



# CMPS

## Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies

Online Presentation (via Zoom)

### Psychoanalysis as a Form of Play: Considering Interpretation and Mourning in Relation to Play

Winnicott's (1968) assertion that all psychoanalytic treatment is a highly specialized form of play implies that a central aspect of analytic work is helping patients to hold paradoxical realities. For example, experiencing the transference involves holding the analyst as real and unreal at the same time. In the past ten years, Cooper has articulated a play perspective in the treatment of adults. This is not the same as playfulness, but the serious business in which elements of deepening transference, defense, and fantasy are illuminated in new ways for patient and therapist: the language of analytic engagement is heard by one or both participants in new ways.

This program will focus on the relationship of playing to the patient's necessary mourning in the analytic process, a mourning not for the loss or death of others but the process of separating from vexing internal object relations that cause psychic pain and compromise. As this approach involves modifications in clinical process, the limits and ethics of working with mourning from a play perspective will be considered.

2 CE Credits for Psychoanalysts,  
Psychologists, and Social Workers

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2026 • 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (Eastern)**

**To Register: [cmps.edu/events](https://cmps.edu/events)**

**For More Information: 212-260-7050 • [cmps@cmps.edu](mailto:cmps@cmps.edu)**

PRACTITIONERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC: \$50

STUDENTS: Free



**Steven H. Cooper, PhD**, is a training and supervising analyst at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute and the Columbia Center for Psychoanalysis, and a clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia University. In Fall 2025, he was the Visiting Erik Erikson Senior Clinical Scholar at the Austen Riggs Center. He is editor in chief emeritus of *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*. He is the author or editor of eight books, including *Playing and Becoming in Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 2023), *Psychoanalysis in Play: Expanding Psychoanalytic Concepts from a Play Perspective* (Routledge, 2025), and, with Christopher Lovett, *Winnicott's Letter to Bion: Playing, Dreaming, and Beyond* (Routledge, 2023). He is the recipient of this year's best paper prize of The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, which he also won in 1988. He is in private practice in New York.

#### CONTINUING EDUCATION INFORMATION

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Participants will be able to (1) describe past and current attempts to frame psychoanalysis within a play framework, especially in relation to the mourning process in analytic work, and (2) describe transference-countertransference from a play perspective.

**Psychoanalysts:** The Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychoanalysts (#P-0032).

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