



Creation of Animation as a Method of Media Art Therapy in Working with War Trauma in Children and Teenagers

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Abstract

Russia's full-scale aggression became a challenge for the entire Ukrainian society, and art therapists in particular. All segments of the population need psychological help.

Media art therapy is the newest type of art therapy, a combination of therapy, art and the latest information technologies. This method provides an opportunity to find a new foothold and can pave the way to the prevention and mastery of the collective trauma of war. The creation of clay (plasticine) animation within the project "Moms breathe out!" by refugee children from the regions of Ukraine where hostilities are taking place, had the purpose of overcoming the impact of traumatic events. About 50 children and teenagers from 9 to 16 years of age participated in the groups. Markers of psychotraumatization were observed in children's behavior and creativity. The script creation process was based on the archetypal motif of "the Hero's Path." The children used Ukrainian and Russian symbols to denote the heroes. Four animated films were made.

A lot of pent-up anger was observed in all groups of children. In all their stories, the Villain was destroyed, because children felt hatred for the enemy who destroyed their lives.

Media art therapy helped children and teenagers express their feelings related to the war in Ukraine through animation. The experience of conducting classes proved the effectiveness of the selected format, materials (plasticine) and therapeutic interventions. Each child was heard and transferred their traumatic experience into a symbolic form in the created animated film.

Posting animated films on the Internet helps to overcome the collective traumatization in Ukrainian society.

Keywords: *psychological trauma, media art therapy, Ukraine, social rehabilitation, communication system.*

1. Introduction

On the morning of February 24, 2022, all of Ukraine shuddered at the full-scale invasion of the terrorist state, which has been waging war against our country since 2014. Millions of Ukrainians suffered irreparable losses: they left their homes, separated from families, lost their loved ones. What is happening in our country has affected everyone, every person suffers from this war every day. Suffers not only physically, but also psychologically. And this is a collective trauma, the trauma of our entire nation. All Ukrainians feel pain, sorrow, anger, fear, anxiety. The scale of what is happening now is so huge that it is impossible to imagine. More than 40 million people need help in overcoming the effects of war trauma.

We are facing many challenges to which we have to respond on a daily basis. Not every adult was ready for this particular wartime reality, and children suffer the most: they do not have the experience of

overcoming adversity, they do not have enough personal resources for this. It is creativity that can help a child to cope with the consequences of the experienced events. Creativity determines the ability to solve new tasks, navigate in new conditions, overcome various difficulties, creativity awakens and stimulates the development of interests, as it is always connected with the discovery of something new, finding something previously unknown. Creativity is an attempt to go beyond existing knowledge, to overcome one's own limits. That is why art therapy can be a useful tool for a specialist's personal care.

We live in an information society. Mass media communication plays an extremely important role in the life of every person. The latest information and communication technologies are now a bridge between a person and society. Our war is going on "live", and every Ukrainian,

both adults and children, experiences “witness trauma” just by watching the news. Information influences, even leads to mental traumatization - media traumatization. A specific feature of media trauma is the use of the media as a source or means of traumatization. Media trauma, like any other type of mental trauma, is associated with strong emotional experiences. An event does not happen directly to a person, but, with the help of media - the Internet, TV, etc. -, feels as if he participates in the event.

The answer to informational influences can be the creation of media content. Therefore, the use of media art therapy methods is a way to prevent and overcome the negative consequences associated with the media.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the article is to present the experience of using animation as a method of media art therapy in working with war traumas in children and teenagers in order to overcome the consequences of psychotraumatization in war conditions.

1.2. Theoretical Background

Media art therapy is the newest type of art therapy, a combination of therapy, art, and the latest information technologies. This type of art therapy involves modern communication systems and the latest digital technologies as means and space for personal healing through art. The

development of media art therapy is possible due to the development of the information type of culture, which is characterized by openness, plurality, multiculturalism, virtuality, uncertainty, globalization (Voznesenska, 2019). The defining feature of media art therapy is the use of modern media in the creative process.

Media creativity is the basis of media art therapy. Media creation is a mass phenomenon: photos or videos, text posts on social networks, blogging, media art, and much more. Additionally, an important aspect of media creation is the therapeutic one. Through media creativity, healing is achieved through the mechanisms of creative selfexpression, and therefore, it can be one of the means of preserving mental health and overcoming the consequences of psycho-traumatization in wartime.

The development of media art therapy is a natural component of the postmodern way of art therapy development. Media art therapy creates a special environment in virtual space that helps to express accumulated feelings, including those elevated by the the media. This helps prevent media traumatism and expands the level of personal media culture. The use of media art therapy technologies allows a person’s “transition” from the role of a “passive media consumer” to the level of a creator of media content.

The methodological basis of art therapy allows one to strengthen personal re-

silience and helps to overcome the consequences of traumatic events. Creativity, in general, allows you to access resources from your own unconscious, satisfying your needs. Any kind of creative activity is a very important communication tool that enables a person to build more harmonious relations with the outside world. Media creativity can have this function in the information world.

The enormous creative potential of modern media tools helps to use media creativity for art therapy. New media devices allow you to create incredible products: photos, videos, collages or even animated films can be created using just a smartphone. In media art therapy, it is natural to use several creative modalities during one individual session or group work session. The multimodality of the virtual space allows you to bring your story, your fairy tale to life by creating memes or animations, or simply voice the text using electronic music.

When using media tools in the therapeutic process, establishing a connection is much easier because of a person's habitual or even trivial relationship with media technologies. Nonverbal communication helps the art therapist or any other person to understand the client better.

The distribution of selfcreated content through the Internet provides a person with unlimited opportunities to receive the support of friends and even strangers through "likes". Hence, media art therapy contributes to the expansion of a person's

communicative strategies and actions and allows the specialist to work with those who, for some reason, cannot participate in a traditional art therapy group, share experiences, and express their own thoughts. This contributes to the adaptation and readaptation of a person in the community, creates conditions for social activity, which is a feature of media art in general, and thus forms an active life position of a person.

Media art significantly expands the possibilities of using art therapy, helps reduce the fear of one's own performance, share creative products with others in social networks and receive support, the range of communicative strategies during interaction expands, and new guidelines for selfrealization are created; selfconfidence appears associated with media competence. Therefore, media art therapy offers an opportunity to find a new foothold in our changing world, which has been invaded by war.

The main mechanisms of media art therapy influence are identification with the hero, empathy, emotional "discharge", change of attitude and behavior, awakening of optimism, distraction, and help in overcoming physical and mental suffering.

We believe that it is media art therapy that can pave the way for the prevention and mastering of the collective trauma of war, caused or reinforced by the media, through the distribution of created media products to a wide audience.

1.3. Process

1.3.1. Media Art Therapy

Previous studies have proven the effectiveness of media art therapy, namely the creation of animated films to overcome the consequences of psychotraumatization, conflict resolution and peacemaking in conditions of war (Voznesenska, 2019; Voznesenska, 2020). That is why we proposed the use of this approach within the framework of the “Moms breathe out!” project, which was implemented by the Non-Governmental Organization “Linoleum,” to which we were invited as one of the mentors of educational events (with funding from the Stabilization Fund for Culture and Education 2022 by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany and the Goethe - Institut). The project included watching animated films of the Festival of Modern Animation and Media Art “Linoleum” and master classes in animation for children and younger teenagers.

The target audience of the project was refugee children - internally displaced persons from the regions of Ukraine where hostilities are taking place such as Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Chernihiv, Pavlodar, Nikopol, etc. These children were evacuated from dangerous areas to the western regions of Ukraine such as Kyiv, Lutsk, Chernivtsi, Uzhhorod. Helping children and teenagers overcome the consequences of war trauma was one of the project’s tasks.

A total of 52 children and teenagers aged 9 to 16 took part in four master classes (24 male and 28 female). The duration of the class was 6 academic hours with a lunch break.

Observation of those children who were not near the combat zone, did not hide for weeks from bombings in the subway or other bomb shelters, proves that even they live in a constant state of fear, feel hidden anger and fury. These are the consequences of the collective trauma of our society - the trauma of war. Some of the children are exposed to secondary trauma, and all are victims of media traumatization.

Clay animation was chosen as the media content children were asked to create. The creation of animation expands the limits of experiments and the possibilities of embodying fictional images (Golubeva, 2010), which allows the use of animation in working with out-of-boundary experiences that are caused by shock trauma, actual military conflicts affecting the whole society.

In addition, the use of media art therapy, namely the creation of animated films, provides an opportunity not only to immerse in the world of cinematography, but also to acquire skills in recognizing the means of media influence, media manipulation, and to improve one’s media culture, which will allow to counteract media traumatization in the future.

1.3.2. Material

Plasticine was chosen as the material that best contributes to the response of strong feelings caused by the trauma of war such as fear, anger, disgust, etc. **Plasticine** is commonly used in work with aggression, phobias and frustrations, as well as to

express strong emotions and experiences, which is important for traumatized children who do not always have the opportunity to express their feelings or who are fearful. Working with plasticine reduces the risk of a child's selfharm and aggression towards others.

Example 1

At one of the classes during a conflict between children, one of the boys sculpted various images and crumpled them, putting them on the table and hitting them with his fist. His last creation were black plasticine knuckles, which the boy "put on" his hand and began to beat the table. To prevent injury, the child was offered safe physical exercises to release aggression.

The other result of working with plasticine is a decrease in body tension, a change in the emotional background, the possibility of "meeting" unpleasant experiences. Awareness of bodily sensations in the modelling process helps the child to integrate the acquired experience (Vozenska, Sknar 2017). Many children said they enjoy sculpting. Plasticine does not require significant physical effort; contributes to the creation of specific images; bright colors activate imagination and manifestations of spontaneity. Plasticine's ability to reproduce any

theme in a creative product was essential for creating an animated film. That is what increases awareness and response to emotions in particular.

Images created from plasticine can be modified quite easily and at any time, which was happening during the filming of animated films (images were transformed, changed, torn into pieces, etc.). This property of plasticine gives the child a sense of control over the situation, the opportunity to bring changes and transformations into life, and raises awareness of the right to make a mistake.

Example 2

In one of the groups, during the creation of a joint image, one of the boys was dissatisfied with the result. He grabbed the jointly created hero and crumpled it. But the opportunity to remake it from the same material and restore the

image provided the resources to master the traumas of other participants. This happened because the hero, who suffered from the child's aggressive actions, was a Phoenix bird. Thanks to this situation, he became a real Phoenix, because the other members of the group were able to restore it, and "he became even better," in their opinion. The child, who was "guilty" of the hero's disfigurement, also received the experience of recovery and rebirth and became convinced that his own mistakes can be corrected, "repairin" what seems to be lost. Acceptance of the child's aggression by the group and the presenters also positively affected the boy because it is possible to be angry, but choosing safe ways for yourself and others to release your aggression is essential.

Modeling from plasticine enlivens the sphere of physical sensations (touching, heating, muscle activity); it allows you to create a process of positive self-discovery, experimentation, creation, fantasy, play; generates new patterns of behavior, activates and increases self-esteem and self-confidence (Voznesenska, Sknar, 2017).

Some children continued to sculpt even when all the characters of the future

animated film were already created, and other children were already moving on to filming. They complicated the plot, introduced additional characters or new elements and accessories of the main characters. Plasticine provides an opportunity to work with small details, involving fine motor skills, which contributes to grounding, returning the child to bodily sensations.

Example 3

In one of the groups, the most hyperactive boy was offered to "paint" with plasticine, i.e. to knead and smear the plasticine on paper. In this way, he created a picture "Love is..." based on the well-known series of memes and presented it to another girl in the group.

All these properties of plasticine determined this material as a tool to solve the tasks of the project: overcoming the consequences of mental trauma of children and teenagers and mastering the skills of creating plasticine animation.

During the creation of an animated film, children had the opportunity to experience roles of screenwriters, directors, animators, cameramen, sound directors, etc. Each of the roles has its own characteristics, revealing certain

transfer

qualities of the participants. Each role allowed children to express themselves, gain skills in learning new experiences, and overcoming obstacles and the consequences of traumatic events.

The director must see the entire film, he is in a meta position, he singles out individual scenes. His role can be defined as that of a project manager. This role provides an opportunity to feel the control of the situation and therefore should help the child learn to manage his life, to get out of the position of a victim. Due to the age and trauma of the children, their lack of experience in filming an animated film, and limited class time, only a few children dared to try themselves as directors. Often, one of the class presenters was forced to take this role.

For the cameraman of an animated film, attention, thoroughness, and accuracy are important. You need to remember how many shots have already been taken, how many are needed for the scene, be attentive to the location of the camera, light, look into the camera and at the same time see the scene in reality. This role contributes to the connection of the traumatized child with reality, the development of attentiveness, and the ability to concentrate.

The movie editor has creative tasks: to determine the length of each scene, its emotional saturation, etc. The same goes for the sound engineer, who records sound on the finished video sequence. Due to the short duration of the classes,

the final editing took place outside of it, and the link to the finished film posted on the YouTube channel was sent to the children's parents. However, the children themselves chose the music to accompany the animated film and sent it to the presenters using information and communication technologies.

The integration of footage (individual photographs) into a complete image, voiceover and musical arrangement can, from the point of view of psychological help in overcoming the consequences of psychotraumatization, be considered as the restoration of a holistic perception of the world after its fragmentation during a traumatic event. The dubbing gives a "voice" to the difficult experiences expressed in the animated film. Provided the class duration is extended and the necessary equipment is available, this stage should be part of the therapeutic work.

Stages of Creating the Animated Film

The work of creating an animated film generally consists of **four stages**: preparing, filming, editing and joint viewing (Golubêva, 2012).

The first stage, **preparing**, aims to develop an idea, script, direction. At this stage, the heroes of the future film are determined. At the end of this stage, each member of the group has a more or less clear idea about the future film. The idea was agreed by all members of the group. That way, everyone has something

to contribute to the development of the script. This stage is the longest because, in it, the trauma treatment process is launched, the “lifeline” of the traumatized child is restored on a metaphorical level, and a new narrative is created that corresponds to the strategy of overcoming the consequences of the trauma.

We started the process with the “birth” of the idea and writing the script based on the archetypal motif “The Hero’s Path.” In it, the Hero overcomes difficulties, matures, learns to control his anger, and finds the “Holy Grail” (Jonson, 1989). We have chosen the theme for the animated film to be “*Dream.*” After all, we understood that children who witnessed terrible events and left their homes need resources to overcome the consequences of trauma, adapt to a new place of residence, and see the future. Therefore, at the first stage during the acquaintance we asked the children about their dreams. We asked the

questions: “If your dream was food, what kind of food would it be?”; “What color is your dream?” The metaphor of food was not chosen by chance, because food often becomes a simple and accessible resource for a person who has experienced traumatic events. It is also a connection with the body and its needs. Food was considered as a “prize” that the Hero seeks in accordance with archetypal motif. Most children chose simple everyday food as a metaphor for the dream, such as chips, tea, scrambled eggs, fried chicken drumsticks, dumplings, hard cheese, or fast food.

The next task was to translate the association into an artistic image with the help of plasticine - to sculpt this food. Some children sculpted several edible products or dishes. Sometimes the children sculpted the food that they didn’t associate with their dream.



Figure 1 Food and characters shaped from plasticine

In the next step, we asked the children what prevents them from implementing their dreams. We had to define an obstacle that the Hero must overcome according to the archetypal motif. And all the children of all groups called the obstacles related to the war such as

Putin, the Russian military, missiles, bombs, etc. None of the previous work led the children to that topic in any way. Its emergence tells us about the unity of all Ukrainian children in their dreams and the possibility of creating trustful relationships in the group

Example 4

A 13-year-old boy: “I dream of returning home, but my mother is afraid to go home because there is a rocket in our garden that has not exploded.”

So we moved on to creating the image of the **Villain**, who creates obstacles to achieving dreams.

Example 5

In one of the groups, the children’s opinions were divided. Several participants of the classes wanted to sculpt the image of Putin, while others - Russian invaders and other negative characters. Therefore, in the animated film created by this group, the Hero meets an entire “army” of villains on his way (Sviato peremohy nad Nit Upom, Celebration of victory over Nit Up, 2022).



Figure 2 “Celebration of victory over Nit Up” 2022, scene from a movie

Example 6

Another group was asked to draw a joint image of the Villain on the board, drawing in turn, and each subsequent child completed the missing details. This is how the three-headed dragon appeared (Bytva z tryholovym, koho-ne-mozhna-nazyvaty, Battle with the Three-Headed Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, 2022).

Example 7

The third group agreed on the image of a dinosaur with a dog's head (a replica of the popular names of the russian aggressors - "pig dogs" and "orcs") and each child choose which part of this dinosaur they would sculpt. This creature was named "Dinodog". Then, one boy decided to add a lot of weapons to the Villain such as grenade launchers, assault rifles, etc., and therefore had to sculpt him assistants (Phoenix, shcho vidrodzhuetsia ta peremahaie, Phoenix Rising and Triumphant, 2022).

Example 8

Another group made a Villain as a robot with human parts in it (Istoriia pro peremohu Deny nad bozhevilnym robotom, The story of Dana's victory over a crazy robot, 2022).

We can see that the image of the anti-hero is composed of several different parts in all cases. In our opinion, this is due to the inability of the child to perceive war as a desire or will of a specific person: people cannot want to kill other people. This image of the enemy is blurred, divided into many. Also, in the image of the Villain, we see the results of the "dehumanization" of the aggressor. After all, in order to destroy the enemy, you cannot see him as a person, and children feel hatred for the enemy who destroyed their lives.

After that, the image of the main **Hero** of the film was created. The children were asked to solve the question of superpowers the Hero should possess to overcome obstacles and achieve his dream. Among the most frequently mentioned superpowers were the possession of time, the ability to instantly move in space or fly, the presence of cyborg body parts, strength, power.

In one of the groups, the idea of rebirth after death was proposed, which was embodied in the image of the Phoenix. It



Figure 3 One of the creations in process. Villain in the colors of the enemy.



Figure 4 Hero in Ukraine national colors

should be noted that in all other groups, the Hero was a human, although endowed with certain superpowers (one Hero could fly, another could manage time, the third had special body parts; we believe that this is a replica of bioprosthesis, when a person due to combat operations and shelling loses limbs). It should be noted that in all groups the hero was a complete image, although all children also participated in its creation of plasticine.

After creating the main characters of the film and discussing them, the scenario was made quickly, and it contained following scenes: the appearance of the Villain, his negative actions, the appearance of the Hero, the battle, the victory of the

Hero, the celebration of the Victory. In the animated film about Phoenix, one more scene was added - the death and rebirth of the main Hero.

The second stage of creating an animated film – *filming* – is the direct animation of the characters. An ordinary Nikon camera, mobile phone, and tripod were used for recording. The standard table, with a sheet of paper on it, served as a film set. We offered the children to use oil pastels to create a space where the events of the future animated film will take place. Oil pastel was chosen as a graphic material that gives the child confidence and allows control. Each group offered its own vision of this space, but each time it

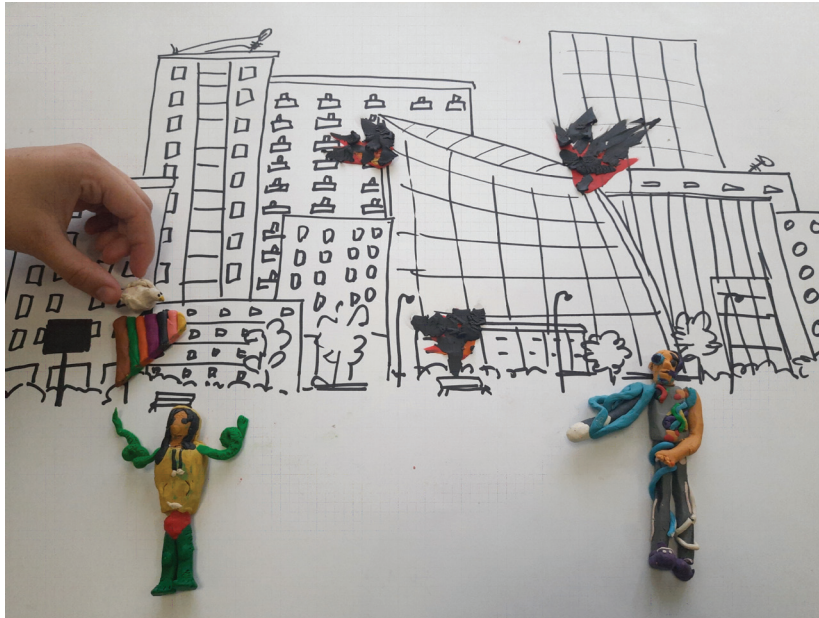


Figure 5 Scene from the movie "The Story of Dana's Victory Over a Crazy Robot", 2022.

was a clear blue sky and the endless lands of Ukraine such as fields, meadows, and in one case - a modern city. We interpret this image as an image of a peaceful country, where planes with deadly bombs and shells do not fly, and people grow crops on the land. This image corresponds to children's ideas about Ukraine before the war and the desire to restore the country in the future.

Natural lighting is usually used, but due to the time of year (in December, which is the month with the shortest days of the year) and problems with electricity in the country due to damage to the power system of Ukraine by enemy missiles, we used mixed lighting, fixing a circular LED lamp above the "film set".



Figure 6. Filming.

We tried to involve all children in participating in the transformations and movements of the characters in each scene of the film.

Example 9

According to observations, children who had a victim mindset or were feeling trapped, joined the filming only when the character they were involved in modeling appeared on the “stage”. But they used this time not in vain, they were not bored: some continued to sculpt, some established more trusting relationships with others, shared their experience. It was important at this stage that the classes were conducted by two co-therapists. One facilitated the filming process, the other was available for communication to those children who were not participating in the filming at that moment.

During the filming, the children improved the original script, they rewrote the scenes, and made additions to the script. These changes took place mainly in the direction of simplification. The shooting of the first simple scenes of the animated film such as the appearance of the hero

and antihero on the “stage” proved to the children the impossibility of conveying complex plot moves. The limited time of the class did not give the opportunity to complicate the animated film with different angles and to use such an expressive technique as the image plan.

Example 10

This is how the scene with the death and rebirth of Phoenix was transformed compared to the original scenario. A new secondary hero appeared, opening for Phoenix a portal to another dimension. After all, it turned out to be difficult to shoot the episode with the transformation of Phoenix into ashes, and then back into a bird.

Editing of the animated film, which was the third stage of the work, took place with the help of a computer and simple software Movavi (version 5.2.2) by the art therapists themselves and outside the timeframe of the classes.

Joint creativity contributes to the experience of mutual support. It restores a holistic perception of reality, where every viewpoint and every thought are given space, where you can coexist, interact, and create. During media art therapy,



Figure 7 Filming the scene of Fenix's death and rebirth.

not only joint creativity and interaction are important, but also the opportunity to get a joint **result**, to create something unusual and share it with others. This provides a resource of trust at the same time as awareness and realization of one's own desires and needs, and opens

up opportunities for each participant to internalize the acquired skills in life. The result is a great resource for cocreators. That is why the last stage of the work is the **spectator** stage. This stage is related to the presentation of your own product to the audience.

In the application of animation as media art therapy, the process ends in full contact with the viewer, comparing one's own feelings, evaluating the transfer of the idea, etc. The screen image begins to exist not only in the imagination of the authors, but acquires meanings given to it by the audience. There is a dialogue between media creators and viewers. Experiencing one's own screen creativity as a social means reveals the essential value and meaning of the screen in modern life for the group members.

All groups of children had the opportunity to watch a "raw" and quick editing of the film without a sound and share their impressions of the classes. The stage of discussion in groups of children is usually "smeared", short, rather like the exchange of emotions. Younger teenage children are not prone to reflection. However, each class necessarily ended with short emotional feedback. The children talked about their impressions, about what was important to them. All children noted the importance of new acquaintances and the appearance of friendships, and interest in a new activity. So, making an animated film is not just about making something. The interaction of children with each other, the ability to solve controversial issues, and the creation of a joint media product that can be shared with those who were not at the class are also important.

Unfortunately, the short duration of the classes did not allow to fully conduct the "spectator" phase. We do not know the

spectators' reactions on animated films, which could be a valuable resource in healing from trauma. We believe that a full viewing of the created animated film had a healing effect for all group members.

2. Discussion and Results

Creating animation on socially significant topics, such as the topic of war, is an opportunity not only to share one's feelings with others, but also to make one's own contribution to overcoming collective traumatization and the development of society. Due to the embodiment of the authors' own experiences in the media product, a new level of understanding or feeling of the social media reality is reached. After all, it is the creative product that allows you to build the boundary "my/someone else's" through emotional unity, to realize common group values.

Media works are powerful stimulators of the activity of complex mental processes in the group and society in general and generate cocreation. It is not only about the creation, but also about the creative perception of a jointly created media product. Perception of an audiovisual media product created by yourself or someone you know contributes to both increasing the level of visual culture and creating a healing environment for overcoming the consequences of traumatic events in one's own psyche. The viewer unconsciously

creates his/her own associations with the images seen on the screen, which correspond to their life experience, and thus can cope with his/her own fears, painful experiences with the help of the method proposed in the animated film. Even adults, watching such films, unconsciously identify themselves with the characters, sympathize with them, rejoice and grieve together with them. This happens precisely because watching “cartoons” as children’s entertainment leads to a certain immersion in the world of childhood and sometimes to a certain regression, overcoming the protective barriers of consciousness.

It is important to add that animated films contain 250-500 frames. Accordingly, the duration of created animated films differs. Observing the behavior and creativity of the children who participated in the project made it possible to identify clear **markers of psychotraumatization:**

- violation of ideas about the world, namely: the inability to receive support, the desire to control time (which was manifested in the endowment of the heroes of animated films with the ability to control time), the desire to instantly move in space with the help of portals or teleportation (which, in our opinion, is a sign of “interruption of the child’s *life line* during a traumatic event, due to which the traumatic event itself is displaced by the child”), etc.;
- violation of self-perceptions in the form of psychosomatic reactions to certain art therapy exercises (headache, drowsiness, which suddenly appeared and suddenly disappeared), difficulties in controlling anger (this ability develops precisely in younger adolescence), the need for clear instructions and difficulties during free creativity, etc.;
- violations in the development of friendly relationships, especially noticeable in children who recently moved to relatively safe regions of Ukraine, in the form of withdrawal, insincerity, mistrust of others, refusal to participate in joint creativity, a feeling of loneliness in a group and confidence, that “no one will understand me”, which can be interpreted as a state of victimhood.

Considering the above markers of traumatization, we emphasize that it is important to try to involve all children in the recording of the film.

It should be noted that children’s ideas about Ukraine, the occupiers and the struggle of the Ukrainian people and the army against Russian aggression were reflected in the details of animated films:

- the “cyborg hand” in the animated film “Victory over Nit Up”, the magical limbs of the main character of the film “Dena’s Victory over the Crazy Robot” as a reflection of the bioprosynthesis of our warriors, crippled in the war,

- the name of the main Villain of one of the films – Nit Up is an inverted surname of the head of the aggressor state,
- Kherson’s crushed watermelon in the animated film “Battle with the Three-Headed Who Cannot Be Named” (classes were held after the liberation of Kherson),
- The form of the main character of the film “Phoenix, who Reborns and Wins” is very similar to the form of the “Mriya” plane destroyed by the invaders at the airfield in Gostomel, etc.

The children used Ukrainian and Russian symbols to denote the heroes, for example symbols of the Russian flag in the animated films “Victory over the Nit Up” and “Phoenix who Reborns and Wins”; Three-Headed Who Cannot Be Named is similar in shape to the two-headed eagle on the Russian coat of arms; wings of Phoenix and the clothes of the winner of Nit Up are made in the colors of the Ukrainian flag.

The colors that the children used to sculpt the villain in all the films are brown, green, black, which indicates feelings towards the Russian invaders such as disgust, aversion, fear. The main character, with whom, as a rule, children identify themselves, is created in such colors as orange, red, yellow - blue. It denotes such emotions and states as anger, activity, aggressiveness, calmness, faith in a better future (Serov, 1993).

A lot of pentup anger was observed in all groups of children. To release it, as well as for ”grounding” (returning the connection with reality during strong emotions), various physical exercises were offered. In two groups, the children were offered elements of drama therapy: to depict and act out villains with the help of their body: how they move, what sounds they make, how they attack and scare others. Such exercises contributed to the disclosure and relaxation of children, and strengthening self-confidence. In one of the groups, the children jokingly started a fight with soft “bags” for sitting. In another, a conflict between two participants almost led to a real fight and tears of one of the boys.

The death of the Villain in every animated film testifies to repressed aggression, anger directed at the Russian invaders who are responsible for the changes in the lives of refugee children, and the possibility of releasing these feelings in a way that is for them safe. Children were happy to record scenes of death or dismemberment of villains, crumpled images without regret, trying to do it quickly, which harmed the actual result of filming an animated film.

3. Conclusions

Media art therapy helped children and teenagers express their feelings related

to the war in Ukraine such as anger, fear, etc. in an animated film. The experience of conducting classes has proven the effectiveness of the chosen format, materials (clay/plasticine animation) and therapeutic interventions (the plot is based on the archetype “The Hero’s Path”). Each child had the opportunity to express

and transfer their traumatic experience into a symbolic form in the created animated film. Posting created animated films on the Internet allows authors to receive support from others. In addition, watching these films can contribute to overcoming collective traumatization in society.

4. References

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