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THREATENED CHILDHOOD IN THE DRAWINGS OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN*

Introduction: In the 21st century, most children experience favorable conditions for development and are protected by their loved ones, who provide them with a happy and safe childhood. Nonetheless, it cannot be forgotten that there are still many thousands of children around the world who experience oppression and whose childhood is destroyed by adults due to abandonment, neglect, and mental and physical violence.

Research Aim: The aim of the study was to attempt to discover and understand the individual traumatic war experiences of Ukrainian children, externalised in drawings.

Method: Qualitative methods were used which allowed for an understanding of the way in which life situations are experienced by those studied. Projective techniques were used to analyse and interpret children's drawings.

Results: In the analysis of the drawings of Ukrainian children who have experienced war trauma, 5 main categories were differentiated: 1. Mummy, I see war; 2. My Father– Hero; 3. Friendship in the face of tragedy; 4. Putin is dead; and 5. Ukraine victorious. The drawings tell a tale of the cruelty which the children have experienced, which they have seen and felt, and which they carry inside themselves.

Conclusions: The children's drawings are a space for the externalisation of unspoken feelings. The children's works demonstrate that suffering, uncertainty, fear for their own lives and the lives of loved ones, and the drama of the sudden loss of a carefree childhood and entry into the cruel world of adults are permanently etched into their memories.

Keywords: projective techniques, picture of war, Ukraine, threatened childhood, drawing, symbol

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INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a unique period that every person goes through from birth to adolescence. This stage of life is characterized by the child's familiarity with the environment, the assimilation of norms and rules applicable to both the social and natural world. The image of the child and the world of childhood has been the subject of research by scientists in various fields. As Śliwerski (2007) points out, in the social sciences and humanities (since the second half of the 20th century), there have been three distinct streams of research on the child and childhood: 1) includes the study of the child as an individual and as a member of a social group, childhood, its social status (place in the structure of age and generation groups); 2) constructivist focus on children as actors, constructors of their own lives, environment and personal development; 3) is concerned with the history of childhood, historical aspects, conditions of the social construct of childhood.

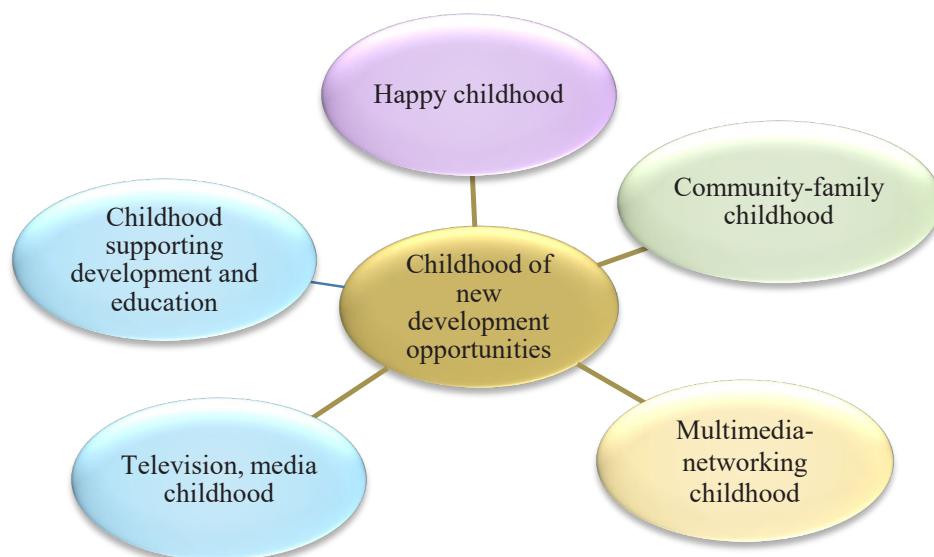
Childhood is viewed by researchers not only as a biological phenomenon, but also as a sociological-historical and pedagogical one. In addition to medicine and history, philosophy and the specific sciences that emerged from it entered the study of childhood: paedology, pedagogical psychology, educational psychology, developmental psychology, prenatal pedagogy, preschool pedagogy, school pedagogy or sociology of childhood (Śliwerski, 2020). Wyness (2002, p. 1) points out that "today, the dominant components of the discourse on childhood are fear (related to adult abuse of children) and multidimensionality (concerned mainly with questions of the child's status in a dynamic and rapidly changing world)". On the other hand, the subject of pedagogical research is issues related to the broader life situation of children (material, care, educational, cultural, emotional, social), in different environments of their lives (family, school, peer group, local environment; in contact with culture). First and foremost are issues concerning the place and role that children play in the so-called busy time of school-related duties, work for the family, and leisure time. The research seeks to capture children's experiences, relationships, behaviors, desires and dreams, to detect factors that determine the shape of children's childhood living in ever-changing environments (local and global) (Izdebska, 2015). Given the dynamism of social processes, the topic constantly finds new fields of research among scientists.

Today in pedagogy, reflection on the child and childhood is undertaken by relating it to the humanistic orientation, according to which childhood is a value, and the child is a person endowed with dignity and freedom, with certain rights. The child is described as a subject of development rooted in culture and history, as the creator of their own life space (child as *humanum*) (Matyjas, 2021). Izdebska (2016, p. 305) describes childhood as

a psychological-developmental, educational and socio-historical stage in human life; in a broader sense, it covers the period from birth to adolescence; as the sum total of a child's experiences, it is the foundation supporting the periods following it; it is realized under specific biological-developmental, socio-cultural, religious-sacral conditions affecting the quality and value of human life; a historical-social-cultural phenomenon describing the situations and social conditions of a child's life in various types of social environments.

Characterizing the different faces and dimensions of childhood, Izdebska (2015) points to: childhood of new developmental opportunities and childhood at risk. The childhood of new development opportunities has different dimensions, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Childhood of new development opportunities



Source: Authors' own study based on (Izdebska, 2015).

Childhood supporting the development and education of the child is realized in families in which a space is created that is conducive to the child's formation of desirable character traits, the formation of pro-social attitudes, learning and experiencing the world and certain values, moral norms; learning the ability to choose, making decisions, learning about oneself, forming self-reflection, creating oneself by answering the question of who I am, who I can be.

Community-family childhood is "realized" in the family home understood in a symbolic sense. Such a family home is characterized by the following features:

closeness, intimacy, a sense of security, privacy, openness, hierarchy, happiness, Growing up creates optimal conditions for growing up among the closest people. The community of the family home builds a strong bond – the family bond. The love linking parents and child, spouses, siblings becomes a source of valuable sensations, experiences, experiences. Constant contact, communication, dialog, mutual openness, empathy are the basis for the development and integration of the family.

A happy childhood allows for continuous becoming in the context of the development of the child's personality, allows for the activation and realization of the most valuable values and their enrichment with new content. A happy childhood is a one in which a child feels loved, cared for, important, safe, blessed with freedom and love, surrounded by the care and concern of adults. It has its rights and responsibilities, experiences a sense of subjectivity, respect for its dignity. It is bestowed with love and respect by loved ones.

Television, media childhood – is associated with children's constant exposure to the media. Proper use of television and computer becomes a source of positive changes in the cognitive, emotional, motivational, behavioral, interpersonal relations spheres. The media enable the acquisition of knowledge in various fields, contribute to the development of interests, the formation of pro-social attitudes.

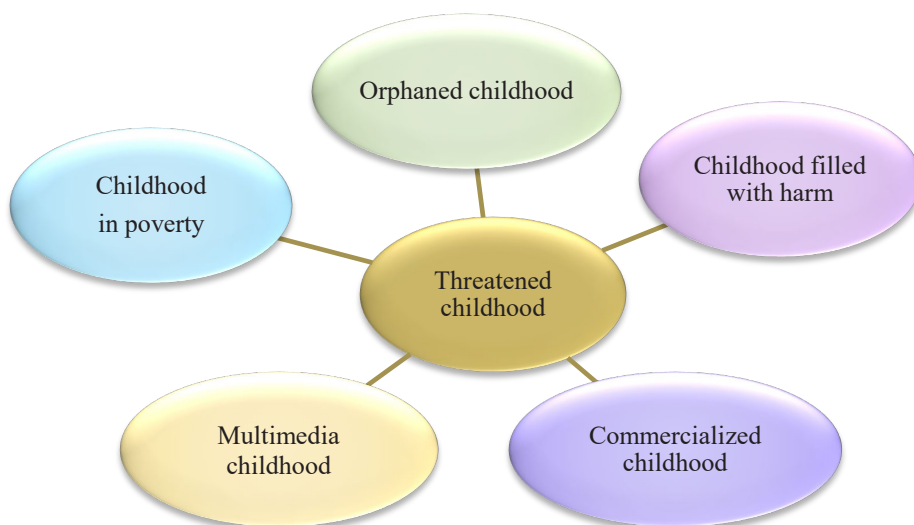
Multimedia-networked childhood – the space for raising and learning is created by modern technologies. The new quality of a young child's life is associated with the constant use of multimedia and the Internet, creating a place for a variety of experiences, experiences, communication, providing a source of inspiration, motivation and aspiration. A private-home way of spending leisure time with electronic devices is inherent in this childhood. It should not be forgotten that although the media are an important link in the process of development and upbringing, they not only provide opportunities, but also carry a number of risks when used irrationally. Negative effects include deterioration of health, disturbances in the emotional sphere (anxiety, hyperactivity, desensitization), increased aggressiveness, loneliness of the child in front of a glass screen, indiscriminate succumbing to the influence of the media.

When characterizing childhood at risk, Izdebska (2015) points not only to the excessive mediatization of children's lives, but points to other inhibitors, such as poverty, orphanhood, psychological and physical violence, and the commercialization of life (Figure 2).

Childhood in poverty – results from the economic degradation of families, poverty is a barrier to the individual development of the child, as the family fails to meet the needs of the child at the right level. Orphaned childhood refers to children orphaned by the death of a parent, as well as abandoned as a result of parental divorce, long-term departure of a parent abroad. Children often struggle with trauma, and childhood is filled with difficult, painful experiences. A childhood filled

with harm can be conditioned by the disintegration of the family in the sphere of interpersonal contacts, the emotional bond between parents and children (Izdebska, 2015). Childhood can also be often threatened as a result of physical, psychological violence and sexual abuse, as well as child neglect, that is, continuous or incidental failure to meet the child's important needs and failure to respect basic rights (Kolankiewicz, 2012). Childhood can also be threatened by warfare. This is highlighted in the *End of Childhood Report* (2017) published by Save the Children, where eight circumstances that threaten childhood were identified: child mortality under the age of five, malnutrition involving inhibited growth, lack of access to education, forced labor, forced marriage, especially for girls, and sexual violence, teenage pregnancies, infanticide, and experiences of armed conflict.

Figure 2.
Threatened childhood



Source: Authors' own study based on (Izdebska, 2015).

Childhood is a time that is associated with carefree, joy and fun. However, sometimes childhood is not what it should be. This concerns the wartime childhood experienced by Ukrainian children. Due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and the brutal violation of international agreements, the horrors of war are being experienced by children both those who fled Ukraine with their families and those who still remain there. According to data from the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, as of January 16, 2023, more than 1,352 children have suffered as a result of the armed aggression: 455 children were killed, more than 897 were injured with varying degrees of severity (*455 Ukrainian children*

died due to Russian aggression – Prosecutor General's Office). A child in Ukraine has become an innocent victim of a neighboring country's aggressive policies. Previously peaceful life suddenly turned into a time full of uncertainty, worrying about the fate of themselves and their loved ones. The children had to mature and grow up quickly, to find and adapt to the world of war reality, to be ready to face the challenges of war, events that were difficult and at the same time painful and terrible. An analysis of a child's drawing can help in knowing and understanding children's experiences.

DRAWING AS A FIELD OF EXPRESSION FOR CHILDREN

Drawing-related creativity is the first form of artistic activity in which a child expresses their personality and the emotions they experience. When characterizing the artistic creativity of a child, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1977) distinguished six phases: the doodle period, the pre-schematic period, the schematic period, the peer group period, the pseudo-naturalistic period, art in adolescence, and the development of a sense of aesthetics.

The earliest phase in the development of a child's drawing creativity is the doodle stage (from 1.6 to 3.0 years of age). According to Szuścik (2020a), in this phase of drawing, the enactive sphere, action through drawing, becomes paramount. The child tries to identify their traces with sensations, feelings and objects from their immediate environment – they name their scribbles. Intentionality appears in their drawing activity. The enactive sphere and the symbolic sphere form the basis of the iconic sphere. The scribble should be considered an image of the child's syncretic understanding of the world. In the next period (from 3 to 5 years), the child comes to integrate the experience of enactive, iconic and symbolic representation development. The form of drawing is becoming more and more relevant to the observation, its verbal definition and precision in drawing. Szuścik (2020a, p. 105) argues that "until the age of 7, the child does not create by drawing, but only organizes their experience, knowledge with the help of drawing, by drawing pictures of objects". In the schematic phase (from the age of 7 to 12), the schemes developed by children are highly individual and subject to modification depending on the intent of the drawing. Between the ages of 9 and 12, the beginnings of realism appear in children's drawings. The child discovers that they are a member of a peer community, moving toward social independence. The drawings become richer in detail, differentiated by the characteristics of the objects. The child expresses the sensations evoked by the object, depicts the world associated with nature and at the same time creates their original world of plastic values (Szuścik, 2020a).

Szuścik (2013) points out that during the schematic period, the child begins to strive for conventional sign making. The simple drawing diagrams presented by

the child are conventional signs. Conventional signs – are communicative to other people – parents or teachers. Anything that is meaningful to a child can be found on a painted piece of paper. Colors, figures and shapes testify to the child's condition, to what sometimes seems to be hidden. With crayons and lines, the child tells what they know and feel and cannot express in words: joy, problems, character, way of thinking, image of themselves, family and surrounding reality (Nazaruk and Konovaluk, 2012).

Recognizing drawing as one of the natural forms of activity and expression of an individual's inner experience, it should be remembered that drawing contains both content realized and unconscious by the person creating it. In addition, they find expression in artwork:

1. Emotional development – the extent to which this is done is directly related to the strength with which the creator identifies with their work (they may appear directly as a character or be represented in the drawing by someone with whom they identify).
2. Mental development is an increase in awareness of one's surroundings and one's own distinctiveness. The knowledge that the child has at the time of drawing. This illustrates the correspondence of the subject with the content of the work, the legibility of the objects drawn, painted, etc., the richness of the details, the ordering of the elements of the composition into a logical whole consistent with the content of the work.
3. Physical development, which manifests itself in the child's creative work, is the ability to coordinate eye-hand movements, the ability to control body movements, general dexterity, manual dexterity. Drawings of a physically active child will include elements of movement and show their greater sensitivity to physical achievements.
4. Perceptual development – observation develops a sense of color, line, shape, proportion, texture, solid, space. It also manifests itself in an increasing sensitivity to tactile sensations.
5. Social development – manifests itself in the inclusion of other people in the content and form of artwork, e.g. "Me and mom", "My friend, colleague", "When playing", "Working in the garden", "My family", etc.
6. Aesthetic development is the ability to express the visual characteristics of perceived objects, nature and experiences through visual means (line, color, etc.) in a manner appropriate to a specific age group of the child. (Szuścik, 1998, pp. 175–176)

A child's drawings sometimes have a great charm, which is also difficult to analyze and explain. The artist wields their art and manages its shape and color, creating works that rise above the level and stand in the front ranks of cultural progress. A child, on the other hand, creates in spite of their will, playing with drawing; they do not know how to draw, but draw as good they can, and do not generally rise above the level of children's art. According to Szuman (1990), the child's drawing creativity is related to the use of drawing tools and the use of their capabilities. Manipulative activity is essential in the development and formation of perceptions and the image of the object in the child's mind.

For parents, teachers, the drawing is a source of knowledge about the child, their thinking, emotions, memories and experiences. It allows to know the spiritual state of the child, which is difficult to interpret because it is based on symbols. The interpretation of drawings is not numerical, but qualitative, and their value is not told by quantitative elaboration, but by the understanding of the symbols they create. Braun-Gałkowska (2016a, p. 42) notes that “children’s drawings vary depending on their artistic talents, age, stage of development, as well as the symbols in which they unconsciously express their emotions, desires, anxieties and moods”. Szuścik (2006) cites various routes of research on children’s drawing. These include:

the analysis of the child’s plastic creativity as: a response to stimuli and the internalization of the child’s experience and knowledge; as a manifestation of the development of higher mental functions relating to artistic activities; as a specific form of manual behavior; as one of the many forms of expression of the child’s experiences; as a non-verbal indicator of the child’s creative development; as the creation of a plastic sign. Stimulation of the child’s creative expression through the ability to verbally articulate experiences [...] shapes an attitude of curiosity about the world and reflection in the child, inspires independent thought and action, teaches courage and openness in the search for inspiration and creative solutions. (Szuścik, 2016)

This paper focuses on a child’s drawing as one of the many forms of expression of a child’s experiences. Ukrainian children, whether they fled the country before the war or stayed there, no longer have a normal childhood. The Russians changed them forever, leaving pain and fear in their memories. These changes can be traced in children’s drawings. Children express their suffering in different ways. In artwork, every shape, color and detail play an important role, as they are an expression of the inner world of feelings and experiences, desires and dreams, as well as anxiety and fear. Children’s drawings tell the story of what their authors cannot express in words. Everything is mixed in them: good and evil, life and death, hope and loss of faith. The drawings have nothing to do with storytelling. Like any trauma, the drawing plays only the role of a snapshot, in which it is difficult to capture context or time (Tyszkova, 1993).

Drawing allows the construction of narratives about the events experienced. Drawing plays a fundamental role in trauma-related situations, affiliating the inner and outer worlds. It presents the voice of a child whose future is threatened by the atrocities and violence suffered. This is why drawing is a basic activity, especially in war situations, when words are not enough to say the unspeakable, when images of trauma inhabit the child’s mind. Drawing allows the child to show on the outside what is happening on the inside and free them from the fear of the “here and now”. The drawing used in projective methods is a graphic representation of an individual’s emotional, cognitive and kinesthetic experience.

RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTION

In this study, the subject of analysis is the drawings of children who experienced the horrors of war. The aim was to learn about and understand the individual traumatic war experiences of Ukrainian children externalized in drawings. A research problem was formulated: How do Ukrainian children externalize the experience of war in their drawings? Children's drawings have been treated as a spontaneous manifestation of the child's psyche, emphasizing that drawing is shaped along the lines of inner memories and experiences. The child tells their story through the drawing, so you can better understand what they experienced and what they feel.

RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Qualitative research allows the researcher to understand and interpret various phenomena, to learn what meaning children give to different situations and their own memories, experiences. By using qualitative methods such as open-ended interviews, participatory observation, text analysis, and analysis of the child's products of activity, it is possible to reach deep into the child's experienced situations and states. As a product of the child's activity, drawing is of cognitive interest as a natural form of expression of experiences (Izdebska, 2015); it allows to collect a lot of information about the child. It is a projection of seeing oneself and others (Czerska, 2004). When collecting research material on children's emotional problems, their experiences, the projection method was used, along with the graphic (drawing) technique, wherein the child depicted their emotional, existential state, as well as feeling, by using a pencil, crayons and markers (Stepulak, 2020).

The projection method is an important aid in learning about a child's inner world and feelings (Braun-Gałkowska, 2016b). It is used to study psychic phenomena, of which "the essential feature [...] is that these phenomena belong to the sphere of human subjectivity, they are individual experiences, not covered by consciousness, especially reflective consciousness, but significantly influencing – among other things, through the mechanism of projection – the way the individual perceives the world, their choices and behavior" (Straś-Romanowska, 2003, p. 31). According to Braun-Gałkowska (2016b, p. 30), this method "allows to collect a great deal of information about the respondent, [...] it gets to the motives of the unconscious and unconscious ways of dealing with difficult situations". The advantage of this method is its ease of application and the fact that it involves a natural form of expression through which one can talk about one's experiences and feelings (Kalbarczyk, 2007, p. 9). Issues related to the problem of feelings are constantly present in psychology and pedagogy. As Polak (2021, pp. 29–30) points out, this is due to "the fact that modern science appreciates their importance in

the individual and social life of humans. Artistic creativity is the result of the need for artists to express their feelings and the desire to share them with the audience”.

The interpretation of the content of the drawings was made in the context of the person who authored the work. The subject presents both their external and internal world, everything they see and feel. To carry out the task, drawings by children aged 6 to 10 were selected and analyzed from various sources, in particular: exhibitions, projects, children’s letters to Ukrainian defenders presented on the Internet.

The first project is “Children. War. Future”, initiated by the Future for Ukraine charity foundation, launched at one of Kiev’s metro stations. Its goal was to draw attention to the problems of children affected by the war in Ukraine. The exhibition included 300 children’s drawings (*An exhibition of children’s drawings created during the war will be held in the Kyiv metro*).

Another important project, entitled “Mom, I see war”, was the collection of children’s drawings about the war to make them available online (*“Mom, I see war” in Ukraine, children’s drawings are collected for the NFT auction*).

An interesting initiative was taken by a couple from Ternopil, Iryna and Liubomyr Krupa, who collected children’s letters to Ukrainian soldiers. More than five hundred students from Ternopil sent letters to the soldiers along with drawings (*Daddy, come back soon...: what children write in letters to the war*).

Another source was children’s drawings drawn at the request of the National Guard of Ukraine (GNU) to support Ukraine’s defenders. In their works, children called for peace, drew a number of national symbols, and expressed their conviction that Ukraine would prevail. Some of the children’s drawings were also dedicated to Putin’s death (*“Putin is dead” and “Ukraine will win”: children encouraged Ukrainian defenders with drawings. News of Ukraine – the latest news of Ukraine today – UNIAN*). Death wish drawings for Putin were also found on the “Ukrainian Truth” website (*A child wants Putin dead: is it normal?*).

An interesting project was carried out at Cherkassy State Technological University. A patriotic drawing contest: “No to racism! Great victory is approaching” allowed the organizers to gather a large collection of children’s works (*Diary of the drawing competition “No to racism! We are approaching a great victory”: works by children of university teachers and staff*).

STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

In subjecting children’s plastic creativity to analysis, reference to measurable criteria for analyzing the plastic form of a product (Uberman, 2021) was abandoned (i.e. visual qualities, ideological unity of form and content, reference to the authentic capabilities of the child), and the focus was on the projective value of plastic

expression. The drawings were treated as a form of communication and analyzed primarily in terms of content, without listening to the authors' narratives about their works. Interpretation consisted, among other things, in characterizing the figures and objects in the drawing, determining the relationship between the various elements of the drawing, analyzing the symbols. A piece of paper was treated as a screen on which the child displayed, often unconscious, experiences and emotions. They sought to learn what the child revealed about their wartime experiences in their projection. After analyzing the material obtained, it was assumed that particularly strong, painful and, above all, dominant issues are extracted from personality through projection (Rembowski, 1985). By subjecting the private world of individuals to scrutiny, the search was made for particular, characteristic ways of organizing the experience and feelings inherent in a given personality. In this context, personality can be viewed as a process or action of an individual organizing experiences and reacting emotionally to a situation. The subject, by drawing their own experience, decided about the placement and features of the drawn elements, such as characters on their own (Kolwińska, 2004). According to Szuścik (2020b, p. 98), expressive actions appearing in children's artwork are a sign of emotional tension occurring due to stress. The colors used, the texture of the work and the symbols are a visual expression of the child's emotional attitude to the situation they are in.

The article analyzes the drawings, which were chosen for their rich meaning and emotional appeal. They present five main themes that appeared in the children's works: 1. Mummy, I see war. 2. My Father – Hero. 3. Putin is dead. 4. Ukraine victorious. 5. Friendship in the face of tragedy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the children's works from a formal point of view allowed us to conclude that the drawings were made preserving the open space. All works are characterized by the children's use of diverse colors. There are both warm and cold colors (these were related to the realistic representation of warfare). The children made drawings according to the actual colors. Some of the drawings presented the conformity of the shapes of the various elements with the actual ones. Some drawings were saturated with many detailed details and symbols. In most of the drawings, children, placed human figures, elements of nature, as well as elements related to the war – military equipment (tanks, aircraft, weapons) and destroyed objects. Many feature Ukrainian national symbols important to children. Children are the most innocent, yet the most affected, vulnerable and unable to cope with the horrors of war around them. As mentioned previously, after analyzing the drawings of Ukrainian children who experienced the trauma of war, there are

5 main categories, the article discusses six selected works that are representations of each category.

1. Mummy, I see war.

The drawings assigned to this category testified to the extent to which the children were shocked by the events of war, experienced fear, uncertainty, sadness at the loss of loved ones in bombing raids, undoubtedly accompanied by a sense of helplessness in the face of the all-encompassing turmoil of war. One of the first elements, bringing the misery of a wartime childhood closer, was the image of the bombing and the destruction that was wrought. In the foreground in drawing (1), you can see destroyed, burning buildings, the red of the fire mixed with smoke reaches almost to the sky. More planes dropping bombs are coming over the settlement. The green-colored bombers have clear military markings. There is a huge bomb funnel between the buildings, and it is as if a Ukrainian flag had fallen into this sludge.

Drawing 1.



Source: (*An exhibition of children's...*).

Human figures are barely outlined in the background. It can be assumed that people are fleeing and seeking refuge in the non-bombarded part of the city. The viewer should not have any doubt as to where this drama is taking place, the clouds in the sky have the national colors of Ukraine, and the author has added the inscription: Mariupol.

The next drawing (2) can be titled *Pain and Hope*.

Drawing 2.



Source: ("Mom, I see war"...).

In the center foreground, the child drew a tree that separates two different realities. On the left, there is an image of Ukraine in ruins, full of destructive tanks and planes. The branches of the tree on this side are stripped of their leaves, and the barrels of the tanks are aimed at them. In the background, there is a red glow in the distance, perhaps the fire is consuming some buildings (there are just residential buildings on the other side of the tree at this level). To the right of the tree, the author presented a picture of rebuilt and vibrant Ukraine. The tree has a green crown, with a swing hanging from one of its branches. A smiling girl wearing a beautiful red dress is rocking on it. A yellow and red ball lies on the grass near her. The presence of vivid colors is associated with an attempt to break the hopelessness of war and recall the joy that accompanies play. Note the numerous symbols drawn by the child. At the bottom of the sheet, a rabbit jumps across a green meadow, which can be considered a symbol of rebirth and transformation. Another important symbol in this drawing is a white dove of peace soaring above everything in the blue sky, holding an olive branch in its beak. You can see urban space in the distance. Above the skyscrapers, the child drew a rainbow, which may symbolize the child's desire to have a happy childhood. This part of the drawing is undoubtedly a cry for peace, for a safe world, and an expression of hope that this will eventually happen. When the Ukrainian army won some victories on the battlefield, when the first towns of Bucha and Irpin were liberated, children understood that they were protected. Ukrainian soldiers began to appear in their drawings more often.

2. My Father – Hero

In the presented drawing (3), a child has placed three soldiers on the green grass under a sunny sky.

Drawing 3.



Source: (*Daddy, come back soon...*).

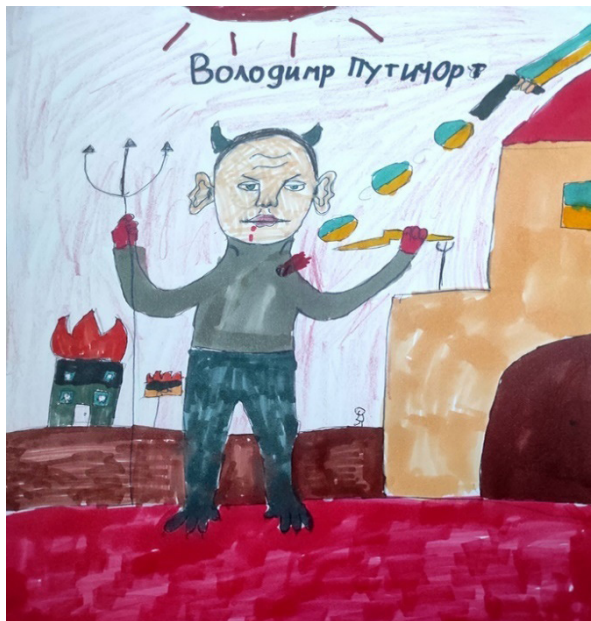
They stand as if posing for a commemorative photograph. Their faces are clearly outlined, they are smiling, two are holding military equipment in their hands: a rifle, a grenade, a pistol, and the third is raising a national flag flying in the wind. Above them, blue clouds and a yellow sun express the positive attitude of the drawing's author, and the inscription "You defend Ukraine" placed in the central part directly speaks of this conviction of the child. Numerous children's works feature a "cry for peace" and a belief in victory over the enemy. Children link faith in regaining freedom to Putin's death.

3. Putin is dead

Children often find it difficult to personalize the enemy. They know that they are experiencing harm, that someone is destroying their lives. The name Putin is mentioned in adults' conversations or in the media, and it is the president of the enemy state who children find responsible for the dramatic situation, and thus is faced with children's feelings and wishes of death. This death wish for the enemy gives the opportunity to express emotion, not to lose hope. In drawing (4) in the central part, the child depicted Putin as a devil/demon with horns on his head and protruding earlobes. The figure has black claws instead of feet and red unnatural

hands, holding a trident in one and a sort of goad in the other. These are symbols of power and destruction (Kopaliński, 2012).

Drawing 4.



Source: (*A child wants Putin...*).

This unnatural figure is hit, wounded (you can see the red of the blood), as you might guess, by a Ukrainian soldier. From behind a large building, a hand in the national colors of Ukraine can be seen shooting a number of large bullets that strike the demon. When drawing, the author used intense colors, browns, grays and reds, one gets the impression that everything is bathed in a sea of blood. This may indicate both a desire to show the drama of war and the aggression and anger of the child drawing this picture. However, most of the children's work is filled with the hope of victory. Children often visualize in their works how beautiful it will be when peace comes.

4. Ukraine victorious

In drawing (5), the child placed a happy, smiling girl and boy in the center, holding the flag of Ukraine up together. Children stand on intense green grass, a small dog sits next to them, and the background is a blue sky, a symbol of happiness, joy, duration, eternity, infinity. The drawing was carefully done with great attention to detail. One could say that it even exudes joy and optimism. By drawing, the child probably moved into the future dreamed of, longed for, eagerly awaited.

Drawing 5.



Source: (*Diary of the drawing...*).

5. Friendship in the face of tragedy

In the presented drawing (6), there is a figure, or rather only a fragment of it – the head of a girl and in the place of the body: a large heart, in which the Ukrainian and Polish flags are combined. The head is decorated with many elements – symbols. The long hair that wraps around the face and flows downward is in the national colors of Ukraine.

Drawing 6.



Source: (Szczygielska-Jakubowska, 2022).

The girl's head is decorated with a garland of various beautiful, colorful flowers, a symbol of the once prosperous Ukraine. There are planes flying above, dropping bombs, a symbol of the destruction wrought. The viewer's attention is also drawn to the face itself, which is two-tone with blue and yellow, just like the hair. The girl's wrinkled forehead expresses bitterness, worry, and pain experienced by the Ukrainian people. The face is wounded, some of the wounds were already treated, others are bleeding heavily, and blood flows in great drops along the symbolic torso. Tears flow from the girl's big black eyes, a symbol of despair and mourning. It can be assumed that the child wanted to illustrate the enormity of the pain and suffering inflicted on Ukraine, and at the same time, by drawing a large heart in which Ukrainian and Polish national symbols are united, to indicate that there are people who sympathize and show needed support. Many meanings can be attributed to the heart symbol, such as love, kindness, help.

CONCLUSIONS

The projection method used allowed to zoom in on some aspects of the children's experience of social reality, to learn about their attitudes toward the war, to understand how they perceive the invaders, and who they consider a true friend, providing support. The drawings show the atrocities of the armed conflict as seen through the eyes of the youngest. The children are mute witnesses to the events, because, after all, they are not directly fighting the enemy, but their drawings are an authentic testimony to the terrible reality. The war is omnipresent in the children's drawings, manifesting both in direct scenes and hidden small details. All precision is directed at the object of trauma. Children draw people and animals, houses, planes, tanks, trees, flowers, sun, sky and many symbols, testifying that the youngest not only experience pain, fear, anxiety, helplessness, uncertainty, but also hope to defeat the aggressor, and a great desire for peace. They dream of a free, peaceful, safe Ukraine. The drawings tell of atrocities that the children have seen or experienced themselves and carry them inside them. They allow the recipient to understand that war is what ruins a child's life: they experience great loss. They lose loved ones, colleagues and friends, home, safe space for functioning, along with life stability. They are deprived of a carefree, happy childhood.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

One of the main limitations of the study conducted is the use of existing children's drawings, which were created as a part of various projects and made available online. Undoubtedly, observing children as they draw and then listening to the child's

narrative would increase the possibility of accurately interpreting the children's works and allow us to determine what meaning the authors give to the various elements of the drawing. The authors, carrying out the "Early childhood education teacher in multicultural conditions: challenges in working with children from Ukraine" project (WPBU/2022/04/00138), will have a chance to use the graphic and verbal method in the future.

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DZIECIŃSTWO ZAGROŻONE WOJNĄ W RYSUNKACH UKRAIŃSKICH DZIECI

Wprowadzenie: W XXI wieku większość dzieci często ma dobre warunki do rozwoju, jest chroniona przez bliskich, którzy zapewniają szczęśliwe i bezpieczne dzieciństwo. Jednocześnie nie można zapominać o tym, że nadal tysiące dzieci na świecie doświadczają opresji, a ich dzieciństwo jest niszczone przez dorosłych poprzez odrzucenie, zaniedbania, przemoc psychiczną i fizyczną. W najtrudniejszej sytuacji, znajdują się dzieci, których dzieciństwo naznacza dramatyzm wojny przynoszącej zniszczenie, choroby, kalectwo, śmierć.

Cel badań: W badaniu dążono do poznania i zrozumienia indywidualnych traumatycznych wojennych doświadczeń dzieci ukraińskich uzewnętrznianych w rysunkach.

Metoda badań: Posłużono się badaniami jakościowymi, które umożliwiają poznanie procesu przeżywania sytuacji życiowych doświadczanych przez osoby badane. Wykorzystano metodę projekcyjną, technikę graficzną i poddano analizie oraz interpretacji rysunki dziecięce.

Wyniki: Analizując rysunki ukraińskich dzieci, które doświadczyły traumy wojennej, wyróżniono 5 głównych kategorii: 1. Mamo, widzę wojnę. 2. Mój Tata – Bohater. 3. Przyjaźń w obliczu tragedii. 4. Putin nie żyje. 5. Ukraina zwycięży. Wojna jest wszechobecna w rysunkach, ujawniona zarówno w bezpośrednich scenach, jak i ukrytych drobnych szczegółach. Rysunki opowiadają o okrucieństwach, których dzieci doświadczyły, które widziały i przeżyły i noszą w sobie.

Wnioski: Rysunki dzieci są płaszczyzną uzewnętrzniania niewypowiedzianych uczuć. Sposób, w jaki dzieci w twórczości plastycznej wypowiadają się o wojnie, odzwierciedla ich osobiste doświadczenia. Prace dzieci świadczą o tym, że w ich pamięć na trwałe wpisało się cierpienie, niepewność, strach o własne życie i życie najbliższych, dramatyzm gwałtownego pożegnania się z beztróskim dzieciństwem oraz wejścia w okrutny świat dorosłych.

Słowa kluczowe: metody projekcyjne, obraz wojny, Ukraina, zagrożone dzieciństwo, rysunek, symbol