



“PLACES OF REMEMBRANCE” IN “A GOD IN RUINS” NOVEL BY KATE ATKINSON©

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ABSTRACT

The study analyses Kate Atkinson's novel "A God in Ruins" (2015) in terms of the multidisciplinary field of memory studies. Among the tasks that were set by the author of the study there are: 1) tracking the correlation of individual memory and collective memory; 2) outlining the traumatic experience of the Todd family, namely the "wounds of time" caused to the family by World War II; 3) comprehending the moments of "crystallization" of collective memory, its "thickening" in "places of remembrance"; 4) outlining the boundaries of the cultural archive reproduced in the novel.

The study discusses the main message of the novel, which is focused on the theme of World War II, on its understanding and reflection in the collective memory of the British people. Through the image of the main character Teddy Todd, a military pilot, specially created by the author to describe war events, the reader can feel and experience the burden of air battles. Teddy Todd is a survivor who survived to preserve the memory of his fallen comrades, to testify war crimes and to raise a new generation of British people (post-war generation of children and grandchildren). The character realises that a peaceful life is not the final happy-end, because in addition to the need

to arrange his own existence, it is necessary to heal the “wounds of time”, as well as to fulfil the duty of remembrance towards the dead men. These surviving memories should be embodied in “places of remembrance” (monuments, museums, military burials, works of art, etc.).

The study outlines a conditional cultural archive that correlates with the text of Kate Atkinson’s novel. This arrangement of memorable dates, memories, and events can be tentatively described in the form of a scheme (the scheme is attached hereto), where the central place is occupied by the most catastrophic experience of people during the World War II. Other “places of remembrance” in connection with the war may be related to its causes or consequences. The main points of the conditional archive: World War I, coinciding with the birth of Teddy Todd; interwar period, which includes the childhood and adolescence of the character; World War II, which involves Teddy Todd in the Battle for Britain and the bombing of Germany; post-war reconstruction of Britain; pacifist movements and youth subcultures in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s that shaped Viola Todd’s worldview; The Queen’s Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee, coinciding with the death of Teddy Todd.

The conditional archive of the novel, and the “places of remembrance” recreated in it correlate with the collective memory of people in Britain, thus encouraging the understanding of the traumatic experience caused by the World War II.

Key words: “place of remembrance”, “wound of time”, archive, collective memory, individual memory, trauma.

АНОТАЦІЯ

“Місця пам’яті” в романі Кейт Аتكінсон “Руїни бога”

У статті проаналізовано роман Кейт Аتكінсон “Руїни бога” (2015) із погляду memory studies. Серед завдань, які висувала перед собою авторка дослідження, були 1) відстежити кореляцію індивідуальної пам’яті (спогадів) та колективної пам’яті; 2) окреслити травматичний досвід родини Тоддів, зокрема, “рани часу”, що були завдані родині Другою світовою війною; 3) осягнути моменти “кристалізації” колективної пам’яті, її “загусання” у “місцях пам’яті”; 4) окреслити межі культурного архіву, відтвореного в романі.

Упродовж дослідження спостережено, що основний авторський посыл роману зосереджений на темі Другої світової війни, її осмисленні й відображенні

в колективній пам'яті британців. Через образ головного героя Тедді Тодда, військового пілота, спеціально сконструйованого авторкою задля зображення воєнних перепитів, читач має змогу відчувати й пізнати тягар повітряних баталій. Тедді Тодд – уцілілий на війні, людина, яка вижила заради збереження пам'яті загиблих побратимів, він зберігає свідчення воєнних злочинів і плекає нове покоління британців (повоєнне покоління дітей та онуків). Герой усвідомлює, що мирне життя – це ще не остаточна крапка, не хеппі-енд, адже, окрім необхідності влаштувати власне існування, треба загоїти “рани часу”, а також виконати обов'язок щодо полеглих – зберегти пам'ять про них. Ці спогади мають трансформуватися в “місця пам'яті” (монументи, музеї, військові поховання, художні твори тощо).

У дослідженні окреслено умовний культурний архів, що з ним корелює текст роману Кейт Аткинсон. Таке впорядкування пам'ятних дат, споминів, подій можна умовно зобразити у вигляді схеми (схема додається в статті), де центральне місце посідає найбільш катастрофічний досвід, що його пережило людство під час Другої світової війни. Інші “місця пам'яті” можуть бути пов'язані з причинами чи наслідками війни. Основні пункти умовного архіву: Перша світова війна, що збігається з народженням Тедді Тодда; міжвоєнний час, на який припадає дитинство та юнацькі роки героя; Друга світова війна, коли відбувається Битва за Британію та бомбардування Німеччини, події, учасником яких стає Тедді Тодд; повоєнне відновлення Британії; пацифістські рухи й молодіжні субкультури, що утворилися в Британії у 60-70-х роках та вплинули на світогляд Віоли Тодд; діамантовий ювілей правління королеви Єлизавети (60-річчя сходження на престол), що збігається зі смертю Тедді Тодда.

Умовний архів роману, відтворені в ньому “місця пам'яті” корелюють із колективною пам'яттю народів Британії, відтак спонукають до осмислення травматичного досвіду, завданого Другою світовою війною.

Ключові слова: “місце пам'яті”, “рана часу”, архів, колективна пам'ять, індивідуальна пам'ять, травма.

INTRODUCTION

The object of this study is the novel “A God in Ruins”, which is a sequel to the novel “Life after Life”. The novel has won a number of awards, in particular the Costa

Book Award (2015). In the Author's Word, which concludes "A God in Ruins", Kate Atkinson notes that her main goal was to recreate World War II memories through artistic means: "I decided to focus on the two aspects of the war that interested me most and that I thought were the most fertile ground for the novel: London Blitz and the strategic bombing of Germany" (Atkinson, 2018: 406). Thus, memories, artistically reinterpreted and reincarnated, are contrasted with oblivion, immersion in amnesia of important events and facts of British national history. From this point of view, the analysis of this work in respect of memory studies seems to be the most appropriate, which will allow to single out the mechanisms of interaction of collective and communicative memory, outline the principles of "crystallization of places of remembrance" and formation of national archives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the second half of the twentieth century, memory as the ability to store information about experience (events of the past) has become the object of interdisciplinary study, a universal concept of the humanities. Pierre Nora states: "At the turn of the 1970th and 1980th, there was a real rapid development of memory" (Nora, 2014: 9); "Lively interest in memory quickly gained global proportions" (Nora, 2014: 9). This meticulous interest in memory and its role in human history is to some extent related to the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs (Halbwachs, 2005). They contributed to the popularization of the concept of "collective memory", intensified the research imagination and actually launched memory studies – a new interdisciplinary field related to scientific research in philosophy, psychology, culturology, anthropology, sociology, literary studies and more. The main object of memory studies is a comprehensive analysis of historical consciousness with an emphasis on its inherent ability to accumulate and archive certain memories (knowledge), which thus correlates with cultural heritage. The basic concepts of the new humanitarian interdisciplinary field are expressed in the scientific works by Alaida and Jan Assmann (Assmann, 2014; Assmann, 2004), Pierre Nora (2014), Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 2001) and others.

Modern Ukrainian literary studies have developed their own views, which tend to the interdisciplinary body of scientific texts on the study of memory. Ukrainian researchers, in particular, dwelled on such concepts as "trauma", "postcolonial trauma", "place of remembrance" etc. These are the scientific researches by Tamara

Hundorova (Hundorova, 2013), Iryna Kolesnyk (Kolesnyk, 2012), Yaroslav Polishchuk (Polishuk, 2011), Oksana Puhonska (Puhonska, 2018) and others. Memory studies in Ukrainian literary studies acquire new relevance in view of artistic practice, which demonstrates interest in memories as images-correlators with the past and re-reads the main events of history, forming ideals similar to the collective identity.

AIM OF THE ARTICLE

The aim of the article is the analysis of “A God in Ruins” novel by Kate Atkinson based on the “memory studies” concept with the purpose to interpret the collective memory of British people that is represented in the novel and to outline the tentative archive of British history in XX century created on the basis of many evidences and signs.

METHODOLOGY

Among the various definitions of memory, which, in fact, are reduced to its main functions (storage, remembering, forgetting), the most productive is the idea of universal archive, which schematically outlines certain points – “places of remembrance”. These are moments of “crystallization of our collective heritage” (Nora, 2014: 99-100), which can relate both to specific things (monuments, memorials, rituals) and to ideas and images embodied, in particular, in art (books, paintings, sculptures, installations, exhibitions, performances, productions). “Place of remembrance” is an opportunity to express individual memories in order to recognise and identify them with the collective awareness of past experiences. From this point of view, Kate Atkinson’s novel “A God in Ruins” is presented for analysis as a text that concentrates on a multitude of cultural codes and references to them that can be related to “places of remembrance”. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to outline an archive or even a map of such sets of memories embodied in the work, which refer readers to the collective memory, activate codes of belonging / non-belonging to a nation (in this case, of course, British identity).

According to this intent, the following tasks were formulated:

- to explore how individual memory fills in the collective one based on private memories of Teddy Todd, a former a Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot,
- to identify the correlation between the injuries suffered by Todd family (Teddy,

Ursula, Nancy, Viola, Sunny, Bertie, Sylvie, Hugh) and the “wounds of time”,

- to consider the mechanism of “crystallization” of collective memory in a particular place (“place of remembrance” in the novel),
- to outline the boundaries of the cultural archive that the author reproduces in her work.

RESULTS

“A God in Ruins” is a text that exposes the painful memories of World War II in order to allow the second and the third generation (the post-war generations in general) to realise the traumatic experience of the past from a distance of a half of century. What has led to the destruction of the established world order and the inherited values of humanity, must be understood in order to avoid reoccurrence in the future. Thus, the etymology of the novel’s title is quite transparent: both world wars destroyed the idea of the godlike nature of a human being, discredited the humanistic values, which humankind considered to be one of the main achievements of developed civilization. In addition, the author cites an epigraph from “Nature” by Ralph Waldo Emerson: “A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal, as gently as we wake from dreams” (Atkinson, 2018: 5). Thus, the writer reveals the allusive nature of her title and outlines the field of her own experiment. First of all, she seeks to answer the question, why such destruction became possible in the twentieth century and what are its consequences.

Kate Atkinson writes in the Author’s Note: “I read many vivid first-hand accounts of individual aircrew’s experience to which I am indebted” (Atkinson, 2018: 407). The text of her novel really resembles an endless stream of memories. It is primarily a recollection of the nearly century-old life of Teddy Todd, the main character who played a minor character in the previous novel by the writer “Life after Life” (younger brother of Ursula Todd, the main character of the story). Teddy is a representative of the era, a witness to all the terrible transformations that humanity has undergone during the twentieth century, so his consciousness and memory can become a kind of relic for future generations.

The story of Teddy Todd’s life is devoid of a strict chronology, when the life of the character appears to the reader in a certain linear sequence, where the start point is usually the date of birth and the end point is the date of death. Probably, it

is about “suspicion of outdated naive realism and skepticism about the definition of art as a mimesis” (Pidopryhora, 2018: 73), which are increasingly demonstrated by modern authors. Thus, Kate Atkinson deliberately avoids a temporal sequence in her presentation, imitating in her text the functioning of human brain, which recalls the events of the past chaotically, responds to various signs and associations that act as “irritators” of consciousness. Also selectively, imitating the spontaneity and unpredictability of memories, the writer unfolds her own narrative: the story then runs ahead, until 2012, when Teddy celebrates his ninety-sixth birthday, then returns to World War II or childhood and youth of the character, when he could be associated with a boy Augustus imagined by his aunt. Similarly, the author’s consciousness wanders between the characters: despite the fact that Teddy Todd is the main character, the plot always splits to tell about the life of his daughter Viola or to reveal the mystery of the death of his wife Nancy or to tell the details of the unhappy childhood of grandchildren Sunny and Bertie. It evidences the notable idiosyncrasy of Kate Atkinson, in whose novels the experimental form prevails. The writer develops not a linear, but a cyclic plot, in which the time can move not only from the past to the future, but also vice versa, it can also stop or accelerate, make loops and leave cavities. Such a cyclic plot is usually associated with the genealogy of one family intertwined with the history of Britain (the Ruby Lennox family in the novel “Behind the Scenes at the Museum”; the Todd family in the novels “Life after Life” and “A God in Ruins”).

Teddy Todd like Ursula Todd was created as a universal model (mannequin), on whom the author seeks “to fit” the experience of many British people. First of all, it is about the military life of the pilot of the Royal Air Force, who flies the legendary Halifax bomber and makes night flights from the base in Yorkshire to enemy territory (mostly Germany, once Italy). This memorial base – the future Yorkshire Aviation Museum – is also a kind of a “place of remembrance” reflected in the work of art. Teddy is torn apart by internal contradictions, because he is forced to make raid after raid and drop bombs, not fully understanding the purpose of the strikes. Ground targets for him are marked by signal light points of bombs in the dark (bombing is carried out only at night). Only after the end of the war the character learns the shocking truth about the losses among the civil people in Germany caused by bombings of the allied forces, and he feels remorse. Teddy is forced to admit his guilt in the destruction of Dresden, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Berlin and other German cities, in the destruction of thousands

of civilians, mostly the elder men and women, and children. At the same time, he cannot forgive and forget Auschwitz, Treblinka, Birkenau, the fallen buddies, their orphaned families. Even in many years after the war Teddy has not been able to solve this moral equation: were the British military entitled to kill thousands of civilians for victory, even if they worked for Nazi industry in Germany? (“Do we have to blame Beethoven for the war?” (Atkinson, 2018: 99)). Similarly, almost forty years after the war, the character still refuses to buy products from the German Siemens plant, which made “spotlights, electric motors, etc.” (Atkinson, 2018: 133) for Nazi death camps during the World War II. These “wounds of time” are hard to heal (“Sometimes you want to forgive them – Ursula once said – and then you think of poor Henny” (Atkinson, 2018: 133-134)). Numerous crimes of Nazism require understanding and forgiveness, which is not easy and not immediately, but requires time and efforts.

The writer describes significant losses of the Royal Air Force, convincingly proving that many casualties could be avoided. Bureaucratic negligence to human life (devaluation of human life) Kate Atkinson metaphorically presents in the form of birds that selflessly fight against a wall in hope to make a hole in it, however, almost all of them die because their strength is not equal with stones of the wall. British pilots are trying similarly to break through the defence of Nazi Germany at the cost of their own lives. According to the statistics used by the author, only 10% of those called up to the RAF at the beginning of the war in 1940 survived by the end of war. Kate Atkinson repeatedly refers to *Catch-22* novel by American writer Joseph Heller, emphasizing that her text is a kind of replica. The writer also develops anti-war discourse, but her rhetoric is connected with memory and reminiscences, but not with irony and criticism as in Heller’s novel. Thus, a detailed series of memoirs of Teddy Todd, the only survivor among many (by chance, and not by deliberate action), seems to be an effective mechanism of pacifist propaganda. Recalling the events of the war, Teddy resurrects those who fell on the battlefield - members of several crews (pilot Todd survived them all), mechanics, servicemen from the auxiliary detachment. It is the consciousness of Teddy Todd and his memory that do not allow the dead to completely sink into oblivion, and at the same time they reveal to contemporaries vague pictures of the past tragedy. The writer contrasts this personalised biography of the character to the impersonal statistics.

The “crystallization of memory” in “A God in Ruins” revolves around symbolic events and facts that are notable for British identity. Peacetime after the Great War

(World War I) is marked by pacifist sentiments, which are manifested even in the Kibbo Kift children's movement, which is visibly opposed to paramilitary Scouting (sewing and pottery instead of reconnaissance and target shooting). Yet the traumatic experience of the World War I is not convincing enough for the post-war generation. Teddy feels the burden of a peaceful existence: "The future was a cage closing around him. Wasn't life itself a great trap, its jaws waiting to snap?" (Atkinson, 2018: 103). The character considers the declaration of a new war on September 3, 1939 as a liberation from boring existence and monotonous work in the bank, his emotions contrast with the general mood. "He didn't hear Chamberlain make his sombre declaration on the wireless" (Atkinson, 2018: 101), which obviously did not frighten the future pilot.

World War II as a central theme of the novel is a special dimension of the text that can be described as a "wound of time" (a traumatic experience reflected in the collective memory). Teddy Todd, one of the few surviving members of the Royal Air Force, may have survived thanks to a mascot (a rabbit toy that replaces the traditional "lucky" rabbit's foot), embodying a living connection between the generations. It is he who has to pass on the collective memory of the dead, those who are no longer able to communicate and share experiences. The first post-war generation (Viola, Teddy's daughter) seeks to distance herself from her parents' traumatic war-related experiences, as these memories are in some ways destructive and destabilise the fragile peace and quiet that has just prevailed in the world. Instead, the second generation (Sunny and Bertie, Teddy's grandchildren, also named Todd because their parents never got married) is ready to take care of the "places of remembrance" associated with the war injuries: "The dead were legion and remembrance was a kind of duty" (Atkinson, 2018: 137). Sunny Todd and his grandfather attend a large World War II military cemetery near Yorkshire: "An acreage of the dead. Neat rows of white gravestones – hard pillows for their green beds. Crews buried next to each other, kept together in the next life as they had been in this one. Pilots, engineers, navigators, wireless operators, gunners, bomb-aimers" (Atkinson, 2018: 150). This event is of lasting importance for young Sunny, it is engraved in his memory together with Teddy's story and creates a certain symbol of the era that has passed into the past, but without which it is impossible to put together a national history.

The survivors themselves also seek oblivion as a therapy for the horrors of war. Teddy Todd rarely sees his comrades-in-arms, and generally avoids meetings

with ex-servicemen, as each such meeting means a return to an unbearable past. Teddy practices “separation” of memory (separation of past), distinguishes between military memories that are directly related to raids, loss of comrades, early deaths of young soldiers, and those when he went to London on a date with his bride Nancy or meeting with his sister Ursula between combat missions or returned to his home in Fox Corner. In this way, anti-memories, moments of life that you don’t want to preserve, give way to memories that can be used to build a narrative about the past. To accumulate a collective memory, there are monuments, memorials, cemeteries, museums and works of art. It is the duty of the survivors to make every effort to create such “places of remembrance”, which can be seen as a symbolic act of liberation from the burden of the past.

The peaceful life so wanted by all during the war cannot heal the “wounds of time” and relieve the weight of past injuries. Life after the great shock is disordered and difficult for Teddy Todd, in general for those who survived and have to take care of their existence. The character tries unsuccessfully to master the new profession of a teacher and finally seems to find a quiet place as a correspondent for a provincial newspaper, which gives him not only earnings but also nourishment for the heart and mind. Teddy writes articles about nature, travels a lot to farms (rural idyll), observes the typical life of ordinary British people (it is primarily about the mental principles that shape national identity). This heals him, forms a new image of the world instead of the one the character lost with his parents’ house, sold after the deaths of Sylvia and Hugh Todd, Teddy’s parents, and which he could not restore for a long time after the war. Instead, neither Nancy nor Ursula can find their right place in the post-war world. They belong to those who succeeded in waiting, because their fiancé and brother returned unharmed, and the purpose of their existence seems to exhaust itself. Nancy repeatedly asks Teddy if he has changed his mind about marrying her, as if she doubts the appropriateness of this step and does not see their future together. This is what the writer describes as an “intimation of mortality” (Atkinson, 2018: 101).

With the end of the war, the burden of earthly existence falls on Teddy with all his weight, because he has again survived those he loved: his mother, sister and wife died. Teddy has to raise his daughter Viola, with whom he never manages to build communication. The conflict of generations is superimposed on the worldview conflict. The early death of Nancy (mother and wife) does not bring daughter and

father closer, but rather pushes them apart, as if the horrors of war and personal tragedy recode the language of love that should prevail in the family and make it impossible to understand. The family ceases to be a foothold in the shaky post-war world. Teddy feels this especially acutely, because all his hopes and efforts to build his own microworld were in vain. So the fact that pilot Teddy Todd survived an incredible massacre in World War II is not equal to a happy fate. The character rethinks the traumatic experience of World War II, forms his own “place of remembrance”, where despite the burden of losses and the bitterness of defeats, despite the understanding that “life and death are completely random” (Atkinson, 2018: 111), happy moments remain.

Viola Todd is another personification of the author’s mask, with the help of which the writer provokes the reader. The author’s desire to endow the character with autobiographical features seems to be too obvious (in the novel “Behind the Scenes at the Museum” the role of such a writer creature is played by Ruby Lennox; in the novel “Life after Life” by Izzie Todd). It is about the image-of-a-woman-who-writes, and in this she finds her own vocation (consolation). Replicated in several novels, the image of a writer who has succeeded in adult age, such an author’s “mirror”, confirms a conscious provocation, applied by Kate Atkinson to encourage the reader to impose a fictional biography on the real (ironic play with the reader is specific for postmodern text strategy). Although these connotations of the image of Viola are perceived as secondary. First of all, Viola Todd is a daughter who does not love her father, and later transfers this feeling of non-love to her own children. It seems that the conflict between generations and the eternal problem of parents and children has been sharpened not least because of differences in perceptions of the family. For Teddy, the family is one of the basis of existence (a direct reference to the British identity), but it is an integral part of the collective memory. Nancy shares the same views. While still alive, she tries to grow similar thoughts and feelings in Viola (searching in museums for her great-grandfather’s paintings, retelling of family stories, a will to obey her aunts after her mother’s death). However, early orphanhood pushes Viola to resist and protest against everything that was dear to her parents, because these things could not prevent the breakdown of their marriage, did not save their family. This is how nihilism is born, which accompanies Viola almost all her life. The philosophy of non-conformism is manifested in the choice of her groom Dominic Ville, a free artist who is unable to take care of himself and his children, in the choice of a way of life

first in the London squat, and in a few years – in a village commune, which imposes a certain austerity (refusal of comfort and material values).

Viola seeks to find other values as opposed to those which her parents have taught, and after the death of her mother, Teddy himself. She is looking for her own “places of remembrance” that are different from her parents’ places, although they exist in the same time dimension and in the same country. Viola is a staunch pacifist, condemning Teddy for his involvement in the bombing of Germany, and taking part in numerous meetings against the latest military conflicts and nuclear weapons, including the Vietnam War. The character seeks herself and her place in the world, not realizing that cultivating her own worldview would be impossible without her father’s participation in World War II and that history cannot be rewritten (prevent, for example, Hitler from coming to power, as pacifist Viola would like). Viola Todd chooses a world-without-war and defends her right to live in a non-militarised society. Honouring the victims of the First and Second World Wars loses its significance, as it is important to reach a state where war becomes impossible. At the same time, such patronage of the world on a universal scale poses urgent problems to Viola. Love and care for her own children and her father seem to her to be something secondary, unworthy of her attention, while the struggle for the global improvement of humanity comes to the fore, it is the meaning of existence (“Mummy, I’m hungry.” Viola was too busy surveying the sea to acknowledge this statement” – this is about Viola’s four-year-old son Sunny. – T.B. (Atkinson, 2018: 42)). The writer ironically calls Viola’s children, Sunny and Bertie, “the children of Adam”, indicating that they belong to the human race, not to the specific parents Viola and Dominic who refuse to care for them properly, absorbed in their own existential crisis. Teddy, who professes traditional family values, takes Viola’s children to his place and actually raises them on his own, as he once raised his daughter. Teddy is once again taking responsibility for the future, as for the post-war generation the notion of duty is becoming blurred, with an emphasis on personal rights and freedoms.

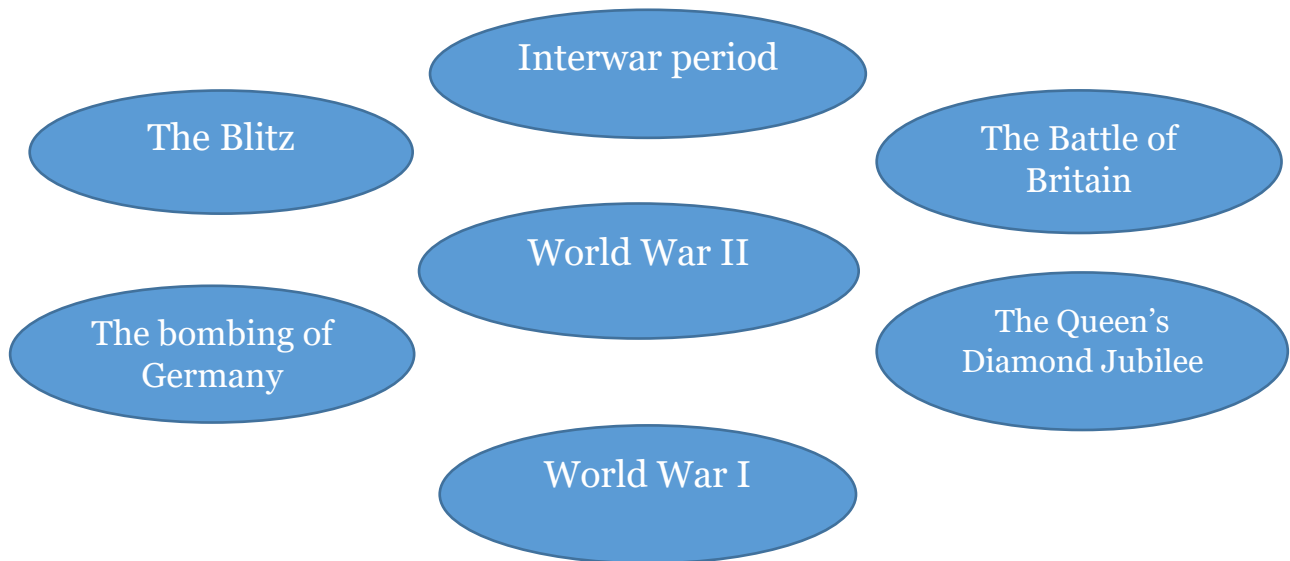
Viola Todd’s new life goal is fiction, which Kate Atkinson mentions in the author’s note: “And, of course, there is a great conceit hidden at the heart of the book to do with fiction and the imagination, which is revealed only at the end but which is in a way the whole *raison d’être* of the novel” (Atkinson, 2018: 409). In adult age Viola realises that the traumatic experience of the past can be overcome through imagination and creativity, because it is the best way to comprehend your own past

and let it go, transforming it into an artistic reality. Her first novel tells the story of a difficult relationship between a single father and daughter, in fact she retells the biography of the character. It is this art therapy that helps Viola overcome the “wounds of time”. In this case, the traumatic experience of the past gives strength and inspiration, and finally makes the unfortunate Viola Todd a commercially successful writer Viola Romain. What Teddy could not achieve when he travelled to France before the war (in search of poetic inspiration), his daughter managed to realise. And yet Viola’s success is not a family one and life happy ending, because she found out too late the price of love, which cannot be bought for generous fees. Father and children are far from her, there is a communication gap between them.

Sunny Todd, who became Philip Ville during his life with his biological father, completely leaves the island (Britain) in search of a lost grace (in general, the writer claims that her novel is about “the Fall (of Man. From Grace)” (Atkinson, 2018: 408); Kate Atkinson remarks in the Author’s note: “There are, you will probably notice, a lot of references in the book to Utopia, to Eden, to an Arcadian past, to Paradise Lost and Pilgrim’s Progress.” (Atkinson, 2018: 408)). Sunny does not agree to take part in the confrontation of generations, to form “places of remembrance”, to heal the “wounds of time”. He abandons his traumatic past and chooses a new island of Bali, where eternal peace and tranquillity will prevail, yoga and spiritual practices – the landmarks of this character’s new identity. Viola’s appearance on Paradise Island reminds Sunny on a past he renounced. So Sunny-Phil does not recognise kinship with his mother (for him, she is now only Viola without any family ties), he denies his own memories, detaches himself from the collective memory and consciously chooses amnesia. Only the news of Teddy’s death can restore Sunny’s sense of family. The pain of loss is stronger than the layering of a new worldview, and acquired religion is unable to stifle it.

Kate Atkinson presents in “A God in Ruins” a kind of archive of the twentieth century, directly related to the events of British history. This archive is like circles on the water, diverging from the thrown stone. The role of such a block that disturbs the collective memory can be correlated with the World War II (“War is Man’s greatest fall from grace, of course, especially perhaps when we feel a moral imperative to fight it and find ourselves twisted into ethical knots” (Atkinson, 2018 : 409)). Memories, dates, and events that cover the broadest layer of British history (pre-war, wartime, and post-war) diverge from the conditional epicentre (the Fall). The main “places of remembrance” of this conditional archive can be presented in form of a visual

scheme, where historical periods correspond to the chaotic, disparate memories set forth in the novel:



The linear sequence of events will be as follows: World War I, which coincides with the birth of Teddy Todd (Hugh Todd returns from the war and the fourth child is born in the family); interwar period, which includes the childhood and youth of the character; World War II, when the Battle of Britain took place, in which Ursula Todd took part, and Teddy Todd volunteered for the Royal Air Force and took part in the bombing of Germany (Rhine raid, bombing of Dresden and Leipzig, raid on the Big City (Berlin)); the post-war restoration of Britain, when Nancy Todd dies, a bride who waited and fulfilled her life's purpose; pacifist movements and youth subcultures (hippie ideology) in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s that shaped Viola Todd's worldview; The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, which marks the end of an era – Teddy Todd dies, because he also fulfilled his purpose – to be-witness-of-his-era. At the same time, this great task assigned to Teddy Todd coincides with no less important goals of his life: Teddy must preserve the memory of a generation, defend his homeland, survive the Great War, and raise the next generation of British people.

DISCUSSION

The relatively new terminology for Ukrainian literary criticism used in this study ("places of remembrance", "wound of time", archive) needs further testing. The author of the article sincerely hopes that she was able to thoroughly prove the

legitimacy of the use of such terms, as they form a kind of matrix or coordinate system and are directly related to memory studies. Therefore, these terms can be effective tools in the analysis of the works of art associated with the depiction of memories in the broadest sense of the word.

CONCLUSION

Individual memory fills the structure of the collective memory just as bees fill honeycombs with honey. In the hive, each cell contains an individual collection (information), while the entire network of cells creates a single unit, collective information, almost identical and yet with some differences. After reading the novel “A God in Ruins”, for a moment I got the impression that its structure resembles the cells of memory, where many cells store memories of the Great War as a “wound of time” that continues to bleed today, in so many years.

The author of “A God in Ruins” encourages readers to reflect on the causes and consequences of the most catastrophic war in human history (“The sixty million dead overall of the Second World War, including eleven million murdered in the Holocaust” (Atkinson, 2018: 395)), in which there were no winners or losers. The Great War marked the general defeat of mankind and of the humanistic ideals nurtured by it. The unconscious lessons of the First World War, the incomprehensible memory of the first great tragedy of the twentieth century, eventually led to ineffective international politics. Such conclusions are self-evident after reading Kate Atkinson’s novel, because “Ruins of God” is a metaphor that points to something majestic and irresistible, which at the same time turned out to be decay. Obviously, the memory archive we see in Kate Atkinson’s work needs our increased attention to realise the volatility and uncertainty of peace.

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