



Psychotherapy Forum *EMBRACING TRAGIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY*

HEATHER FERGUSON, LCSW

| Tuesday, May 27th 2025 | 7:30-9:00 PM EDT |
Via Zoom

In this case presentation, **Heather Ferguson, LCSW** considers her patient's eating disorder and self-harming behaviors as embodied forms of remembering and a reenactment of early sexual trauma. Symptoms become the portal to understanding her patient, Amy. We appreciate her behavior's affect-regulating functions and expression of under processed traumatic states. Amy articulates her sense of impossibility in dislodging the imprint of her past, altering her sense of fatedness, and unlocking necessary mourning to create a sense of a generative future. Cultivating tragic consciousness becomes a therapeutic aim: to bear the truth of Amy's experience and pain while finding meaning and personal integrity amid crushing memories. The ability to engage one's life choices despite reality's challenges can be understood as turning fate into destiny. Ferguson invites the clinician to engage the challenge of acknowledging their vulnerabilities and limits while envisioning an expanded future for themselves, the patient, and the treatment.


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About The Speaker

Heather Ferguson, LCSW, is a faculty and supervisor at the Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity, the National Institute for the Psychotherapies, the Wilhelm Reich Center for the Study of Embodiment, and the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis. As a certified hypnotherapist and practitioner of EMDR, she integrates embodied techniques into her psychoanalytic practice. She writes and lectures about eating disorder treatment, the role of intergenerational transmission of trauma, and the use of embodied techniques to deepen psychotherapeutic engagement. She has chapters in *Ghosts in the Consulting Room: Echoes of Trauma in Psychoanalysis* (Eds, Harris, Kalb, and Klebanoff) and *Art, Creativity, and Psychoanalysis: Perspectives from Analyst-Artists* (Ed., Hagman). She is an Associate Editor for *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context* and a member of the Music Industry Therapist Collective (MITC). She has a private practice in New York City.



EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the concept of tragic consciousness.
2. Discuss the application of tragic consciousness to psychoanalytic work.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/CONTINUING EDUCATION Continuing Medical Education (CME):

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