Influence and Autonomy, by S. Mitchell

a. People / Organizations:
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b. Quotes:
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c. General Notes:
   - Prologue (pg. ix)
     - "The concept of technique in psychoanalysis is generally associated with the three fundamental pillars of classical American orthodoxy: neutrality, anonymity, and abstinence. Although they have been put into practice in a wide variety of ways, these principles are generally understood as injunctions against the analyst's ill-advised participation in the analytic process. They caution restraint: remain calm and nonpartisan; stay hidden; do not gratify." (pg. ix)
       - "With the broad movement in the direction of a two-person, interactive view of the analytic process, **these principles have fallen into disrepute. Even in the most conservative quarters, they are being radically transformed. Most of us now seem to regard the analyst as inevitably and usefully embedded in the process. Because there is nowhere to hide, gratification and the analyst's partisanship, in one form or another, are inescapable. With the fading of the classical model, the very concept of technique itself has also fallen into disrepute. The emphasis now is on interaction, enactment, spontaneity, mutuality, and authenticity;** technique is associated with what is regarded as the anachronistic illusion that the analyst can remain outside the process by maintaining a wooden, mechanical demeanor. In the current analytic milieu, the term technique itself has become almost a term of abuse. Technicians are people who clean teeth, run electrocardiogram machines, and fix computer hardware. Technique in psychoanalysis is associated with precisely the impersonal, scientistic model of psychoanalytic practice many of us were trained in, found inadequate, and left behind." (pg. ix-x)
     - "I suggest throughout this book that practicing psychoanalysis entails a special kind of experiencing and thinking. Sullivan's term participant observation provides a good start for describing the analyst's activity, but only a start, because one can be a participant observer in many different kinds of activities. The kind of participation required of the analyst is a complex blend of listening; silently responding; giving oneself over to the explicit and subtle interactional gambits offered by the patient; observing the impact on the patient of one's own ideas and emotional commitments; and giving oneself over to a range of states of mind that allow a broad array of one's own feelings and imaginings, past and present, fantastic and realistic, to come alive. The kind of observation required of the analyst is a complex form of self-reflection, with shifting foci, sometimes on the patient, sometimes on the analyst, sometimes on the patient and analyst as a unit. And the kind of hard thinking required of the analyst is grounded in her responsibility for keeping the process psychoanalytic, in which the patient's ultimate welfare is always the first priority, no matter how difficult it is at times to know precisely how to do that." (pg. xii)
   - Chapter 1 - Introduction: From Heresy to Reformation (pg. 1)
     - "Over the course of its century-long history, psychoanalysis has generated many different psychological understandings of the workings of the human mind. Of these, there are two understandings that are most important, most foundational to the entire psychoanalytic enterprise. The first, which we owe to Freud's earliest clinical explorations, is that **the mind of an individual is extraordinarily complex, that there is much more going on in the mind of each of us than we are even dimly aware of.** This is generally referred to as the discovery of the unconscious. The second, which was developed extensively in the second generation of psychoanalytic theorizing, particularly in the work of Harry Stack Sullivan and the American interpersonal school and Melanie Klein and her intellectual descendants, is that **the apparent boundaries between individuals are much more permeable than they appear to be and that everyone handles threatening, disturbing fragments of mental complexity by locating and experiencing them in other people.**" (pg. 1)
       - "Analytic experience has taught us that people often employ a kind of externalization as an unconscious strategy for diverting attention from and controlling conflictual aspects of their own experience. That which is perceived everywhere outside a person actually originates within him. Klein (1946) called this externalizing process projective identification"; that is, we unconsciously locate a repressed segment of the ego, a sector of self, in others, whom we then struggle to control or to avoid. Harry Stack Sullivan (1956) called this externalizing process the dynamism of "specious ideals"; that is, whatever we do not want to experience in ourselves becomes something we are preoccupied with discerning and condemning in others (pp. 101-105)." (pg. 1-2)
     - "This central, largely unacknowledged feature of **psychoanalysis is its fundamentally interactive nature.**" (pg. 3)
     - "Like many progressive intellectuals of his day, Freud saw human understanding as falling into two broad classifications: science and religion. The latter, in Freud's view, was pervaded by fantasy and illusion. Beliefs were generated and adhered to because they were appealing to the believer. Science, Freud and his contemporaries thought, was different. Science operates according to rationality and reality. Scientific beliefs describe the world as it really is, regardless of what is appealing or frightening to the believer." (pg. 7)
     - "As we shall see in the chapters that follow, what has been revealed over and over, in many different psychoanalytic traditions and languages, is that the patient's unconscious conflicts and fantasies come alive in the interactive play between the analysand's experience and the analyst's experience. One does not have to choose. Attention paid to interaction in the analytic relationship does not diminish or distract from the exploration of the patient's unconscious; it potentiates and vitalizes it." (pg. 19)
     - "In my view, psychoanalysis has become a method for generating a certain kind of meaning, for fostering certain forms of experience and living. There are many, many forms of human experience, and contemporary psychoanalysis promotes and facilitates only one of them, a particularly Western, late 20th-century form. **The way of life promoted by psychoanalysis operates in a matrix of dialectical tensions between conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings; private sensations and public engagements; language and affect; past and present; actuality and imagination; verbal and nonverbal; bodily and psychical processes; social embeddedness and autonomous self-definition**. These categories are not taken as polarities, as if fully separable from and antithetical to each other, but rather as interpenetrating and, in some sense, as mutually creating each other" (pg. 24)
       - "Defining psychoanalysis as a method for generating meaning within the matrix constituted by these dialectical tensions makes it possible to account for both what analysts have in common and their enormous diversity. Different schools of analytic thought and different national forms of psychoanalysis differ greatly in the relative emphases they place on these various dimensions. Freudians tend to weight the past vis-à-vis the present, while interpersonalists tend to weight the present vis-à-vis the past. The Kleinians tend to stress the fantastic, while the self psychologists tend to stress the actual. The Lacanians emphasize the importance of language, while many object relations theorists emphasize the importance of preverbal experience. British writers place great weight on the private and ineffable, while American writers place great weight on relationship and mutuality. These differences are not inconsequential; they constitute very different visions of human nature and lead to very different forms of analytic experience. But they share a common matrix for the generation of meaning, despite their variable emphases, and that common matrix makes psychoanalytic meaning different from meaning generated by moral, aesthetic, or religious systems. Traditional authors (e.g., Michels, 1996) who believe that the credibility of psychoanalysis rests on its scientific status assume that defining psychoanalysis in

terms of meaning-making makes it indistinguishable from moral, aesthetic, or religious philosophies. What they miss is that the kinds of meaning generated by the analytic process are distinct (although overlapping) from the kinds of meaning generated by other systems. Moral systems ground meaning in virtuous action; aesthetic philosophies find meaning in the interesting and diverting; religious traditions locate meaning in relation to a prime mover or designer of the universe. **Psychoanalysis grounds meaning in the rich tapestry of experience generated in the dialectics between past and present, the conscious and the unconscious, the fantastic and the real, the given and the constructed.**" (pg. 24-25)

- "[T]he traditional ideal of autonomy, redefined as an emergent rather than a preexisting property, can be reconciled with an understanding of **the psychoanalytic process as fundamentally dyadic, as requiring the transformation of two people in their engagement with each other**. This reconciliation entails a deepening of our understanding of the analytic relationship and its lasting residues that acknowledges rather than denies its deeply interactive nature." (pg. 26)
  - "The analytic process is often now generally understood to represent not simply an unfolding of the contents of the patient's mind, but an interaction between two people, each of whom brings to that interaction his or her own dynamics, passions, ideas, and general subjectivity." (pg. 29)

- Chapter 2 - The Therapeutic Action (pg. 33)
  - See text
- Chapter 3 - Interaction in the Interpersonal Tradition (pg. 63)
  - "Sullivan's clinical experience, set within an intellectual milieu dominated by American pragmatism and the social psychology of G. H. Mead, led him to very different conclusions. (See Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, chapter 3, and Mitchell and Black, 1995, chapter 3, for more detailed accounts of Sullivan's early work.) He saw schizophrenics not as isolated and removed from their human environment, but as exquisitely sensitive to what was going on around them. He came to regard schizophrenia not as a process emerging and evolving from within the patient, but as a reaction and adaptation to circumstances and attitudes outside the patient. In fact, Sullivan became convinced that isolating schizophrenic patients as a phenomenon to be studied destroyed the possibility of even beginning to understand the way in which schizophrenia emerged within a family system, as a response to interpersonal patterns among family members. (In addition to Sullivan's mostly indirect impact on psychoanalysis, he was one of the fathers of family systems theories approaches to family therapy.)" (pg. 64)
    - "Sullivan's two principles are really specific applications of a more general concept: the environment plays a formative role in the shaping of human experience. When applied to the past, this concept translates into the ecological principle that what happened matters, that family dynamics and parental character have a powerful impact on the formation of personality and psychopathology. When applied to the present, the general concept translates into the participatory principle that what is happening matters, that the participation of the therapist plays a crucial formative role in generating the data he is struggling to understand. These principles, which became central to the development of Sullivan's theories of motivation, development and psychic structure, were compatible with Erich Fromm's Marxist version of Freud's contribution." (pg. 65)
      - "Marx had derived human suffering and difficulties in living as being from larger historical and cultural forces. Human nature is not something fixed, but, rather, is formed through mankind's progressive conquest over natural forces through the historical development of human productivity. Personality, values, even ideas are shaped by necessary economic roles and functions. Conflict, within and among individuals, is generated by clashes between larger economic interests and forces. As mankind moves through the historical development of different economic structures, from tribalism to feudalism to capitalism to socialism, all conflict and tensions are resolved." (pg. 65)
  - "Sullivan's theory is radically ecological. **The central theme in all Sullivan's contributions is the idea that a person cannot be understood, or even meaningfully thought about, except in the context of interactions with others.** "All organisms live in continuous, communal existence with their necessary environment" (Sullivan, 1953, p. 31). The human environment, Sullivan stressed, includes continual interactions with others and, on a wider level, with the collective achievements of others, culture. It is folly to attempt to grasp the structure of any organism without considering the ecological niche it has become adaptively shaped to fill. Sullivan provided unusual, startling definitions of personality in his effort to push the reader beyond the ordinary yet greatly misleading tendency to think of the individual in isolation. Personality, for Sullivan (1938) "is made manifest in interpersonal situations and not otherwise" (p. 32). Personality is "the relatively enduring pattern of recurrent interpersonal situations which characterize a human life" (Sullivan, 1940, p. Xi). The personality, or self, is not something structured into the Person, Sullivan suggested. **Personality is the patterns of what a person does when he is with other people**. There are times when one is not with other people - while sleeping, fixing a car, communing with nature. From Sullivan's point of view, the personality is simply not present in those situations (unless there are prominent illusory others, as will become clear later). **Personality is shaped in interaction with others and emerges in interactions with others. Personality is interaction**. **And psychopathology concerns disorders of personality**. Sullivan's thoroughgoing interactionism can be seen clearly in his way of defining motivation as compared with Freud's. For Freud, the basic motivational unit is the impulse, arising from bodily tensions in "erogenous zones" and becoming attached to objects only through the accidents of experience. According to Freud, the infant "turns" toward reality only reluctantly and with resignation, when the fantasies generated by the pure pleasure principle are found wanting. For Sullivan (1940), the initial stimulus is often the environment itself: "Situations call out motivations" (p. 191). The environment evokes a response from the individual. Further, Sullivan's basic motivational units, needs for "satisfaction" and "security," are interactional from the start and in their very nature. Needs for satisfaction emerge as "integrating tendencies," drawing one into interactions with others with reciprocal needs. These needs do not arise from bodily erogenous zones but employ "zones of interaction" in their interchange with others. The need for security is the pursuit of relief from the tension of anxiety, which has been picked up through the "empathic linkage" with other people. For Freud, the primary motivational energy, the drives of the id, become secondarily retooled to allow the individual to adapt to his environment;' for Sullivan, the primary motivational energy is evoked by and preadapted to the environment from the start." (pg. 68-69)
  - "The standard is not objectivity or rationality, but candor, openness and authenticity. The goal is not to circumvent influence, but continually to deconstruct or reflect on it. The analyst's contribution is important not for its transcendent correctness, but for the genuineness of its self-reflective reports on the interaction with the patient. Whereas early interpersonalists regarded the "consensual validation" that the analyst provides as the correction of distortions to arrive at the Truth, contemporary interpersonalists regard the consensual validation provided by the analyst as an agreed on version of the truth that is useful, not contradicted by other data, and potentiating new experiences and personal growth. In the interpersonal tradition, coming to terms with ways of thinking about mutual influence is a work in progress." (pg. 99)
- Chapter 4 - Interaction in the Kleinian Tradition (pg. 101)
  - See text
- Chapter 5 - Varieties of Interaction (pg. 143)
  - See text
- Chapter 6 - The Analyst's Intentions (pg. 168)
  - "[O]ne goal the analyst might usefully try for is a self-reflective responsiveness to the patient in each particular session. I am suggesting that, within that global intention, we are always committing ourselves to one or another form of responsiveness and participation and foreclosing others. At any particular moment, we might choose to be even handed or explicitly partisan; sympathetic or self-expressive; dogged or yielding. I believe that we

make these continual choices on the basis of an implicit sense of an ongoing analytic process that we are trying to enrich and deepen through our participation. There are times when it feels to me that keeping quiet is the best way I can help to deepen the process; other times an interpretation seems necessary, or the expression of a feeling, or a concern, or a fantasy. I believe that each clinician maintains an implicit model of rich, particularly analytic experience, and that implicit model serves, as I suggested in the previous chapter, as a kind of preconscious compass, guiding the perpetual choices that constitute analytic participation. The compass used by each analyst is unique. There is in psychoanalysis, unlike in navigating the earth, no objective, singular electromagnetic field and generic compasses. Each analyst's clinical judgment is shaped by his or her personal integration of psychoanalytic models and concepts, seasoned with his or her personal dynamics, character, and life experience. Theoretical concepts are a crucial part of this personal guidance system. Psychoanalysts spend a great deal of time absorbing psychoanalytic ideas, adopting some, abandoning others, transforming many, to arrive at their own synthesis. (This is why I am opposed to atheoretical eclecticism or model-mixing, which ignores the way each clinician molds his or her own, distinctly personal model.) That conceptual integration, saturated with our own life experience, provides each of us with an implicit sense of the richness and depth of experience, and that integration in the point of reference in relation to which we make clinical choices." (pg. 195)

- Chapter 7 - The Analyst's Knowledge and Authority (pg. 203)
  - See text
- Chapter 8 - Gender and Sexual Orientation in the Age of Postmodernism (pg. 231)
  - See text
- Epilogue (pg. 263)
  - See text

d. <u>Further Readings</u>:
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