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Karakaya Ali

Orchid ID: 0000-0002-8578-4013

THE DEATH OF XANDA THE LION DIDN'T MAKE SENSE: TRAUMA DUE TO FORCED MIGRATION AND WAR IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN WRITING

*Recent wars, annexation, and separatist movements in Ukraine have led people to leave their homes in the search of a safe place to live. This has been overly visible after the February 2022 invasion by Russia, but has been present and had many instances since the spring of 2014. These forced migrations and their imprints on individuals, families, and subsequently, the nation are common things to see among popular trauma narratives of Ukrainian literature as the Ukrainian nation has been subjected to many events throughout centuries like the Holodomor, two world wars, and colonial oppression. As the events affected the nation as a whole rather than individuals, the traditional psychological method of reflection on the past fails to help millions of people to cope with their traumatic exposure. For this, the historical trauma idea in the context of the historical memory concept is used as a tool to analyze large-scale traumas in the sociological/cultural sense and literature acts as a tool for the much-needed talking through for the nation. This paper examines the correlation between historical trauma and forced migration events that happened between 2014-2022 by analyzing narratives about trauma and traumatized individuals in Ukrainian writing in the scope of Olena Stiazhkina's *Smert' leva Sesila mala sens* (Ukrainian: *The Death of Cecil the Lion Made Sense*). (All translations from Ukrainian and Russian have been done by the present author unless otherwise stated).*

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Problem statement: The Concepts of Trauma and Historical Trauma

The main issue addressed in this study is the correlation between the narrative of a catastrophic event in the Donbas region of Ukraine, a very tricky geopolitical area, and the traumatic outcomes of that event that are reflected in literature (Dodonova, 2019), as well as the possible responses to it (Гребенюк, 2022; Caruth, 1996), and the overall evaluation of the event through the lens of cultural and historical trauma, which can have an impact on society as a whole (Sztomka, 2000). This will be achieved through an analysis of Olena Stiazhkina's novel within the framework of trauma theory.

Trauma in literature is presented to the reader through personal narratives. These narratives make us witnesses to specific events that are sometimes formed by a traumatized character, sometimes a relative, friend, or acquaintance, and sometimes by the narrator. No matter how they are presented, the reader takes these narratives and interprets them. According to the research by McAdams, we do not 'discover' ourselves in narratives, but rather we create ourselves through them (1993). He also argues that human beings are storytellers by nature, and stories are used for different purposes by human beings. Stories can teach us things, guide us the way, and broaden our horizons by introducing us to new people, ideas, and places, they can give us moral lessons, and so on (McAdams, 1993). But one of the main reasons why trauma narratives matter, and why people find them interesting is thanks to the healing function of narratives. This has even found a reflection in modern medicine: self-narratives are used as a tool for psychotherapy (Sivrioğlu & Zwane, 2016).

Historical trauma, however, is a term that is used to describe the impact of colonization,

cultural suppression, and historical oppression (Kirmayer et al., 2014). This means that the traumatic event(s) that has happened, has affected groups of people, for a long time. These people with a shared traumatic background live their lives, and the future generations that are created by them may carry the results of the events that happened with their ancestors. Trauma becomes an inseparable part of the culture. These traumatic events can very much differ. Wars, famines, diseases, natural disasters, language oppression, resettlement, revolutions, and many others can be counted as traumatic experiences that may turn into a part of the collective identity. Yet this does not define a traumatic experience as historical trauma. A traumatic event of great extent can be “worked through”, in other words, we can witness a catastrophic event that has shaped the collective identity of a nation or a group of people but the effects of this event can reduce to a level that it might lose the label of cultural trauma. According to Smelser, events as traumatic as the French Revolution and catastrophic as the black death, are not currently considered as traumatic as they were for the societies they affected. The continuousness of traumatic events plays an important role in this, so if the reasons or people that trigger traumatic events disappear, the aftermath of the traumatic events for society, historical trauma, can also become less distinguishable (Alexander et al, 2004).

The purpose of the article is to examine the various trends in responses to large-scale traumatic events and evaluate them within the context of historical, cultural, and colonial trauma. **The specific objective of this study** is to analyze the trauma narratives that arose from the war in Ukraine and led to migration, as depicted in Olena Stiazhkina's novel “Smert leva Sesila”. The relevance of this study is in its investigation of the trauma responses and causes of trauma depicted in Olena Stiazhkina's “Smert leva Sesila” in connection to similar narratives that emerged during the post-2022 period in Ukrainian history.

Analysis of recent research and publications. This study analyzes recent publications in the field of trauma studies in the Ukrainian humanities (Гребенюк, 2022; Dodonova, 2019) and synthesizes them with research from Western scholars (Sztomka, 2000; Caruth, 1996) to provide further insights into the subject.

According to research carried out by Ukrainian and Western scholars, all interpretations of trauma share the naturalistic fallacy, and this approach collides with the interpretation of cultural/historical trauma like events that traumatize the people are not the causes of the trauma as traumas cannot be inherited (Alexander, 2004). Cultural trauma is the direct result of the cascading aftermath of a traumatic event, but not the result of the event itself. The interpretation and narrativization of the event determine the possibility of it turning into a part of the collective memory of a group, and even a part of the collective identity. In light of this information, cultural trauma is one of the many wheels that turn together to create the collective identity, and collective identity may be the foundation stone for national identity. This is the main point why ‘trauma’ in literary studies has a different approach and has different methods of interpretation than ‘trauma’ in psychology. In this sense trauma studies in literature has more of a sociological perspective. As a result, the term cultural trauma gives researchers the needed grounds to study the deeply buried wounds of society and just as psychology does with individuals (Sztomka, 2000, p. 450).

An event that is potentially traumatizing to a group of individuals, according to Sztomka, needs four characteristics to be considered:

- 1) This ‘change’ has to be sudden and fast.
- 2) It is radical, deep, and touches the very core of society.
- 3) It is perceived as imposed on the society of the traumatized by others.
- 4) It is shocking and repulsive (Sztomka, 2000, p. 452).

These criteria show that although any event of any sort can be traumatizing for individuals, it is less likely for an event to be imaginably traumatizing for a group of people at the same time. It should contradict the standard of judgment of society, and importantly the event must be

perceived as something that is brought unto them by someone outside of their community as they know it.

Historical Trauma in the Ukrainian Context:

Narrativization and interpretation of all sorts of traumas depend on the context. And the context of this paper is the traumatic experiences that Ukrainian people have gone through. It is imperative for an individual to have the required background information about the traumatic events before attempting to trace them and their effects in the literature. Among the most notable historical events which happened in the 20th century that might have had traumatic effects on the Ukrainian nation, we can count: disease epidemics that happened at the beginning of the 20th century, the First World War, and the October Revolution, Holodomor, and other man-made famines, the Great Purge under Stalin, the Second World War. The results of these events, such as ethnic and political cleansings, forced resettlements, and various repressions in the end deepened the colonial trauma for the nation. According to Dodonova, during these, and various other events that took place during the 20th century more than 20 million Ukrainians lost their lives, and this loss has traumatized the social psyche of the nation completely (Dodonova, 2019, p. 45). The survivors of these events, or the traumatized, have suffered in their own ways. As Dodonova describes in the same work, historical trauma is an understanding that is caused by the tragic events of the past that include extreme forms of violence, a fundamental change in the way of life, as well as the aftermath of those events, which had a terrible impact on people's psyches, behaviors, and memories (Dodonova, 2019, p. 49). Trauma is the absence of any understanding, or ability to talk or to share, therefore trauma itself is the state of non-narrativization. Therefore, the events that people go through usually leave a scar that will not heal by itself (Caruth, 1996). And for the trauma to be talked through by the traumatized people themselves, or by those who weren't the first-hand victims of the event, but inherited the trauma through various procedures there has to be a narrative. The narrativization of historical trauma in modern Ukrainian literature has been observed to be of two major different types: through speaking or keeping silent (Гребенюк, 2022, s. 106-107). Both of these methods are actively used both in literature and in real life.

The Holocaust, for example, has been one of the most traumatizing events for the people of Europe. Although wars have always been a part of humanity, and people have always found ways to survive, surviving doesn't necessarily bring a healthy psyche with itself. Perhaps the most dangerous consequence of wars and such violent events is the intergenerational consequences they bring. Understandably, Holocaust survivors did not want to 'retraumatize' themselves by talking about the horrifying events that happened to them. Here the big role is played by the conspiracy of silence. Individuals choose not to talk about what is already known by the populace. Therefore in most cases, first-hand trauma survivors in modern literature tend not to talk about their traumas. It is usually the intergenerational effects of the trauma that gives the reader the ability to see the method of 'talking through' in action. Yet it is perfectly possible to see first-hand traumatized talking about traumas that have been less destructive to their lives.

Katerina Babkina's "Miy did tantsiuvav krashche za vsikh" (Ukrainian: My grandfather danced better than anyone) is an exceptional work that gives the readers the possibility to indulge themselves in traumatic experiences and the intergenerational consequences of both individual and historical traumas. The book consists of 12 short stories. The main accent of the story is on the stories of the families of five classmates. Through the stories of them and their families, Babkina denotes the most traumatic events that Ukrainians went through, such as the Second World War, Stalin's repressions, Holodomor, and the fall of the Soviet Union. These key events all have different effects on the people and the parents and grandparents of the five classmates.

The narrative on trauma in this work, especially for historical trauma is quite apparent. The first-hand victims, for example, the grandfather after the honor of whom the book was named, do not choose to talk about their traumas. We see their traumas through the eyes of their children

and grandchildren. There the narrativization changes from the silent one to a talking one, as the characters actively discuss the reasons and the results of those traumas as well as talk about their individual traumas.

Moreover, the second generation traumatized by the first-hand victims then starts to carry the weight of something that they haven't seen or witnessed. This subsequently leads to the same thing happening with their children, the third generation, interpreting the initial trauma in their own way, and of course, suffering in their own way as well. According to Michele Crossley, identifying personal narratives and stories can be done in two different ways: the first is, obviously, psychotherapy, but the second one is, more interestingly, autobiographies (Crossley, 2000). Literature gives people the ability to indulge themselves in the autobiographies of people who may or may not be real, although the characters of Babkina's novel do not tell their own autobiographies. That is done by Babkina, who follows a similar way to what McAdams suggests as the interview to use when exploring narratives. According to him, as someone can't tell their 'whole story' in life, they should rather talk about: their life chapters, and key events in their life (peak experiences, or high points; or Nadir experiences, or low points; as well as turning points), then significant people, stresses, and issues. This can give a good layout of someone's life, and although Babkina does not use this method like a psychologist, she gives us many of these necessary details from a person's life, for multiple people. Therefore the given work has been essential for understanding how intergenerational trauma works, and how historical events and culture leave scars on individuals as personal narratives of individuals, like puzzle pieces, come together to enlighten us on trauma on a national level.

Colonial trauma

Colonial trauma can be defined as a rather complex and long-term understanding that affects people in a cumulative way (Mitchell, 2019). It can be regarded as a process of defamiliarization of one's own. The language, traditions, and cultural dynamics of a nation can be defamiliarized. In exchange, the colonizer brings their own, which is argued to be a better version of what the colonized have had up until the point of colonization.

Trauma connected to forced migration events

Forced migration events in the colonial context have the tendency to be connected with the aims of the colonizers to dilute the society and impose their influence. It can also be connected with wars and various natural disasters. In any case, exposure to trauma can happen before, during, or after the actual movement in migration events (Cohodes et al., 2021), and the results of the exposure can vary.

The Ukrainian nation had to endure many forced migrations. And it would be naive to think that wars and forced migration events began in 2014. Yet during the period between 2014 and 2022, the number of migrants kept escalating to a level that no historical event in the history of the nation could match. The annexation of Crimea and the occupation of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in 2014 have led to an internal refugee crisis in Ukraine. This then led to problems for both the migrants and the people living in the receiving cities, as the infrastructure was not ready for such a big wave of migrants. After the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, a migrant wave made up mostly of women and children found itself before the doors of Europe, and beyond.

According to data from The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, n.d.(a)), there are two different trends in the numbers of Ukrainian refugees from 2014 to the present day.

The first one is the internal migration caused by war. For the first time since independence, Ukraine faced an internal migration crisis (Мальчикова та Лозова, 2017). Since the beginning of the annexation of Crimea and the Russo-Ukrainian war in the Donbas region, more than 9 million Ukrainians were displaced and had to move to other parts of the country. This brought many problems for the migrants. First and foremost, the trauma of leaving your home involuntarily, possibly losing loved ones, and not knowing when you will be back. But the

traumatic experience, unfortunately, does not end there. The ideology behind the Russian Federation's invasion of the aforementioned regions is simple: they claim that people who live in them are ethnically Russian, their culture and language are Russian, and therefore these territories are 'primordially Russian' [Russian: *Iskonno russkie zemli*].

Donbas as a Phenomenon

The word Donbas today is used to define the oblasts of Donets'k and Luhans'k. Hiroaki Kuromiya describes the Donbas region as the Ukrainian-Russian borderland and states that the region has been politically unmanageable throughout its history (Kuromiya, 1998). Moreover, he claims that Donbas was actively Russified after WW2: during the 1980s and 1970 the intellectuals from the region promoted the Ukrainian language and the culture against the Russification movement, but this was fruitless as they were arrested (Kuromiya, 1998, pp. 326-328).

It is safe to say that people from Donbas, exactly on the account of Russian colonialism suffered from colonial trauma on a great scale. Donbas was not the only territory of Ukraine where Russia actively suppressed the local culture and forced its own. Nikolai Gogol in one of his letters dating back to 1844 said:

*"I myself do not know whether my soul is Ukrainian [Russian: *khohklatskaia*], or Russian"* (Гоголь, 1844).

This 'confused' state of mind about one's identity has been a common thing in Ukraine, especially in the Eastern part of the country where N. Gogol is from, and even more so in Donbas as it is one of the parts of Ukraine with the most Russian influence. And after the internal migration movement began, from the East to the West, the migrants had to endure cultural and linguistic hardships (Блинова, 2016).

Stiazhkina and "Smert' leva Sesila mala sens"

Olena Stiazhkina was born in 1968 and raised in Donets'k (PEN Ukraine, 2021), a city within the Donbas which has been a troublesome spot for Kyiv since immediately after the independence with its linguistically and culturally Russified population (Kuromiya, 1988, p. 337). She received her both undergraduate and graduate education in the field of history at Donets'k National University, where after getting her Ph. D. she started to work as a faculty member in the Department of Slavic History. Following the beginning of the War in Donbas, she moved first to Mariupol', then to Kyiv. Stiazhkina herself is a sufferer of forced migration and this most likely triggered her to begin her activism. She has been an advocate for human rights issues and against the occupation of the Donbas and Crimea. In 2014 Stiazhkina has given a TEDx Talk in Kyiv called, "Do vstrechi v Donetske!" (Russian: See you in Donets'k!) where she told about her understanding of the Donbas and Crimea. In her talk, she argues the word "Donbas" should leave our active vocabulary, as the word doesn't specify anything in the modern-day context as it is a Soviet word with connotations of the imperialistic past of exploitation of the region. She says, "Donbas will not return to Ukraine, because Donbas doesn't exist." (TEDx Talks, 2014) The reason why Stiazhkina says that is because the word 'Donbas' is a portmanteau word, made up of the words Donetskiy (Ugol'niy) Basseyn (Russian: Donets'k [coal] basin). The name of the region shows the pragmatic approach of the Soviet regime. The region in various propagandas was called the 'Heart of Russia' (Donbass Serdtse Rossii, 1921) for powering the entire country with its rich coal mines. Stiazhkina stands against the use of this 'Sovietism' and invites people to see the region as it is. This with the fact that she was born and raised in Donets'k must have played a huge role in her decision of writing her novel.

Furthermore, Stiazhkina understands the importance of unity for trauma sufferers, and she founded the social movement "Deokupatsiia. Povernennya. Osvita" (English: Deoccupation. Return. Education) in 2016, which discusses the Ukrainian future of the occupied territories: Donets'k, Luhans'k, and Crimea publicly to overcome the consequences of the Russian occupation in a humanitarian space by spreading education, and information about the Donets'k Oblast (Декупація. Повернення. Освіта, 2016).

Stiazhkina wrote all of her literary works and a significant portion of her academic works in Russian before the occupation. Among these are “*Ty posmotri na nee!*” (Russian: Look at her!) (Стяжкина, 2006), *Na Yazyke Boga* (Russian: In the Language of God) (2016), which was later translated into Ukrainian by Kateryna Sichenko in the same year of its publication, and *Rozka* (Стяжкина, 2018). In fact, her first work written in Ukrainian is *Smert' leva Sesila mala sens* (English: Cecil the Lion's Death Made Sense) which was published in 2021 in Lviv. Nevertheless, the writer wrote the beginning of the novel in Russian and then changed the language to Ukrainian, which is related to the narrative on the phenomenon of bilingualism and people's tendency to switch from Russian to Ukrainian after the events of 2014 in Ukraine. Stiazhkina deliberately makes the characters change languages in dialogue to give the reader all the realities of the people of Donets'k in a manner that uses the language as a medium to give background information on the meaning of what the character says. Because language is considered an inseparable part of identity and the role of self-identification played by the language in Ukraine is highly politicized and ideologized (Olszański, 2012).

Stiazhkina's novel is a complex chronicle of stories of 4 children who were born in the same hospital and the same day in 1986, which happens to be the year when the Chernobyl nuclear disaster happened. The Chernobyl Nuclear disaster marks the beginning of the downfall of the Soviet Union as it marked not only the end of the Soviet nuclear industry but the regime as a whole (Plochy, 2019). This is of symbolic importance for the novel.

The name of the book is of symbolic importance “The Death of Cecil the Lion” refers to the killing of the iconic lion with an ‘unusual’ black mane which made it famous among researchers from Oxford University in 2015 (BBC News, 2015). The death of Cecil the lion was among the biggest news stories of the year with other news like the Charlie Hebdo Attack, the premiere of a new movie from the Star Wars series, the birth of Princess Charlotte of Wales, the legalization of same-sex marriages by the US Supreme Court and many others. Among all these stories that made it into the headlines, there was not much space for the war in the east of Ukraine. On this, Olena Stiazhkina says during an interview that she came across a news article about ‘the most important events of the World in 2015’ where she saw the death of Cecil the lion, but couldn't see anything about the Cyborgs of Donets'k Airport, whose name was chosen the ‘Word of the Year’ by the online dictionary of Ukrainian language and slang ‘Myslovo’ (Радіо свобода, 2015).

Stiazhkina's novel, ironically titled 'The Death of Cecil the Lion Made Sense,' highlights the disparity between the global reaction to Cecil's death and the lack of attention given to similar events. On the other hand, in her book, Stiazhkina argues that the death of Xanda, another lion who happened to be Cecil's cub, did not create a worldwide sensation. However, the deaths of both the father and son are similar in that they were killed by a hunter in the same national park, and they were both monitored by the Oxford University with the only difference being the time they were killed (BBC News, 2017). The death of Xanda the lion did not garner the same level of attention from the media or the world as Cecil's death did. This difference in global resonance illustrates that certain events capture the public's attention, while others do not, regardless of the significance of the event itself. Xanda's death remains largely unknown to the public due to its lack of interest to the media. This phenomenon is not unique to the case of Xanda but can be observed in various events throughout history. In Stiazhkina's book, events such as the conflict in Donbas that have had a significant impact on the lives of millions are likened to Xanda's death, which failed to receive significant global attention, or, simply, ‘*didn't make sense*’. This raises important questions about the role of the media in shaping public perception and awareness of events, and, overall, the book serves as a critique of the cultural and societal norms that contribute to the uneven distribution of attention and resources.

From the perspective of trauma studies, the novel has many personal trauma narratives and most of them can be identified as cultural trauma which has a historical background. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that trauma related to forced migration is narrativized through the

stories of those, who lived in Donetsk before the events of 2014. ‘Separatist movements’ or the invasion of the region caused the inhabitants to leave their city in search of a safe place. This reaction can be described by the Freudian understanding of life, which essentially claims the urge to survive will always win, therefore a departure is often seen in the reactions to traumatic experience (Caruth, 1996, p. 70-81). There are 3 different trends for the choices made by people overall in the novel: the first one is to stay.

The reign of the “Russian Spring” began in early April in Donetsk (Серета, 2019), after which a lot changed for Tanya & Viktor, and Ernest.

“Таня ніколи не думала про те, чи може людина прокинутися іспанцем, напередодні вкладаючись у ліжку ніким. Прокинутися англійцем, французом, хорватом. Хорваткою. Вона б не хотіла хорваткою. Ніким, крім русскої. Це відбулося з нею навесні 2014. Здається, у березні. Було дуже шкода, що вона не позначила цього дня в календарі. Варто було б, хотілося навіть відзначити його як другий день народження. Як перший день, коли вона зрозуміла, хто вона і хто, зрештою, у всьому винний” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 246–247).

(“Tanya never thought if someone could wake up as Spanish, having laid down in the bed as no one the day before. To wake up English, French, Croatian. Croatian. She wouldn’t want to be Croatian. No one else, but Russian. This happened to her in the spring of 2014. I think in March. It is a real pity that she didn’t mark that day on the calendar. It would be worth it, even to celebrate as her second birthday. As the first day, when she understood who she was and, ultimately, was to blame for.”)

Tanya is a doctor, who is in her second marriage to Viktor. She and her husband were on the “other” side of the separatist movements in the region. Tanya believed in a revolution and thought that it would be best that Donetsk will be a part of the Russian Federation. Although her husband, Victor, was on the same “side” as his wife, he had other thoughts about the future of Donetsk. Stiazhkina describes this as down below in one sentence:

“Тієї весни, коли Таня прокинулася русскої, Вітя раптом став республіканцем.” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 247)

(“That spring, when Tanya became Russian, Viktor suddenly became republican.”) (Although the text is written in Ukrainian in this part of the novel, the word for Russian (woman) in the sentence (русскої) is written in Russian.

During this part of the novel, these two characters who choose to stay have different arguments to support their decision. While Viktor put forth that he will not trim his beard before the full recognition of Donetsk People’s Republic, Tanya sabotaged pro-Ukrainian actions and looked for someone to help in a fallen Russian drone...

Remaining in the novel the case of Tanya and her husband is associated with madness. This is evident in various lines of Tanya in which she is seen in a mood of rage at Ukraine and everything Ukrainian, or completely senseless from what she is doing, as in the sequence in which she is searching for the pilot of a pilotless drone.

“— Ти тепер завжди українською? — із сумішшю смутку та підозри запитала тітка Таня. Гаська кивнула.

— Змусили там? Чи бандерівка? — поцікавився Вітя. Дядько Вітя.

— Можна я вже піду? — Гаська підвелася, але тітка Таня схопила її за руку і всадила на стілець.”

(— Are you always going to speak in Ukrainian now? — asked Aunt Tanya with a mixture of sadness and suspicion. Has’ka nodded.

— Did they force you there [in Ukraine]? Or are you a Banderite now? — asked Victor. Uncle Victor.

— Can I go now? — Has’ka got up, but Aunt Tanya grabbed her by her arm and made her sit on the chair.)

People have different responses to trauma. The responses of Tanya and Victor can be

associated with colonial trauma, as it is clearly stated that Tanya, all her life dreamt of being Russian, which is a thought imposed on her by the colonial suppression, which suggested that being Russian is superior, or better. Finally getting what she wanted, she acts aggressively toward those who didn't choose this 'better' way of life. Her sudden change in temperament and neuroticism can be associated with PTSD, which is a common thing to observe during big-scale stressors like a war (Arsova et al., 2016).

The other character who stayed after the war is Ernest. Named after the German communist Ernst Thälmann, Ernest found himself a higher purpose, he, as a veterinarian, helped the animals who were left behind by the people who had left the city. It is no secret that forced migration sometimes puts people in a position where they have to make decisions to save themselves and their loved ones. Involuntary migrants often have little or no time and limited alternatives when preparing for the 'companion animals' they take care of (Keltly-Huber & Beirne, 2015). This, most likely, gave Ernest the thought that he is of use in a city that was shelled constantly, and where countless people left or died, including one's that mean something to the character. Ernest also stayed to be the one to protect the childhood swing of his and his friends' (Ukrainian: Hoidalka) and to be the one to stay, to protect what is his, and to be there in the case someone he loves returns.

“Немає відповіді на запитання: «Чому ти не поїхав». «Навіщо ти тут?» На це, можливо, є. Відповідь боягуза, життя якого відкладене на завтра” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 320).

(There is no answer to the question 'Why didn't you leave'. 'Why are you here?' For this one, possibly there is... The answer of a coward whose life is postponed until tomorrow.)

The other trend concerns one of the characters, Ernest's father, Bohdan Kornienko, whose wife died right after the birth of Ernest due to blood loss. Bohdan was all alone and went through countless hardships while raising his child. After Donets'k was captured and bombed heavily Bohdan realized that he had to make a decision. He writes to his son's childhood friend, Halus'ka, who happens to be a writer about his decision:

“Я — в Москві” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 228) (I am in Moscow).

He claims that he just chose not to die in Donets'k, although he is in full comprehension of those whom he values this is not something tolerable. He thinks that he is dead for his son. But he worries about him and says:

“У зрадників теж є почуття” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 239) (Traitors also have feelings).

He is undergoing a traumatic experience that is caused directly by forced migration which also has a historical background. He migrated to the country which funds and supports the separatist movement in Donets'k and other parts of Ukraine. Bohdan realizes that what he did will be considered treason by anyone, who suffered through the war, especially his son, whom he left in Donets'k. But war, being the terrible thing as it is, leaves people no choice. Leaves wounds that will one day heal, but always will leave a scar for everyone involved.

“... страх перед бомбами виявився сильнішим, ніж батьківський інстинкт” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 239) (...the fear of bombs proved to be stronger than the parental instinct).

But then he says that he does not support the Russian army, because he works for a Dutch company. He tells about his adaptation process and tells that it goes surprisingly well he even speaks Russian with a Moscow accent, with the only issue being he sometimes pronounces “h”s instead of “g”s. The ‘h’ (г) phoneme in Ukrainian is non-existent in Russian, instead of that, the Russian language has the ‘g’ (г) phoneme, which is represented in Ukrainian with another letter (г). The phonemes of h and g are practically one another's equivalent in these two languages. Ukrainians pronouncing the Russian ‘g’ as ‘h’ has been characteristic and associated with low social status.

The main reason his experience of forced migration and trauma is not the same as the rest of the characters and his experience is considered a separate trend in this paper is because of the

place where he travels to escape the war, Moscow, a place that does not exactly sound like the usual narrative of forced migration for a Ukrainian war refugee to escape to. Nevertheless, it is a real narrative for many: according to the data retrieved from the UN Refugee Agency, between the period of 2014-2021, more than a million Ukrainians have sought asylum in the Russian Federation (UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, n.d.(b)) The experience of a Ukrainian refugee seeking asylum in Russia, is, of course, going to be different from that who seeks asylum in a neutral country or who is internally displaced. Therefore the traumatic results will differ. To illustrate this, Bohdan tells of an experience of his that has roots going back all the way to the 17th century (Котенко та ін., 2011).

“Мені майже п’ятдесят років, але вперше в житті тут, у Москві, я почув про себе: «Хохол» (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 233).

(I am almost fifty, but for the first time in my life, in Moscow, I heard ‘Khokhol’ about myself).

Khokhol is a derogatory ethnonym used by Russians to describe Ukrainians (Онацький, 1957). This word has a rather imperialistic connotation, and the reason why Bohdan feels the urge to talk about this way of addressing is connected to post-colonial trauma, which can be evaluated as a part of cultural trauma for the Ukrainian nation. Ukraine having been a Russian colony that is very close geographically to the colonial center i.e. Moscow also with a similar language, culture, and religious beliefs has been the victim of a different sort of colonial oppression. Ukrainians when in comparison with other nations such as the Turkic states of Central Asia, were counted as members of the same nations as Russians. But Russians have considered them to be of a more rural, and underdeveloped minor culture. This found its reflection in the Russian language with such derogatory ethnonyms for Ukrainians like khokhol and other ukrainophobic stereotypes.

The other characters who decide to leave Donets’k and find somewhere safe to live their lives in peace have different reasons and timing. For Maria Lishke it was not so long after the beginning of the war.

“Марія поїхала до Києва, ще в червні, коли здавалося, що божевілля завершиться, що галоперидолу вистачить на всіх, хто раптом упоровся в ідею втопитися у федеральних округах, озерах, плигнути з даху на Луб’янську площу, молитися чекісту й померти з кулею в потилиці. Ліків не вистачило. І бомбардування, тортури й мародерство майже не впливали на перебіг хвороби” (Стяжкіна, 2021, с. 240).

(Maria left for Kyiv, back in June, when it seemed that the madness would end, that haloperidol would be enough for everyone who suddenly decided to drown in federal districts, lakes, jump from the roof to Lubyans’k Square, pray to the Chekist and die with a bullet in the back of the head. There was not enough medicine. And the bombing, torture, and looting had almost no effect on the course of the disease).

The referendum in May was supposed to ease things down and would put an end to the ongoing ‘madness’ in Donets’k (BBC News, 2014), but it made everything escalate with even bigger political crises, riots, and protests, which at the end rose the level of instability and the death toll in the city (Krasnolutska, Choursina and Doroshev, 2014). People tended to leave the areas where the fighting occurred after the referendum and through the summer months when their kids didn’t go to school and when they received help from the government regarding the housing problem (ТЧН.Уа, 2014). But life was equally hard for those who stayed and for those who left Donets’k: they all suffered in their own ways. For instance, refugees from the East faced some problems and prejudice for many reasons, which in the end made their process of adaption harder, or even impossible in some cases (Твоє місто, 2014). Maria loses her husband in Donets’k, while she is away and asks for her husband to come to her. After the death of her husband Maria returns to the region as a sniper...

Maria is going through the same traumatic events which can be considered in the context of colonial and historical trauma, but she is also going through something very personal: the loss

of a loved one. Research has shown that people exposed to extreme and unexpected stressors react with unexpected motives or sometimes in ways that may seem senseless to others (Javidi & Yadollahie, 2012).

The final character in this analysis is Oleksei, a dentist, who before becoming a refugee in Germany, took part in the fighting action. He went to the front and lost his arm there. Then he leaves the region for a while, until 2019 when he goes to Germany to get a prosthetic arm. As a person, who chose to stay, and do what he thinks is the best for his city, he paid a heavy physical price. Oleksei has to live with his lost arm, which is another strong aspect of the post-war trauma when the war leaves a scar you cannot unsee.

Conclusion. Literary trauma theory looks for "texts that contain trauma" or, in other words, texts that use intertextuality, disintegration, repetition, time, and manipulation of the language, to convey meaning as a result of very severe stress under the influence of a traumatic event and aims to classify them (Berger et al., 1997). Narratives about war do not always bring a narrative about forced migration, and what happens afterward. Stiazhkina's work harbors elements of war, migration due to war, cultural and historical trauma, and personal traumatic experiences of the characters and presents all of these as keys to unlocking the secret of an important historical event in the history of Ukraine and Europe. Stiazhkina's novel brings together the history of 34 years through the eyes of many characters who are like a family, but at the same time, they have so many differences even in the way they think about the main event of the novel: the occupation of Donets'k. The characters have lived and grown up there, and circumstances have driven them out of the place they call home. This has worked differently for every single one of the characters. Some, still call it home and the changes that happen there make them happy, some put efforts to change the situation. But all have been irreversibly wounded by this event, and all have been traumatized. The work proves this point by creating a meaning due to the traumatic stress the characters go through.

In conclusion, the *Death of Cecil the Lion*, made up of personal and cultural trauma narratives of its characters gives us valuable information on the interpretation of the situation that has been ongoing since the spring of 2014 in Eastern Ukraine. Unfortunately, it allows the reader to take a look at the reflection of traumatic events in Ukrainian writing of the future as the war is not over, and once again the problems for Ukraine escalated to a new level. With the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian writing of the 21st century will surely have many other works like this, where trauma due to war and migration will be visible.

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А. Каракая

СМЕРТЬ ЛЕВА КСАНДИ НЕ МАЛА СЕНСУ: ТРАВМА ЧЕРЕЗ ВИМУШЕНУ МІГРАЦІЮ ТА ВІЙНУ В СУЧАСНОМУ УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ ПИСЬМЕНСТВІ

Війна Росії проти України, яка фактично розпочалася у 2014 році й набула статусу повномасштабного вторгнення в лютому 2022 року, змусила багатьох українців покинути свої домівки в пошуках безпечного місця проживання. Ці вимушені міграції окремих осіб і родин, які чисельно репрезентують велику частину української нації, стали ще одним травматичним наративом, який долучився до історії попередніх колективних травм України, таких як Голодомор, дві світові війни, колоніальне гноблення й попередні вимушені депортації українського населення. Масштаби трагедій, пережитих нацією, є

підставою для використання при аналізі художніх репрезентацій травми концепцій історичної й культурної пам'яті, які традиційно використовуються в гуманітаристиці як інструмент для аналізу масштабних травм у соціологічному/культурному сенсі, опосередкованих вербальними видами мистецтва, зокрема, літературою, які надають можливості для «проговорення» травматичного досвіду як своєрідної терапії.

У цій статті досліджується колективна травма вимушеної міграції українського населення після початку війни Росії проти України у 2014 році в художньому наративі роману Олени Стяжкіної «Смерть лева Сесила мала сенс» із позицій теорій історичної та культурної травми, зокрема, з опорою на праці Д. ЛаКапри, К. Карут, П. Штомпки та ін. Історична травма, яка є центральним поняттям у статті, розглядається в контексті феномену колонізації, культурного й політичного тиску на націю й окрему особистість. Історична травма інтерпретується в контексті сучасних українських реалій та специфічних рис української літератури останнього десятиліття, фіксуючи у собі такі феномени, як “conspiracy of silence”, проговорювання та мовчання. Текстуальний аналіз зосереджено на наративізації різних травм, репрезентованих у творі Стяжкіної, таких як індивідуальна, культурна та історична. Особлива увага у статті приділяється засобам текстуалізації колоніальної травми, яка є невід'ємною частиною колективного досвіду будь-якої колонізованої нації.

Поглиблений контекст індивідуального наративу долі героїв твору, народжених у один день в одному пологовому будинку в Донецьку, забезпечується переконливим викладом історичного тла подій і, зокрема, русифікації Донбасу й початку гібридної війни. Детальний аналіз окремих історій персонажів твору сфокусовано на різних формах їх реагування на військово-політичні зміни 2014 року. На прикладах окремих персонажних наративів простежується спільний патерн реагування на пов'язані з війною індивідуальні травми й спільну для персонажів колективну травму, яка долає межі раннього періоду війни з найбільшою втратою людських життів і триває надалі. Розглядаються індивідуальні й колективні спроби подолання персонажами аналізованого твору наслідків травматичних подій.

Ключові слова: історична травма, вимушена міграція, колоніальна травма, Олена Стяжкіна, «Смерть лева Сесила мала сенс»