,
and... will have to... carry on,
I don't think Putin with- just withdraw and...
stop... doing what he's- he's been doing.
So it's totally up to... Ukrainian leaders, and... Ukrainian people to
just,
((exhale)) carry on, and... show that, er...
they can still prevail.

The story painted by Lilia is a bleak one, but it is also a view held by many Ukrainians, including the majority who took part in this project. As in Lesya's excerpt, Lilia uses Putin's name both to symbolize the man and all of the powers that he directly and indirectly controls. Lilia positions Putin as a cold, calculating man, which is indeed how he is portrayed throughout much international media, therein dialogically reflecting the international news outlets. This positioning is furthered when Lilia discursively removes agency from the soldiers, saying instead that they will be sent to be killed in Ukraine. This reassignment of agency also discursively

indicates that Lilia's anger is with the political and governing bodies of Russia, not with the Russian people themselves.

In fact, Lilia's frustration appears to be directed to world political bodies, in general, which was again reflected in many of the interviews for this project. As Lilia says, no other leader seems willing to help, 'So Ukraine is basically there on- on its own.' This frustrated statement also dialogically echoes news reports of the many sanctions that other countries imposed upon Russia for the Ukrainian war, which seemed often to have little to no effect (e.g. Christie, 2015; Rettman, 2016; RT Staff, 2016). The inability or unwillingness of international political bodies to intervene in more serious ways has been a source of frustration and despair for many Ukrainian people, which is dialogically echoed throughout Lilia's statements.

Finally, when Lilia refers to 'Ukraine' when she says 'Ukraine is basically there on- on its own', she is referring to the Ukrainian politicians as well as the Ukrainian people, especially the Ukrainian citizens who are experiencing the brunt of Russian aggression. This is evidenced by Lilia's near-repetition of this statement shortly after, during which time she also mentions Ukrainian politicians and the general population individually: 'So it's totally up to... Ukrainian leaders, and... Ukrainian people to just, carry on, and... show that, er... they can still prevail.' Lilia's final statement, of prevailing, also clearly discursively marks Ukrainians as victims and Russians as aggressors in the war, therein assigning responsibility for the war once again to Russia.

Other literary devices were also found to be helpful to the interviewees in discussing their feelings and perceptions of the war, especially when it came to who is responsible. In the next example, married couple Lev (late 30s, from Eastern Ukraine, living in New Zealand) and Raisa (late 30s, from Eastern Ukraine, living in New Zealand) make particular use of personification in explaining their views of what Ukraine is experiencing during the war.

Corinne: What do you guys... think will happen,
and what do you hope will happen?

Lev: What I- I'm afraid... will happen... Mmm... Is...
well, u- I-have-
I've read that... ((smacks lips))
one of... goals of Russia in this conflict is...
just make... permanent wound on the b-body of Ukraine.
So Ukraine will suffer f-from this constant conflict...
and will not raise,
will not hit... even... average country...

will be just... below everything ((inhales)).

And that's... what... I am thinking wi- really will happen because...

they have resources to- to make this happen.

Er... and Ukraine from its side cannot fight... er, in X war...

Because... we're smaller country,

we cannot fight... on political... arena... really...

We tried with... er... European Union, USA...

And in-

Raisa: They're just concerned.

Lev: They're concerned.

Raisa: ((laughter)) ((inhales)) And it helps.

Lev: And then again concerned.

Raisa: Mm-hmm... Yeah,

and they warn... again... that it will be sanctions... against-

Lev: Yeah, they will talk about sanctions again.

Raisa: [Mm-hmm.]

Lev: [They will talk.]

Raisa: And again concerned.

Lev: S-so... we, erm... well,
we as Ukraine, er,
we are alone.

When Lev first begins explaining his views of what might happen in the Ukrainian war, he first mentions having read the forthcoming information (assumedly from news outlets). Mentioning this before telling his opinion serves two purposes. First, it allows him to draw upon institutional symbolic capital in addition to embodied symbolic capital, therein adding more perceived weight to his opinion (Meadows, 2009; Seals, 2011). Second, this allows Lev to prime his listeners to dialogically connect with the many recent stories of Russian aggression against Ukraine, including the many internationally illegal acts that had been reported at that time. Lev then makes use of personification to give very strong visual weight to his opinion, saying that Russia's goal is to make a 'permanent wound on the b-body of Ukraine. So Ukraine will suffer f-from this constant conflict... and will not raise.' This personification brings to mind a person who has been beaten to the point that they can no longer stand, a gruesome and powerful image of violence. Lev then continues by explaining that because Ukraine is a smaller country, it cannot fight on equal

terms, therein further personifying Ukraine as a smaller person who is unable to fight back as they are beaten.

After this powerful imagery, Lev begins to explain that Ukraine has asked for help from larger political bodies such as the European Union and the United States. Raisa then joins Lev in this description, co-constructing this expression of frustration and hopelessness. Double-voicing the previous statements made by the aforementioned larger countries, Raisa says, 'They're just concerned,' which Lev repeats. They in fact repeat the statement 'and again concerned' four times within ten lines, showing through repetition the perceived pointlessness and insincerity of these countries' statements of concern after so long without further actions. Lev and Raisa cement this point by then stating once again, 'we as Ukraine, er, we are alone,' reflecting an in-group sentiment shared among many who identify as Ukrainian and who are personally invested in Ukrainian affairs.

The Government but Not Necessarily the People

Other interviewees were careful to specify that not all Russian people support the war in Ukraine. More specifically, many of the participants attributed responsibility directly to those in the Russian government and were careful to distinguish between the Russian people following the Russian government's influence and the Russian people who are not so swayed. An example of this comes from Anatoliy (mid-20s, from Central Ukraine, living in New Zealand).

Corinne: What... er, are your feelings about the current... political situation in Ukraine?

Anatoliy: Well, it is actually quite worrying... erm... unfortunately, quite disturbing...
 Er, of my first thought was about my parents.
 Er, luckily, they are in central part,
 and the actual... conflict, the war, hasn't, er, reached, er, that part.
 And hopefully it will not, er...
 unless people... stop doing what they are doing, erm...
 And, er... I definitely... disapprove... erm...
 and probably condemn... er, this... this propaganda,
 which is... er, coming from Russia,
 and which is orchestrated by Putin...
 Erm... I do... believe that...
 this is, erm... human... erm... specificity... er,
 or this is how brain works,

that we... do deny things, er, which are uncomfortable...
but do not... cause us big problems... now...
So we'll procrastinate until it gets really really bad,
and then we wake up and open our eyes.
So I think this is what's happening with many Russians...
Erm, I do know that many Russians do not support war,
and they... do not... er... approve what-Russia-is-, er,
what Putin is doing.
Er... and, erm, I noticed... a very interesting... division... er...
in Russia...
Although, I think this is probably... different question,
er, so, yeah,
your question was about... er, what I feel about it.
Yeah, so, yeah, I- I- I- I- I'm... I don't feel... comfortable about it,
erm... and I do hope that it would- er... will stop.
Er, I'm happy to see that international community... er, does
support Ukraine,
and they were not fooled...
((sighs)) erm... er, by Putin...
Although, the fact that, er,
there was... no official... statement from,
actually... anyone, really,
saying that,
yes, there are Russian soldiers... fighting in Ukraine...
I do s... see that people are kind of trying to use it as an excuse...
Er... because, erm... If there is no... evidence that there-
there are Russian... soldiers... fighting against Ukraine,
there is no war... between Russia and Ukraine.
Erm... So it is kind of still... as if... internal conflict.
They kind of understand,
and they say that it's not really internal conflict,
but nobody says in black and white that Russia is fighting with
Ukraine.

still currently live in Ukraine. In discussing their location and experiences with recent events, Anatoliy self-corrects from using the term 'conflict' to the term 'war'. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, the terminology used carries much semantic weight in regard to assigned responsibility (Pavlyuk, 2015). By self-correcting from 'conflict' to 'war', Anatoliy is emphasizing Russia's responsibility in the aggressive events that led to the war.

Anatoliy further emphasizes Russia's role as the aggressor in the war by stating his clear disapproval of actions orchestrated by the government and carried out by the Russian military: 'And, er... I definitely... disapprove... erm... and probably condemn... er, this... this propaganda, which is... er, coming from Russia, and which is orchestrated by Putin...' Anatoliy is careful with his word choice, saying that he definitely disapproves of the Russian propaganda related to the war. He also says that he 'probably' condemns it, which indicates Anatoliy's awareness of the strength of a word such as 'condemn', and his careful use in applying it. Furthermore, by mentioning Russian propaganda in particular, Anatoliy is drawing intertextually upon the type of messages that have been espoused by some major Russian media outlets, referring to Ukrainians as fascists and neo-Nazis (cf. Chalupa, 2014; Walker, 2014), similar to what Gleb discussed in Chapter 3. By making this intertextual connection, Anatoliy is able to dialogically respond to these claims, which he has heard repeated many times by some Russian-identifying people, especially on social media outlets. Noticeable, however, is that Anatoliy does not condemn the Russian people repeating the statements from this propaganda. Rather, he blames Putin and the government officials working under him who have approved the printing of this negative propaganda towards Ukraine, once again indicating that it is the Russian government, not the ordinary Russian people, who are viewed as responsible for the Ukrainian war.

This point is further elaborated on in the next part of Anatoliy's discourse when he says that he believes 'this is how brain works, that we... do deny things, er, which are uncomfortable... but do not... cause us big problems... now... So we'll procrastinate until it gets really really bad, and then we wake up and open our eyes.' Through this more psychologically focused discourse, Anatoliy effectively absolves the general Russian people from any conscious responsibility in supporting Russian aggression in the Ukrainian war. Rather, Anatoliy says that this is an aspect of all human nature. In so saying, Anatoliy also creates more discursive bridges between the everyday Russian people and other general populations broadly, including Ukrainians. This is further evidenced by Anatoliy's use of 'we' and 'us' in his discussion of human nature.

Throughout the next part of Anatoliy's discourse, he is careful to continue avoiding a general lumping of all Russian people together. Rather, he talks about those who support the war and those who do not: 'Erm, I

do know that many Russians do not support war, and they... do not... er... approve what-Russia-is-, er, what Putin is doing. Er... and, erm, I noticed... a very interesting... division... er... in Russia...' In this excerpt, Anatoliy is careful to talk about 'many Russians' instead of Russians in general. He talks about the many who do not support the war, as well as a second group of many for whom 'this is what's happening'. That is, the second group who support the war are not directly blamed by Anatoliy; rather, he has already attributed responsibility for their position in the war to the propaganda created by the Russian government. Therefore, it is once again the Russian government, not the people themselves who bear primary responsibility for the war.

Notably, Anatoliy's discourse again shifts to discuss the perceived lack of genuine effort by other countries to assist Ukraine, similar to the discussion had by Lev and Raisa. It is interesting to note that like Lev and Raisa, Anatoliy is careful in how he talks about other world powers, indirectly criticizing these countries' lack of sincere assistance. Anatoliy begins by saying what he is thankful for, therein positioning these other world powers in a positive light in the beginning. However, Anatoliy then subtly shifts position, stating, 'Although, the fact that, er, there was... no official... statement from, actually... anyone, really, saying that, yes, there are Russian soldiers... fighting in Ukraine...' Beginning with the contrastive discourse marker 'although', Anatoliy has interrupted the expected positive narrative continuation to offer instead a subtle criticism of these countries for not doing in fact what one would expect, which includes an official statement acknowledging Russian soldiers' presence in Ukraine. This statement by Anatoliy intertextually draws upon the many stories from world news at that time that carefully avoided ever directly stating that Russia had broken international law, something heavily criticized by many Ukrainians.

Anatoliy further presents his mitigated criticism by first not pointing to any specific countries, instead using the general term 'people', and then explaining why this lack of sincere effort on the part of other countries is actually hurting Ukraine: 'I do s-... see that people are kind of trying to use it as an excuse... Er... because, erm... If there is no... evidence that there- there are Russian... soldiers... fighting against Ukraine, there is no war... between Russia and Ukraine. Erm... So it is kind of still... as if... internal conflict.' As Anatoliy explains, because other countries have purposefully avoided acknowledging Russia's breach of international law and militant occupation of Ukrainian territory, there is no official acknowledgment that a war is taking place. This can be understood as a strategic move on the part of these countries because they are thus avoiding sending their own resources to aid in the war effort, and they are also avoiding directly taking one side or another in a highly explosive situation. However, as Anatoliy points out, through this avoidance, these countries are also participating in a construction of the war as an internal war for

Ukraine, which it is not. As previously mentioned, if it is seen as an internal war, then it is also seen as Ukraine's problem, and therefore the other countries are not required to respond. Yet, it is not an internal war, and the lack of acknowledgment of this by other countries denies Ukraine of needed support as it is engaged in war with Russia.

This last point is reinforced once again by Anatoliy through repetition of ideas, when he says: 'They kind of understand, and they say that it's not really internal conflict, but nobody says in black and white that Russia is fighting with Ukraine.' Here Antoliy explains that the representatives from these other world powers understand the effect their avoidance is having, though he again mitigates his criticism of these foreign powers by using 'kind of'. He then once again begins by giving some positive credit to these country representatives when he explains that they acknowledge it is not an internal conflict for Ukraine. However, he then once more subtly criticizes these countries' avoidance by beginning with 'but' and then explaining that still none of these country representatives are directly making the statement that Russia is attacking Ukraine, therein allowing the unsaid to be further avoided in discourse and in practice.

For some of the interviewees, the focus of responsibility for the war rests solely with government, whether this be only the Russian government or whether it also include the Ukrainian government. For Kalyna (37 years old, from Western Ukraine, still living in Ukraine), blame for the Ukrainian war also sits with the Ukrainian government. Therefore, responsibility for the war is still outward looking, but in a different way. For her, those in the Ukrainian government who have been involved in the war are not of the people and are therefore part of 'them' and not part of 'us' (cf. Csernicskó, 2017; Fligstein, 2008; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014; Wodak & Boukala, 2015).

Corinne: Um, so- so what,
uh y- you've- you told me some,
some about the current uh war
and what are your feelings about um everything that's happening
right now?
Um, and how closely do you follow it every day?

Kalyna: Well.
The situation in Ukraine is very dramatic.
Because we have not only external um, uh, enemy
like uh Putin and uh uh this Russia pr- Russian propaganda.
We have all uh even uh very uh strong uh internal uh enemies.
Like um uh, some officials who are- uh who are paid by Kremlin.
They are uh officials in all the branches,

like in police, in army, in uh government,
 so they uh do their best to to spoil everything,
 to stop some uh good initiatives
 to stop um, mm uh different help for Ukrainian army.
 So, we have to fight uh to the, to in- in the two directions.
 S- well, I don't know when, when will it fi- ((exhales)) stop.
 And some people say that it could be a big and uh massive war and
 everything is only uh coming.
 Um, another people say that everything uh will uh end
 uh there on Donbas,
 and nobody's uh planning to co- to come here.
 Well you know,
 When- when you fight uh against uh ill uh person,
 uh, like Putin you-
 you cannot predict what- what is in his head.
 We- we can't uh know w- what's there.
 Well, we's- we are concentrated in uh daily needs,
 and we- we do our best to- to- to- to make something
 to help to keep situations- situation
 and I have an idea (xx) will be there.

Kalyna begins by describing the situation in Ukraine as 'very dramatic', therein positioning events as already more intense than would be expected. She then goes on to explain that the reason events are dramatic is 'Because we have not only external um, uh, enemy like uh Putin and uh uh this Russia pr- Russian propaganda. We have all uh even uh very uh strong uh internal uh enemies. Like um uh, some officials who are- uh who are paid by Kremlin.' Similar to Anatoliy, Kalyna also specifically points out Russian propaganda and positions it as creating a problem by further contributing to the Ukrainian war. In fact, she mentions Russian propaganda alongside Putin, therein discursively drawing comparisons between them and drawing upon intertextual references to Putin and his administration's role in the war, as well as the role of the Russian propaganda of which Putin's government has approved. Kalyna then continues by saying that there are also internal enemies, which she describes as 'very strong', therein positioning them as powerful and difficult to remove. She provides an example in the form of some Ukrainian officials who are paid by the Kremlin, meaning through metonymy that these officials are paid by the Russian government. Kalyna has thus detailed an indeed distressing situation, where top members of the Russian government have paid

powerful members of the Ukrainian government to aid Russia in disrupting Ukraine.

Kalyna then continues, providing more details as to who these powerful officials are: 'They are uh officials in all the branches, like in police, in army, in uh government.' The branches that Kalyna names include those known for carrying power and having the ability to carry out aggressive acts when ordered to do so, such as the police and army, as well as those who do the ordering in the government. Kalyna explains that these officials are paid to attempt to stop any initiatives that would help the Ukrainian army, which she implies includes actions such as fighting against Russian aggressors in the war zone. By not fully stating this, Kalyna is expecting that I will fill in the gaps by drawing upon the intertextual threads that link her meaning to the many narratives existing about corrupt individuals interfering in Ukraine's ability to fight in the war zone (with which I was in fact familiar). Kalyna then emphasizes again the exhaustive, dramatic nature of this two-way internal/external fight, saying, 'So, we have to fight uh to the, to in- in the two directions. S- well, I don't know when, when will it fi- stop.'

Kalyna next draws dialogically upon Discourses that were (and still are) circulating among the Ukrainian people. She says, 'And some people say that it could be a big and uh massive war and everything is only uh coming. Um, another people say that everything uh will uh end uh there on Donbas, and nobody's uh planning to co- to come here.' Drawing dialogically upon the unknown mass voices of 'some people', Kalyna relates one view that is that the war is only beginning and that it will get much larger, which also dialogically reflects many past Discourses throughout the centuries of wars spreading suddenly and unexpectedly, something that the Ukrainian people are familiar with from the Soviet era. She also dialogically expresses a second view that the war will not progress beyond the war zone, which has centered in the region of Donbas in Eastern Ukraine. Notably, Kalyna does not present a third view of Russia withdrawing or of international allies stepping in, as neither one of these are major Discourses in Ukraine, the hope of each of these having ended for most Ukrainians prior to Kalyna's interview (Russian occupation of Donbas had been going for six months by this point). It is still impossible to say what the outcome will be at the writing of this book; even though Kalyna's interview took place several years ago, the Ukrainian war is still ongoing.

The final part of Kalyna's excerpt again mentions Putin, both as the individual and as metonymy for the Russian government and officials operating alongside him. As she says, 'When- when you fight uh against uh ill uh person, uh, like Putin you- you cannot predict what- what is in his head. We- we can't uh know w- what's there.' By mentioning mental illness, Kalyna is drawing upon stigmatizing Discourses of people with mental illness as unpredictable to position Putin as such. Additionally, she

is dialogically drawing upon discourses among some Ukrainian people and within some Ukrainian news outlets speculating as to whether or not Putin is ill, which at times has included mental illness.¹ Once again, though, Putin is also named as a metonym for the Russian government and officials condoning the Russian war, as a single man would not be able to fight against the Ukrainian army alone. In both meanings, Kalyna is pointing to the government, and not the general population, as being responsible for the Ukrainian war.

The General Population as Responsible

While most of the participants named various governments as responsible for the Ukrainian war, some of the participants specifically pointed to individuals from outside of the government as retaining responsibility for the events of the war. One such case can be found in an excerpt from the interview with Lana (early 30s, from the Black Sea region of Ukraine, now living in New Zealand). In this excerpt, Lana begins by immediately focusing generally on people and more or less maintains this focus while including a discussion of larger nation-states.

Corinne: Yeah.

And, what are your feelings about, um,
what's going on with the war in Ukraine right now in general?

Lana: U:m, ((smacks lips))

I- I have really-
really big regret that the best, erm,
((smacks lips)) the best men of Ukraine,
they're just dying in that,
stupid war? ((sighs))
And, um, so,
and Ukraine just losing the chance to change,
or to become this, um,
swapping to Eu- to European, u:m, values,
to European, erm, w- way of life
and they're just losing their, erm,
((smacks)) all efforts,
just, like you know
just dying,
for nothing?
And, er,

and I mean like from,
 let's say like, er,
 Russians,
 they send not the best people,
 they send,
 like prisoners,
 like former prisoners or,
 people who we:re, like, with-
 have some, erm,
 ((smacks lips)) problems with law?
 They just give them guns and illegally transfer them to Ukrainian
 territory and say
 'Okay, you can do whatever you want.'
 And um, and all those people who:,
 like poor- poorly educated, or,
 have, er, have no values of any other life,
 they just kill for nothing.
 They don't have eh
 it's like, they-
 I- I'm- I'm sure that they don't want, like, don't want to,
 bring freedom or bring Russia to: this Donbas?
 But just erm,
 they- they just like,
 they just like to: have a power,
 to have a gun in their heads and-, hands and
 d- do the robbery and, mmm,
 ch- took whatever they like, and,
 I know that some- some families who: erm run from Donetsk?
 and the:y, mm,
 all their belongings were taken.
 So, th- they left their flats?
 And their flat now robbed?
 And, th- and those, they-
 they took whatever they want,
 like TV,

so any, like, so, it's-
 it's not really like, for something good,
 they're not fighting for something good,
 for bringing something good,
 but just for dest- for destroying.

When I asked Lana to talk about her feelings relating to the Ukrainian war, she begins by talking about the individual Ukrainians who are fighting with the military in the war. Lana calls these Ukrainian soldiers 'the best men of Ukraine', positioning them positively and in fact valorizing them. She then addresses what she perceives to be the futility of the war, saying that these soldiers are 'just dying' in the war, which she calls a 'stupid war'. By including 'just' and 'stupid', Lana clearly positions herself as against the war, with the war being positioned as a pointless event.

Lana then increases the stakes of what is being lost, bringing the discussion to a national level that affects all Ukrainians. By saying that Ukraine is 'losing the chance to change', Lana dialogically draws upon the Discourses of EuroMaidan which largely focused on Ukraine entering the European Union as a strategic move to embrace Western European values and ideologies and to further separate from Russia. She even connects with these Discourses at a more direct level by mentioning 'swapping' to European values and way of life, meaning moving from a more Russian-aligned position to a more Western European-aligned position. When Lana then references 'all the efforts', she is intertextually referencing the many years that Ukraine had spent working with the European Union since 2008 in an attempt to draft an agreement by which Ukraine could become part of the European Union (Ukrainian Independent Information Agency, 2008). Lana then once more comments on the futility of the war, expressing that all of these efforts will be lost 'for nothing', showing her clear positioning against the war.

Following this discussion of what is at stake, Lana then returns to a focus on the individuals involved in the war, saying that 'Russians, they send not the best people.' By 'Russians', Lana is clearly referring to the Russian government officials, who she says are not sending the 'best people', referring to the soldiers being sent to fight in the war zone. Interestingly, in saying that the government is 'sending' these individuals, and not that the individuals are going themselves, Lana is also very much holding the Russian government responsible for Russian soldiers going to the war zone. Lana then continues with a lengthy description of the type of people she believes are going to fight, a description that is very similar to that given by Larysa in Chapter 3, including a lack of education, low socioeconomic status and a penchant for violence, including robbery and a fondness of weapons. This repeated description shows that this

narrative of Russian villains has become a master narrative in discussions of the Ukrainian war, which is easily intertextually drawn upon by Ukrainians who are against the war. In addition to this description of the Russian soldiers allowing Lana to easily other these individuals, by having this description follow the valorized Ukrainian soldiers, Lana creates a clear divide between them. Furthermore, this divide, focused on the soldiers themselves, allows Lana to place more direct blame for the violence occurring on the individual Russians fighting in the war zone. Lana has described their perceived undesirable qualities in detail, thus placing much importance on identifying them as the responsible parties.

To further emphasize Lana's villainy of the Russian soldiers, she then recounts a short story of Ukrainian families who lived in Donbas (the war zone), fled when the fighting started, and were robbed by the Russian soldiers. Interestingly, this story is a general recounting, again dialogically drawing upon stories that Lana has likely heard from a number of sources: 'I know that some- some families who: erm run from Donetsk'. However, drawing upon these events in a narrative format brings more voices and experiences directly into Lana's argument, therein allowing her to draw upon embodied symbolic capital, even if not hers, in order to further strengthen her argument for her audience. This narrative of delinquent villains stealing from defenseless Ukrainian citizens who must flee also serves the purpose of further placing full responsibility for the Ukrainian war on the Russian individuals who are fighting in the war zone.

All as Responsible

Finally, there was another, yet much less prominent, position taken by some of the participants when discussing responsibility for the Ukrainian war. For some of the participants, both Russians and Ukrainians are responsible for the war. This responsibility includes not just the Russian and Ukrainian governments, but also the Russian and Ukrainian people. Klara (30 years old, from Central Ukraine, still living in Ukraine) was one of the people who held this view, as expressed in her interview excerpt.

Corinne: Thinking about, um, the war that's currently happening in Ukraine,

um, how closely do you follow the situation,
and what are your feelings about it?

Klara: ... Well... I'm trying to...

all the time... stay... er, ne-n- loyal,
or neutral, or-
and just see people... behind... the countries.
Because... ((sighs))

I actually was thinking about it a lot.
 What we are blaming Russians for, is... basically... following- for-
 following the... propaganda,
 that they hear on the TV,
 and losing their... their people's values.
 They- some of them are, er...
 starting to... er,
 to be glad or happy when... bad things happen to Ukraine.
 Some of them are actually-
 have so much anger that they are willing to go and fight against
 Ukrainians with... with their guns.
 And even those who are not doing either one,
 they still... already building some borders in their... themselves,
 in- in- like, in their,
 I would say... soul, if-you-can-s- if- if- if we can talk about it.
 And... I'm just afraid to ... ph... to... become the same,
 and start being happy when something bad happens in Russia.
 Because no one in-, n- no one...
 It-will- it will not... be better for anyone, if- if people are hurted-
 ar- are hurt.
 But... Well... I- it is hard to- s- to stay neutral in this situation,
 we- do- I do feel like...
 there is aggression against... my country,
 and... people who are actually my friends, er,
 or some people who are- I just n- hardly know, but I...
 But these are pe- these people who I actually know...
 have to- to fight, and... and possibly die... for-
 I... really don't understand for which reason.
 Why this is happening in twenty-first century,
 li- it just doesn't feel- s-seem to... to... to be possible in twenty-first
 century.
 There is a lot of aggression... er, in the society,
 and it's... obvious, for obvious reasons,
 but definitely Ukraine is growing up.
 The soc- Ukrainian society is growing up,
 there- is- a- there are volunteers...

They are helping a lot,
 there are volunteers to actually fight.
 There are... er, there is a lot... of discussion going on,
 and the society is becoming... more grown-up,
 in terms of... f-...
 in terms of, first of all, defining ourselves as Ukrainians.
 Not... former Soviet-Unions-ners,
 not... Russian friends, or not friends,
 but actually Ukrainians who have their own path.
 And... we finally,
 we-... Ukraine...
 wanted to have good relationships in- with Russia for so long...
 And... w- were- w-was willing to give up... n-
 little and big things to stay friends...
 is finally willing to- to not stay friends and not give up anything,
 because- because the... stocks... are... our lives already.
 You can't give up your life to stay friends.

Corinne: Yeah. And... do you think that- that that's, um, an important step that Ukraine has made?

Klara: Yes.

I- We actually- we were forced to make this step.
 Maybe we would never had courage to make it ourselves.
 But... we were helped,
 and we are making it.

Klara's position on who is responsible, likely stems from her own self-positioning in regard to the war, evidenced when she says, '... Well... I'm trying to... all the time... stay... er, ne-n- loyal, or neutral, or- and just see people... behind... the countries.' Interestingly, Klara first says 'loyal' before she self-corrects to 'neutral', which are two seemingly opposing terms in political discourse, as 'loyal' implies clearly taking one side over another. However, Klara then continues in her discussion of remaining neutral, saying that for her this means focusing on individual people and not on monolithic nation-states. Before beginning to explain further what she means, Klara first states, 'I actually was thinking about it a lot.' This positions Klara as having spent time giving considerable thought to her opinion, therein giving it more symbolic weight than an opinion which is thought to be spontaneous. This discursive positioning further foreshadows Klara's presentation of an idea that may be controversial for some.

In further setting up the presentation of her own opinion, Klara first dialogically draws upon more frequent discourses among Ukrainian identifying people: 'What we are blaming Russians for, is... basically... following- for- following the... propaganda, that they hear on the TV, and losing their... their people's values.' In fact, this statement clearly echoes the opinions given by several other interviewees earlier in this chapter. However, Klara positions herself as still one of them, not against them, by referring to 'we' and including herself in these discourses of blame, thus not absolving herself of any blame either. She then explains that some Russians are fighting in the war, due to 'so much anger' within themselves, therein positioning these Russian individuals as acting reactively, not without personal reason. This reactiveness further implies that something has happened to cause this anger, which differs from other Discourses of the Russian soldiers being pure villains (see earlier in this chapter and Chapter 3). In this statement, Klara is dialogically drawing upon these Discourses and subtly disagreeing with them.

After mentioning some Russian individuals who are happy about the war and others who are willing to fight in the war, Klara then says, 'And even those who are not doing either one, they still... already building some borders in their... themselves, in- in- like, in their, I would say... soul, if-you-can-s- if- if- if we can talk about it.' This comment is notable for several reasons. The first is because Klara is making allowances for Russian individuals who are neither happy about the war nor wanting to fight, which is an allowance not made by many of the Ukrainian interviewees. The second is that Klara reflects on the effect that the war is having for Russian people, which is similar to that which is happening for Ukrainian people. The comment about building borders within themselves is a very insightful, metacognitive comment, which also draws more commonalities between the Ukrainian and Russian experiences of the effects of the war. Third, Klara mentions the soul and then says 'if we can talk about it', which dialogically echoes the history of the Soviet Union, during which time religious talk, including discussion of concepts such as the soul, were not allowed and were even dangerous (cf. Hroch, 1999). This past history has strong echoes throughout former Soviet countries, with some people still very uncomfortable talking about anything viewed as religious. By commenting upon the allowance of such a topic, Klara is dialogically drawing upon these past experiences and still present discourses, therein merging the past shared Soviet history with the present Ukrainian and Russian fighting.

Klara further draws connections between the Ukrainian and Russian experiences by saying, 'And... I'm just afraid to ... ph... to... become the same, and start being happy when something bad happens in Russia. Because no one in-, n- no one... It-will- it will not... be better for anyone, if- if people are hurted- ar- are hurt.' The negative views that she mentions being expressed by some Russians, such as joy at seeing Ukrainians hurt,

are no longer something only possible in the 'other'. Rather, Klara says that she is afraid of the possibility of feeling the same way, thus implying that this is something that anyone could experience, including herself, regardless of her identity as a Ukrainian. She also says that the violence does not benefit anyone, which reinforces her neutral position, while drawing upon and negating Discourses of retaliation.

While attempting to remain neutral in her views, Klara explains why this is still something that she finds difficult to do: 'we- do- I do feel like... there is aggression against... my country, and... people who are actually my friends, er, or some people who are- I just n- hardly know, but I... But these are pe- these people who I actually know... have to- to fight, and... and possibly die... for- I... really don't understand for which reason.' Klara references Russian aggression against Ukraine, calling the latter 'my country', therein showing her allegiance to Ukraine and clear self-positioning as Ukrainian. This statement also serves to place primary responsibility for the war on Russia as the aggressor. She then further elaborates on the struggle she feels by drawing upon embodied symbolic capital to explain how friends of hers are dying in the war. She amends this to include other people who she does not personally know, emphasizing how many Ukrainians are dying in the war. However, she then returns to a focus on people who she personally knows, therein reinstating her embodied symbolic capital and personal losses in the war. Like Lana, Klara emphasizes the futility of the war when she says that there appears to be no particular reason for the death of her friends. Klara further emphasizes her feelings about the senselessness of the war by saying that she does not understand how this could happen in the twenty-first century – a statement which intertextually references historical references to wars in 'less sophisticated' times, as well as positioning modern Ukrainian and Russian societies as contexts that should be beyond such wars.

While this previous part of Klara's discourse emphasizes Russian responsibility for the war, she does not renege on her previous sentiment of neutrality. Klara's next statement assigns responsibility once again also to Ukraine: 'There is a lot of aggression... er, in the society, and it's... obvious, for obvious reasons, but definitely Ukraine is growing up.' In this statement, Klara refers to aggression in Ukrainian society, intertextually referencing the Ukrainian Discourse against Russian people regarding the war. By using the same term for both Russian and Ukrainian societies ('aggression'), Klara semantically assigns responsibility for the fighting to both societies, albeit in a subtle way. However, Klara notably then excuses Ukrainians for behaving aggressively, saying that it is for obvious reasons, by which she intertextually references the topic of this part of the interview (the Ukrainian war) and dialogically echoes the many Ukrainian voices assigning responsibility for the war to Russia. Continuing to pardon Ukrainian individuals for this position, Klara connects these events to Ukraine 'growing up', which is another master narrative that has run

throughout Ukrainian discourse, including many of the interviews in this book (cf. Bondarenko, 2008; Osnach, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, September 2014).

During the next part of Klara's explanation, she elaborates on how Ukraine is seen to be growing up. Again drawing on master narratives of Ukrainian identity development, which have been found to be especially prominent among Ukrainian young adults (see Chapters 2 and 3; Shulga, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014), Klara states, 'in terms of, first of all, defining ourselves as Ukrainians. Not... former Soviet-Unions-ners, not... Russian friends, or not friends, but actually Ukrainians who have their own path.' By contrasting the identity of 'Ukrainian' against other nation-state related identities, Klara emphasizes the newly stressed importance of a national identity (Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014). Therefore, when she refers to 'Ukrainian who have their own path', she is emphasizing the national aspect of the identity marker Ukrainian over the cultural or linguistic aspect (though these are not mutually exclusive). She then says, 'we-... Ukraine... wanted to have good relationships in- with Russia for so long.' By beginning with 'we' and then self-correcting to 'Ukraine', Klara is both including herself in the definition of Ukraine and drawing upon more institutional symbolic capital in addition to her own embodied symbolic capital. In so doing, Klara also is able to dialogically access Ukraine's long history with Russia to make a stronger point by drawing upon a greater historical timeline. This statement also echoes the past tumultuous history between Ukraine and Russia, while simultaneously positioning Russia as once again in a position of being the one at fault by not being willing to cooperate in upholding a good relationship.

Klara ends this discussion by comparing the 'previous' Ukraine with the 'current' Ukraine, by personifying Ukraine and saying that previously the Ukrainian people would make many sacrifices for the sake of friendship with the Russian people, as well as for a positive international relationship between the two countries. Klara then dialogically echoes her and others' previous discourses of the rise of a Ukrainian national identity (Bondarenko, 2008; Shulga, 2015; Tsentr Doslidzhennya Suspil'stva, April 2014). Connecting time and space, bringing them together to access the chronotope of the Ukrainian war, Klara says that Ukrainians are no longer to give up everything for the sake of a good relationship with Russia 'because the... stocks... are... our lives already. You can't give up your life to stay friends.' Through this statement, Klara again intertextually draws upon the Ukrainian war and the many lives that have been lost. Simultaneously, Klara acknowledges Ukraine's role and responsibility for fighting that has occurred in the Ukrainian war. Even though she condones it, therein breaking her neutral stance, she does so while positioning Ukraine as necessarily taking part in the war, therein holding some of the responsibility.

Finally, following the final question that I posed to Klara, her succinct answer again joins the events of the Ukrainian war with the rise in importance of Ukrainian national identity. As Klara states, 'I- We actually- we were forced to make this step. Maybe we would never had courage to make it ourselves. But... we were helped, and we are making it.' The step Klara refers to is two part - establishing a national Ukrainian identity and breaking ties with Russia, both of which have been connected in Klara's discourse. Klara begins this final statement by saying Ukrainians (in which she includes herself through 'we') were forced, therein assigning responsibility again to Russia. However, interestingly, Klara sees this step as beneficial for Ukraine and something that Ukraine may not have 'had courage' to do itself, further personifying Ukraine, and positioning the aggressive actions from Russia as a not altogether bad thing since there was, in her view, a positive result for Ukraine. In this way, she says that Ukraine was 'helped' by Russia. However, she then ends by assigning Ukraine, and therefore the Ukrainian people, more agency by saying that now they are taking this necessary step themselves. Thus, while Russia is not without responsibility, Ukraine is also not without agency.

Further Remarks

Many different arguments have been made of who is responsible for the war in Ukraine, ranging from those who believe that responsibility comes from outside of the country with Ukraine being used as an international political tool (e.g. Fursov, 2016) to those who believe that political extremists from within Ukraine itself are responsible (as detailed in Risch, 2015). The participants in the current project were likewise divided on the issue of to whom or what responsibility should be attributed.

A key factor in establishing responsibility resided in how participants positioned themselves and others in their narratives. This positioning led to the various arguments that responsibility resided with the Russian government, with various governments but not with lay people, with the general population of a given country, or with everyone. Across all of the arguments of responsibility, the interviewees drew upon similar linguistic strategies, including the use of metonymy, personification, repetition, dialogism and intertextuality, as well as the aforementioned discursive positioning.

For the individuals who were arguing that politicians and governments are responsible for the war, metonymy was a particularly useful device. Through the use of metonymy, they were able to discursively form collective identities which they then continued to reference throughout their discourse under a metonymous referent (Catalano & Waugh, 2013; Rattcliffe, 2005). In this way, 'Putin' or 'Russia' came to mean much more than just the man or the country; they became symbols of political responsibility and aggression (Beliaeva & Seals, 2019). By pointing to them

specifically, it also became possible to subsume individual identities of other people involved, thus drawing more upon institutional discourses, which are not as emotive as personal discourses (cf. Ratcliffe, 2005).

Furthermore, other governments were not without responsibility either. Many of the participants named the lack of support from international governments, but they did so indirectly through the use of linguistic devices. Repetition was one of the devices used, enabling participants to emphasize the futility of these countries' espoused efforts and to instead indirectly criticize these countries' lack of genuine effort in supporting Ukraine. In making this argument, participants also found personification useful, as it allowed them to evoke more emotion for Ukraine's situation. In particular, Lev's description of Ukraine as a smaller person beaten helpless on the ground painted a very powerful image of the helplessness and hurt that they feel for their country.

For the participants who argued that individual people are also responsible, dialogism and intertextually were particularly useful in supporting their position. One such way this was achieved was through the voicing of others not present (whether named or unnamed). This voicing of the other in a narrative format directly brought more voices into the account being told, therein drawing upon even more embodied symbolic capital than what would exist for the teller alone (Bakhtin, 1986, 1992; Bourdieu, 1986; Meadows, 2009; Todorov, 1984). Historical references were also intertextually drawn upon, bringing more institutional symbolic capital to the argument and positioning the speaker as speaking from a more knowledgeable space (Bourdieu, 1986; De Cillia *et al.*, 1999; Meadows, 2009).

Finally, responsibility was also shown through sequencing in discourse. When participants wanted to clearly assign responsibility, they found success in juxtaposing characters who represented valor with those who represented villainy. This was particularly useful for Lana in comparing her discursively constructed Ukrainian heroes against Russian villains to make her point. However, Klara also made use of sequencing, this time in order to construct a give and take of responsibility in her attempt to negotiate her desired position of neutrality. It is through this assortment of linguistic devices that participants were able to position and reposition themselves and others in discursively constructing responsibility for the war.

Note

- (1) Due to the highly controversial and potentially dangerous nature of these posts, I have chosen to not name any specific articles or outlets here. However, readers can conduct a simple internet search and will retrieve many relevant printed news items.