10:00am-11:15am

**Patricia Gherovici, PhD**

*Is a Trans-History of Psychoanalysis Possible?*

Many psychoanalysts view transgender expression as an indicator of underlying “pathology” – be it a precursor of transvestism or homosexuality (Limentani), borderline disorders (Green), narcissistic disorders (Oppenheimer, Chiland) or psychosis (Socarides). Understandably, feeling relegated to the realm of pathology and abjection, trans people rejected psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, however, has played a crucial part in the history of transsexualism. It is time both to historicize and theorize this loaded connection. Dr. Gherovici argues for the depathologization of transgenderism. Lacan’s theory of the sinthome offers an innovative framework for rethinking sexual difference. With the help of this theory, one can challenge the pathological approach too often adopted by psychoanalysis. This calls for a more fruitful dialogue between Lacanian psychoanalysis and the clinic of transsexualism. In this paper, Dr. Gherovici argues for a productive confrontation between psychoanalysis and transgender discourses, claiming that transgender people are actually changing clinical praxis, advancing new ideas for the clinic that can be expanded to social and intellectual contexts.

**Objectives**

* Assess the controversial yet central role played by psychoanalysis in the history of transsexualism.
* Challenge the idea that transgender is inherently psychopathological.
* Explore manners in which psychoanalysis and transgender discourses could engage one other.

**Jack Pula, MD**

*Countertransference Considerations in Psychoanalytic Work with Transgender Analysands*

Many psychoanalysts feel unprepared to work with transgender, gender non-conforming and gender questioning patients due to lack of experience and knowledge, and the discomfort of feeling unmoored as their assumptions about gender get challenged and stretched during clinical work. Dr. Pula will present highlights from his autobiographical published paper *Understanding Gender through the Lens of Transgender Experience* and from an unpublished paper, *What’s an Analyst to Do? Countertransference Considerations in cis-Trans Dyads*, to help participants think about ways in which their own subjectivity can work to both promote and foreclose psychoanalytic exploration with transgender patients.

**Objective**

Participants will reflect on how gender is explored and utilized in psychoanalytic dyads, with specific attention to the role of countertransference.

11:30am-1:00pm

**Randi Kaufman, PsyD**

*Gender Benders, Gender Defenders: Understanding Gender Expansion and the Journey to Become a More Authentic Self*

This presentation will give an overview of gender development throughout the lifespan, and options for becoming a more authentic self when gender identity or expression does not conform to traditional gender norms. The journey of gender development often is invisible to those who are cisgender or seem to fit a conventional paradigm. Being gender-expansive or transgender forces individuals to go through a process of introspection to figure out their true self, making their gender journey visible. When the journey is not undertaken or goes poorly, people frequently suffer and develop mental health issues. When the journey goes well it can lead to self-expansion and becoming more of who the person already is.

**Objective**

Participants will become more culturally competent regarding the development of gender identity and treatment options for gender-expansive and transgender children, youth and adults.

**Avgi Saketopoulou, PsyD**

*Massive Gender Trauma, Psychosis and the Spectrality of Gender: Working Analytically with Severely Mentally Ill Transgender Patients*

This presentation centers on work with trans patients whose psychosis appears to be interdigitated with non-normative gender. Reversing the causal arrow it suggests that it is, in fact, early objects’ attempts to erase atypical genders in early childhood that may create the very psychic preconditions for the consolidation of primitive processes. How do we as analysts, however, begin to parse out what belongs to the psychic realm and what pertains to gender per se? Clinical material from the analysis of a psychotic transfemale patient foregrounds these dilemmas and illustrates the significance of attending to the psychic traces left behind by early atypical gender experiences which are ostensibly abandoned but which nevertheless persist spectrally. With such extremely complicated analysands, fleshing out how psychotic operations get recruited in managing massive gender trauma helps address them therapeutically.

**Objective**

Participants will be able to critique the notion that, when encountered in severely psychiatrically ill patients, gender issues are to be reflexively understood as part of their overall psychopathology.
The workshop

Transgender identities have arrived, both upon the national cultural stage as well as within the more intimate context of the consulting room. Psychoanalysts, in response to this arrival, find themselves facing yet another controversy that calls into question apparently foundational notions about gender and embodiment.

When it comes to transgender identities, what kind of a controversy are we dealing with? On the one hand, there are those who view the gender binary of female/male as inherently repressive. Psychoanalysis, from this perspective, should be on the side of innumerable subversive gender performances, in which any norm related to gender or sexuality is resoundingly questioned in the service of some kind of transformative overcoming. On the other hand, there are those who argue that transgender phenomena are inevitably symptomatic manifestations of psychopathy, usually of the more severe types such as borderline, psychotic or pervasive. The transgender individual, from this perspective, would be conceptualized in terms of the power of unconscious, omnipotent fantasy to disavow the difference between the sexes—a disavowal that sometimes involves a demand for surgical interventions.

Our workshop aims to elaborate upon some of the coordinates of this controversy while at the same time to seek ways to move beyond it. Together we will search for more analytically nuanced responses to the theoretical and clinical difficulties that analysts face in their attempts to understand and help their transgender patients.

Register at IPTAR.ORG
General Admission $40 (CE Credit available)

The presenters


Randi Kaufman, PsyD has been working with transgender and gender non-conforming people since 1998, providing individual and group psychotherapy, evaluation, and training and consultation. She built and served as the first Coordinator of the Transgender Health Program at Fenway Health in Boston, creating services where none had existed. She has evaluated several transgender inmates throughout Massachusetts in response to the lack of knowledge and appropriate treatment for incarcerated transgender people, and was instrumental in helping several inmates begin hormone therapy. She provided testimony in federal court for two transgender inmates, who won federal lawsuits. In 2012 Dr. Kaufman branched out to work with TGNC youth due to the lack of providers working with this young group. She trained and worked with Dr. Norman Spack at the GeMS program at Boston Children’s Hospital, and after relocating to NYC she became the team psychologist for The Gender & Family Project at the Miller Institute for the Family in NYC, which serves gender non-conforming and transgender children and youth and their families. Dr. Kaufman is a clinical supervisor for the Institute for Human Identity in NYC, the clinical consultant to Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, MA, and has a private practice in Union Square.

Jack Pula, MD is a psychiatrist and psychotherapist in private practice in New York City, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University, and psychoanalytic candidate at the Columbia Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research. Dr. Pula has given multiple talks in psychiatric and psychoanalytic settings on transgender experience and mental health. He serves on several related committees, including the American Psychiatric Association’s Working Group on the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria, the Committee of Gender and Sexuality of the American Psychoanalytic Association, and the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry Committee on LGBT Issues. Dr. Pula’s publications include: “Ethical Issues Raised by the Treatment of Gender-Variant, Prepubescent Children,” with Jack Drescher, MD; “On Psychotherapy, LGBT Identity, and Cultural Visibility: In Conversation with Alison Bechdel,” with Adam Crichtfield, MD; and “Understanding Gender through the Lens of Transgender Experience,” Psychoanalytical Inquiry 35:8 (2015).

Avgi Saketopoulou, PsyD is on the faculty of the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, the National Institute for the Psychotherapies and the Stephen Mitchell Center. She serves on the editorial boards of Psychoanalytic Dialogues, the Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association and Studies in Gender and Sexuality. She has received the Ruth Stein Prize, the Ralph Roughton award, the Symonds Prize, and the JAPA prize in 2014.