R. D. Laing: 50 years since *The Divided Self*

Edited by Theodor Itten & Courtenay Young
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First published in 1960, *The Divided Self* by Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing (1927-1989) set out to explain psychosis as an ordinary and understandable human experience. Laing’s insights were absolutely revolutionary in its humane approach. One commentator described it as ‘that particular touch of genius which causes one to say ‘Yes, I have always known that; why have I never thought of it before?’.

Collected in these pages are writings critically celebrating Laing’s life, work, frailties, brilliance, and his wide and varied influences over this last half a century. You will find transcripts, memoirs, newly commissioned and written articles and only a very few previously published papers. Contributions have come from colleagues, friends, clients and a family member, as well as people who never actually knew him personally, yet deeply appreciate his work. Each is different in tone and character. Each captures something unique about Laing and his work.

R.D. Laing was as famous for his empathic perception, sagacious intellect, wisdom of the heart, as well as his rebelliousness and falling from grace. In reading this book you may partake in shared experiences possibly beyond your previous imagination; you may anticipate some fascination and exhilaration. You may also be made to rethink some obvious assumptions and hopefully you will be inspired.

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