

From Instincts to Self (Vol. 2), by W. R. D. Fairbairn

a. Quotes:

b. General Notes:

▪ Chapter 1 - Dissociation and Repression (pg. 13)

- "Dissociation is a mental process whereby unacceptable mental content or an unacceptable mental function becomes cut off from personal consciousness: such mental content or function being regarded as unacceptable if it is either irrelevant to an active interest, incompatible with an active interest, or unpleasant in relation to an active interest." (pg. 51)
- "Repression is an active mental process whereby certain mental elements, the appearance of which in consciousness would cause displeasure, are excluded from personal consciousness without thereby ceasing to be mental." (pg. 69)
- "Dissociation was defined as: An active mental process, whereby unacceptable mental content or an unacceptable mental function becomes cut off from personal consciousness, without thereby ceasing to be mental - such mental content or mental function being "unacceptable" within the meaning of this definition if it is either irrelevant to, incompatible with, or unpleasant in relation to an active interest. Repression has just been defined as: An active mental process whereby certain mental elements, the appearance of which in consciousness would cause displeasure, are excluded from personal consciousness without thereby ceasing to be mental. It is, therefore, obvious that repression is in its essence just dissociation of the unpleasant. While, however, repression must be regarded as dissociation of the unpleasant, it does not follow that all dissociation of the unpleasant is necessarily repression. As a matter of fact, the two processes are not co-extensive. Dissociation of the unpleasant is the more extensive process of the two, and repression is just a special form which it takes under certain definite conditions." (pg. 69)

- "These considerations lend point to the suggestion already made that it is to the source of the repressed material that we must look, if we would understand what it is that differentiates repression from simple dissociation of the unpleasant. In simple dissociation of the unpleasant, what is dissociated is part of the mental content which is felt to be unpleasant because of its relation to a prevailing tendency. In repression, what is dissociated is part of the mental structure which is felt to be unpleasant because of its relation to the organised self. It is only in the latter instance that we can properly speak of "conflict" - a term which is generally used to describe the state which provides the essential condition of repression. This difference between repression and simple dissociation in relation to the source of the material involved may perhaps be expressed more pointedly in another way. **Whereas in simple dissociation of the unpleasant the dissociated material is of external origin, in the case of repression the dissociated material is of internal origin.** At first blush it may seem incorrect to say that in simple dissociation of the unpleasant the dissociated material is of external origin, if we include under this heading dissociation of unpleasant ideas and memories. These are part of the mental content; is it not absurd, it may be asked, to say that these are of external origin? The answer to this question is that it is not absurd, because ideas and memories have their origin in the experience of events which happen to an individual. All the examples of dissociation of the unpleasant, which were cited in the section of this thesis devoted to "Dissociation", showed a dissociation of mental content determined by events. When we speak of "The good old times", what are dissociated in our minds are the memories of unpleasant events. The same holds true of many of the dissociations witnessed in "shell-shock" cases. Our shelving of thoughts about our own death is determined by our experience of the deaths of others. The failure of patients suffering from fatal disease to recognise the gravity of their own condition is a failure to recognise the significance of an event which is happening to them. The dissociations of the kind which occurred to Livingstone, when he was being mauled by a lion, are all dissociations determined by the unpleasantness of events. Repression, on the other hand, is exercised in relation to tendencies springing from the innate instinctive endowment of the individual concerned. These tendencies may, of course, be activated by situations in which the individual is placed, but the menace, against which defence is directed, has its roots in the nature of the individual himself. It is the tendencies which he possesses that are intolerable, rather than the situations which provoke these tendencies. The danger is internal, not external. It is endo-psychic. This is well illustrated in the case of the patient whose 'spaniel dream' has been recorded. What provoked the distortion in this dream was the presence in the dreamer of sexual desires which were in conflict with her ideals and sentiments. The object of repression in such cases is to preserve consciousness from the unpleasant affect which would result, if the presence of strong impulses irreconcilable with the organised self were to make itself felt in consciousness. In the dream in question the impulses did eventually reach conscious expression, with the result that the patient awoke in terror- fear being the natural emotion in the presence of any danger whether external or internal in origin. The object of the distortion in the earlier part of the dream was to prevent conscious realisation of the unacceptable tendency, which was too insistent to be denied expression altogether. So long as the significance of the impulse involved was concealed by distortion, unpleasant affect was avoided, but, as soon as repression began to break down, unpleasant affect began to make its appearance. It is just the appearance of such unpleasant affect that the process of distortion is calculated to prevent; and it is in the possibility of preventing the development of such unpleasant affect that the rationale of repression is to be found." (pg. 74-76)

- "Defence, however, is a feature which repression shares with all forms of dissociation of the unpleasant. The difference between repression and simple dissociation of the unpleasant lies in the fact, that in the first case the menace, from which protection is sought, is of internal origin, whereas in the second case it is only of external origin. In simple dissociation of the unpleasant, the defence is directed against mental content determined ultimately by events that happen to the individual. In repression, the defence is directed against tendencies which form part of the mental structure of the individual himself." (pg. 77)

▪ Chapter 2 - The Superego (pg. 80)

- "**In my opinion, whatever the superego is, it certainly is**" (pg. 81)
 - "It is a hypothesis framed primarily to explain a large group of very puzzling facts encountered by the psychotherapist in the course of his clinical work —facts such as the compulsive rituals and ceremonials of the obsessional patient and the delusional sense of guilt and suicidal tendencies of the melancholic." (pg. 82)
- "The theory of mental structure elaborated in *The Ego and the Id* (Freud 1923b) is expounded in topographical fashion. According to the scheme adopted, the matrix of the mind, which is regarded as primarily unconscious, is described as the Id. The id is primitive in character and loosely organised; in it all impulses are generated, and it is thus the source of all the activity of the organism. The psychological nature of the id is, therefore, not difficult to establish. It quite evidently consists of the primitive instinctive dispositions. The ego according to Freud's scheme, is differentiated out of the id. It is described as that part of the id which is modified by contact with the outer world. It thus arises in the course of experience. It is described as the organ of perception, and it includes consciousness. It also includes the preconscious and must therefore be the storehouse of such memory-residues as escape the action of repression. It controls or attempts to control the motor functions; volition must therefore be regarded as characteristic of its activity. The id, as we have seen, is really the source of all impulse, but the motor pathway passes through the ego. The impulses generated in the id arise as an expression of the inner nature of the organism; they arise in complete independence of the conditions prevalent in the outer world and without regard to their suitability to the situation of the moment. This is what Freud means when he says that the impulses of the id are governed by the "pleasure principle". In contrast to the pleasure principle, which characterises the activity of the id, he postulates a "reality

- principle", which comes to characterise the activity of the differentiated ego. Since the ego is the organ of perception, it naturally performs the function of modifying the impulses of the id in conformity with the situations presented by the external world. As James Glover (1926) points out, so far as the ego is active at all, its function is 'reactive' rather than 'impulsive', whereas the reverse holds true of the id. The ego is thus seen to be essentially an adaptive structure. So far, the psychological nature of the id and the ego is fairly clear. The id consists of the raw, primitive, loosely organised, innate instinct-dispositions; and the impulses generated in these dispositions are id-impulses; these impulses are the ultimate source of all the organism's activity. It is the instinctive tendencies and the impulses generated in them which forms the material for repression; and it would therefore seem that the repressed lies, primarily at any rate, within the confines of the id. The ego, on the other hand, is not quite so simple. Its chief feature, perhaps, is that it has a monopoly of consciousness. In virtue of this fact, it is described by Freud as being the organ of perception. Since the preconscious also falls within the confines of the ego, all the phenomena of memory properly belong to it as much as do those of perception. It is evident indeed that the cognitive functions as a whole belong to the ego. The ego embraces all that is involved in "learning by experience". We must also assume that the whole of affective life takes place within the confines of the ego. The fact that the ego has a monopoly of consciousness makes this inference inevitable. It is true that Freud sometimes speaks of repressed affects. But he explicitly admits in one passage that this is not an exact method of expression; he admits that affect properly speaking is necessarily conscious. As regards conation it would seem that all the higher forms of conation are ego-functions. The ego must be responsible for that mysterious but important process, mediated by affect, whereby cognitive processes are enabled to modify impulse. Since we know that modification of impulse is largely achieved through inhibition, we shall expect to find the function of inhibition included in the ego's repertoire. This appears to be the case, both with regard to that form of inhibition which manifests itself as conscious control and with regard to that form which occurs below the level of consciousness. Since repression is a form of inhibition in the wide sense of the term, repression is essentially a function exercised by the ego upon impulses arising in the instinct-dispositions of the id. Finally if the id consists in the primitive instinctive tendencies, we must ascribe to the ego all the higher organisations of these tendencies which are developed in the course of the individual life-history. To the ego therefore belong the sentiments and ideals, and indeed the character itself." (pg. 84-85)
- "Whatever degree of development the superego attains, however, in individual cases, **the superego may be described in general terms as an organisation of sentiment.**" (pg. 100)
 - "It differs from an ordinary adult sentiment-organisation chiefly in three respects, (1) in its primitive and childish character, (2) in its independence of the organised self, (3) in its loose connection with consciousness. Of these three characteristics of the superego, it would seem reasonable to suppose that the first two - its primitive character and its independence - are accounted for by the third, viz. its loose connection with consciousness. It is presumably because it is out of relation to the adaptive function of consciousness and thus unable to develop in conformity with the fruits of widening experience that the superego remains primitive and independent." (pg. 101)
 - "[T]he superego originates in an essentially empathetic relationship towards frustrating figures, who are at the same time the most vital individuals in the environment of the child." (pg. 101-102)
 - "The primitive nature of the superego stands in sharp contrast to the high degree of development which seems to characterise the familiar sentiment-formations of the adult. The sentiment of patriotism, for example is subject, even in an uneducated person, to considerable elaboration on the conceptual level. It embraces thoughts about national welfare and cooperation which cannot be ascribed to a mere identification with the community at the imaginative level. It is highly elaborated and integrates a wide group of the individual's activities, though, of course, in many people it is narrow and bigoted. Similarly the sentiment of love is elaborate and comprehensive, including in its scope thoughts about the ultimate welfare and happiness of the loved person. The superego on the other hand is narrow and bigoted in the extreme, and conceptual elements appear to be wholly absent. The primitive features would appear to depend upon the period of life at which it is formed. **The superego originates in the child's identification with parents who are imagined as arbitrary and irrational beings like the gods of the Greek myths** (who indeed perhaps derive their characteristics from this source). To the infant, the parents must indeed appear very much as his gods did to the ancient Greek - mysterious creatures who come and go the child knows not why, creatures whose actions he cannot understand, creatures who sometimes indeed appear benevolent, but who at other times thwart and obstruct his activities for no reason obvious to his undeveloped mind. Moreover, just as it is the inexorability and recalcitrance of external objects that leads us to our conception of a reality outside ourselves, so it is that the child realises the presence of his parents most acutely, when they thwart him or at any rate appear to him as a menace. The superego, therefore, if it partakes of the nature of a sentiment-formation, stands in contrast with the familiar sentiments, because it is a formation retaining a very childish and primitive character. It is like those "nests" of primitive cells, which according to one theory of the origin of cancer, persist unaltered in character in some part of the body, while the cells around undergo the normal process of differentiation and specialisation. According to this theory of cancer, the primitive cells lie dormant for a period of years, only to flare up into furious activity, when the time comes. To the end the cancer cells remain primitive and unorganised, and since they are outside the economy of the body, their activity has all the appearance of being due to a foreign agent. The superego resembles the cancer cell in the fact that it retains its primitive character and functions outside the spheres of the organised self. Every sentiment, of course, passes through a phase in which it is primitive and unorganised just as all the cells in the body do; but the special feature of the superego is that it persists in this primitive and unorganised state. It always remains childish, like a colony of aborigines in a civilised state." (pg. 105-106)
 - Chapter 3 - Libido Theory Re-evaluated (pg. 115)
 - **"Psychology is a biological science, but it is not biology.** It studies the same facts as does biology but it studies them from a different point of view. Its special province is to interpret the behaviour of living organisms in terms of inner experience. While the facts which it studies are phenomena of behaviour, it interprets behaviour, so to speak, from the inside; and its explanations are mainly couched in terms of thought and feeling. One of the more obvious phenomena of behaviour demanding explanation is the fact that members of the same species tend to behave in certain characteristic ways in relation to certain characteristic situations; some of these situations appear to be in the main externally conditioned (i.e., determined by environmental contingencies); others again appear to be in the main internally conditioned (i.e., determined by well-marked organic states). In either case behaviour is more or less specific. In the human species this specificity of behaviour is less marked than in any other species, but even in man a number of very characteristic behaviour patterns may be discerned. It is this fact that has given rise to the theories of instinct both in biology and in psychology. All theories of instinct explain the phenomena in question by assuming the existence of innate dispositions which determine the individual to behave according to patterns characteristic of the species; these hereditary dispositions are described as 'instincts'. Biology, however, is interested in instinct rather than in instincts, whereas the reverse is true of psychology. Biology concerns itself with the more general problems raised by instinctive behaviour, e.g., the place and function of instinct in the organic world, the conditions under which instinctive behaviour arose and the steps of its evolution, its utility and weaknesses, its survival value, etc. In so far as the biologist is interested in the classification of instincts, he classifies them (quite naturally and legitimately) according to the role they play in furthering such fundamental biological ends as the preservation of the individual and the maintenance of the species. The psychologist, however, concerns himself with narrower problems. He is less concerned with the general significance of instinct in the organic world than in describing instinctive behaviour as he finds it - particularly in human beings-and formulating the laws which govern it. Above all he is interested in the inner aspect of instinctive behaviour; as a consequence, the terms in which he describes it are predominantly terms of thought and feeling and the laws which he formulates are mainly laws of experience. The psychologist therefore classifies instincts according to the observed patterns which behaviour actually exhibits and according to the nature of the experiences which it affords, quite apart from the biological ends which are served. From these facts it inevitably follows that a strictly psychological classification of instincts must differ widely from a biological classification, and that there is no necessary correspondence between the two. Thus from the biological standpoint, sexual

- and parental activities may be grouped together on the grounds that both have as their aim the maintenance of the race; from the psychological standpoint they may be distinguished on the grounds that they exhibit different behaviour-patterns and yield qualitatively different experiences. Again, biologically speaking, aggression in the search for a mate falls into a different category from aggression in the interests of self-preservation, whereas, from a psychological standpoint, aggressive behaviour is of the same quality, whatever biological aim it serves. Again while self-preservative aggression and flight serve the same biological ends, they exhibit totally different behaviour and are associated with totally different psychological experiences, as is evident when we consider the difference between the emotions of anger and fear. From what has been said it is thus evident that the Freudian dualisms of ego-instincts and sex-instincts, and of life-instincts and death-instincts, depend upon considerations which are in no sense psychological." (pg. 132-133)
- Chapter 4 - Child Assault (pg. 165)
 - See text
 - Chapter 5 - The Nervous Child (pg. 183)
 - See text
 - Chapter 6 - Imagination and Child Development (pg. 195)
 - **"Both the outer and inner worlds, of course, are realities —that is, both exist.** Unfortunately, however, there is an incompatibility between them. Each world makes its claim upon the other; but the claims of the two are only too liable to conflict. The inner world consists essentially of instincts, desires, wishes, feelings and emotions dependent ultimately upon the endowment with which we are born. From the point of view of the internal world taken in isolation, the sole criterion as to whether these inner impulses should be satisfied is the existence of a need, for example, hunger or thirst. A need knows no criterion except itself and it demands instant satisfaction. External reality may not be prepared to satisfy our needs however, for example, thirst in the desert. Alternatively, external reality may require us to defer satisfaction of our needs, for example, thirst after a surgical operation, or the case of a baby on 4-hourly feeds, who is hungry an hour too soon, or the girl who wants a doll may have to wait till Christmas. Again external reality may require us to do something before our needs can achieve satisfaction, for example the young man who wants to be a doctor has to put in five years hard work at University, or the child who wants 6d from his father may only obtain it on condition that he does an hour's weeding in the garden, while most men have to work for their daily bread. **Each of us, therefore, is confronted throughout life with constant conflict between demands of the inner and outer worlds. Our success and happiness depend largely upon the extent to which we adapt the one to the other.**" (pg. 196-197)
 - "Throughout life, everyone is faced with the unwelcome necessity of having both to check his natural impulses and desires and to modify them in such a way as to meet the conditions imposed by the outer world, including, of course, the social environment. It is only by inhibiting and modifying his impulses that he is enabled to obtain such partial satisfactions as the nature of things permits." (pg. 197)
 - "There are all intermediate degrees between the two extremes; but, to be normal, an individual must have a fairly strong Reality Sense. In general, it may be said that successful adaptation in life depends upon the extent to which the reality sense is developed. Unfortunately, human beings are not born with a reality sense. It is something which has to be acquired. Further, it has been found that the degree of reality sense, which any given adult possesses, depends mainly upon the extent to which it has been acquired in early childhood. Early childhood is the period during which the reality sense develops. Indeed, if we may regard growing up as an educational task, the development of a reality sense is the great task of early childhood." (pg. 198)
 - **"The newborn babe has no reality sense. He is unable to draw any distinction between himself and outer objects. His own feelings or sensations constitute his universe.** Another characteristic of the infant is a natural tendency to prefer the pleasant to the unpleasant. What is pleasant satisfies him and he soon learns to seek it. What is unpleasant makes him dissatisfied and he seeks to avoid it or to replace it by what is pleasant, for example, hunger is unpleasant so he cries; while feeding promotes satisfaction which is real. Contrast the state of things when the infant is hungry but not fed, he will seek imaginary gratification through sucking movements, or sucking his thumb. Imaginary satisfaction is unreal and transient, hunger returns. The illustration which I have given shows, however, how imagination is exploited as a method of dealing with unsatisfied impulses. The infant learns in time, however, that the wish is not as good as the deed. The imaginary feed is no real substitute for the actual feed. In learning this, he has taken the first step in developing a reality sense. He has learned that there is something outside himself to be reckoned with in seeking the satisfaction of his desires. He thus comes gradually to realise the breast or bottle is not part of himself, but external objects to be reckoned with. Later, he comes to appreciate the existence of the mother or nurse as external objects also, much more important objects, but objects much more uncertain in their behaviour, much more difficult to conciliate and control. So, **step by step, throughout childhood the outer world is built up. As the reality sense develops, the child's behaviour gradually changes in character.** By nature, he tends to avoid the unpleasant and to seek the pleasant. This is "behaviour according to the pleasure principle". At this level of behaviour, every impulse seeks instant satisfaction. As the reality sense develops, the child's behaviour becomes more adaptive. He learns, to some extent, to content himself with such satisfactions as the nature of the world around him permits, to endure the postponement of satisfaction and even to submit to the complete frustration of some of his impulses. This lesson is hardly learned however. It is never completely learned by any of us, though some of us learn it better than others. **In the face of disappointment and when we are thwarted and frustrated in our efforts, there is always a temptation to resort to the unreal world of imagination and to seek in phantasy what is denied to us in reality. This is a regressive process. In the adult, this resort to phantasy tends to compromise adaptation in life, if it goes too far. In moderation, however, it helps to tide us over crises which might otherwise overwhelm us. We are all liable also to have recourse to phantasy when we retreat at night from the strain and stress of the real world in sleep; for dreams are simply phantasies which occur when sleep dulls the reality sense. In the case of the artist and the writer, imagination may even be exploited as a profession and thus be converted into a means of adaptation. It must be admitted, however, that there are artists and writers who employ their imaginative gifts, not in the interests of adaptation, but as an escape from reality.**" (pg. 198-199)
 - "Here it may be remarked that the imaginative play of children is essentially an intermediary or stepping-stone between pure phantasy and stark reality. The play of children is largely make-believe, that is to say, they attach their phantasies to reality, as a garment is hung on a peg. Thus the hearthrug becomes a boat and two chairs become a railway train. As children grow older, play becomes more realistic. This is to say play gradually becomes more adapted to the conditions of the outer world. Play thus exercises an important function in the development of the child. It provides a series of steppingstones between the world of imagination and the world of reality." (pg. 200)
 - Chapter 7 - Adolescence (pg. 210)
 - **"The child is born immature. During childhood, there is a gradual growth and unfolding of those physical and mental characteristics which form the hereditary endowment of the child. Adolescence is merely the last stage in the journey from immaturity to maturity.** In all this there is nothing which essentially differentiates the psychology of adolescence from the psychology of childhood. All that is distinctive of adolescence arises from the appearance of the reproductive function and the strengthening of those tendencies which are relevant to it. Although, ultimately, this is all that distinguishes the psychology of adolescence from that of early phases, it is sufficient to give the psychology of adolescence a very distinct character of its own. This will be best understood if we consider the biological significance of the reproductive function in respect of the: (1) break with ties to the old family; (2) foundation of a new family. This leads to the abandonment of a life of dependence; and the necessary adaptation to a life of independence. The emergence of the function of reproduction thus involves a complete reorientation of the individual's life." (pg. 213)
 - Chapter 8 - Male Pseudo-Hermaphroditism (pg. 218)

- See text
- Chapter 9 - Principles of Psychoanalysis (pg. 229)
 - See text
- Chapter 10 - The Psychology of Anxiety (pg. 243)
 - See text
- Chapter 11 - The Psychopathology of Aggression (pg. 253)
 - "The origin of the mechanism whereby aggression and hate are turned back on the ego is traced by Freud to the relationship of the child to parent figures in the earliest years of life - the years in which the individual's future reaction patterns are laid down. The significance of the child's relationship to his parents lies in the fact that, while they are the child's first love-objects and the source of all his welfare, they are also the chief source of frustration and prohibitions. Aggression is the instinctive reaction to frustration; and frustration is particularly bitter when it originates in those whose love and affection are most eagerly sought. Consequently, when the child is thwarted by his parents, there are generated within him hostile feelings and impulses proportionate in intensity to his craving for signs of favour and love. The simultaneous presence in the mind of both positive and negative feelings for the same person is in itself a sufficiently intolerable situation; but the situation is rendered all the more intolerable by the fact that the parent is also feared owing to his superior power and authority. Fear and love thus combine to impose an internal taboo upon aggression; and under the influence of this taboo the aggressive impulses become repressed together with the hostile thoughts and feelings which accompany them. Being deprived of their natural objects in the outer world, they have no alternative but to seek a point of attachment in the ego. Meanwhile, as the child develops, the external authority of the parents is being internalised in the form of conscience. The result is that the introverted aggressive tendencies unite with developing conscience to constitute an internal agency which both passes judgments and exacts punishments (not only, as actual parents do, for overt acts but also for secret wishes and hidden impulses)." (pg. 255)
- Chapter 12 - The Role of Aggression (pg. 264)
 - "According to psychoanalytical findings, the life of the child is largely dominated by phantasy; and, although, as the individual develops, he tends to become increasingly realistic, it is found that his thoughts and behaviour continue to be influenced at unconscious, if not at conscious, levels by phantasies persisting from his early childhood. These phantasies, it should be noted, are not simply ideational phenomena. Although their content is derived from data provided by outer situations, their proliferation is out of all proportion to any external stimuli. They are thus essentially dynamic and represent an exploitation of experiential data for the satisfaction of inner needs. In so far as they do not issue in overt behaviour, they themselves provide an alternative to such behaviour; and they can only be satisfactorily interpreted as the product of internal tensions created by the pressure of biological drives." (pg. 267)
- Chapter 13 - Practicing Psychoanalysis (pg. 272)
 - See text
- Chapter 14 - Sexual Delinquency (pg. 284)
 - See text
- Chapter 15 - Phantasy and Inner Reality (pg. 293)
 - See text
- Chapter 16 - Psychoanalysis (pg. 295)
 - See text
- Chapter 17 - Psychoanalysis and the Dentist (pg. 309)
 - See text
- Chapter 18 - Arms and the Child (pg. 327)
 - See text
- Chapter 19 - A Critique of Educational Aims (pg. 333)
 - See text
- Chapter 20 - Psychoanalysis and the Teacher (pg. 350)
 - See text
- Chapter 21 - Psychotherapy and the Clergy (pg. 363)
 - See text
- Chapter 22 - The Study of Mental Abnormality (pg. 368)
 - See text
- Chapter 23 - Prolegomena to a Psychology of Art (pg. 381)
 - See text
- Chapter 24 - The Ultimate Basis of Aesthetic Experience (pg. 397)
 - See text

c. Further Readings:

- .