



WEST MIDLANDS
INSTITUTE OF
PSYCHOTHERAPY

‘Minding Fatherhood’

***Thoughts on the Paternal
and on Paternity-Testing in
Small Things Like These***

David Smith

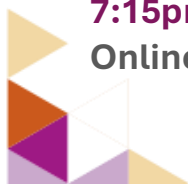
MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2026

7:15pm – 8:45pm

Online via Zoom

Chaired by

Iona Brown



‘MINDING FATHERHOOD’

Thoughts on the Paternal and on Paternity-Testing in *Small Things Like These*. Join WMIP for a paper delivered by David Smith.

The highly acclaimed 2024 Irish film Small Things Like These offers a deeply moving and psychologically astute paternal portrayal, with Cillian Murphy delivering an understated performance as fatherless father Bill Furlong. Following The Quiet Girl (2022), it further reflects author Claire Keegan’s concern with the welfare of children, particularly the developmental impact of being unwanted, unclaimed, neglected, and deprived of consistent loving parental care. Dedicated to the women and children who suffered in Ireland’s Magdalen laundries and mother and baby homes, the film and novel contribute to the emotional and psychological working-through of a deeply felt yet largely unprocessed collective trauma surrounding the systematic, decades-long abuse of women and children in Ireland.

Drawing on poetry and psychoanalytic thinking, this paper explores the powerful projective processes at play, characterised by the disavowal of desire and outsourcing of shame. Focusing on paternal representations, the enduring relational influence of the past, and the haunting presence of ghosts in the nursery, it considers the restorative and reparative potential of parenting, while challenging us to reflect on the ongoing societal neglect of children, to whom we all have promises to keep.

This film is available to watch on Amazon Prime participants are encouraged to watch the film in advance.

DAVID SMITH

David Smith is a Belfast-based psychoanalytic psychotherapist and author, with a background in therapeutic communities. With a particular interest in the creative use of culture to inform psychoanalytic thinking and clinical practice, his published writings include essays on Michael Eigen, Marion Milner, sea swimming, and Northern Ireland, in addition to writing credits for two short psychoanalytic films, *The Clearing* (2019), and *The Blind Sea* (2023). David has made clinical presentations in Belfast, Dublin, London, and New York City. He is Chair of the Northern Ireland Institute of Human Relations, and former Chair of the Psychoanalytic Section of the Irish Council for Psychotherapy.



BOOKING

Booking is required for this event. Complete the form [here](#) or email admin@wmip.org

CPD CERTIFICATES

Requests for certificates should be sent to the above email after the event.

FEE

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