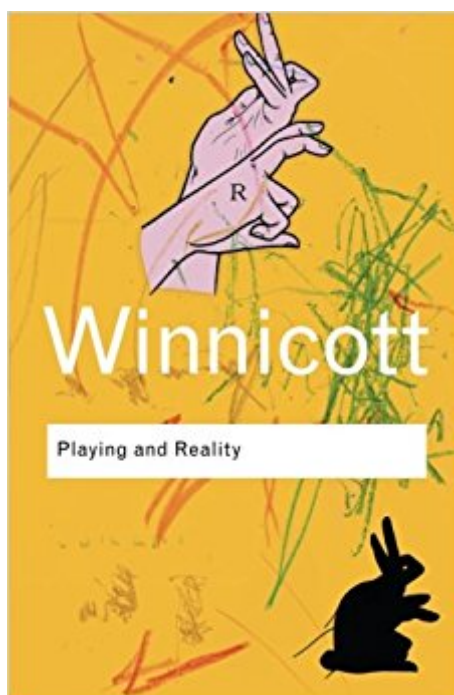


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# Playing And Reality (Routledge Classics) (Volume 86)



## Synopsis

What are the origins of creativity and how can we develop it - whether within ourselves or in others? Not only does *Playing and Reality* address these questions, it also tackles many more that surround the fundamental issue of the individual self and its relationship with the outside world. In this landmark book of twentieth-century psychology, Winnicott shows the reader how, through the attentive nurturing of creativity from the earliest years, every individual has the opportunity to enjoy a rich and rewarding cultural life. Today, as the 'hothousing' and testing of children begins at an ever-younger age, Winnicott's classic text is a more urgent and topical read than ever before.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Winnicott was the greatest British psychoanalyst who ever lived. He writes beautifully and simply about the problems of everyday life - and is the perfect thing to read if you want to understand yourself and other people better." - Alain de Botton

D.W. Winnicott (1896-1971). A renowned psychoanalyst and theorist, whose profound and original thought has had a lasting influence throughout the world. He was President of the British Psycho-Analytical Society and President of the Paediatric Section of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Winnicott was a strange, playful genius. The hugeness and flexibility he shows in this book is

astounding. He's tossing around super-profound philosophical ideas like oranges and catching them in reverse order; leaving an idea undeveloped at the end of a chapter, and ending the chapter essentially with a good hearted laugh. I can almost see him laughing his way through certain parts of the text. I give this book five stars because the ideas contained in here are going to continue to bear fruit in so many ways. We have been waiting for decades for someone to tie together the Neo-platonic strands in psychological thought, in contradiction to Freud and the radical empiricist strands, and Winnicott is the first to really achieve some headway in this area. You see, most people in psychology either think that our brains are like wax and we go around pressing them against things and putting indentations in the wax, whereas some others think that our brains are more like cookie cutters that chop out figures from raw experience. The former group are the empiricists (Freud), and the latter, the rationalists. (Piaget). This is especially important as we move into an era where psychotherapy is increasingly cognitive and rationalistic. Psychiatry and psychology training, in the wake of psychoanalysis's rationalistic errors of ignoring data and imposing a theory of sexuality on every case it came across, is unfortunately being repeated by people in the various schools of therapy. And it's really confusing for residents (like myself) to decide how much data to gather on a patient, and when to stop and apply a theory. Winnicott teaches here that we in part, create reality and in part, discover it. Certain expectations we have come from our playful and interpersonal nature and we find ways to make the world conform to those expectations and desires. That does not mean those interpretations of the world are "illusion", meaning false, as Freud uses the term pejoratively. It simply means that a creative process is involved. But more importantly, after disagreeing with Freud so profoundly, Winnicott goes on to say that our expectations must also be let down repeatedly and conformed to reality as well. The infant does not only create the blanky-teddy, but discovers it in the real world, and gradually lets go of it, just as we all gradually let go of our parents, if we had healthy ones, that is... But the reality that we conform to is not the reality where all our expectations and illusions were dashed to pieces. They are merely modified to fit into a reality as Winnicott sees it, a reality of other minds and other persons.

The title of the book promises and promotes considerable clinic application. Winnicott is original and surprisingly simple and precise through his practical and theoretical implements.

I'll start off by saying I agree with D. Miles - this can be difficult reading at times. I'm not a psychoanalyst but I am a linguist so complicated language is something I am used to dealing with. I

still find myself working hard when reading *Playing & Reality*. If you're willing to put in the effort, you'll find some fascinating ideas and interesting case studies that illustrate them. Franz Metcalf, in his review, has done an excellent job of explaining Winnicott's importance.

Classic text that covers transitional objects, the psychology of play, and a few breathtaking pages on Hamlet.

This is a brilliant book written clearly and with compassion. The concept of the potential space is put forth and discussed at length with many clinical examples.

classic

Was exactly what I wanted, AND was in perfect condition. If I ever need more books for my graduate studies I will definitely shop here!

First published in the late Sixties, *PLAYING AND REALITY* represents a significant advance in the Freudian approach to child-rearing. D. W. Winnicott is especially interested in the importance of play in the development of the child, as they learn how to cop with what can seem a hostile world. "Play" is not something unimportant, but a fundamental element in the process of adaption, a process that continues throughout an individual's life. The book is particularly strong in its analysis of the ways in which cultures shape individual lives: no two people are the same, and it is the responsibility of the parents - as well as psychoanalysts - to acknowledge this. Children should be treated on their own terms; their responses carefully analyzed; and advice judiciously given, with the proviso that the children are quite at liberty to reinterpret it in their own way, or ignore it if necessary. *PLAYING AND REALITY* argues convincingly that the ways in which people come to terms with their surroundings is through a fusion of "inner" and "outer" worlds - sometimes this is achieved through the deliberate investing of objects with particular significances peculiar to the individual. On the other hand, individuals can sometimes invest objects (as well as people) with too much significance, leading to the deliberate imposition of meanings upon phenomena. This manifests itself as an over-reliance on things (as well as people) that can inhibit as well as promote development. This is where the parent - or the therapist - has to intervene, for it is only by exchanging ideas that the process of adaptation to unfamiliar phenomena can be continued. The book shows its age on certain occasions by relying too much on binary oppositions - inner/outer worlds, head/heart, society/ individuality - but it

nonetheless retains its significance as a text making a genuine attempt to understand how the process of adaptation works. It is not just of interest to psychoanalysts, but to anyone interested in "adaptation studies" - understood in this sense as a means by which to understand how human beings come to terms with the world around them.

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