

Editorial

This, the second issue of the *Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, is the first to be edited by us. As novices in such an enterprise, we can only hope that our efforts, however imperfect, will have succeeded enough in providing a stimulating platform for the presentation, exploration and development of existential thought. We are, of course, indebted to the editors of the first issue of the *Journal*, Carol Van Artsdalen and Elena Lea Zanger, for laying the foundations of this enterprise.

The main focus of this issue is on the life and work of R.D. Laing and the undeniable influence that his ideas have had, and continue to have, upon psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy in general and upon the existential-phenomenological derivations of such in particular. As an exquisitely original thinker, Laing cannot easily, or accurately, be slotted into any restrictive category. Although the term 'Laingian' has recently been incorporated into the Oxford Dictionary, we would suggest that Laing was much more than just a 'Laingian'. Nevertheless, if only because 'existential analysis', too, remains a concept which does not lend itself to clear-cut and sedimented definition, it seems, to us at least, a fitting and not unpleasant nexus from which Laing's views may be analysed and extended both rigorously and passionately.

Laing was forever 'setting the cat among the pigeons'. He did this brilliantly - even when 'the pigeons' were those who claimed to be his closest admirers and followers. In the end, his many detractors found a powerful weapon to employ against him - silence. Much of Laing's later work received minimal, if any, attention by his peers and colleagues. We hope that this, and subsequent issues of the *Journal*, will help to rectify this situation. Many of the papers included herein were originally delivered by their authors at the Third Annual Conference of the Society for Existential Analysis which was entitled 'Demystifying Psychotherapy - R.D. Laing and Beyond'. We are grateful to the speakers for allowing us to publish their papers and hope that they will generate as much comment and discussion in print as they did when they were delivered.

R.D. Laing once wrote: "But human life is only dust and ashes without love. If you investigate and enquire into the world without love, you don't find anything worthwhile, you obtain only heartless knowledge."

In the best sense possible, the editing of this issue of the *Journal* was a labour of love for us. To all those who assisted us in our task, our heartfelt gratitude. We hope that they will judge their faith in us worthwhile. As to you, the reader, only your silence can truly wound.

Alessandra Lemma
Ernesto Spinelli
Editors