

Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis, by S. Mitchell

a. People / Organizations:

- .

b. Quotes:

- .

c. General Notes:

▪ Introduction (pg. 1)

- "The world is very different from the world in which psychoanalysis first appeared. There have been enormous changes in political, economic, and social structure; stunning developments in scientific understanding; many cultural shifts and cataclysms; striking differences in the ways men and women conceive of themselves, their place in the universe, and their relationships with each other. The patients who seek analytic treatment are different; the analysts who practice psychoanalysis are different. Our struggles, our problems, our sensibilities, our hopes and dreads are, in many ways, significantly different from those of people who lived a hundred years ago." (pg. 6-7)
 - "This book is based on the premise that psychoanalysis has changed from Freud's day to ours much more radically than is generally acknowledged and that the seeming self-containment of psychoanalysis tends to obscure those changes. The shifts in the world around psychoanalysis have seeped into its concepts and practice and altered both profoundly. What appear as progressive changes, incremental additions to past discoveries are, in a broader sense, pervasive and often radical responses to major shifts in the world in which the participants in psychoanalysis, both analysands and analysts, live, love, work, and struggle. The lack of full recognition of the radical nature of recent developments in psychoanalytic thinking is a major factor contributing to the motley state of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice. Many fragments of the nineteenth-century features of Freud's original contributions remain, alongside his own stunning and often undeveloped innovations, alongside ideas and concerns that he could never have thought or envisioned." (pg. 7)
- "Psychoanalysis is a vibrant clinical process that continues to reinvent itself, finding new meanings for its methodology, as the experience and concerns of its participants change and develop." (pg. 8)
 - "Psychoanalysis is a process involving, most fundamentally, the hopes and dreads of its two participants." (pg. 9)

▪ Part 1 - The Analytic Situation (pg. 11)

○ Chapter 1 - What Does the Patient Need? (pg. 13)

- "Freud's understanding of virtually every feature of the analytic process was informed by this vision. Underneath the surface of experience is a hidden world of unconscious impulses and fantasies, vestiges from our bestial, prehuman, deep past. Psychoanalysis is a "depth-psychology," its instrument, the psychoanalytic method: "The intellect and the mind are objects for scientific research in exactly the same way as any non-human things." Psychoanalysis is a "specialty science," and "its contribution to science lies precisely in having extended research to the mental field" (Freud, 1933, p. 159). The psychoanalytic method allows us to see beneath the appearance of things and the surface of the mind; by uncovering unconscious thoughts, through the generation of insight, psychoanalysis can transform the mind's unconscious underlying structures. As Freud wrote to Wilhelm Fliess at the beginning of his work with Dora, she was "smoothly opening for the available collection of passkeys" (quoted in Gay, 1988, p. 246). In contrast to Jung, whose religiosity informed his emphasis on psychosynthesis, Freud felt that no synthesis was necessary. (In fact, Freud launched a full-scale attack on religion as a form of infantilism in *The Future of an Illusion* [1927].) To Freud, analysis meant breaking things up into their constitutive elements, taking them apart, grasping their hidden structure. The ego automatically reintegrates itself on a less conflictual, more rational basis: "Where id was, there ego shall be." And rationality does not just integrate the individual but draws humankind together, overcoming the isolating effects of infantilism and primary process mentation. Through analysis, both the hopes and dreads that the patient brings into the analytic situation are revealed to be based on unconscious infantile fantasies, on illusions of one sort or another. Hopes derive from infantile impulses for oral, anal, and oedipal gratifications and triumphs. Dreads derive from fantasied punishment (particularly castration) for forbidden wishes. Hopes and dreads are transformed, through the analytic process, into rational understanding." (pg. 14-15)
 - "However, I am not talking just about emotional tone here but about fundamental beliefs - the premise that the analyst knows better, sees more maturely and deeply into the patient's difficulties and into the very nature of life - the premise that the analyst's vision is a rational antidote to the chaotic, infantile, illusion-bound hopes and dreads of the patient's emotional inner world. The analyst has privileged access into the patient's experience; the analyst knows what is real and what is not. To disengage from the compelling clutches of infantile experience and to haul himself toward maturity, the patient needs an infusion of reality in the form of insight. The belief in the greater objectivity and maturity of the analyst's perspective was necessitated by Freud's deep faith in science and is inextricably bound up with his basic understanding of the nature of the analytic method. The patient, driven by unconscious fantasies to which, by definition, she has no access, is in no position to understand or deal constructively with what is troubling her. The analyst's interpretations provide access into and a blueprint of the patient's unconscious experience. Infantile fantasies are exposed, reexamined, and processed through mature, rational thought: "Where id was, there ego shall be." Darkness is transformed into light; infantilism into a more rational, more mature vision; and the patient gives up and puts away childish things. The deep conviction that it is the content of the analyst's interpretations that opens the doors of repression - the objective naming, the rational surveillance of the unconscious - is nowhere more evident than in what is to us today the ghastly practice of Freud and other early analysts analyzing their own children." (pg. 17)
 - ◆ "It was compelling and humane to feel that what the patient needed was an expansion of the capacity to reason clearly, to dispel illusory hopes and dreads through rational thought. Only as our faith in reason as a singular and linear, inexorable and progressive force has been shaken by contemporary experience has the analyst's claim to greater clarity and objectivity been reconsidered on conceptual, moral, and political grounds." (pg. 18)
- "The cultural and intellectual context within which the psychoanalytic method is practiced has changed dramatically since Freud's day. While we are still living in a time of extraordinary and awe-inspiring scientific discoveries, our era is postscientific - we no longer can maintain a deep confidence that science, objectivity, and technological competence themselves can serve as an orienting framework providing meaning and understanding. Some of the successes of science have come to haunt us, from the awesome destructive power of nuclear arms, to the massive spawning of toxic waste as a by-product of the industrial revolution, to the tangled problems associated with overpopulation and longer life in the age of modern medicine. The key role of science in generating the threats of extinction and self-contamination, the shadow under which we all now live, makes the fully sanguine faith in science held by progressive thinkers of Freud's day a psychological impossibility. Freud could speak, with perfectly defensible optimism, of mankind's "progressive control over the forces of Nature" (1933, p. 177). To those of us living today, with ozone depletion, the greenhouse effect, and other features of the ecological crisis, nature seems a more formidable, less yielding, potentially retaliatory adversary. Our aspirations to control the forces of nature now seem less optimism than a possibly fatal hubris. The problem of nihilism has returned. Most people of our day still believe in rationality, but the rationalism of Freud and his contemporaries, the faith that

