

BOOK REVIEWS

It is a truism that there is more than one way of looking at a subject and combining this with the idea that novels are legitimate publications for review we are trying as a special feature something rarely tried before and that is to have three different people review the same book. Not only that but the novel in question *Zone of the Interior* by Clancy Sigal has a chequered reputation and the status of being something a hybrid – a fictionalised account of a real event that happened some 40 or so years ago. What makes it even more interesting is that all three reviewers do not come to the job of reviewing the book without some personal knowledge and involvement with the subject. One often needs some distance from past events to be able to assess them accurately and the theme of the special feature of how we can understand the legacy and influence of RD Laing is continued in a re-assessment of the functioning and demise of the Paddington Day Hospital in London.

Zone of the Interior

Clancy Sigal. (2005). Pomona. 404 pp. £9.99.

(Originally published in 1976 by Thomas Y. Crowell Company in New York), 359 pp.

Zone of the Interior, first published in the US and Canada in 1976, is Clancy Sigal's fictionalised, but largely factual, account of his experiences of 'anti-psychiatry' between 1961-65 with R D Laing; the Philadelphia Association charity, the therapeutic community at Kingsley Hall in east London and David Cooper's National Health Service ward for young male mental patients called Villa 21 at Shenley Hospital, Hertfordshire.

This 'lost classic' and 'the book they dared not print', according to the publishers, has been largely ignored since it was published in the UK in 2005. According to Sigal's preface to the 2005 edition, *Zone of the Interior* had been suppressed in the UK in 1976 because of the publishers' fear of libel.

However, well before Kingsley Hall closed in 1970, Jeff Nuttall's *Bomb Culture* (1968) described with real names what was happening inside and outside Kingsley Hall from the time it opened in 1965. Also, in 1968, *Drop Out!* (with a cover by Alan Aldridge) by Robin Farquharson, a mental patient who had been a resident in Kingsley Hall, was published by Anthony Blond. Both Jeff Nuttall and Robin Farquharson are referred to by R D Laing in *Mad to be Normal*.

There is also of course the most famous of the Kingsley Hall residents, Mary Barnes, who co-wrote *Mary Barnes Two Accounts of a Journey*