

Non-Compliance in WINNICOTT'S WORDS

A Companion to the Work of D. W. Winnicott

By Alexander Newman

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If you want to find out when, where and/or how frequently Winnicott wrote about a particular concept this text will prove of great value. Alexander Newman, the founding editor of *Winnicott Studies* and of *the Squiggle Foundation*, has edited, organized and summarized the symposia of the Squiggle Foundation listing, alphabetically, most of the major themes D.W. developed. The references at the end of each topic are clear and helpful, listing in detail where in Winnicott's works one can find specific reference. Newman's citations of secondary sources, i.e., Andre Green, M. Khan, L. Trilling et al., used to exemplify Winnicott's ideas, are focused and helpful. There is a comprehensive list of Winnicott's publications, a short descriptive outline of the major events in his life, and a current bibliography, almost exclusively British publications, of Winnicott-related articles and books. Finally, Newman's placing of D.W.'s thought within the context of the work of his contemporaries, e.g., Melanie Klein and Anna Freud, by means

of personal letters and pertinent references, is well done, historically informative, and clinically useful.

But the strength of the book is marred by serious shortcomings. Winnicott, as is well known, was a masterfully poetic writer. Too frequently Newman presents Winnicott as if he were an unknown author; and he further confuses the reader by introducing his own case histories and explanations into the text. This format is not only distracting but confusing. Is the text Newman's reading of Winnicott, or is Winnicott used, rather extensively, as a backdrop for Newman? *A Companion to the Work of D.W. Winnicott* does not help clarify this. Although the book jacket warns that *the text is neither a textbook nor ... a dictionary* and can consequently *be used as both*, its function as an excellent reference dictionary is overshadowed by Newman's presence. I was also perplexed by the fact that although the editors at New York University Press know that Winnicott is a major influence, particularly in America, there is hardly any reference to the numerous articles and books, by American authors, on Winnicott. What could account for such a remarkable oversight? It would have enriched the text to include such authors as A. Model, P. Giovachini, etc. Is the text solely Newman's organized transcript of the Squiggle Foundation symposia discussions, with references addressed only to a British audience?

Finally, the colloquial tone of some of the writing is unexplainable in a text intended to explicate and categorize Winnicott's concepts. Note, for example Newman's aside: (*Can you tell, by being with a person whether they are the outcome of good fucking and being enjoyed, or not?* pg.35.)

I've always thought Winnicott meant a little bit more than this when he spoke of good enough parenting. Or, *This 'ego-relatedness' (a term I do not at all like - but what else?)*...pg. 331. Does Newman expect the reader to value his opinions with such breezy commentary? It would be helpful to know why he feels *ego-relatedness* is a problem in the absence of that is breezy.

Winnicott, like a good transitional object, is open to many uses—some of the uses Newman employs in this text are particularly helpful; but the work is marred by the above mentioned shortcomings.