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Serge Hefez is a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and director of the Family Therapy Unit on the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric ward at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris. He is the author of an original and important work that seeks to shed light on the construction processes of an individual's psyche at a historical moment in time, when social and cultural landmarks are in crisis.

French sales:
Paperback (Le Livre de Poche)

Serge Hefez

Transitions, Redefining Gender

Transitions, Réinventer le genre

How can we move away from binarities?

#MeToo movement and gender theorists have demonstrated that confining women (and men) to predetermined roles is a social construction, often harmful for women. Today, cracks are beginning to show. Medicine and various therapeutic protocols now enable individuals to adapt their anatomy to the gender they believe to be authentically their own.

Serge Hefez describes this “anthropological shift”, by illustrating it with accounts from individuals, couples, or families, who come to see him. But what can a psychoanalyst do for these patients, who are unable to reconcile with their identities, torn by their ambivalence between sex and gender?

We need to overturn the idea that a happy identity means fitting into a predefined mould. Identity construction is more akin to assembling a jigsaw, where each person draws pieces from his or her family and social environment. Nowadays, the pieces of this identity puzzle take on a more varied and sometimes surprising form; strict mothers, nurturing fathers, mothers who did not carry their baby, etc. Therefore, the role of a psychoanalyst's is to support these patients, so that this assembly can be carried out in the happiest way.

Through an ambitious and accessible text, Serge Hefez demonstrates that the MFC model (Mother-Father-Child) is not the only acceptable family model (to the exclusion of all others), as long as the child finds the right areas of identification and the right jigsaw pieces required to construct his or her identity.