



COMMUNITY
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY
FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC THERAPIES

Syllabus:

Paternal Eros:

The place of fathers in psychoanalysis

The place of fathers in our psyches

Speaker:

Bill Cornell, M.A. TSTA

Date:

March 17, 2025

Time: 6:15 pm – 9 pm

Seminar

2.75 CE Credits

Fee: Free to Members; Pay-What-You Can Model to Non-Members per our
Seminar Series Guidelines

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Contemporary culture at large drifts toward a distancing, a kind of chilling de-sensualisation and de-eroticisation of the human relation to reality.... instead of inviting a sensory intimacy, contemporary works of art frequently signal a distancing rejection of sensuous curiosity and pleasure.
--Juhani Pallasma

Description: Libido and sexuality were at the foundation of Freud's fashioning of psychoanalytic theory. For Freud, libido was a kind of psycho-physical drive that compelled human beings toward the world and each other, an erotic desire for life. As psychoanalytic theory has developed, libido has gained a much more human dimension for love and erotic engagement through object relations, attachment and relational theories. In contemporary psychoanalytic writings the mother-child relation is seen as the primary crucible for our erotic futures. The

place of the father—of paternal eros—has been largely in the shadows. This class will focus on the erotic dimensions of fathering. These are forces that can go awry. Paternal eros is not simply a place of comfort but can become sources of rage and pain.. We will discuss the readings in the full and small groups.

If time allows, we will revisit a few scenes from the film *C'mon, C'mon*, viewed this time through the lens of an evolving paternal eros between Johnny and Jesse and the emerging triangular relationship with Jesse's mother, Viv (Johnny's sister). One of the powers of psychoanalytic thinking is that it opens multiple lens through which to consider and experience multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon.

It is important to note that while this class will be focused on the place of the father in analytic theory and in human development, paternal eros as an emotional and unconscious force *is not gendered*. Perhaps the day will come when we will speak of parental eros.

Program Objectives:

At the end of the program, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss and reflect upon the role of the father in relational development and maturation.
2. Consider your own attitudes and beliefs about the role of the erotic in the psychotherapeutic relationship.
3. Appreciate the importance of attending to and exploring one's father in therapy with men and women.

References/Readings (see note below about number of readings):

Required reading:

1. Diamond, M.J. (2017). The missing father function in psychoanalytic theory and technique: The analyst's internal couple and maturing intimacy. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 86, 861-887.
2. Snyder, G. (1974). *The bath. Turtle Island*. New York: New Directions Press.
3. White, T (2024). How My Dad Reconciled His God and His Gay Son:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/02/05/opinion/coming-out-evangelical-pastor.html>.

Recommended reading and media:

4. Cornell, W.F. (2004/2024). Erotic vitality and disturbance. [Originally published as The Impassioned Body: Erotic vitality and disturbance, *British Gestalt Journal*, 12, 97-104.]

5. Diamond, M.J. (2017). Recovering the father in mind and flesh: History, triadic functioning and developmental considerations. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 85, 297-334.
6. Film: C'mon, C'mon (2021), found on Amazon Prime, You Tube, Google Play and Apple TV+
7. Broome, B. (2021). *Punch Me Up to The Gods*. Boston: Mariner Books.

(At least 3 references need to be journal-based articles published in the last 10 years. These can be listed as references instead of readings if you want participants to read items other than those that are peer-reviewed articles published in the past 10 years; alternatively, they can be listed as supplemental readings in addition to the required reading you are including)

A personal note from Bill: These requirements of the APA for 3 journal-based articles published within the last 10 years in order for a class to “merit” and be “awarded” CEU’s is a contemporary, professional example of the valorization and perpetuation of a certain class of “knowledge” that marginalizes other forms of knowing, teaching, and representing the kind of living, literary, sociological, and political writings and voices that are so essential to the topics of the classes we are addressing this year. Attempting to limit recognized material to the past 10 years erases the history of ideas that we so need in order to both comprehend and critique any theory and method of practice.

The Speaker: William F. Cornell, M.A., TSTA (P), has maintained an independent private practice of psychotherapy and consultation in Pittsburgh, PA for over 40 years. Having studied behavioral psychology at Reed College in Portland, Oregon and phenomenological psychology at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he followed his graduate program with training in transactional analysis and body-centered psychotherapy and has studied with several mentors and consultants within diverse psychoanalytic perspectives.

For the past 25 years, Bill has consulted, lectured, and trained in countries throughout the world, contributing annually to training programs in England, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Romania. He has published more than 50 articles and book chapters, several books, and edited multiple others in psychoanalysis and transactional analysis.

A coeditor of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* for fifteen years, Bill is now the Editor of the Routledge book series, “Innovations in Transactional Analysis.” Bill is a recipient of the Eric Berne Memorial Award and the European Association for Transactional Analysis Gold Medal, in recognition of his writing.

For additional information on the background and experience of the speaker, or to request the speaker's CV, please contact inquiries@wpacommunity.org or see our faculty section on our website at www.wpacommunity.org

Who Should Attend and Instructional Level of Activity: Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors with interest in advancing their understanding and application of contemporary psychoanalytic concepts. Instructional level is suited for practicing mental health clinicians. Intermediate level of instructional programming.

Continuing Education Credits: 2. *The Western Pennsylvania Community for Psychoanalytic Therapies is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Western Pennsylvania Community for Psychoanalytic Therapies maintains responsibility for this program and its content.*

Attendance: To receive continuing education credit, you must sign in and be present for the entire seminar. You will be asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the session.

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