



# **R. D. Laing (Edinburgh Review: Introductions to Scottish Culture)**

*Gavin Miller*

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## **R. D. Laing (Edinburgh Review: Introductions to Scottish Culture) Gavin Miller**

R. D. Laing (1927-1989) was Scotland's most famous public intellectual. His revolutionary challenges to conventional psychiatry were read by millions across the world. When he died, there were memorial services in London and New York, but in his native Scotland, his contribution to intellectual culture is largely forgotten. At the 77th anniversary of his birth (7 October 2004), this book asks why Laing's work has been so unfairly neglected. It also aims to show the enduring value of Laing's ideas, their international significance, and the vibrant Scottish culture from which they arose. In the course of his life, R. D. Laing moved from the forefront of humane, and humanist, psychiatry to a position of notoriety. Latterly, he was alcoholic, professionally unlicensed, and as disturbed, at times, as anyone he had ever treated. His work also descended into near-madness - he implied, for example, that his problems could be traced to the hostility of his mother's uterus, eight days after he was conceived. It

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