



Inventing Imaginary Worlds: From Childhood Play to Adult Creativity Across the Arts and Sciences

Michele Root-Bernstein

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How can parents, educators, business leaders and policy makers nurture creativity, prepare for inventiveness and stimulate innovation? One compelling answer, this book argues, lies in fostering the invention of imaginary worlds, a.k.a. *worldplay*. First emerging in middle childhood, this complex form of make-believe draws lifelong energy from the fruitful combustions of play, imagination and creativity.

Unfortunately, trends in modern life conspire to break down the synergies of creative play with imaginary worlds. Unstructured playtime in childhood has all but disappeared. Invent-it-yourself make-believe places have all but succumbed in adolescence to ready-made computer games. Adults are discouraged from playing as a waste of time with no relevance to the workplace. Narrow notions of creativity exile the fictive imagination to fantasy arts.

And yet, as Michele Root-Bernstein demonstrates by means of historical inquiry, quantitative study and contemporary interview, spontaneous worldplay in childhood develops creative potential, and strategic worldplay in adulthood inspires innovations in the sciences and social sciences as well as the arts and literature. Inventing imaginary worlds develops the skills society needs for inventing the future.

For more on *Inventing Imaginary Worlds*, check out: www.inventingimaginaryworlds.com

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