
From Adolescence to Young Adulthood: A Projective Psychoanalytic Study on Gender Dysphoria

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Résumé

This study presents the framework of an ongoing psychoanalytic research project based on projective test-based interviews with individuals aged 15 to 25 experiencing gender dysphoria. The aim is to explore the psychic ruptures and shifts in internal representations beyond the bodily transitions that occur during the passage from adolescence to young adulthood. A significant portion of the participants are either in the early stages of the gender affirmation process or preparing to initiate it.

The methodology consists of clinical interviews using projective tools such as the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Test. These sessions are analyzed through a psychoanalytic lens, focusing on ego functions, object relations, levels of destructiveness, and narcissistic structures. Central to the theoretical framework are André Green's concepts of the death drive and negative narcissism, which help illuminate the destructive themes observed. Additionally, Alexandra Lemma's work on the temporal integration of the body and psyche during adolescence provides critical insights into the developmental complexities faced by these individuals.

The research also addresses the legal and medical context of gender affirmation procedures in Turkey, exploring how this framework intersects with psychodynamic processes and transference-countertransference dynamics in clinical work. Many participants joined the study as part of their psychiatric evaluations, which shaped the ethical and relational boundaries of the research.

The presentation will share the theoretical foundations, methodological approach, and preliminary clinical observations, while reflecting on the role of projective techniques as tools not only for diagnosis but for accessing the representational world of individuals navigating gender dysphoria.

Keywords: Gender dysphoria, adolescence, psychoanalysis, projective test

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