

R. D. LAING:
THE POLITICS OF MIND

Can human beings be persons today? Can a man be his actual self with another man or woman? Before we can ask such an optimistic question as, "What is a personal relationship?", we have to ask if a personal relationship is possible, or, *are persons possible* in our present situation? We are concerned with the possibility of man. This question can be asked only through its facets. Is love possible? Is freedom possible?

R. D. Laing

It is more than one hundred years since Henry David Thoreau remarked that, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation", and, while much has changed in the intervening years, that unhappy condition apparently has not. Rich or poor, black or white, male or female, sane or insane, communist or capitalist, we-or at least most of us-continue to lead lives that are less than we can imagine and, often, more than we can bear. How we got this way is, of course, a difficult question to answer. All I can do is to try to describe some of the ways we have behaved toward one another and hope that the description begins to provide an explanation for our behaviour. The history of our times is a melancholy catalogue of what we have done to others, what we have allowed others to do in our name, what others have done to us, and what we have done to ourselves. This book will, I hope, begin to re-examine the landscape of our divided worlds.

The British psychiatrist, R. D. Laing, puts the problem this way:

At this moment in history, we are all caught in the hell of frenetic passivity. We find ourselves threatened by extermination that will be reciprocal, that no one wishes, that everyone fears, that may just happen to us "because" no one knows how to stop it. There is one possibility of doing so if we can understand the structure of this alienation of ourselves from our experience, our experience from our deeds, our deeds from human authorship. Everyone will be carrying out orders. Where do they come from? Always from elsewhere. Is it still possible to reconstitute our destiny out of this hellish and inhuman fatality?

In order to try to make sense out of our history, we might profitably begin with the fundamental distinction Laing makes between *experience* and *behaviour*. By *experience* is meant the way we perceive and comprehend the world. By *behaviour* is meant the way we act on our perception and comprehension of the world. Thus *experience* may be thought of as the way the world looks to us; and *behaviour* may be thought of as the way we look to the world. In Laing's words:

I cannot experience your experience. You cannot experience my experience. We are both invisible men. All men are invisible to one

another. Experience is man's invisibility to man.

"I do not experience your experience", says Laing. "But I experience you as experiencing. I experience myself as experienced by you. And I experience you as experiencing yourself as experienced by me. And so on." According to Laing, all social relations are the elaboration of this intricate interaction between *behaviour* and *experience*, between *self* and *others*. We experience the behaviour of others and then behave according to our experience.

Our behaviour is a function of our experience. We act according to the way we see things.

If our experience is destroyed, our behaviour will be destructive.

If our experience is destroyed, we have lost our own selves.

This is the crux of Laing's argument: *"If our experience is destroyed, our behaviour will be destructive.* If our experience is destroyed, we have lost our own selves." But how can someone's *experience* be destroyed? How can the most personal and individual thing we have—our experience of ourselves and the world—be taken away from us? In this book, we will be examining some of the fundamental ways *some* people deny *other* people their *experience*. Out of this denial comes our major theme: *divisions*. In *Knots*, Laing describes the situation in this way:

It is our duty to bring up our children to love,
honour and obey us.

If they don't, they must be punished,
otherwise we would not be doing our duty.

If they grow up to love, honour and obey us
we have been blessed for bringing them up properly.

If they grow up not to love, honour and obey us
either we have brought them up properly
or we have not:

if we have
there must be something the matter with them;

if we have not
there is something the matter with us.

Like many social critics, Laing begins with the problem of *alienation*, the problem that the young Karl Marx was analyzing at about the same time that Thoreau was describing the lives of "quiet desperation" around him. "By alienation," writes Erich Fromm, "is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts—but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person." The central fact of this alienation is that the person does not experience himself as the subject *of* his world but rather as an object *in* his world. As Fromm puts it, "It is the fact that

man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished "thing", dependent on powers outside of himself, onto whom he has projected his living substance. "

For Laing, too, *alienation* is the fundamental fact of our present condition: "Our alienation goes to the roots. The realization of this is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present interhuman life." But this condition of *alienation* is not natural to man. "We are born into a world where alienation awaits us. We are potentially men, but are in an alienated state, and this state is not simply a natural system. Alienation as our present destiny is achieved only by outrageous violence perpetrated by human beings on human beings."

Thus, from the very beginning, Laing is describing power relationships that allow some people to perpetrate violence on others: in other words, Laing is discussing *politics*. But, as we shall see, it is a very personal view of politics. It examines politics as it affects *personality* and *persons*. As Edgar Friedenberg describes Laing's view: "It is something like this: Human personality develops in each of us as we respond to the particular power situations in which we find ourselves; our personality comes to be largely defined by our customary ways of coping with the demands that impinge on us, and with the anxiety aroused by those demands and our anticipation of possible failure or punishment."

The most important power that any social group, or "nexus", has is "the power to define reality". It is precisely this power that we will see operating in Frantz Fanon's description of *racism* in the pages that follow; the power of whites to define reality for blacks. Similarly, we will see this power operating in Doris Lessing's description of *sexism*; the power of men to define reality for women. Finally, the same power will be seen functioning in Ivan Illich's description of poverty; the power of rich nations to define reality for poor nations. For Laing, as for Fanon, Lessing, and Illich, the question is whether we are to be the subjects of our own world or objects in someone else's world. "To Laing," as Friedenberg puts it, "the way in which experience is validated or rejected by powerful others-ordinarily parents-is the key to subsequent development of personality." In Laing's words:

There must be something the matter with him
because he would not be acting as he does
unless there was
therefore he is acting as he is
because there is something the matter with him

He does not think there is anything the matter with him
because
one of the things that is
the matter with him
is that he does not think that there is anything the matter with him
therefore
we have to help him realize that,

the fact that he does not think there is anything the matter with him
is one of the things that is
the matter with him

Thus the title of Laing's most famous book, *The Politics of Experience*, suggests that the political power of society and of its agents—from psychiatrists to nuclear families—has created a situation where we conform in order to survive, but we survive only at the cost of our alienation from our own experience. The question of who shall define reality is a complicated one. After all, whenever we define reality for ourselves, we are also, in part, defining it for those who enter our orbit:

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, 'It means just what I choose it to mean. Neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'who is to be master. That is all.'

"Those who can define are the masters", observed Stokely Carmichael. Clearly, this process is pervasive in our society. Parents do it for their children; teachers do it for their students; doctors do it for their patients; employers do it for their workers; politicians do it for their constituents. Perhaps I am even doing it for you right now.

But is there a difference between a reality shared and; reality dictated, between one proposed and one imposed. The Brazilian pedagogue, Paulo Freire, speaks of the difference between "the banking concept of education" in which the teacher "deposits" knowledge in the student and the "dialogic" process in which teacher and student are co-participants. "Education must begin with the solution to the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students. Similarly, Laing describes the "polar opposites" of love and violence. "Love lets the other be, but with affection and concern. Violence attempts to constrain the other's freedom, to force him to act in the way we desire, but with ultimate lack of concern, with indifference to the other's own existence or destiny."

Sometimes, however, it is not so easy to tell the difference. Those of you who have read either Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Cancer Ward* or Alan Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Longdistance Runner*, or seen the films, *If...or Nobody Waved Goodbye*, will know what I mean. Though one takes place in a Russian hospital and the others in an English borstal, a snobbish "public" school, and a Toronto suburb, they all share a common situation: someone is defining reality for others... and for their own sake. Just as the avowed purpose of the cancer ward is the cure of the patient and of the borstal the rehabilitation of the inmate, so the goal of the "public" school is the education of its students and of the suburban Toronto family the nurturing *of* its children. In other words, what the doctor (in *The Cancer Ward*), the governor (in *The Loneliness of the Longdistance Runner*), the headmaster (in *If...*), and the father (in *Nobody Waved Goodbye*) have in common is their belief that they are acting in the best interest *of* their "wards". But what links the "wards"—the patient, Oleg; the prisoner, Smith; the student, Travis; and the son, Peter—is their sense of being oppressed by the institutions that set out to liberate

them. The patient, Oleg, speaks for all of them when he says:

You see, you start from a completely false position. No sooner does a patient come to you than you begin to do all his thinking for him. After that, the thinking's done by your standing orders, your five-minute conferences, your programs, your plan and the honor of your medical department. And once again I become a grain of sand, just as I was in the camp. Once again nothing *depends* on me."

What these four works describe is precisely the attempt on the part of the agents of society to define reality for some of its members. In *Asylums*, Erving Goffman noted the tendency of certain social agencies to become "total institutions" in the sense that they totally administered the life of their inmates. Though dedicated to cure, rehabilitation or education, total institutions like asylums, prisons and boarding schools often seek to impose a specific reality on their inmates and thereby define experience for them as well. This is what Oleg means when he tells his doctor "Why do you assume you have the right to decide for someone else? Don't you agree it's a terrifying right, one that rarely leads to good? You should be careful. No one's entitled to it, not even doctors."

"But doctors *are* entitled to that right-doctors above all", exclaims his doctor. "Without that right there'd be no such thing as medicine!"

This is a vivid example of what Laing means by "the politics of experience". Not only does the doctor define reality for the patient's sake but for her own as well: "Without that right there'd be no such thing as medicine!" The political dimension is revealed; the doctor's power rests on her ability to define reality for the patient. In the process, she becomes the total administrator of reality. "Total institutions are not a separate class of social establishments, observes Samuel E. Wallace, "but rather specific institutions, which exhibit to an intense degree certain characteristics found in all institutions. The issue is not which institutions are total and which are not, but rather, how much totality does each display?" By this yardstick, Laing sees psychiatry as a dangerous political weapon: "Psychiatry is concerned with politics, with who makes the law."

For Laing, psychiatry may be viewed as an ideology which, when placed in the service of a dominant soci. vision, may function as a repressive social agent. In the opinion of Dr. Thomas Szasz, psychiatry may be the new secular religion in an age of pseudo-science:

The discerning reader may detect a faint note of familiarity here. Modern psychiatric ideology is an adaptation-to a scientific age-of the traditional ideology of Christian theology. Instead of being born into sin, man is born into sickness. Instead of life being a vale of tears, it is a vale of diseases. And, as in his journey from the cradle to the grave man was formerly guided by the priest, so now he is guided by the physician. In short, whereas in the Age of Faith the ideology was Christian, the technology clerical, and the expert priestly; in the Age of Madness the ideology is medical, the technology clinical, and the expert psychiatric.

Thus psychiatry, like the nuclear family, becomes an instrumental motive force in the creation of the total social institution; through a process of *mystification*, both define normality and mould the individual into the one-dimensional shape of social utility. Laing calls this *mystification* a political act of "violence masquerading as love". His former associate, Dr. David Cooper, speaks of "violence in psychiatry" as "the subtle, tortuous violence that other people, the 'insane ones', perpetrate against the labelled madmen. In so far as psychiatry represents the interests or pretended interests of the sane ones, we may discover that, in fact, violence in psychiatry is pre-eminently the violence of psychiatry."

But the normality that the family demands is no less alienating than the sanity that the psychiatrist defines. "From the alienated starting point of our pseudo-sanity, everything is equivocal", writes Laing. "Our sanity is not 'true' sanity. Their madness is not 'true' madness."

The madness that we encounter in "patients" is a gross travesty, a mockery, a grotesque caricature of what the natural healing of that estranged integration we call sanity might be. True sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality; the emergence of the "inner" archetypal mediators of divine power, and through this death a rebirth, and the eventual reestablishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer.

Ronald David Laing was born into a poor Glasgow family in 1927, graduated from medical school there in 1951, and then served in the British Army for two years, doing psychiatric work. After his discharge, he returned home to work in a psychiatric hospital and set about to see whether he could change the behaviour of his patients by simply changing their treatment. At this time, in the Fifties, Laing still believed that schizophrenia was a mental illness and that humane but conventional treatment was the basis of the psychotherapeutic cure. As a fellow psychiatrist, Dr. James S. Cordon, records Laing telling the story:

He described, with amused tolerance for his own "scientific procedure," the sociometric process by which he had selected the twelve most "out-of-contact" chronic schizophrenic patients on his ward. He had two nurses each day take the twelve who were chosen to a pleasant room in another part of the hospital. There, with decent occupational and recreational facilities, treated simply as human beings, they could do whatever they pleased. On the first day, the patients, many of whom had hardly moved or spoken in years, had to be wheeled or pushed off the ward. "On the second day," he recalled, "an hour before the ward door opened, they had gathered around it talking, laughing, jumping up and down: it was enormously moving."

Within eighteen months all twelve, many of whom had been hospitalized for ten or fifteen years, were out of the hospital and back to their families. Within another year they were all back in the hospital.

Laing's experience suggested two things: First, as he put it, "a change in the way schizophrenics were treated could radically alter their schizophrenia". And, second, the "disease" was not in the individual patient but in his family. From these two conclusions would come Laing's radical redefinition of schizophrenia and madness.

On the surface, Laing's analysis looks deceptively simple. As Juliet Mitchell explains it:

The model is neat-if we don't treat people as people, we drive them crazy: if we don't analyze our crazy people as people we keep them crazy. On the other hand, if we *do* treat people as people, then, even if they do the odd crazy thing, we accept this, because we accept them as people. If we analyze those who have been depersonalized and made crazy, once more as though they were people, then they become people again, and they are 'cured' of an illness that wasn't 'in' them in the first place.

But there is clearly more to it than that. In order to treat his patients as people, Laing had first to understand how they saw themselves.

In 1957, after moving to London's famed Tavistock Clinic, Laing published his first book, *The Divided Self*, in which he adopted existentialist vocabulary to describe the *situation* of his young schizophrenic patients. By attempting to reconstruct their experience, Laing discovered a logic in their apparently erratic behaviour. Suffering from acute "ontological insecurity"-the loss of "a firm sense of one's own autonomous identity"-the schizophrenic attempts "to preserve a being that is precariously structured" by separating his experience and behaviour into two separate realms. As Laing put it:

The term schizoid refers to an individual the totality of whose experience is split in two main ways: in the first place, there is a rent in his relation with his world and, in the second, there is a disruption of his relation with himself. Such a person is not able to experience himself 'together with' others or 'at home in' the world, but, on the contrary, he experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; moreover, he does not experience himself as a complete person but rather as 'split' in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves, and so on.

"The divided self', then, is the result of a desperate attempt to preserve an identity that has already lost its sense of integrity. "With this loss of unity, the person preserves a sense of having an 'inner' 'true' self which is, however, unrealized, whereas the 'outer', 'real', or 'actual' self is 'false'." One of Laing's patients put this sense of division and disintegration vividly when she said: "I'm thousands. I'm an in divide you all. I'm a no un." Trapped in this situation, "the individual is developing a microcosmos within himself; but, of course, this autistic, private, intra-individual 'world' is not a feasible substitute for the only world there really is, the shared world".

In pursuit of this "shared world", Laing's interest shifted from the study of individual schizophrenics to the study of the families of schizophrenics. First, in *The Self and Others*, he charted the intricate strategies that make up interpersonal relationships. Arguing that "every relationship implies a definition of self by other and other by self", Laing went on to expose the knots in which we tie ourselves and others. "There are those who excel in tying knots and those who excel in being tied in knots," Laing wrote. "Tyer and tied are often both unconscious of how it is done, or even that it is being done at all. It is striking how difficult it is for the parties concerned to see what is happening. We must remember that part of the knot is not to see that it is a knot."

Jack doesn't know he knows
and he doesn't know
 Jill does not know.

Jill doesn't know she doesn't know,
 and doesn't know
 that Jack doesn't know he knows
 and that he does not know Jill does not know.
They have no problem.

At this point, Laing came across Gregory Bateson's famous explanation of schizophrenic behaviour, the so-called "double-bind" theory. The "double bind" is a particular knot: a situation in which an individual is compelled to respond to two contradictory commands which are presented simultaneously. It is, Bateson says, "a situation in which no matter what a person does, he 'can't win' ".
He comments:

They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game.

It was precisely this "game" that Laing and Arnold Esterson described in their study of the families of schizophrenics; *Sanity, Madness, and the Family*. Schizophrenics were not born; they were literally created by their families. Not only was their reality defined for them by the family, but any attempt to affirm their own identity was characterized as deviant. Borrowing liberally from the recent writing of Jean-Paul Sartre on the origins of social organization, Laing was now ready to piece together his theory of the roots of insanity based on his study of madness in the family.

This theory is set out in two books called, significantly, *The Politics of Experience* and *The Politics of the Family*. By *politics*, as I pointed out earlier, Laing means the ability to validate or invalidate experience. The struggle, then, is the struggle to control behaviour by defining experience. Society does this through its various agents by defining "reality" in terms of norms and then using those norms as ideal standards. The primary agent is the family. It is, Laing says, "in the first place, the usual instrument for what is called socialization, that is, getting each new recruit to the human race to behave and experience in

substantially the same way as those who have already got here". As social agents, the family reproduces in the child a set of attitudes that will outfit him for life in what Herbert Marcuse calls the "one-dimensional society". "The family's function is", according to Laing, "to create, in short, one-dimensional man; to promote respect, conformity, obedience; to con children out of play; to induce a fear of failure; to promote a respect for work; to promote a respect for respectability."

From the moment of birth, when the Stone Age baby confronts the twentieth-century mother, the baby is subjected to these forces of violence, called love, as its mother and father, and their parents and their parents before them, have been. These forces are mainly concerned with destroying most of its potentialities, and on the whole this enterprise is successful. By the time the new human being is fifteen or so, we are left with a being like ourselves, a halfcrazed creature more or less adjusted to a mad world. This is normality in our present age.

Some people can adapt to this system. We call them normal. "Society highly values its normal man. It educates children to lose themselves and to become absurd, and thus to be normal," Laing tells us. "Normal men have killed perhaps 100,000,000 of their fellow normal men in the last fifty years." But some cannot adapt to this imposed normality. They break down. Instead, they devise a strategy to deal with their inability to hold their invalidated experience and their sense of themselves together. As Laing puts it, "it seem to us that *without exception* the experience and behaviour that gets labelled schizophrenic is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation".

Though, in Cooper's phrase, the schizophrenic may look like someone whose "logic" is "ill", he is, in reality, someone, who has been made an *invalid* because his experience has been *invalidated*. For Laing and Cooper, schizophrenia is no 'something happening *in* a person but rather something between persons". Thus when one psychiatrist calls schizophrenia "a failure of human adaptation", Laing responds that it may as well be "a successful attempt not to adapt to pseudo-social realities". It all seems to be a matter of perspective: "Schizophrenia is a label affixed by some people to others in situations where an interpersona disjunction of a particular kind is occurring. This is the nearest one can get at the moment to something like an 'objective' statement, so called."

The validity of a definition is ultimately determined by the identity of the one who is defining. It is in this context that Laing argues: "There is no such 'condition' a 'schizophrenia,' but the label is a social fact and the social fact a *political event*." Seen from this radical perspective, all our definitions may have to be turned upside down and inside out. "What we call 'normal' is", according to Laing "a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on experience. . . . It is radically estranged from the structure of being." No wonder, then, that "the condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man." On the other hand schizophrenia may be seen as an alienation from this alienation, where, "even through his profound wretchedness and disintegration", the patient may be "the hierophant of the sacred". Finally, "madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be break-through. It is potential liberation and renewal

as well as enslavement and existential death."

In *The Politics of Experience*, Laing describes how, in some instances, breakdown does become break-through; transforming the "schizophrenic experience" into a "transcendental experience". As depicted by Gregory Bateson, the schizophrenic embarks upon a voyage from the "outer" world of the "ego" to the "inner" world of the "seW" -and back out again. He regards it as an archetypal journey that bears a close resemblance to descriptions of religious experience:

It would appear that once precipitated into psychosis the patient has a course to run. He is, as it were, embarked upon a voyage of discovery which is only completed by his return to the normal world, to which he comes back with insights different from those of the inhabitants who never embarked on such a voyage. Once begun, a schizophrenic episode would appear to have as definite a course as an initiation ceremony—a death and rebirth—into which the novice may have been precipitated by his family life or by adventitious circumstances, but which in its course is largely steered by endogenous process.

In terms of this picture, spontaneous remission is no problem. This is only the final and natural outcome of the total process. What needs to be explained is the failure of many who embark upon this voyage to return from it. Do these encounter circumstances either in family life or in institutional care so grossly maladaptive that even the richest and best organized hallucinatory experience cannot save them?

Though there are doubtless many reasons why some people remain lost in inner space, Laing would put a primary responsibility on the practice of psychiatry itself. Instead of viewing madness as a potentially natural healing process, many analysts arrest the process by trying to *cure* the patient. But, as Cooper points out, "Curing is so ambiguous a term; one may cure bacon, hides, rubber, or patients." In other words, it is a treatment that alters and "improves" the product. "Curing is concerned with making the patient more acceptable to others (including the doctors and nurses [making them] less anxious about him, and with making him express less distress. Healing on the other hand is concerned with helping people become whole when to a varying extent they have gone to pieces." According to Laing, instead of total institutions bent on curing, we need human *communities* dedicated to healing.

Instead of the mental hospital, a sort of reservicing factory for human breakdowns, we need a place where people who have traveled further and, consequently, may be more lost than psychiatrists and other sane people, can find their way *further* into inner space and time, and back again. Instead of the *degradation* ceremonial of psychiatric examination, diagnosis and prognostication, we need, for those who are ready for it (in psychiatric terminology, often those who are about to go into a schizophrenic breakdown), an *initiation* ceremonial, through which the person will be guided with full social encouragement and sanction into inner space and time, by people who have been there and back again. Psychiatrically, this would appear as ex-patients helping future patients to

go mad.

It is an audacious proposal: "ex-patients helping future patients to go mad". But given the present state of mental health where, Laing says, "a child born today in the United Kingdom stands a ten-times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university", it may not be so strange after all. If man's madness is heaven's sense then the voyage from hell to heaven must be carried through to the end.

In this particular type of journey, the direction we have to take is *back* and in, because it was way back that we started to go down and out. They will say we are regressed and withdrawn and out of contact with them. True enough, we have a long, long way to go back to contact the reality we have all long lost contact with. And because they are humane, and concerned, and even love us, and are very frightened, they will try to cure us. They may succeed. But there is still hope that they will fail.

In his own pilgrim's progress, R.D. Laing has moved a long way from his early career as an orthodox psychiatrist to his recent fame as a leader of what some call the movement towards "anti-psychiatry". A critic of the establishment of the secular religion of psychiatry in which the doctor displaced the priest, Laing has been hailed as a pioneer of a new spiritualized therapy in which the doctor has *become* the priest. His career as a practicing psychiatrist has led him from a conventional mental institution in Glasgow to the experimental therapeutic community he helped create at Kingsley Hall. Even more radically, his career as a social and psychological theorist has led him from a sympathetic analysis of the schizophrenic's situation to a sweeping critique of a society which destroys its most sensitive individuals while it reproduces its most destructive characteristics.

While R.D. Laing is perhaps most famous as the man who has redefined the boundaries of our definition of madness, his most important accomplishment to date has been to reveal to us the workings of "the politics of experience". For if we are to transform our alienated, fragmented selves into liberated, whole persons, we must repoliticize our experience so that we may reclaim it, validate it for ourselves, and thus become the primary actors in our world. What Laing has done is to expose the process of mystification whereby we have tied ourselves and each other in knots, creating a divided self and a divided world. He sums the idea up this way:

As long as we cannot up-level our "thinking" beyond Us and Them, the goodies and baddies, it will go on and on. The only possible end will be when all the goodies have killed all the baddies, and all the baddies all the goodies, which does not seem so difficult or unlikely since to Us, we are the goodies and They are the baddies, while to Them, we are the baddies and they are the goodies.

Millions of people have died this century and millions more are going to, including, we have every reason to expect, many of Us and our children, because we cannot break this knot.

It seems a comparatively simple knot, but it is tied *very, very* tight-round the throat, as it were, of the whole human species,

But don't believe me because I say so, look in the mirror and see for yourself.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1972.
- Boyers, Robert and Robert Orrill, eds. *R.D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Cooper, David. ed. *The Dialectics of Liberation*. New York: Tavistock Publications, 1967.
- Cooper, David. *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1972.
- Friedenberg, Edgar Z. *Laing*. London: Fontana, 1973.
- Fromm, Erich. *The Sane Society*. New York: Rinehart, 1955
- Goffman, Erving. *Asylums*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1961.
- Laing, R.D. *The Divided Self*. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1965.
- Laing, R.D. *Knots*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.
- Laing, R.D. *The Politics of Experience*. Harmondsworth Eng.: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Laing, R.D. *The Politics of the Family*. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1969.
- Laing, R.D. *Self and Others*. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1971.
- Laing, R.D. and David Cooper. *Reason and Violence*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1964.
- Laing, R.D. and A. Esterson. *Sanity, Madness and the Family*. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1970.
- Sillitoe, Alan. *The Loneliness of the Long-distance Runner*. London: W.H. Allen, 1959.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *Cancer Ward*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1969.
- Wallace, Samuel E. ed. *Total Institutions*. Chicago: Transaction Books, 1971.

Citation:

"R.D. Laing: The Politics of Mind"
originally published in *Divisions*, by Paul Levine.
Toronto: CBC Publications, 1975, pp 1-19.