

The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness (Penguin Psychology)

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Dr. Laing's first purpose is to make madness and the process of going mad comprehensible. In this, with case studies of schizophrenic patients, he succeeds brilliantly, but he does more: through a vision of sanity and madness as 'degrees of conjunction and disjunction between two persons where the one is sane by common consent' he offers a rich existential analysis of personal alienation.

The outsider, estranged from himself and society, cannot experience either himself or others as 'real'. He invents a false self and with it he confronts both the outside world and his own despair. The disintegration of his real self keeps pace with the growing unreality of his false self until, in the extremes of schizophrenic breakdown, the whole personality disintegrates.

R.D. Laing, one of the best-known psychiatrists of modern times, was born in Glasgow in 1927 and graduated from Glasgow University as a doctor of medicine. In the 1960's he developed the argument that there may be a benefit in allowing acute mental and emotional turmoil in depth to go on and have its way, and that the outcome of such turmoil could have a positive value. He was the first to put such a stand to the test by establishing, with others, residences where persons could live and be free to let happen what will when the acute psychosis is given free rein, or where, at the very least, they receive no treatment they do not want. This work with the Philadelphia Association since 1964, together with his focus on disturbed and disturbing types of interaction in institutions, groups and families, has been both influential and continually controversial.

R.D. Laing's writings range from books on social theory to verse, as well as numerous articles and reviews in scientific journals and the popular press. His publications are: *The Divided Self*, *Self and Others*, *Interpersonal Perception* (with H. Phillipson and A. Robin Lee), *Reason and Violence* (introduced by Jean-Paul Sartre), *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (with A. Esterson), *The Politics of Experience* and *The Bird of Paradise*, *Knots*, *The Politics of the Family*, *The Facts of Life*, *Do You Love Me?*, *Conversations with Children*, *Sonnets*, *The Voice of Experience* and *Wisdom, Madness and Folly*.

R.D. Laing died in 1989. Anthony Clare, writing in the *Guardian*, said of him: "His major achievement was that he dragged the isolated and neglected inner world of the severely psychotic individual out of the back ward of the large gloomy mental hospital and on to the front pages of influential newspapers, journals and literary magazines . . . Everyone in contemporary psychiatry owes something to R.D. Laing."

"Dr. Laing is saying something very important indeed. . . . This is a truly humanist approach."

-Philip Toynbee in the *Observer*

"It is a study that makes all other works I have read on schizophrenia seem fragmentary. . . . The author brings, through his vision and perception, that particular touch of genius which causes one to say Yes, I have always known that, why have I never thought of it before?"

-*Journal of Analytical Psychology*

Other Books

The Oxford Handbook of Global South Youth Studies. Ninety percent of the world's youth live in Africa, Latin America and the developing countries of Asia. Despite this, the field of Youth Studies, like many others, is dominated by the knowledge economy of the Global North. To address these geo-political inequalities of knowledge, The Oxford Handbook of Global South Youth Studies offers a contribution from Southern scholars to remake Youth Studies from its current state, that universalises Northern perspectives, into a truly Global Youth Studies. Contributors from across various regions of the Global South, including from the Diaspora, Indigenous and Aboriginal communities, locate and define the Global South, articulate the necessity of studying Southern lives to enrich, re-interpret, legitimate and offer symmetry to Youth Studies, and utilize and innovate Southern theory to do so. Eleven concepts are re-imagined and re-presented throughout the Handbook--personhood, intersectionality, violences, de- and post-coloniality, consciousness, precarity, fluid modernities, ontological insecurity, navigational capacities, collective agency and emancipation. The outcome is a series of everyday practices such as hustling, navigating, fixing, waiting, being on standby, silence, and life-writing, that demonstrate how youth living in adversity experiment with and push back against routine and conformity, and how research may support them in these endeavors and, simultaneously, redefine the relationships between knowledge, practice and politics--what the volume editors term epistepaxis. The Handbook concludes with a nascent charter for a Global Youth Studies of benefit to the world, that no longer excludes, assumes or elides but rather includes new possibilities for representing youth, researching amongst them, and devising policies and interventions to better serve them. This volume is a critical addition to the field of Youth Studies and one that should be of interest to scholars, researchers, and students working in this area in both the Global North and South.

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