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As Rod Buchanan states, at the beginning of this long-awaited and authoritative biography of Hans Jürgen Eysenck, his interest is in what made Eysenck such a compelling figure, not whether he was right or wrong. Compelling he certainly was. Eysenck was for many years after the Second World War the best known and most-cited psychologist in Britain, and the third-highest-cited non-American behind Piaget and Freud. He was seen not only as the leading clinical psychologist in Britain, but as representative of clinical psychology. While he advocated scientific rigour he was a highly significant popularizer of psychology. He was the most controversial psychologist of his time, at the same time revered and distrusted by others.

He was already the subject of one biography (Gibson, 1981) and writer of an autobiography that went into a second edition (H. J. Eysenck, 1997); now a major new biography of him has appeared. The research for the book was carried out by Buchanan while he was based at the University of Groningen and was funded by the Wellcome Trust: the decision to commission an Australian writer to prepare a book in the Netherlands on a German whose academic work was carried out wholly in Britain was itself noteworthy. So why all the fuss?

This book follows a conventional sequence, in first surveying Eysenck's family background and early career, followed by successive chapters addressing the later focuses of Eysenck's work. These cover the dimensions and biology of personality, his place in the early development of behaviour therapy, and his later excursions into the fields of politics, race and IQ, and smoking and cancer. The main thrust of the book is to explore the tensions between his purportedly scientific approach to his work, and the highly adversarial way in which Eysenck presented his work and responded to criticisms from others.

Buchanan explores in detail Eysenck's unusual early life, which Eysenck himself shrouded in some mystery. He was born in Berlin in 1916 and grew up there, the only child of an actor-singer father and a Jewish stage actress mother who separated when Eysenck was 2. He moved to London in 1934 and entered University College in 1935,

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where he quickly became a protégé of Cyril (later Sir Cyril) Burt, and obtained a first-class degree in 1938, then enrolling for a PhD for which Burt was the supervisor. His 'big break' was undoubtedly his appointment as a research psychologist at Mill Hill Hospital in London in 1942 by the Australian psychiatrist Aubrey (later Sir Aubrey) Lewis.

Eysenck grasped assertively a number of opportunities early in his career. As an alien he was barred from both militarily related research work and front-line military service, so was able to gain his PhD and pursue further research, establishing the research credentials that would equip him for the Mill Hill post. He could not have known in 1942 that Lewis would become head of the new Institute of Psychiatry in 1948, unique in Britain as the national postgraduate centre for psychiatry, and which would become the best-endowed psychiatric centre in Britain. With his appointment at the Maudsley Hospital as senior psychologist in 1946, again through Lewis, Eysenck in effect continued in the same post, becoming professor in 1955, until his retirement in 1983. There were no service obligations attached to the post, and with Rockefeller money – and later tobacco money – funding his research post, indeed 'opportunity met ambition' in the post he occupied for so long.

Buchanan traces Eysenck's early research interests in aesthetics (for his PhD) and suggestibility, which did not automatically suggest the field of personality theory, which Eysenck entered in 1944 and which would define the rest of his career. His 1947 *Dimensions of Personality*, the book that launched him internationally, expounded his dimensional approach to personality, linking the abnormal to the normal, and introduced his personality factors of neuroticism and extraversion-introversion, drawn from the data sheet developed by Lewis at Mill Hill and built on Burt's factor analytic approach.

Eysenck's subsequent research over this 40-year period is then explored in a multifaceted way, examining the intellectual background to his work, the methodologies he adopted and adapted, the theorizing in which he indulged, the relationships with his colleagues and combatants – and the controversies he engendered. The ways in which these are intertwined are the major themes of the book, and they are addressed in a both technically informed yet readable manner. The book is made entertaining with direct quotes from his respondents, bringing life to his narrative, and section headings such as 'Shock, Horror: Psychotherapy Doesn't Work' and 'Mastering the Media Spin Cycle', a careful mix of summary of Eysenck's work and succinct comment on his style.

The intellectual basis of his work was clearly due to Galton, Burt and Spearman, and Buchanan is at pains to point out that in a number of senses Eysenck was not original. He relied for much of his data on the work of his endless army of research students – at least 25 PhD students at any one time in the 1950s and 1960s – and his reporting of data was sometimes incomplete or selective. Buchanan charts the steady increase of criticisms of Eysenck's methodology and theory, by statisticians, psychologists and psychiatrists, both within and beyond the Institute of Psychiatry. Buchanan's understanding and analysis of the ways in which Eysenck addressed these attacks, both by bolstering his own claims, and by shifting his position, are another core theme of the book.

An important middle section of the book views Eysenck as 'clinical partisan'. His fundamental critique in 1952 of the effectiveness of psychotherapy was an example of his ongoing antipathy towards psychoanalysis. More constructive was his role in the

promotion of the new techniques of behaviour therapy from the 1950s, with the first published papers in Britain coming from Gwynne Jones and Vic Meyer, both then at the Institute. Eysenck sought other allies to promote a rational theory of treatment, such as the key South African figures of Joseph Wolpe and Jack Rachman. He also presented himself as the founder of clinical psychology in Britain, although he played little part in the broader development of the profession of clinical psychology.

As he moved beyond the biological foundation of his dimensions to address more controversial areas, most notably his later work on the relationships between personality and race and between smoking and cancer, he attracted more persistent and serious opposition. This is best illustrated by the extraordinary account Buchanan gives of the vindictive exchange between Eysenck, and Rokeach and Christie, with respect to Eysenck's 1954 book *The Psychology of Politics*. While negative reactions to Eysenck included the violence displayed by students at the LSE in London in 1973, he received the affection and respect of other leading psychologists, most notably Frank Farley, a past president of the American Psychological Association.

One reason for Eysenck's reputation is undoubtedly the sheer volume of his work: he had the capacity to dictate whole chapters and articles, with remarkably few errors. Buchanan carefully analyses this outpouring, pointing out that of his 80 or so books, over a third could be classified as popular or quasi-popular, and another third were edited volumes, with much of the work done by others. Of his journal articles a sizeable proportion were responses and rejoinders to others. His short Pelican popular books were very widely read, and were a positive contribution to the increasing dissemination of psychological thinking to a wider public.

Despite Buchanan's even-handedness, the overwhelming impression conveyed by the book is the extent to which even those close to Eysenck were at the least wary of him, and many others distrustful of him. As Buchanan points out, he left no Eysenckian School because he did not create one, unlike Donald Broadbent, whose personal warmth Buchanan at a number of points explicitly contrasts with Eysenck. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the fractured relationship he had with Monte Shapiro, who alone of his earliest psychological colleagues remained at the Institute throughout his career.

An important feature of the book are the attributed contributions from so many psychologists who had been at the Institute, either as students or colleagues, who knew Eysenck well and were well informed about different aspects of his work. Buchanan traces the way in which his early colleagues left the institute, including both such former senior colleagues as Gwynne Jones and Reg Beech, and such students as Alan and Ann Clarke, and Dick Passingham. The contribution of this diaspora to the prestige of the Maudsley, and their dissemination of a Maudsley approach to abnormal and clinical psychology, is not a personal legacy of Eysenck. But together with the dispersal of Maudsley-trained psychiatrists inspired by Aubrey Lewis, they have been a major force in transforming the way in which mental health problems are conceptualized and helped, and the recognition of *their* contribution, overshadowed by Eysenck in his lifetime, is one of the achievements of the book.

This is the most detailed biography of a major British psychologist since Leslie Hearnshaw's life of Cyril Burt, Eysenck's mentor, published 30 years ago, and so invites comparison with that biography. There are important differences in approach:

Hearnshaw began his biography with his opinion of Burt as ‘almost wholly favourable’, while Buchanan was aware from the beginning of the contentious nature of his subject. Most intriguing are Hearnshaw’s comments regarding Burt as ‘unquestionably ambitious’ and attracting ‘uncritical adulation’ from his supporters and ‘rancorous denigration’ from his detractors, strikingly similar to Buchanan’s evaluation of Eysenck. These two highly intelligent, erudite and ambitious men, both careless in their handling of evidence and with a strong element of self-promotion, were joined in the first formative years of Eysenck’s career, and are now together in biography.

Hearnshaw had a chapter on ‘Burt the Man’, which draws attention to the lack of significance given in this volume to Eysenck as man – as husband, father, or friend. He married first in 1938 Margaret Davies, with whom he had a son Michael, himself an eminent psychologist. In 1950 he married Sybil Rostal – who survives him – with whom he had three daughters and a son Darrin (now Evans) who maintains a website in honour of his father. Buchanan mentions that on the death of Hans, Sybil engaged a firm to destroy his personal records – as he drily notes, ‘a pity’.

Buchanan’s surmise that his book could begin a new debate about Eysenck’s legacy is correct, in that already there have been some unusual consequences of the publication of the book. *The Psychologist*, the in-house magazine of the British Psychological Society, took the uncommon step of asking Eysenck’s older son Michael to review the book, which he saw as ‘scrupulously fair-minded’ (2010), in stark contrast to the opinion of Sybil: ‘The views expressed in this book are not shared by me’. Buchanan also presented a paper at the 2010 conference of the European Society for the History of the Human Sciences, addressing issues of the potential for legal proceedings for libel against him in relation to the book, principally in relation to Eysenck’s role in the smoking and cancer debate (2010: 27).

For the current reviewer, as a clinical and research psychologist from the 1960s, trained and working away from the Institute, Eysenck’s personal prestige was enormous, deriving from his widely used personality tests, his publications such as the massive 1961 *Handbook of Abnormal Psychology*, and his editorship of the new journal *Behaviour Research and Therapy* in 1963, which rapidly became the outlet for many of the key behaviour therapy articles. This book is an extraordinarily carefully researched and crafted volume, searching behind both the published work and public face of a highly gifted yet complex individual with unparalleled productivity who occupied a key post for many years, and whose influence was worldwide. Buchanan’s conclusion that Hans Eysenck is best seen as an aggravating controversialist is a sad but fair final comment.

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Biographical Note

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