

Freedom and trauma in late adolescence gender transition

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The freedom to transition in transgender patients is not a matter of choice, it is a matter of life and death according to Patrícia Gherovici (2017). The transgender phenomenon has challenged psychoanalytic theories understood as timeless and fixed in the phylogenesis of human beings, (Lieberman 2019), (Sakatoupoulou 2020). A structural conceptualisation could help analysts separate people for whom hormone-surgical reassignment is recommended from a wider group of gender fluid individuals for whom such measures would be disastrous. Trauma is present in the clinical practice of transgender people, and it is important not to retraumatise if we distinguish true transgender people from fluid gender people, where the psychoanalytic approach will be different. Susann Heenen-Wolf (2021) offers an understandable metapsychology for the origin of gender dysphoria, which is seen as a motivating force behind gender transition. The clinical vignette I present was not primarily aimed at a change of sex/gender, but at the way in which the psychoanalytic process can help achieve an internal coherence that has undergone a transition conceived as a passage from a state of confusion, dissonance and discord to a state of cohesion and psychic integration.