On Roles:
“You were born cultureless, innocent, ignorant -- but I repeat myself. Even before you understood that you cannot know it all, cannot do it all, and cannot have it all, you were obliged to commit yourself to socially approved roles.”

On Statuses:
“Inequality exists because it is unavoidable; some forms of it, like the power difference between parent and child, are necessary for society to function. But hereditary inequality is neither unfavorable nor necessary. No form of stratification now practiced is inevitable or even defensible.”

On Identity:
“The river of culture flows like time itself. Wherever you were tossed into it at birth, its ever-changing current began permeating your being. Had you entered it at another point, you would have become and known something different.”

On Values:
“Is it true that Capitalism Equals Democracy? That to be rich, at any cost to others, is the goal of life?”

On Science:
“‘But how can you be sure?’ you ask. Face it, in science you can’t be. But you can be certain enough to wager your life and wealth and good name: some odds are overwhelming.”

On Religion:

On Choice:
“Freedom is the area between Must and May Not . . . Life comes down to a paradox: you were built for choosing, but you cannot usually be allowed to do so.”

On Context:
“From crime to war to inequality, from unemployment to terrorism to starvation, from breathing-space to the destruction of the very ecologies that make your oxygen, every problem humanity faces is made worse by adding more people.”

On how to improve your own life chances:
“Your personal culture is typified by your interests, attitudes, possessions, and behavior. It is your personal selection of items from the cultural bazaar. Though you share its traits with others, your profile of them is yours alone.”

On humanities prospects:
“If humanity is to be responsible for its own evolution, as the Fall from Grace perhaps implied, then we humans need to discuss what we want to become. What do you want to go into your culture? What should be thrown out?”