The Politics of Experience, by R. D. Laing

a. Quotes:
   - "Children are not yet fools, but we shall turn them into imbeciles like ourselves, with high I.Q.'s if possible." - Author (pg. 58)

b. General Notes:
   - Introduction (pg. 11)
     - "**There is little conjunction of truth and social "reality." Around us are pseudo-events, to which we adjust with a false consciousness adapted to see these events as true and real, and even as beautiful. In the society of men the truth resides now less in what things are than in what they are not. Our social realities are so ugly if seen in the light of exiled truth, and beauty is almost no longer possible if it is not a lie.** We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing. It is difficult for modern man not to see the present in terms of the past. The white European and North American, in particular, commonly has a sense not of renewal, but of being at an end: of being only half alive in the fibrillating, heartland of a senescent civilization. Sometimes it seems that it is not possible to do more than reflect the decay around and within us, than sing sad and bitter songs of disillusion and defeat. Yet that mood is already dated, at least insofar as it is not a perennial possibility of the human spirit. It entails a sense of time, which is already being dissolved in the instantaneous, stochastic, abrupt, discontinuous electronic cosmos, the dynamic mosaic of the electromagnetic field. Nevertheless, the requirement of the present, the failure of the past, is the same: to provide a thoroughly self-conscious and self-critical human account of man. No one can begin to think, feel or act now except from the starting point of his or her own alienation. We shall examine some of its forms in the following pages. **We are all murderers and prostitutes-no matter to what culture, society, class, nation, we belong, no matter how normal, moral, or mature we take ourselves to be. Humanity is estranged from its authentic possibilities.** This basic vision prevents us from taking any unequivocal view of the sanity of common sense, or of the madness of the so-called madman. However, what is required is more than a passionate outcry of outraged humanity. Our alienation goes to the roots. The realization of this is the essential springboard for any serious reflection on any aspect of present inter-human life. Viewed from different perspectives, construed in different ways and expressed in different idioms, this realization unites men as diverse as Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Tillich and Sartre…**At all events, we are bemused and crazed creatures, strangers to our true selves, to one another, and to the spiritual and material world—mad, even, from an ideal standpoint we can glimpse but not adopt. 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. This book attempts to document some forms of our contemporary violation of ourselves**." (pg. 11-13)
   - Chapter 1 - Persons and Experience (pg. 17)
     - "Even facts become fictions without adequate ways of seeing "the facts." We do not need theories so much as the experience that is the source of the theory. We are not satisfied with faith, in the sense of an implausible hypothesis irrationally held: we demand to experience the "evidence." We can see other people's behavior, but not their experience. This has led some people to insist that psychology has nothing to do with the other person's experience, but only with his behavior. The other person's behavior is an experience of mine. My behavior is an experience of the other. T**he task of social phenomenology is to relate my experience of the other's behavior to the other's experience of my behavior. Its study is the relation between experience and experience: its true field is inter-experience. I see you, and you see me. I experience you, and you experience me. I see your behavior. You see my behavior. But I do not and never have and never will see your experience of me.** Just as you cannot "see" my experience of you. My experience of you is not "inside" me. It is simply you, as I experience you. And I do not experience you as inside me. Similarly, I take it that you do not experience me as inside you. "My experience of you" is just another form of words for "you-as-I-experience-you," and "your experience of me" equals "me-as-you-experience-me." Your experience of me is not inside you and my experience of you is not inside me, but your experience of me is invisible to me and my experience of you is invisible to you. 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. Experience used to be called the Soul. Experience as invisibility of man to man is at the same time more evident than anything. Only experience is evident. Experience is the only evidence. Psychology is the logos of experience. Psychology is the structure of the evidence, and hence psychology is the science of sciences. If, however, experience is evidence, how can one ever study the experience of the other? For the experience of the other is not evident to me, as it is not and never can be an experience of mine. I cannot avoid trying to understand your experience, because although I do not experience your experience, which is invisible to me (and non-tastable, non-touchable, non-smellable, and inaudible), yet I experience you as experiencing. I do not experience your experience. 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. The study of the experience of others is based on inferences I make, from my experience of you experiencing me, about how you are experiencing me experiencing you experiencing me.…**Social phenomenology is the science of my own and of others' experience. It is concerned with the relation between my experience of you and your experience of me. That is, with inter-experience.** It is concerned with your behavior and my behavior as I experience it, and your and my behavior as you experience it. Since your and their experience is invisible to me as mine is to you and them, I seek to make evident to the others, though their experience of my behavior, what I infer of your experience, through my experience of your behavior. This is the crux of social phenomenology." (pg. 17-19)
     - "Experience is invisible to the other. But experience is not "subjective" rather than "objective," not "inner" rather than "outer," not process rather than praxis, not input rather than output, not psychic rather than somatic, not some doubtful data dredged up from introspection rather than extrospection. Least of all is experience "intra-psychic process." Such transactions, object relations, interpersonal relations, transference, counter-transference, as we suppose to go on between people are not the interplay merely of two objects in space, each equipped with ongoing intra-psychic processes. This distinction between outer and inner usually refers to the distinction between behavior and experience; but sometimes it refers to some experiences that are supposed to be "inner" in contrast to others that are "outer." More accurately this is a distinction between different modalities of experience, namely, perception (as outer) in contrast to imagination, etc. (as inner). But perception, imagination, fantasy, reverie, dreams, memory, are simply different modalities of experience, none more "inner" or "outer" than any other. Yet this way of talking does reflect a split in our experience. We seem to live in two worlds, and many people are aware only of the "outer" rump. As long as we remember that the inner" world is not some space "inside" the body or the mind, this way of talking can serve our purpose. (It was good enough for William Blake.) The "inner," then, is our personal idiom of experiencing our bodies, other people, the animate and inanimate world: imagination, dreams, fantasy, and beyond that to even further reaches of experience. Bertrand Russell once remarked that the stars are in one's brain. The stars as I perceive them are no more or less in my brain than the stars as I imagine them. I do not imagine them to be in my head, any more than I see them in my head. The relation of experience to behavior is not that of inner to outer. My experience is not inside my head. My experience of this room is out there in the room. To say that my experience is intra-psychic is to presuppose that there is a psyche that my experience is in. My psyche is my experience, my experience is my psyche." (pg. 20-21)
     - "I wish to define a person in a twofold way: in terms of experience, as a center of orientation of the objective universe; and in terms of behavior, as the origin of actions. Personal experience transforms a given field onto a field of intention and action: only through action can our experience be transformed. It is tempting and facile to regard "persons" as only separate objects in space, who can be studied as any other natural objects can be studied. But just as Kierkegaard remarked that one will never find consciousness by looking down a microscope at brain cells or anything else, so one will never find persons by studying persons as though they were only objects. A person is the me or you, he or she, whereby an object is experienced." (pg. 23)
       - "**Much human behavior can be seen as a unilateral or bilateral attempt to eliminate experience.** A person may treat another as though he were

not a person, and he may act himself as though he were not a person." (pg. 25)

- "As adults, we have forgotten most of our childhood, not only its contents but its flavor; as men of the world, we hardly know of the existence of the inner world: we barely remember our dreams, and make little sense of them when we do; as for our bodies, we retain just sufficient pro-prioceptive sensations to coordinate our movements and to ensure the minimal requirements for biosocial survival—to register fatigue, signals for food, sex, defecation, sleep; beyond that, little or nothing. Our capacity to think, except in the service of what we are dangerously deluded in supposing is our self-interest and in conformity with common sense, is pitifully limited: our capacity even to see, hear, touch, taste and smell is so shrouded in veils of mystification that an intensive discipline of unlearning is necessary for anyone before one can begin to experience the world afresh, with innocence, truth and love." (pg. 26)
- "What we call "normal" is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on experience (see below). It is radically estranged from the structure of being. The more one sees this, the more senseless it is to continue with generalized descriptions of supposedly specifically schizoid, schizophrenic, hysterical "mechanisms." There are forms of alienation that are relatively strange to statistically "normal" forms of alienation. The "normally" alienated person, by reason of the fact that he acts more or less like everyone else, is taken to be sane. Other forms of alienation that are out of step with the prevailing state of alienation are those that are labeled by the "normal" majority as bad or mad. **The condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man.** Society highly values its normal man. It educates children to lose themselves and to become absurd, and thus to be normal. Normal men have killed perhaps 100,000,000 of their fellow normal men in the last fifty years. Our behavior is a function of our experience. We act according to the way we see things. If our experience is destroyed, our behavior will be destructive. If our experience is destroyed, we have lost our own selves." (pg. 27-28)
- "Men at all times have been subject, as they believed or experienced, to forces from the stars, from the gods, or to forces that now blow through society itself, appearing as the stars once did to determine human fate. Men have, however, always been weighed down not only by their sense of subordination to fate and chance, to ordained external necessities or contingencies, but by a sense that their very own thoughts and feelings, in their most intimate interstices, are the outcome, the resultant, of processes which they undergo. **A man can estrange himself from himself by mystifying himself and others.** He can also have what he does stolen from him by the agency of others. If we are stripped of experience, we are stripped of our deeds; and if our deeds are, so to speak, taken out of our hands like toys from the hands of children, we are bereft of our humanity. We cannot be deceived. **Men can and do destroy the humanity of other men, and the condition of this possibility is that we are interdependent.** We are not self-contained monads producing no effects on each other except our reflections. We are both acted upon, changed for good or ill, by other men; and we are agents who act upon others to affect them in different ways. Each of us is the other to the others. Man is patient-agent, agent-patient, inter-experiencing and interacting with his fellows. It is quite certain that unless we can regulate our behavior much more satisfactorily than at present, then we are going to exterminate ourselves. But as we experience the world, so we act, and this principle holds even when action conceals rather than discloses our experience. We are not able even to think adequately about the behavior that is at the annihilating edge. But what we think is less than what we know; what we know is less than what we love; what we love is so much less than what there is. And to that precise extent we are so much less than what we are. Yet if nothing else, each time a new baby is born there is a possibility of reprieve. Each child is a new being, a potential prophet, a new spiritual prince, a new spark of light precipitated into the outer darkness." (pg. 29-30)
- "**The "surface" experience of self and other emerges from a less differentiated experiential matrix**. Ontogenetically the very early experiential schemata are unstable and are surmounted, but never entirely. To a greater or lesser extent, **the first ways in which the world has made sense to us continue to underpin our whole subsequent experience and actions.** Our first way of experiencing the world is largely what psychoanalysts have called fantasy. This modality has its own validity, its own rationality. Infantile fantasy may become a closed enclave, a dissociated undeveloped "unconscious," but this need not be so. This eventuality is another form of alienation. Fantasy as encountered in many people today is split off from what the person regards as his mature, sane, rational, adult experience. We do not then see fantasy in its true function but experienced merely as an intrusive, sabotaging infantile nuisance. For most of our social life, we largely gloss over this underlying fantasy level of our relationship. **Fantasy is a particular way of relating to the world. It is part of, sometimes the essential part of, the meaning or sense** (le sens: Merleau-Ponty) **implicit in action.** As relationship we may be dissociated from it; as meaning we may not grasp it; as experience it may escape our notice in different ways. That is, it is possible to speak of fantasy being "unconscious," if this general statement is always given specific connotations. However, although fantasy can be unconscious - that is, although we may be unaware of experience in this mode, or refuse to admit that our behavior implies an experiential relationship or a relational experience that gives it a meaning, often apparent to others if not to ourselves—fantasy need not be thus split from us, whether in terms of its content or modality. Fantasy, in short, as I am using the term, is always experiential and meaningful; and, if the person is not dissociated from it, relational in a valid way" (pg. 30-32)
- "Personal action can either open out possibilities of enriched experience or it can shut off possibilities. Personal action is either predominantly validating, confirming, encouraging, supportive, enhancing, or it is invalidating, denying, discouraging, undermining and constricting. It can be creative or destructive." (pg. 34)
- "Under the heading of "defense mechanisms," psychoanalysis describes a number of ways in which a person becomes alienated from himself. For example, **repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection**. These "mechanisms" are often described in psychoanalytic terms as themselves "unconscious," that is, the person himself appears to be unaware that he is doing this to himself. Even when a person develops sufficient insight to see that "splitting," for example, is going on, he usually experiences this splitting as indeed a mechanism, an impersonal process, so to speak, which has taken over and which he can observe but cannot control or stop. There is thus some phenomenological validity I referring to such "defenses" by the term "mechanism." But we must not stop there. They have this mechanical quality because the person as he experiences himself is dissociated from them. He appears to himself and to others to suffer from them. They seem to be processes he undergoes, and as such he experiences himself as a patient, with a particular psychopathology. But this is so only from the perspective of his own alienated experience. As he becomes de-alienated he is able first of all to become aware of them, if he has not already done so, and then to take the second, even more crucial, step of progressively realizing that these are things he does or has done to himself. Process becomes converted back to praxis, the patient becomes an agent. Ultimately it is possible to regain the ground that has been lost. **These defense mechanisms are actions taken by the person on his own experience. On top of this he has dissociated himself from his own action. The end product of this twofold violence is a person who no longer experiences himself fully as a person, but as a part of a person, invaded by destructive psychopathological "mechanisms" in the face of which he is a relatively helpless victim**. **These "defenses" are action on oneself.** But "defenses" are not only intrapersonal, they are trans-personal. I act not only on myself, I can act upon you. And you act not only on yourself, you act upon me. In each case, an experience." (pg. 34-36)
- "There are many varieties of experience of lack, or absence, and many subtle distinctions between the experience of negation and the negation of experience. All experience is both active and passive, the unity of the given and the construed; and the construction one places on what is given can be positive or negative: it is what one desires or fears or is prepared to accept, or it is not. **The element of negation is in every relationship and every experience of relationship**. The distinction between the absence of relationships, and the experience of every relationship as an absence, is the division between loneliness and a perpetual solitude, between provisional hope or hopelessness and a permanent despair. The part I feel I play in generating this state of affairs determines what I feel I can or should do about it. The first intimations of nonbeing may have been the breast or mother as absent. This seems to have been Freud's suggestion. Winnicott writes of "the hole," the creation of nothing by devouring the breast. Bion relates the origin of thought to the experience of no-breast. The human being, in Sartre's idiom, does not create being but rather injects nonbeing into the world, into an original plentitude of being. Nothing, as experience, arises as absence of someone or something. No friends, no relation. ships, no pleasure, no meaning in life, no ideas, no mirth, no money. As applied to parts of the body - no breast, no penis, no good or bad contents - emptiness. The list is, in principle, endless. Take anything and imagine its absence. Being and nonbeing is the central theme of all philosophy, East and West. These words are not harmless and innocent verbal arabesques, except in the professional philosophism of decadence. We are afraid to approach the fathomless and bottomless groundlessness of everything. **"There's nothing to be afraid of." The ultimate reassurance, and the ultimate terror**. We experience the objects of our experience as there in

the outside world. The source of our experience seems to be outside ourselves. In the creative experience, we experience the source of the created images, patterns, sounds, as within ourselves but still beyond ourselves. Colors emanate from a source of pre-light itself unlit, sounds from silence, patterns from formlessness. This preformed pre-light, this pre-sound, this preform is nothing, and yet it is the source of all created things. We are separated from and related to one another physically. Persons as embodied beings related to each other through the medium of space. And we are separated and joined by our different perspectives, educations, backgrounds, organizations, group loyalties, affiliations, ideologies, socioeconomic class interests, temperaments. These social "things" that unite us are by the same token so many things, so many social figments that come between us. But if we could strip away all the exigencies and contingencies, and reveal to each other our naked presence? If you take away everything, all the clothes, the disguises, the crutches, the grease paint, also the common projects, the games that provide the pretexts for the occasions that masquerade as meetings—if we could meet, if there were such a happening, a happy coincidence of human beings, what would now separate us? Two people with first and finally nothing between us. Between us nothing. No thing. **That which is really "between" cannot be named by any things that come between. The between is itself no-thing.**" (pg. 37-39)

- "We are not much concerned with experiences of "filling a gap" in theory or knowledge, of filling up a hole, or occupying an empty space. It is not a question of putting something into nothing, but of the creation of something out of nothing. Ex nihilo. The no-thing out of which the creation emerges, at its purest, is not an empty space or an empty stretch of time." (pg. 40)
  - ""**Is" is not this, or the next, or anything. Yet "is" is the condition of the possibility of all things. "Is" is that nothing whereby all things are. "Is" as no-thing, is that whereby all things are. And the condition of the possibility of anything being at all is that it is in relation to that which it is not. That is to say, the ground of the being of all beings is the relation between them. This relationship is the "is," the being of all things, and the being of all things is itself no-thing.** Man creates in transcending himself, in revealing himself. But what creates, wherefrom and whereto, the clay, the pot and the potter, are all not-me. I am the witness, the medium, the occasion of a happening that the created thing makes evident. Man, most fundamentally, is not engaged in the discovery of what is there, nor in production, nor even in communication, nor in invention. He is enabling being to emerge from nonbeing. The experience of being the actual medium for a continual process of creation takes one past all depression or persecution or vain glory, past, even, chaos or emptiness, into the very mystery of that continual flip of nonbeing into being, and can be the occasion of that great liberation when one makes the transition from being afraid of nothing to the realization that there is nothing to fear. Nevertheless, it is very easy to lose one's way at any stage, and especially when one is nearest. Here can be great joy, but it is as easy to be mangled by the process as to swing with it. It will require an act of imagination from those who do not know from their own experience what hell this borderland between being and nonbeing can become. But that is what imagination is for." (pg. 41-42)
    - "This zone, the zone of no-thing, of the silence of silences, is the source. We forget that we are all there all the time." (pg. 44)

- Chapter 2 - The Psychotherapeutic Experience (pg. 46)
  - "The irreducible elements of psychotherapy are a therapist, a patient, and a regular and reliable time and place. But given these, it is not so easy for two people to meet. We all live on the hope that authentic meeting between human beings can still occur. **Psychotherapy consists in the paring away of all that stands between us, the props, masks, roles, lies, defenses, anxieties, projections and introjections, in short, all the carryovers from the past, transference and countertransference, that we use by habit and collusion, wittingly or unwittingly, as our currency for relationships**. It is this currency, these very media, that re-create and intensify the conditions of alienation that originally occasioned them." (pg. 46-47)
    - "It is the relation between persons that is central in theory and in practice. **Persons are related to one another through their experience and through their behavior.** Theories can be seen in terms of the emphasis they put on experience or on behavior, and in terms of their ability to articulate the relationship between experience and behavior." (pg. 50)
      - "Object-relations theory attempts to achieve, as Guntrip has argued, a synthesis between the intra- and interpersonal. Its concepts of internal and external objects, of closed and open systems, go some way. Yet it is still objects, not persons, that are in question. Objects are the what, not the whereby, of experience. The brain is itself an object of experience. We still require a phenomenology of experience including so-called unconscious experience, of experience related to behavior, of person related to person, without splitting, denial, depersonalization and reification, all fruitless attempts to explain the whole by the part." (pg. 52)
  - "**Psychotherapy must remain an obstinate attempt of two people to recover the wholeness of being human through the relationship between them.** Any technique concerned with the other without the self, with behavior to the exclusion of experience, with the relationship to the neglect of the persons in relation, with the individuals to the exclusion of their relationship, and most of all, with an object-to-be-changed rather than a person-to-be-accepted, simply perpetuates the disease it purports to cure. And **any theory not founded on the nature of being human is a lie and a betrayal of man**. An inhuman theory will inevitably lead to inhuman consequences - if the therapist is consistent. Fortunately, many therapists have the gift of in-consistency. This, however endearing, cannot be regarded as ideal. We are not concerned with the interaction of two objects, nor with their transactions within a dyadic system; we are not concerned with the communication patterns within a system comprising two computer-like subsystems that receive and process input and emit outgoing signals. Our concern is with two origins of experience in relation." (pg. 53-54)
    - "**[W]ithout the inner the outer loses its meaning, and without the outer the inner loses its substance.**" (pg. 55)
    - "**The psychotherapeutic relationship is therefore a re-search. A search, constantly reasserted and reconstituted, for what we have all lost…"** (pg. 55)
  - "We must continue to struggle through our confusion, to insist on being human. Existence is a flame which constantly melts and recasts our theories. Existential thinking offers no security, no home for the homeless. It addresses no one except you and me. It finds its validation when, across the gulf of our idioms and styles, our mistakes, errings and perversities, we find in the other's communication an experience of relationship established, lost, destroyed, or regained. We hope to share the experience of a relationship, but the only honest beginning, or even end, may be to share the experience of its absence." (pg. 56)
- Chapter 3 - The Mystification of Experience (pg. 57)
  - "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 half-crazed creature more or less adjusted to a mad world. This is normality in our present age. Love and violence, properly speaking, are polar opposites. **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. We are effectively destroying ourselves by violence masquerading as love.**" (pg. 58)
  - "The family is, in the first place, the usual instrument for what is called socialization…" (pg. 68)
  - "Children do not give up their innate imagination, curiosity, dreaminess easily. You have to love them to get them to do that. Love is the path through permissiveness to discipline; and through discipline, only too often, to betrayal of self." (pg. 71)
    - "**The double action of destroying ourselves with one hand, and calling this love with the other, is a sleight of hand one can marvel at. Human beings seem to have an almost unlimited capacity to deceive themselves, and to deceive themselves into taking their own lies for truth.** By such mystification, we achieve and sustain our adjustment, adaptation, socialization. But the result of such adjustment to our society is that, having been tricked and having tricked ourselves out of our minds, that is to say, out of our own personal worlds of experience, out of that unique meaning with which potentially we may endow the external world, simultaneously we have been conned into the illusion that we are separate "skin-encapsuled

egos." Having at one and the same time lost our selves and developed the illusion that we are autonomous egos, we are expected to comply by inner consent with external constraints, to an almost unbelievable extent." (pg. 72-73)

- "Inevitably we see the other as the reflection of the occasion of our own self-division. The others have become installed in our hearts, and we call them ourselves. Each person, not being himself either to himself or the other, just as the other is not himself to himself or to us, in being another for another neither recognizes himself in the other, nor the other in himself. Hence being at least a double absence, haunted by the ghost of his own murdered self, no wonder modern man is addicted to other persons, and the more addicted, the less satisfied, the more lonely." (pg. 74)
  - "[W]hen violence masquerades as love, once the fissure into self and ego, inner and outer, good and bad occurs, all else is an infernal dance of false dualities. It has always been recognized that if you split Being down the middle, if you insist on grabbing this without that, if you cling to the good without the bad, denying the one for the other, what happens is that the dissociated evil impulse, now evil in a double sense, returns to permeate and possess the good and turn it into itself." (pg. 75)
- "In the last fifty years, we human beings have slaughtered by our own hands coming on for one hundred million of our species. We all live under constant threat of our total annihilation. We seem to seek death and destruction as much as life and happiness. We are as driven to kill and be killed as we are to let live and live. **Only by the most outrageous violation of ourselves have we achieved our capacity to live in relative adjustment to a civilization apparently driven to its own destruction**. Perhaps to a limited extent we can undo what has been done to us and what we have done to ourselves. Perhaps men and women were born to love one another, simply and genuinely, rather than to this travesty that we call love. It we can stop destroying ourselves we may stop destroying others. We have to begin by admitting and even accepting our violence, rather than blindly destroying ourselves with it, and therewith we have to realize that we are as deeply afraid to live and to love as we are to die." (pg. 76)

- Chapter 4 - Us and Them (pg. 77)
  - "Durkheim was quite right to emphasize that collective representations come to be experienced as things, exterior to anyone. They take on the force and character of partially autonomous realities, with their own way of life. A social norm may come to impose an oppressive obligation on every. one, although few people feel it as their own." (pg. 78)
    - "We act not only in terms of our own experience, but of what we think they [others] experience, and how we think they think we experience, and so on…" (pg. 78-79)
      - "All those people who seek to control the behavior of large numbers of other people work on the experiences of those other people. Once people can be induced to experience a situation in a similar way, they can be expected to behave in similar ways. Induce people all to want the same thing, hate the same thing, feel the same threat, then their behavior is already captive—you have acquired your consumers or your cannon-fodder." (pg. 95)
- Chapter 5 - The Schizophrenic Experience (pg. 100)
  - "The studies of the families of schizophrenics conducted at Palo Alto, California, Yale University, the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute and the National Institute of Mental Health, among other places, have all shown that the person who gets diagnosed is part of a wider network of extremely disturbed and disturbing patterns of communication. In all these places, to the best of my knowledge, no schizophrenic has been studied whose disturbed pattern of communication has not been shown to be a reflection of, and reaction to, the disturbed and disturbing pattern characterizing his or her family of origin. This is matched in our own researches. In over 100 cases where wet studied the actual circumstances around the social event when one person comes to be regarded as schizophrenic, it seems to us that without exception the experience and behavior that gets labeled schizophrenic is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation. In his life situation the person has come to feel he is in an untenable position. He cannot make a move, or make no move, without being beset by contradictory and paradoxical pressures and demands, pushes and pulls, both internally from himself, and externally from those around him. He is, as it were, in a position of checkmate." (pg. 114-115)
- Chapter 6 - Transcendental Experience (pg. 131)
  - "We are living in an age in which the ground is shifting ad the foundations are shaking" (pg. 131)
    - "In these circumstances, we have every reason to be insecure. When the ultimate basis of our world is in question, we run to different holes in the ground, we scurry into roles, statuses, identities, interpersonal relations. We attempt to live in castles that can only be in the air because there is no firm ground in the social cosmos on which to build. We are all witnesses to this state of affairs. Each sometimes sees the same fragment of the whole situation differently; often our concern is with different presentations of the original catastrophe." (pg. 131)
  - "When a person goes mad, a profound transposition of his place in relation to all domains of being occurs. His center of experience moves from ego to self. Mundane time becomes merely anecdotal, only the eternal matters. **The madman is, however, confused. He muddles ego with self, inner with outer, natural and supernatural.** Nevertheless, he can often be to us, even through his profound wretchedness and disintegration, the heirophant of the sacred. An exile from the scene of being as we know it, he is an alien, a stranger signaling to us from the void in which he is foundering, a void which may be peopled by presences that we do not even dream of. They used to be called demons and spirits, and they used to be known and named. He has lost his sense of self, his feelings, his place in the world as we know it. He tell us he is dead. But we are distracted from our cosy security by this mad ghost who haunts us with his visions and voices which seem so senseless and of which we feel impelled to rid him, cleanse him, cure him. Madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be breakthrough. It is potentially liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death." (pg. 133)

c. Further Readings:
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