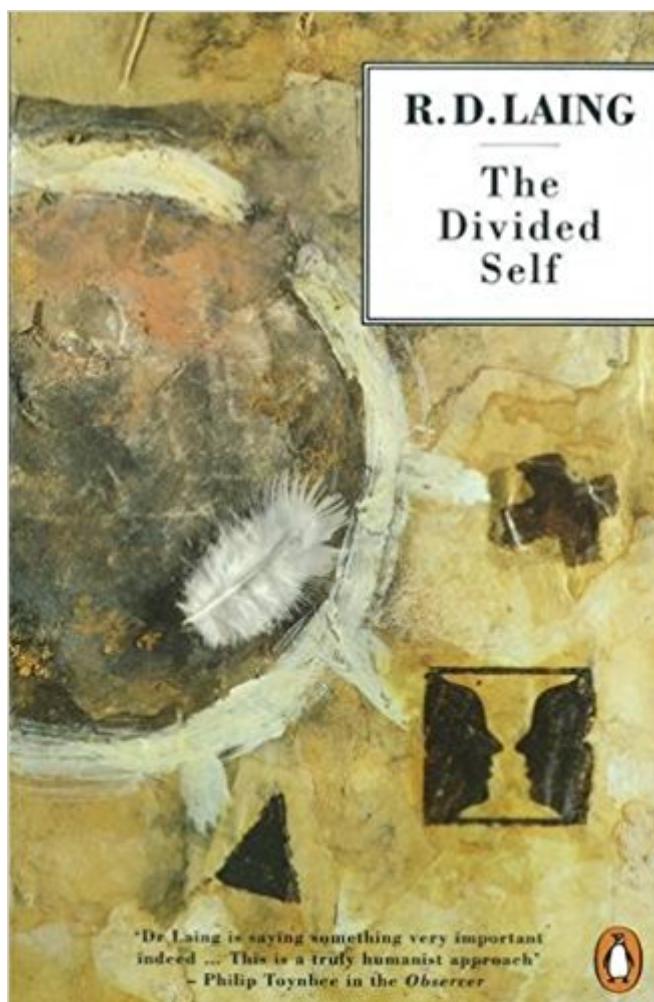


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The Divided Self: An Existential Study In Sanity And Madness (Penguin Psychology)



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"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

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."

Great read

A psychotherapy classic. A must read for every professional therapist as well as those aspiring therapists. In our day of psychopharmacology we are fortunate to have this book. It was ahead of its time.

This should be mandatory reading for Psychology majors, and anyone who wants to work in the mental health field. On one hand, this is a great book about schizophrenics and their existential issues. On the other hand, everything in this book also applies to non-psychotic people, and THIS is why this book is so far ahead of others in its field, even for as old as it is. It's too bad not many people read it anymore.

It is a very interesting book, and also helps to understand yourself (even if you are not a schizoid person). Some findings of the author apply more or less to everyone. It is also easy to read.

an important book describing personal insecurity in mental illness

Laing uses poetic language with great power of clinical penetration and wisdom.

Laing gives a unique perspective upon schizophrenic person that no other psychologist has ever given. This is a must have for a psychiatrist.

Very interesting depiction of madness. How the author suggests the nature of the modern world interacts with modern man is intriguing.

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