

# Donald Winnicott's Vision of Health. Creative Processes as Defence Mechanisms against Anxiety and Trauma

Daniela Carstea

Lecturer PhD, English Department; University of Bucharest, Romania.

## Abstract

It could be said that Winnicott's entire opus revolves around a central issue: the relationship between illusion and reality, between the self and the outside world. For Winnicott, the key process is the establishment of a sense of the self experienced as real. The perfect accommodation to the subject's wish creates what Winnicott terms the "moment of illusion." Thus, in the earliest months of life, Winnicott's so-called "good enough mother" is invisible, and it is precisely her invisibility which allows the infant the crucial megalomaniacal, solipsistic experience which Winnicott characterizes as the state of "subjective omnipotence." In his view, a relatively prolonged experience of subjective omnipotence is the foundation upon which a healthy self develops. Winnicott proposed an optimistic view of fantasy, play, and creativity. He began his research in this area of human experience with the postulate of what he called "primary creativity": when a mother is absent or does not immediately comply with what her baby wants, there is pain and puzzlement, then anger and fear.

Winnicott's transitional phase is conceived as a "normative and desired step toward more complete psychological development in both emotional and cognitive spheres". The child imbues the object with special value and uses it for comfort, particularly at times of transition in which there is an increase in anxiety. According to Winnicott, the subject thus keeps at bay the unthinkable anxieties of annihilation and disintegration that antedate the separation anxieties.

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