

Deprivation and Delinquency, by D. Winnicott

a. Quotes:

- "...all human individuals are alike in spite of the fact that each is essentially distinct..." - Author (pg. 81)

b. General Notes:

- Chapter 1 - Evacuation of Small Children (pg. 11)
 - "The capacity to experience and express sadness marks a stage in the development of a child's personality and capacity for social relationships." (pg. 12)
 - "[T]he family unit provides a reassurance that the infant cannot really do without, and the toddler cannot miss it without interference with his emotional development and without impoverishment of his personality and character." (pg. 18)
- Chapter 2 - Review of the *Cambridge Evacuation Survey* (pg. 19)
 - "[T]o me evacuation is a story of tragedies; either the children are emotionally disturbed, perhaps more than they can recover from, or else the children are happy and it is the parents who suffer, the implication being that they are not needed even by their own children. For me, the only success the scheme can claim is that it could fail." (pg. 19)
- Chapter 3 - Children in the War (pg. 22)
 - "Tiny children are only indirectly affected by war. They are scarcely wakened from sleep by guns. The worst effects come from separation from familiar sights and smells, and perhaps from mother, and from loss of contact with father, things which often cannot be avoided. They may however come into contact with mother's body more than they would ordinarily do, and sometimes they have to know what mother feels like when she is scared. Quite soon, however, children begin to think and talk in terms of war. Instead of talking in terms of fairy stories that have been read and repeated, the child uses the currency of the adults around him, and his mind is full of aeroplanes, bombs, and craters. The older child leaves the age of violent feelings and ideas, and enters a period of waiting for life itself, a period which is the teacher's heyday, since ordinarily a child between 5 and 11 years is longing to be taught and told what is accepted as right and good. In this period, as is well known, the real violence of war can be very distasteful, while at the same time aggression appears regularly in play and fantasy with romantic colouring. Many never leave this stage of emotional development, and the result may be harmless, and may even lead to highly successful accomplishment. Actual war, however, seriously upsets the lives of adults who have stuck here, and this gives the cue to those who have charge of children who are in this 'latency' period of emotional development to select and enlarge upon the non-violent side of war. One teacher has described how this may be done through the use of war news in the geography lesson: this town in Canada is interesting because of evacuation, this country is important because it contains oil or has a good harbour, that country may become important next week because it grows wheat or supplies manganese. The violent side of war is not stressed. A child in this age group does not understand the idea of a fight for freedom, and indeed could be expected to see a great deal of virtue in what a Fascist or Nazi regime is supposed to provide, in which someone who is idealised controls and directs. This is what is happening inside the child's own nature at this age, and such a child would be liable to feel that freedom meant licence. In the majority of schools the stress would be laid on the Empire, the parts coloured red in the maps of the world, and it is not easy to show why children in the latency period of emotional development should not be allowed to idealise (since idealise they must) their own country and kind." (pg. 22-23)
 - "After all, **the Authoritarian regime has not sprung out of nothing**; in one sense it is a well-recognised way of life found in the wrong age group. When it claims to be mature it has to stand the full test of reality, and this brings out the fact that the idealisation in the Authoritarian idea is itself an indication of something unideal, something to be feared as a controlling and directing power. The onlooker can see this bad direction at work, but the young devotee himself presumably only knows that he blindly follows where his idealised leader leads." (pg. 24)
- Chapter 4 - The Deprived Mother (pg. 27)
 - See text
- Chapter 5 - The Evacuated Child (pg. 34)
 - See text
- Chapter 6 - The Return of the Evacuated Child (pg. 39)
 - See text
- Chapter 7 - Home Again (pg. 44)
 - See text
- Chapter 8 - Residential Management (pg. 49)
 - See text
- Chapter 9 - Children's Hostels in War and Peace (pg. 65)
 - See text
- Chapter 10 - Aggression and Its Roots (pg. 73)
 - "It seems that as soon as we admit that the infant can, and has the urge to, hurt, we must admit the existence of an inhibition of aggressive urges making for protection of what is loved and is therefore in danger. Already, soon after birth, infants are unlike in the degree to which they show or hide direct expression of feelings, and it is of some comfort to mothers of angry, screaming babies that the other mother's nice docile infant who sleeps when not fed, and feeds when not asleep, is not necessarily laying down any better foundations for mental health than her own child is doing. It is evidently of value to the developing infant that he has frequently experienced rage at an age when he need not feel remorse. To be angry for the first time at eighteen months must be truly terrifying for the child. If it is true, then, that the infant has a vast capacity for destruction it is also true that he has a vast capacity for protecting what he loves from his own destructiveness, and the main destruction must always exist in his fantasy. And the important thing to note about this instinctual aggressiveness is that although it soon becomes something that can be mobilised in the service of hate, it is originally a part of appetite, or of some other form of instinctual love. It is something that increases during excitement, and the exercise of it is highly pleasurable. Perhaps the word greed conveys more easily than any other the idea of original fusion of love and aggression, though the love here is confined to mouth-love. So far I think we have described three things. Firstly there is a theoretical greed or primary appetite-love, which can be cruel, hurting, dangerous, but which is so by chance. The infant's aim is gratification, peace of mind and body. Gratification brings peace, but the infant perceives that to become gratified he endangers what he loves. Normally he compromises, and allows himself enough gratification while not allowing himself to be too dangerous. But to some extent he frustrates himself; so he must hate some part of himself, unless he can find someone outside himself to frustrate him and to bear being hated. Secondly there comes a separation of what may hurt from what is less likely to hurt. Biting, for instance, can be enjoyed separately from loving people, through the biting of objects that cannot feel. In this way the aggressive elements of appetite can be isolated and saved up for use when the child is angry, and eventually mobilised to combat external reality perceived as bad. Our search for naked aggression through study of the infant has partially failed, and we must try to profit from our failure. I have already indicated the clue to the reason for our failure, by mentioning the word fantasy. The truth is that by giving a most minute description of the behaviour of an infant or a child we leave out at least half, for richness of personality is largely a product of the world of inner relationships which the child is all the time building up

awkward things about excessive self-control is that in a nice child, one who would not hurt a fly, there may come about a periodical break-through of aggressive feelings and behaviour, a temper tantrum, for example, or a vicious action, and this has no positive value for anyone, least of all for the child, who afterwards may not even remember what has happened. All that parents can do here is to find some way of getting through such an awkward episode, and to hope that with the child's growth a more meaningful expression of aggression may evolve. In another more mature alternative to aggressive behaviour the child dreams. In dreaming, destruction and killing are experienced in fantasy, and this dreaming is associated with any degree of excitement in the body, and is a real experience and not just an intellectual exercise. The child who can manage dreams is becoming ready for all kinds of playing, either alone or with other children. If the dream contains too much destruction or involves too severe a threat to sacred objects, or if chaos supervenes, then the child wakes screaming. Here the mother plays her part by being available and by helping the child to wake from the nightmare so that external reality may play its reassuring part once more. This process of waking may take the child the best part of half an hour. The nightmare itself may be a strangely satisfactory experience for the child. Here I must make a clear distinction between dreaming and day-dreaming. The stringing together of fantasies during waking life is not what I am referring to. The essential thing about dreaming as opposed to day-dreaming is that the dreamer is asleep, and can be awakened. The dream may be forgotten, but it has been dreamed, and this is significant. (There is also the true dream that spills over into the child's waking life, but that is another story.)" (pg. 82)

- "Ordinarily, however, acceptance of symbols starts early. **The acceptance of symbols gives elbow room to the child in his or her living experience.** For instance, when infants adopt some special object for cuddling very early on, this stands both for them and for the mother. It is then a symbol of union, like the thumb of a thumb-sucker, and this symbol may itself be attacked, as well as valued beyond all later possessions. **Play, based as it is on the acceptance of symbols, has infinite possibility in it. It enables the child to experience whatever is to be found in his or her personal inner psychic reality, which is the basis of the growing sense of identity.** There will be aggression there as well as love. In the maturing individual child there appears another alternative to destruction, and a very important one. This is construction. I have tried to describe something of the complex way in which, under favourable environmental conditions, **a constructive urge relates to the growing child's personal acceptance of responsibility for the destructive side of his or her nature.** It is a most important sign of health in a child when constructive play appears and is maintained. This is something that cannot be implanted, any more than trust can be implanted. It appears in the course of time as a result of the totality of the child's living experiences in the surroundings provided by the parents or those acting as parents." (pg. 83)
- "Behind it all is magical destruction. This is normal to infants in the very early stages of their development, and goes side by side with magical creation. Primitive or magical destruction of all objects belongs to the fact that (for the infant) objects change from being part of 'me' to being 'not me', from being subjective phenomena to being perceived objectively. Ordinarily such a change takes place by subtle gradations that follow the gradual changes in the developing infant, but with defective maternal provision these same changes occur suddenly, and in ways that the infant cannot predict. By taking each infant through this vital stage in early development in a sensitive way the mother gives time for her infant to acquire all sorts of ways of dealing with the shock of recognizing the existence of a world that is outside his or her magical control. If time is allowed for maturational processes, then the infant becomes able to be destructive and becomes able to hate and to kick and to scream instead of magically annihilating that world. In this way actual aggression is seen to be an achievement. As compared with magical destruction, aggressive ideas and behaviour take on a positive value, and hate becomes a sign of civilization, when we keep in mind the whole process of the emotional development of the individual, and especially the earliest stages. Elsewhere I have tried to give an account of just those subtle stages by which, when there is good enough mothering and good enough parentage, the majority of infants do achieve health and a capacity to leave magical control and destruction aside, and to enjoy the aggression that is in them alongside the gratifications, and alongside all the tender relationships and the inner personal riches that go to make up the life of childhood." (pg. 85)
- Chapter 11 - The Development of the Capacity for Concern (pg. 87)
 - See text
- Chapter 12 - The Absence of a Sense of Guilt (pg. 91)
 - See text
- Chapter 13 - Some Psychological Aspects of Juvenil Delinquency (pg. 97)
 - "The unconscious may be a nuisance for those who like everything tidy and simple, but it definitely cannot be left out of account by planners and thinkers. Man the feeler, man the intuitive, far from leaving the unconscious out of account, has always been swayed by his unconscious. But man the thinker has not yet realised that he can both think and also at the same time include the unconscious in his thinking. Thinking people, having tried logic and having found it shallow, have started on a reaction towards unreason, which is a dangerous tendency indeed." (pg. 97)
 - "The normal child, helped in the initial stages by his own home, grows a capacity to control himself. He develops what is sometimes called an 'internal environment, with a tendency to find good surroundings. The antisocial, ill child, not having had the chance to grow a good "internal environment', absolutely needs control from without if he is to be happy at all, and it he is to be able to play or work." (pg. 100)
- Chapter 14 - The Antisocial Tendency (pg. 103)
 - "A child becomes a deprived child when deprived of certain essential features of home life. Some degree of what might be called the 'deprived complex' becomes manifest. Antisocial behaviour will be manifest at home or in a wider sphere. On account of the antisocial tendency the child may eventually need to be deemed maladjusted, and to receive treatment in a hostel for maladjusted children, or may be brought before the courts as beyond control. The child, now a delinquent, may then become a probationer under a court order, or may be sent to an approved school. If the home ceases to function in an important respect the child may be taken over by the Children's Committee (under the Children Act, 1948) and be given care and protection. It possible a foster home will be found. Should these measures fail the young adult may be said to have become a psychopath and may be sent by the courts to a Borstal or to prison. There may be an established tendency to repeat crimes for which we use the term recidivism. All this makes no comment on the individual's psychiatric diagnosis. The antisocial tendency is characterized by an element in it which compels the environment to be important. The patient through unconscious drives compels someone to attend to management. It is the task of the therapist to become involved in this the patient's unconscious drive, and the work is done by the therapist in terms of management, tolerance, and understanding. The antisocial tendency implies hope. Lack of hope is the basic feature of the deprived child who, of course, is not all the time being antisocial. In the period of hope the child manifests an antisocial tendency. This may be awkward for society, and for you if it is your bicycle that is stolen, but those who are not personally involved can see the hope that underlies the compulsion to steal. Perhaps one of the reasons why we tend to leave the therapy of the delinquent to others is that we dislike being stolen from? The understanding that the antisocial act is an expression of hope is vital in the treatment of children who show the antisocial tendency. Over and over again one sees the moment of hope wasted, or withered, because of mismanagement or intolerance. This is another way of saying that the treatment of the antisocial tendency is not psychoanalysis but management, a going to meet and match the moment of hope." (pg. 105-106)
 - "There is a direct relationship between the antisocial tendency and deprivation. This has long been known by specialists in the field, but it is largely due to John Bowlby that there is now a widespread recognition of the relationship that exists between the antisocial tendency in individuals and emotional deprivation, typically in the period of late infancy and the early toddler stage, round about the age of one and two years. When there is an antisocial tendency there has been a true deprivation (not a simple privation); that is to say, there has been a loss of something good that has been positive in the child's experience up to a certain date, and that has been withdrawn; the withdrawal has extended

over a period of time longer than that over which the child can keep the memory of the experience alive. The comprehensive statement of deprivation is one that includes both the early and the late, both the pinpoint trauma and the sustained traumatic condition and also both the near-normal and the clearly abnormal." (pg. 106)

- "There are always two trends in the antisocial tendency although the accent is sometimes more on one than on the other. One trend is represented typically in stealing, and the other in destructiveness. By one trend the child is looking for something, somewhere, and failing to find it seeks it elsewhere, when hopeful. By the other the child is seeking that amount of environmental stability which will stand the strain resulting from impulsive behaviour. This is a search for an environmental provision that has been lost, a human attitude which, because it can be relied on, gives freedom to the individual to move and to act and to get excited. It is particularly because of the second of these trends that the child provokes total environmental reactions, as if seeking an ever-widening frame, a circle which had as its first example the mother's arms or the mother's body. One can discern a series - the mother's body, the mother's arms, the parental relationship, the home, the family including cousins and near relations, the school, the locality with its police-stations, the country with its laws. In examining the near-normal and (in terms of individual development) the early roots of the antisocial tendency I wish to keep in mind all the time these two trends: object-seeking and destruction." (pg. 107)
 - "At the basis of the antisocial tendency is a good early experience that has been lost. Surely, it is an essential feature that the infant has reached to a capacity to perceive that the cause of the disaster lies in an environmental failure. Correct knowledge that the cause of the depression or disintegration is an external one, and not an internal one, is responsible for the personality distortion and for the urge to seek for a cure by new environmental provision. The state of ego maturity enabling perception of this kind determines the development of an antisocial tendency instead of a psychotic illness. A great number of antisocial compulsions present and become successfully treated in the early stages by the parents. Antisocial children, however, are constantly pressing for this cure by environmental provision (unconsciously, or by unconscious motivation) but are unable to make use of it." (pg. 110)
- Chapter 15 - The Psychology of Separation (pg. 113)
 - See text
- Chapter 16 - Aggression, Guilt and Reparation (pg. 116)
 - "I would like to say that it seems to me that it is comparatively easy for us to get at the destructiveness that is in ourselves when this is linked with anger at frustration or hate of something we disapprove of or when it is a reaction to fear. The difficult thing is for each individual to take full responsibility for the destructiveness that is personal, and that inherently belongs to a relationship to an object that is felt to be good; in other words that is related to loving. Integration is a word that comes in here because if one can conceive of a fully integrated person then that person takes full responsibility for all feelings and ideas that belong to being alive. By contrast it is a failure of integration when we need to find the things we disapprove of outside ourselves and do so at a price, this price being the loss of the destructiveness which really belongs to ourselves. I am talking therefore about the development which has to take place in every individual of the capacity to take responsibility for the whole of that individual's feelings and ideas, the word 'health' being closely linked with the degree of integration which makes it possible for this to happen." (pg. 117)
 - "**One thing about a healthy person is that he or she does not have to use in a big way the technique of projection in order to cope with his or her own destructive impulses and thoughts.**" (pg. 117-118)
 - "We are dealing with one aspect of the sense of guilt. It comes from toleration of one's destructive impulses in primitive loving. Toleration of one's destructive impulses results in a new thing, the capacity to enjoy ideas, even with destruction in them, and the bodily excitements that belong to them, or that they belong to. This development gives elbow room for the experience of concern, which is the basis for everything constructive." (pg. 121)
- Chapter 17 - Struggling Through the Doldrums (pg. 124)
 - "[A]dults should hide among themselves what they come to understand of adolescence. It would be absurd to write a book for adolescents on the subject of adolescence, because this period of life is one which must be lived. It is essentially a time of personal discovery. Each individual is engaged in a living experience, a problem of existing, and of the establishment of an identity. In fact there exists only one real cure for adolescence: maturation. This and the passage of time do, in the end, result in the emergence of the adult person. The process cannot be hurried up, though indeed it can be broken into and destroyed by clumsy handling; or it can wither up from within when there is psychiatric illness in the individual. We do sometimes need to be reminded that although adolescence is something we always have with us, each adolescent boy or girl grows up in the course of a few years into an adult. Irritation with the phenomena of adolescence can easily be evoked by careless reference to adolescence as a permanent problem, forgetting that each individual is in the process of becoming a responsible society-minded adult." (pg. 124)
 - "The adolescent is essentially an isolate. It is from a position of isolation that he or she launches out into what may result in relationships. It is the individual relationships, one by one, that eventually lead to socialization. The adolescent is repeating an essential phase of infancy, for the infant too is an isolate, at least until he or she has been able to establish the capacity for relating to objects that are outside magical control. The infant becomes able to recognize and to welcome the existence of objects that are not part of the infant, but this is an achievement. The adolescent repeats this struggle. It is as if the adolescent must start from a state of isolation. Relationships must first be tried out on subjective objects. In this way we sometimes see young adolescents as collections of isolates, attempting at the same time to form an aggregate through the adoption of mutual ideas, ideals, and ways of dressing and living. It is as if they can become grouped on account of their mutual interests and concerns. They can of course achieve a group if they are attacked as a group, but this is a grouping that is reactive, and after the end of the persecution the grouping ceases. It is therefore not satisfactory because it has no dynamic from within. The sexual experiences of the younger adolescents are coloured by this phenomenon of isolation, and by the need that exists for association on the basis of mutual interest." (pg. 125-126)
- Chapter 18 - Youth Will Not Sleep (pg. 134)
 - See text
- Chapter 19 - Correspondence with a Magistrate (pg. 141)
 - See text
- Chapter 20 - The Foundation of Mental Health (pg. 145)
 - See text
- Chapter 21 - The Deprived Child and Loss of Family Life (pg. 148)
 - "We have to know what sort of things happen in the child when a good setting is broken up and also when a good setting has never existed, and this involves a study of the whole subject of the emotional development of the individual. Some of the phenomena are well-enough known: hate is repressed or the capacity to love people is lost. Other defensive organizations become set up in the child's personality. There may be regression to some early phases of the emotional development which were more satisfactory than others, or there may be a state of pathological introversion. Much more commonly than is generally thought, there is a splitting of the personality. In the simplest form of this splitting, the child presents a shop-window or out-turned half, built up on a basis of compliance, and the main part of the self containing all the spontaneity is kept secret and is all the time involved in hidden relationships to idealized fantasy objects. Although it is difficult to make a simple and clear statement of these phenomena, an understanding of them is necessary if we are to see what are the favourable signs in the case of deprived children. If we do not understand what is there when the child is very ill, we cannot see, for instance, that a depressed mood in a deprived child may be a favourable sign, especially when not

accompanied by strong persecution ideas. A simple depressed mood indicates at any rate that the child has retained unity of personality and has a sense of concern, and is indeed taking responsibility for all that has gone wrong. Also, antisocial acts, such as bed-wetting and stealing, indicate that at any rate momentarily there can be hope - hope of rediscovering a good-enough mother, a good-enough home, a good-enough inter-parental relationship. Even anger may indicate that there is hope, and that for the moment the child is a unit and able to feel the clash between what is conceivable and what is actually to be found in what we call shared reality. Let us consider the meaning of the antisocial act, for instance, stealing. When a child steals, what is sought (by the total child, i.e. the unconscious included) is not the object stolen; what is sought is the person, the mother, from whom the child has the right to steal because she is the mother. In fact every infant at the start can truly claim the right to steal from the mother because the infant invented the mother, thought her up, created her out of an innate capacity to love. By being there the mother gave her infant, gradually, bit by bit, the person of herself as material for the infant to create into, so that in the end his subjective self-created mother was quite a lot like the mother we can agree about. In the same way, the child who wets the bed is looking for the mother's lap that is meant to be wetted in the early stages of the infant's existence. The antisocial symptoms are gropings for environmental recovery, and indicate hope. They fail not because they are wrongly directed, but because the child is unconscious of what is going on. The antisocial child needs therefore a specialized environment that has a therapeutic aim, and that can give a reality response to the hope that is expressed in the symptoms. This has to be spread over a long period, however, to become effectual as a therapeutic, since, as I have said, much is unavailable to the child as conscious feeling and memory; and also the child has to gain great confidence in the new environment, in its stability and its capacity for objectivity, before the defences can be given up - defences against intolerable anxiety that is always liable to be reactivated by new deprivation. We know, then, that the deprived child is an ill person, a person with a past history of traumatic experience, and a personal way of coping with the anxieties roused; and a person with a capacity for recovery greater or less according to the degree of loss of consciousness of the appropriate hate and of the primary capacity to love." (pg. 151-152)

- "I call this thing a transitional object. By this means I can illustrate that one difficulty every child experiences is to relate subjective reality to shared reality which can be objectively perceived. From waking to sleeping the child jumps from a perceived world to a self-created world. In between there is a need for all kinds of transitional phenomena - neutral territory. I would describe this precious object by saying that there is a tacit understanding that no one will claim that this real thing is a part of the world, or that it is created by the infant. It is understood that both these things are true: the infant created it and the world supplied it. This is the continuation forward of the initial task which the ordinary mother enables her infant to undertake, when by a most delicate active adaptation she offers herself, perhaps her breast, a thousand times at the moment that the baby is ready to create something like the breast that she offers. Most of the children who come into the category of the maladjusted either have not had an object of this kind, or they have lost it. There must be someone for the object to stand for, which means that the condition of these children cannot be cured simply by giving them a new object. A child may, however, grow to such confidence in the person who is caring for him or her that objects that are deeply symbolical of that person will appear. This will be felt as a good sign, like being able to remember a dream, or to dream of a real event." (pg. 160)
- Chapter 22 - Group Influences and the Maladjusted Child (pg. 162)
 - "This ugly word - maladjustment - means that at some early date the environment failed to adjust appropriately to the child, and the child is therefore compelled either to take over the cover-work and so to lose personal identity, or else to push round in society forcing someone else to act cover, so that a chance may come for a new start with personal integration. The antisocial child has two alternatives - to annihilate the true self or to shake society up till it provides cover. In the second alternative if cover is found then the true self can re-emerge, and it is better to exist in prison than to become annihilated in meaningless compliance." (pg. 167)
- Chapter 23 - The Persecution that Wasn't (pg. 172)
 - See text
- Chapter 24 - Comments on *Punishment in Prisons and Borstals* (pg. 174)
 - See text
- Chapter 25 - Do Progressive Schools Give Too Much Freedom to the Child? (pg. 180)
 - See text
- Chapter 26 - Residential Care as Therapy (pg. 190)
 - See text
- Chapter 27 - Varieties of Psychotherapy (pg. 200)
 - See text
- Chapter 28 - Psychotherapy of Character Disorders (pg. 208)
 - "The antisocial tendency always arises out of a deprivation and represents the child's claim to get back behind the deprivation to the state of affairs that obtained when all was well. I cannot develop this theme here, but this thing that I call the antisocial tendency must be mentioned because it is found regularly in the dissection of character disorder. The child in accommodating the antisocial tendency that is his or hers may hide it, may develop a reaction formation to it, such as becoming a prig, may develop a grievance and acquire a complaining character, may specialize in day-dreaming, lying, mild chronic masturbating activity, bed-wetting, compulsive thumb-sucking, thigh-rubbing, etc., or may periodically manifest the antisocial tendency (that is his or hers) in a behaviour disorder. This latter is always associated with hope, and it is either of the nature of stealing or of aggressive activity and destruction. It is compulsive. Character disorder, then, according to my way of looking at things, refers most significantly to the distortion of the intact personality that results from the antisocial elements in it. It is the antisocial element that determines society's involvement. Society (the child's family and so on) must meet the challenge, and must like or dislike the character and the character disorder." (pg. 209-210)
- Chapter 29 - Dissociation Revealed in a Therapeutic Consultation (pg. 221)
 - See text

c. Further Readings:

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