



Portrait of the Psychiatrist as a Young Man: The Early Writing and Work of R.D. Laing, 1927–1960, by Allan Beveridge. Oxford, United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 2011, 352 pp., \$79.95.

No psychiatrist since Freud and Jung has gained as much public recognition as Ronald David Laing. After the publication of *The Divided Self* in 1960, he became a darling of the British New Left and was treated as a guru by young people across the English-speaking world. “Two chicks who dig Coltrane, the [Grateful] Dead and R.D. Laing” advertised in New York’s *Village Voice* in 1971 for compatible guests to join them at a party, and bumper stickers during Laing’s 1972 U.S. college lecture tour read “I’m mad about R.D. Laing” (1, p. 67). A generation of practicing psychiatrists was influenced by his view that the symptoms of psychosis could be seen as meaningful and appropriate to a patient’s circumstances. This book will appeal to many of those psychiatrists as well as to others who admire Laing’s intellectual achievements. The book addresses the following questions: How did it come about that a middle-class youth from Glasgow wrote a book about madness that rocked the world? How did he produce a work based on existential thinking and the ideas of European philosophers, such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, within 5 years of graduating from medical school, a work that was nearly in complete form when he arrived at the Tavistock Clinic in London in 1956?

In this masterly and erudite work, Beveridge offers a number of answers to these questions. Laing was a brilliant student, charismatic, and driven to re-examine conventional thinking. His personal involvement in the field was spurred by the fact that his mother suffered from a psychotic disorder during his entire upbringing, and his father also suffered an acute paranoid episode. (Laing later claimed that his successful interpretation of his father’s paranoid fears made him his first patient.) One of the great contributions of this book is to reveal the Glaswegian origins of Laing’s intellectual growth. A stimulus for his innovative work came indirectly from the European political situation in the 1930s. While he was in his first job placements in Glasgow after completing medical school, his mentors were Jewish physicians and philosophers who had escaped the European fascist threat. The émigré physicians chose Scotland, in preference to Britain, since Scotland offered more immediate access to licensed professional practice. Laing’s first supervisor, Joe Schorstein, whom Laing described as his “spiritual father,” was a Glasgow neurosurgeon

whose father was a Viennese rabbi and who was immersed in European philosophy. Laing and Schorstein discussed Kant and Hegel in the changing rooms of the operating theater into the wee hours of the morning. Another Jewish émigré, Karl Abenheimer, an analyst who studied with Fromm-Reichmann and Jung and who was working at a Glasgow mental hospital, was also a major influence. In their ongoing philosophical discussion group, Abenheimer pointed Laing toward Binswanger and other European philosophers. A contemporary described Laing in these meetings as “intellectually insatiable, committed, courageous and...near to physical exhaustion,” but also as “gallus,” a Glaswegian slang term meaning overconfident and flamboyant (p. 25).

Beveridge reveals, with depth and clarity, Laing’s influences inside psychiatry and beyond. He points out that, in writing *The Divided Self*, Laing “used everything he gleaned from his voracious reading, and this included not only existential philosophy, but also psychoanalysis, sociology, and literature” (p. 108). We learn that Laing was greatly influenced by Freud but highly critical of the Freudian interpretation of psychotic symptoms. He preferred to listen to what the patient actually said, not to translate it through psychoanalytic interpretations. Laing was very sympathetic to Bleuler’s view that schizophrenia was ultimately understandable, and he judged other clinicians by whether they agreed with that precept. In constructing his view of the self in *The Divided Self*, Laing drew heavily upon object relations theory. Although the major exponents of this approach, Klein, Winnicott, and others, worked and taught at the Tavistock, Laing claimed that he had written *The Divided Self* before he ever went to London and that his “false self” theory was not much influenced by Winnicott. Beveridge also reveals the influence of the arts on Laing, including the work of figures such as Blake, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Kafka, and Camus.

In these pages, we see the seeds of what was to be Laing’s most contentious and, many would argue, harmful work, *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, in which he attempted to demonstrate that schizophrenia was a product of abnormal communication patterns within the family. In this work, he was much influenced by Fromm-Reichmann and Gregory Bateson. This work has since become so vilified that many have lost sight of his other contributions to the field. Beveridge reminds us of one of Laing’s “core beliefs,” which he shared with the great English asylum director John Connolly and from which we can all benefit today: “The sane and the insane were on a spectrum and any denial of this led to the risk of perceiv-

ing the mad as somehow less than human. Once this step was taken, it paved the way for inhumane treatment" (p. 67).

There is much more to this fascinating book—case notes from Laing's clinical work in Glasgow and London, responses to the publication of *The Divided Self*, and Beveridge's critique of the work. For those interested in the contributions of this extraordinary figure, it is a gold mine.

Reference

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RICHARD WARNER, M.B., D.P.M.
Boulder, Colo.

Dr. Warner is Director of the Colorado Recovery. The author reports no financial relationships with commercial interests.

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Textbook of Psychoanalysis, 2nd Edition, edited by Glen O. Gabbard, M.D., Bonnie E. Litowitz, Ph.D., and Paul Williams, Ph.D. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Publishing, 2012, 636 pp., \$125.00.

The choice of editors for this second edition of the *Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, just 7 years after the first, speaks volumes about contemporary broadening changes in the field that are manifest in daily practice as well as encouraged institutionally in the various teaching psychoanalytic institutes and centers throughout the United States. The coeditors of both the first and previous edition (published in 2005) were all psychiatrists. Two of the three editors of the first edition, to whom the second edition is dedicated—the late Arnold Cooper, of Weill Cornell Medical College, and Ethel Person, of Columbia University—came of age in the “golden era” of the 1950s and 1960s when psychoanalysis was popular in the United States and the theory was more unified and centered on Freud's ideas. Glen Gabbard (who is incidentally coeditor, along with Robert E. Hales and Stuart C. Yudofsky, of *The American Psychiatric Publishing Textbook of Psychiatry, 5th Edition*) has remained a coeditor of the textbook for the second edition. Gabbard, Cooper, and Person are well known to the readership of the *Journal*, and their work continues to be taught in psychiatry residency departments. The first volume did a fine, orderly job of describing the many changing aspects of clinical treatment in the second century of psychoanalysis.

In the last 7 years, we have seen even more rapid shifts in psychoanalysis. Gabbard's choices of new partners in this giant editorial task are likely less known (as of yet anyway) to the psychiatric readers of the *Journal*. Paul Williams is an English psychoanalyst of the more eclectic Independent or Middle Group of analysts. He was trained as a social anthropologist and was, along with Gabbard, joint editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (2001–2007). Bonnie Litowitz, from Chicago, is an analyst whose background is in linguistics, and she has served for many years as an associate editor of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. Thus, all three analyst-editors of this second edition have in common influential and international positions presiding over and shaping the literature of the field, which was not the case for the editors of the previous volume, who had in common primarily teaching in a North American clinical tradition of psy-

choanalysis that was closer to psychiatry than the humanities (although they also served as journal editors). Psychoanalysis, as any reader who delves into the pages of this journal will see, as well as its academic expressions and outreach, continues to support a strong clinical interest and practice in theory of mind. But the underpinnings of this theory of mind have become broader than Freud imagined, as “theories of mind” in fact, that can be diverse and at times even theoretically at odds with each other. Psychoanalysis abides as the guiding basis for most psychodynamic psychotherapies.

Thus, there is a new section in this edition titled “Schools of Thought” (edited by Adrienne Harris), which speaks to separated strands of theory that are associated with famous names, some from the distant past that have been marginalized. For example, Klein, Bion, Kohut (of “self-psychology”), Lacan, and the more recent Greenberg and Mitchell (of “relational psychoanalysis”) all are given equal attention. In the previous edition, these schools were described in the introduction as part of the emergent history of a developing psychoanalytic field, which was in earlier stages of moving away from the noun as singular.

The separated theories reflect how psychoanalysis is now frequently taught, with trainees often exposed to these valid and differing emphases, terminologies, and techniques. For many years, “mainstream” psychoanalysis was “ego psychology,” based on Freud's structural theory, but it is now referred to as “classical” and presented in this book as one school of thought. This certainly is taught significantly in many institutes, but this new edition of the textbook shows the general manner of its de-emphasis (for example, Jay Greenberg's essay titled “Psychoanalysis in North America After Freud”). The diverse aspect of contemporary psychoanalysis is highly exciting, promising, and, at times, confusing, particularly for beginners. This volume helps us to sort out the history, politics, varieties, and rationales of differing approaches.

The intellectual excitement in the field is beautifully captured in section VI, which deals with the connection of psychoanalysis to other disciplines, such as the neurosciences (by David Olds), philosophy (by Jonathan Lear), and literature (by Madelon Sprengnether). For those who may appreciate a steadying sense of how abidingly familiar our core Freudian preoccupations continue to be, in spite of the rapid changes, I highly recommend section II, titled “Core Concepts” (edited by Richard Zimmer). In this section, one finds chapters on transference, the unconscious, defense and resistance, childhood experience, gender and sexuality, and the newer term “intersubjectivity,” which takes up the interactive aspect of each personality and active mind within the analytic dyad.

The topic of treatment and technique, discussed in section IV, is interesting and may be the subject most likely to keep shifting in subsequent editions according to what theory a particular writer employs and which theory is implicitly questioned. All of the authors for this section are well known in the literature, are clinically very seasoned and thoughtful, and give attention to ethics. Child analysis is also included. Research, which is discussed in section V (edited by Linda Mayes), includes some articles on psychotherapy as well as analysis but is covered in only 38 pages in this almost 600-page volume. This topic was covered in 60 pages in the previous edition. I am not sure what this means, especially given all of the criticism that the field of psychoanalysis has encountered from the mental