

Katarzyna Schier

When Can Tormented Psychotherapists Help Others? Traumatic Experiences Written in the Body

The speech will focus on two subjects: the specificity of body-psyche relationship and the way psychotherapists function in contact with their patients/clients. By referring to the plot of Janusz Korczak's novel *Król Maciuś I* the speaker will present the challenges of contemporary culture that concern both psychotherapists and their patients. It is a culture "ruled" by children. A reflection upon this problem introduces us to the first dimension of "being tormented". The second dimension of "being tormented" is connected to the way of (not) coping with transgenerational transfer of trauma. This dimension also concerns both therapists and their patients. By referring to the outcomes of her own research in the field of the inversion of roles within a family the speaker will present theses on the distortion of body image and the emergence of psychosomatic disorders among such patients. Their trauma is "written in the body". Here the inversion of roles within a family, i.e. parentification, is considered a kind of traumatic experience including three generations – grandparents, parents and children. It is a situation in which a child takes care of its parent (emotional and/or instrumental) in order to make them take care of itself. The speech will be concluded with reflection on how psychotherapists can cope with their own experiences of being tormented so that they can efficiently help their patients/clients.