

## **Abstract for Fifth Conference of the Child and Adolescent Section of the EFPP**

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In this paper I would like to describe the experience of weekly psychoanalytic psychotherapy of three unaccompanied refugee adolescents seen in an inner city Young People's Counselling Service in London, UK.

The three patients are female, they come from three different war zones (Kosovo, Rwanda and Somalia) and they entered UK as refugees when they were under 18 years old. In their country of origin they witnessed the loss of both or either parent in the context of civil war. In two of the cases their parents have been murdered in their presence and they were also raped and consistently sexually and physically abused. In one of the cases the loss of both parents was perpetrated by the sudden disappearance and imprisonment that led to murder through torture.

My three patients suffered not only the devastating loss of their actual parents but also the violation of their identities as young female women in their country of origin. The three of them have suffered the traumatic experience of fleeing their own country and of arriving into a new culture as unaccompanied minors.

My three patients have been in regular weekly psychoanalytic psychotherapy for one, two and three years respectively and the three of them started treatment about a year after they entered UK.

In this paper I would like to concentrate on:

- Similarities and differences among the three patients' experience of witnessing the murder of their parents according to the constellation of their internal worlds
- Relationship between actual parents and inner parents as uncovered in the course of psychoanalytic psychotherapy
- Specific issues of technique in working psychoanalytically with young people who have been traumatised by civil war, who are in the process of settling into a new culture as refugees and whose legal status is not yet determined
- Transference and Counter-transference as re-enacted in the course of psychoanalytic treatment
- How to monitor change and evaluate progress (reparation and restoration) of the internal world when the external world is still unresolved and uncertain

This paper is an attempt at exploring some common aspects of the current work with young female refugees particularly in relation to their relationship to internal

and actual parents. It is not a detailed clinical account of individual psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

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