

'PLAYING AND REALITY' BY
D. W. WINNICOTT

DEAR SIR,

I would ask for a modest space in your correspondence columns in order to set right the record concerning the circumstances in which Donald Winnicott's posthumous work, *Playing and Reality*, came to be compiled and published, since the facts are quite other than the suppositions made by your reviewer, Frank J. Menolascino, in your issue of January 1972 (p. 106).

It is obviously legitimate for a reviewer to criticize structure, content, and style in a work under scrutiny. The reviewer's reputation alone is at risk if what he writes is inaccurate or irrelevant. When, however, the reviewer speculates about the procedures followed by an author and his publisher in order to bring a book to publication, he should take care to ascertain from a reliable source the facts of the case.

Playing and Reality is a volume to which Dr. Winnicott gave much thought during the last few years of his life. With Mr. Masud Khan and myself he determined most carefully what material should go into this book and what into a companion volume entitled *Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment* now published in the International Library of Psychoanalysis. Dr. Winnicott lived to correct the proofs of both books, and he himself provided the beautiful drawing that was used for the book-jacket. Furthermore, this is not Dr. Winnicott's 'final' publication. Material exists, and was discussed in great detail by Dr Winnicott, for two further volumes, which will be prepared for publication by Clare Winnicott, his widow, and Masud Khan. The rich store of his writings is not yet exhausted, though I hope that your reviewer's fantasies may be stilled or diverted by the facts I have given.

JOHN HARVARD WATTS,
Managing Director.

Tavistock Publications Ltd.,
11 New Fetter Lane,
London, EC4P 4EE.

DEAR SIR,

May I refer to the review of *Playing and Reality* which appeared in your issue of January 1972?

I am barely concerned with your critic's views of the nature of the book, for Dr. Winnicott's work will long outlast Mr. Menolascino's opinion thereof. I must, however, take objection to his statement concerning the compilation of *Playing and Reality*. I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Winnicott for a number of years and I clearly recall discussing with him in September 1970, various suggestions for a title for

his book, the proofs of which he had already corrected.

I believe it fair, Sir, that your readers be made aware of the injustice and incorrectness of your reviewer's allegation on the mode of compilation of *Playing and Reality*.

HARRY KARNAC.

H. Karnac (Books) Ltd.,
56/58 Gloucester Road,
London, S.W.7.

A MODEL FOR MANIC-DEPRESSIVE
PSYCHOSIS

DEAR SIR,

Court (1972) suggests a continuum model for manic-depressive psychosis with mania at the top end of the scale as the most severe form of this disease. The observations make for interesting reading but the evidence in itself is flimsy. He mentions the triangular model of Whybrow and Mendels (1969) put forward to explain the 'paradoxes' of this disease, forgetting that Baillarger, who originally described the disease in 1853, termed it 'folie circulaire'. Court puts forward nine lines of argument for his model which I should like to answer.

(1) I do not agree that a transition from depression to mania without a period of normality excludes a bipolar illness.

(2) The addition of stress to a depressed patient rarely results in mania but usually in a deepening of the depression and/or increase in agitation.

(3) The same forms of treatment do not generally prove effective in both mania and depression. It is true that tranquillizers damp down activity in both forms, but I have yet to see the effectiveness of anti-depressant drugs in mania. Knowing but little about the 'blanket' effect of ECT, it is very difficult to discuss objectively its effect in manic-depressive psychosis.

(4) The occurrence of depression before, during and after manic states could support Court's model although depression after mania is rare, but in my opinion also supports a continuum model with equal weight given to depression and mania.

(5) The existence of 'mixed states' does not disturb the bipolar model according to Kleist (1942) and Neele (1949). Leonhard (1959) explains this phenomenon by subdividing the illness into unipolar states of depression and mania, and manic-depressive psychosis.

(6) The biochemical and psychophysiological findings in manic-depressive psychosis are still in an early stage of evolution, and support for almost any model can be found. Court himself states that Whybrow and Mendels (1969) conclude that catecholamine secretion 'may reflect a general response to stress'.