

**REBEL WITH A CAUSE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HANS EYSENCK** W. H. Allen & Co., London, 1990. 310 pp.

Hans Jürgen Eysenck was born in Berlin on 4th March 1916, of parents who were both professional actors. In the first chapter of this autobiography, we learn that his parents soon separated, and the young Hans eventually found himself with a father who later embraced National-Socialism, a pretty, young step-mother who danced in cabaret, a Jewish 'step-father' who had retired from being a Professor of Aesthetics to become rich as a film director and author, and an attractive, cultivated mother who guided his introduction to literature and kindled his athleticism, yet without ever being able to relate to him as a child. He actually lived for most of his childhood, in circumstances of relative penury, in the devoted care of his maternal grandmother, a practising Catholic. Physically venturesome to the point of folly, it was only by good luck that he avoided entering adulthood with a shattered arm and one useless eye. Precociously rational and intellectual, sceptical, self-reliant, adventurously curious and distrustful of dogma, he avidly explored a confusion of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Socialist and Nazi values.

The 'psychologising' that Eysenck explicitly forbids himself in the Introduction to this autobiography might plausibly identify in this first chapter the roots of the search for meaning and structure that was to direct so much of his later development. He had fallen in love with science even before he left school, and was looking forward to a career in physics.

Eysenck calls himself undisciplined, wild, a bad penny and a sanctimonious prig at this stage of his development. For those schooled in the English art of understatement where self-reference is involved, this exercise in objective self-criticism may render more tolerable a narrative style which, even before the end of this first chapter, they might otherwise find uncomfortably self-congratulatory.

Leading into Chapter 2, a wealth of often amusing detail somewhat conceals the heartbreak of voluntary exile, first in France and then in England, to escape from an intolerable Fascist milieu. As an extra turn of the screw, University College, London, found that his German qualifications did not entitle him to read for a physics degree, so he perforce entered the only vaguely 'scientific' course that would admit him—in psychology.

By the end of the chapter he has acquired a First Class Honours degree and a wife. A son, a divorce, a second wife, and then more children, are introduced later. In the realm of ideas, it appears that the particular stance which has characterised all his work evolved quickly and early. Being a physicist *manqué*, it is hardly surprising that his approach to psychology should be 'hard-nosed'. This predisposition was reinforced by the college where he obtained his degree. There, the powerful intellects of Pearson, Haldane and Burt were wrestling with forms of statistical analysis designed for studies in which no accurate control of variables could be achieved.

Developing in such a climate, he evolved principles and assumptions which he thought should govern a scientific psychology. For readers of this journal, the most interesting of these is to be found in his assertion that psychologists should "plump for" that resolution of the mind/body problem which treats

both as aspects of a single continuum. 'Plump' seems exactly the right verb here, in the sense of an abrupt plunge rather than a cautious choice although he himself asserts that the reasons for rejecting Cartesian dualism are "too obvious to require any supporting argument". Later in this review, considering the views on parapsychology which he developed much later, it will be interesting to ask whether he considers that his plumping has remained ghost-proof.

Chapter 3 opens with Eysenck, most improbably, having afternoon tea with Aubrey Lewis, who promptly offered him a job as a research psychologist. Lewis, later knighted, was a psychologist *manqué* who had turned to medicine as a second-best and then achieved pre-eminence as a psychiatrist, directing the work of the world-famous Maudsley Hospital. Of immense ability and influence, he planned to found a post-graduate Institute of Psychiatry within the University of London, and he eventually found in Eysenck the designee and head of this Institute's psychology department. But there was no hint of this at this first meeting.

Eysenck accepted the job, at the Mill Hill Emergency Hospital for War Neuroses, and found himself free to design his own programme of research. Using an innovative combination of experimental and statistical methods, and with both the patients and the psychiatrists as his experimental subjects, he started stripping psychiatry down to its nuts and bolts.

After years of work, his results challenged dogmatic beliefs in psychiatric psychology, education and politics. When he went on to investigate the relative influence of biological and social factors in determining human characteristics, his conclusion that genetic factors were important aroused hostilities which on at least one occasion led to physical assault.

Chapter 3 tells of all this, sketches in some of the science involved and charts progress up to the stage where he is about to be appointed Reader although not yet as head of his own department, in the Institute which Aubrey Lewis has just successfully established. He tells also of the progressive breakdown of his first marriage and the beginning of the relationship that succeeded it.

In Chapter 4, he tells of his survey of the available evidence on the value of the psychotherapies, and in particular of psychoanalysis, as treatments for the neuroses. He concluded that such therapies seemed to have little demonstrable value, and Aubrey Lewis agreed. Eysenck then went on to claim that the only function of psychiatry should be to make practical use of the fundamental insights achieved by psychology. Clinical psychologists should be recognised quite independently of psychiatrists, as being qualified to design and use treatment regimes properly grounded in psychological theory. He proposed one such regime himself, evolved from the work of Alexander Herzberg. This was the method of 'behaviour therapy', based on the view that neurotic disorders are concatenations of conditioned emotional responses, which can be extinguished by applying techniques fully described in any standard textbook on learning and conditioning.

Working in a psychiatric institute, Eysenck's study of this therapy, and of the possibility that it could be administered by psychologists rather than psychiatrists, had to be clandestine. When he eventually made it public a

This document is made available through the declassification efforts  
and research of John Greenewald, Jr., creator of:

# The Black Vault



The Black Vault is the largest online Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) document clearinghouse in the world. The research efforts here are responsible for the declassification of hundreds of thousands of pages released by the U.S. Government & Military.

**Discover the Truth** at: <http://www.theblackvault.com>

a meeting of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, all hell was let loose, since the idea that psychologists could treat, except under psychiatric supervision, was an anathema. And on this issue Aubrey Lewis was wholeheartedly with Eysenck's opponents.

In the power-struggle that followed, Eysenck's survival was helped by the fact that, by that time, he had achieved the cherished status of Professor, with his own independent post-graduate Department of Psychology within the Institute's structure. And not only did he survive but, against all the probabilities, he won. The research on behaviour therapy, and the training of psychologists to develop and use it, became one of the Department's main activities.

In Chapter 5 he describes the part he played, and continues to play, in the controversy over the role of tobacco-smoking in the causation of cancer, cardio-vascular diseases and so on. His stance here reflects some very basic characteristics — his concern for the quality of data, and for the statistical adequacy of its analysis, his rejection of facile interpretations of complex evidence, his essentially combative (but certainly not aggressive) nature, and (to quote one of his closest colleagues and admirers) his mastery of "the strategies of fair and unfair debate". In agreeing with, and extending, the criticisms of Doll, and others advanced by authorities such as the statistician R. A. Fisher, Eysenck has sometimes been represented as asserting that smoking is in no way implicated in the aetiology of cancer and cardio-vascular diseases. In this chapter he disowns any such view, but states that the quality of the evidence usually adduced is inadequate to establish the relationships beyond reasonable doubt. One might ask, of course, what level of doubt is too unreasonable to tolerate in matters of life or death. Nevertheless, his fascinating account of his own more recent studies in collaboration with Kissen and with Grossarth-Maticek, seems to show unequivocally that smoking has to be considered in interaction with personality and stress, if its effects are to be understood.

In Chapter 6, Eysenck talks about his theory-building in the areas of intelligence and personality. These were the fields in which the writer of this review (himself a renegade physicist) had, for fifteen years, the privilege of collaboration. The friendship then engendered of gratitude and admiration must inevitably show through in this review, all attempts at objectivity notwithstanding!

Chapter 7 is of particular interest to readers of this journal. Here we find him demonstrating qualities that only a few adventurous scientists exhibit in any generation — in his case, by insisting that well-attested data in the fields of astrology and the paranormal should not be dismissed without proper examination. He considers that his own contributions to the field of parapsychology have been modest — one substantial investigation which failed to find any evidence for precognition in rats, one theory (suggesting that extraverts should show more evidence of parapsychological phenomena than introverts), which has been well supported by subsequent experimental work, and one book (Eysenck & Sargent, 1982) reviewing the experimental evidence in the field. In the area of astrology, he concludes that, even when well-designed and properly-analysed experiments at first seem strongly suggestive

of astrological tradition, further investigation will usually lead to en- plausible alternative explanations; and this conclusion is supported by he himself completed in collaboration with David Nias. However, a c involvement with the French psychologist Michel Gauquelin and his Françoise led him to become involved with a major series of investig and analyses, and to the eventual conclusion that "the results report the Gauquelins . . . suggest novel and hitherto unknown relations be- terrestrial life and effects upon it by the planets" (p. 252).

The reader may feel that it would have been safer to couch conclusions in terms of correlations between planetary positions and certain character- of some terrestrial life-forms, without implying anything about causality alone its direction. But this is not the place for evaluation of conclusions reached about particular hypotheses and controversies. What is relevant review is that the account he gives of his studies in these fields well illust- not only his open-mindedness, but also his rigorously critical approach.

What would have been interesting would have been some attempt to unravel the web of motivations which must have operated to persuade a "psychologist they most love to hate" to expose even more of his neck to hatchets. We learn that the route to the paranormal was via studies of hyp- and a visit to Rhine's laboratory, but students of suggestibility have invariably, or even frequently, beaten a path to that particular horror. Eysenck asks this same question about himself, about motivation, but characteristically refuses to address it.

The other question not explicitly addressed is as to whether we feel some of the parapsychological data are going to compel what Kuhn (who has called a shift of paradigm. He does not yet seem sure that such a shift is unavoidable, and indeed, in *Explaining the Unexplained*, he first attempts to relate some 'paranormal' evidence to theories in quantum physics. However, in the same publication, the question of post-mortem survival is considered at some length, and the possibility not dismissed. We would like to conclude that Eysenck would be less confident in urging parapsychologists to reject Cartesian dualism, today, than he was at the outset of his career. Would he be prepared to postulate a curious kind of mind/body continuum, not defined in terms of the mutual transformability of its two aspects? It would have been intriguing to be told.

To consider now the book as a whole; the author warns in his Introduction that he will not be over-modest. He certainly has not been, although the book is not lacking in objective self-criticism, or in verbatim reports of the criticisms of others. If you are brilliant of mind, large, fit and athletic of body, with a self-confident and combative temperament, the number of opportunities you have for presenting yourself as a rather average bungler must be severely limited.

But the style is certainly self-congratulatory, and this is not the only source of irritation. For example, any attempt to evolve a straightforward chronology from the discursive narrative involves much to-ing and fro-ing, and in fact fails completely, as one finds, for example, in attempting to deduce the date of the all-important first meeting with Aubrey Lewis. One could also conclude that, although the author says in his Introduction that he will "deal with

number of interesting psychological and sociological questions ("How does a scientist decide..." etc.), he seldom provides any answers, although he certainly offers relevant data.

However, all this is just nit-picking. It is difficult in Science to attribute a great advance to what some particular person said and did, because all progress depends on the collaborative conflict of numerous actors. Nevertheless, Eysenck shows convincingly that he has been (and remains) a star in this enterprise. His avowed intention was to write mainly about his ideas, and the over-riding disappointment for some will be that the author has not performed the sort of strip-tease that they expect in an autobiography. Nonetheless, with a wealth of often amusing anecdote, he has happily provided a reasonably rounded self-portrait, which should surely dispel the cold-and-calculating, devil-with-horns image which his detractors so enjoy peddling. With his gift for popularisation which eschews the jejune, he has again contributed to the history of ideas in the social sciences in a way which opens windows for those who might not otherwise have been able to see. And perhaps above all, he has set out an inspiring record of remarkable achievement, accomplished in the face of formidable obstacles, by vision, dedication, work, intelligence—and, of course, rather more good luck than bad.

In his concluding sentences, Eysenck mistakenly attributes to W. B. Yeats three lines of advice in a poem by Dylan Thomas; a mishap so greatly to the delight of some reviewers as to render them virtually incapable of commenting on anything else in the book. Let this review therefore conclude with some advice that Yeats undoubtedly did offer:—

*When you are old and gray and full of sleep  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book  
And slowly read...*

But why wait that long?

Faculty of Education and Design  
Brunel University, Runnymede Campus  
Egham, Surrey. TW20 0JZ

W. D. FURNEAUX

#### REFERENCES

- Eysenck, H. J. and Sargent, C. (1982) *Explaining the Unexplained*. Book Club Associates.  
Kuhn, T. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

PARAPSYCHOLOGY: NEW SOURCES OF INFORMATION, 1973-1989 by Rhea A. White  
Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, 1990. xiv + 699 pp. \$67.50, £50.65.

It is tempting to quote Mr Squeers's "Here's richness!" at the sight of White's splendid volume. The book is organised on the same lines as one compiled with Laura Dale, entitled, *Parapsychology: Sources of Information* which was published in 1973, but the present work is more than twice the size of the original. The increase is partly a consequence of increased activity in the field, but also it is partly due to a change in policy from being selective for the earlier volume to being more comprehensive in this one. The number of headings under which books are grouped in the first chapter has been expanded from 24 to 27; and the numbering is continuous with that of the previous book. There is a new chapter on Government Publications but the chapter on encyclopaedias has been discontinued. A very instructive chapter on 'New Views of Parapsychology' covers such topics as anomalous research, the advent of electronic data-processing, exchanges between parapsychologists, and recent changes within parapsychology.

As readers of the previous volume will anticipate, a major component (pp.1-305) of this work is the list of books in the first chapter. Each entry carries a reference number and the author's (or editor's) name in heavy type, followed by the title in italics, with the place, publisher and year of publication, the number of pages, any bibliography, chapter notes, figures and illustrations etc. There are something approaching five hundred titles listed, and each followed by a brief—c.100-200 words—summary of the contents and a list of reviews from a variety of periodicals, usually including the *JASPR*, the *JP*, and the *JP*. The indexes list authors, editors, illustrators, translator and introducers in one alphabetical sequence, titles in another and subject matter in a third. There are also chapters on parapsychological periodicals, journals and theses, as well as a glossary of terms. There are appendices of containing glossaries and illustrations, a list of abbreviations, and an addendum of the less-accessible publishers.

In any compilation of this kind there must be a subjective element in the selection of items included; but I am surprised that some titles have not been included. Thus three academic studies of 19th-century Spiritualism, Barrow's *Independent Spirits* (1986), Ann Braude's *Radical Spirits* (1987) and Alex Owen's *The Darkened Room* (1989) would merit consideration. In general works, John Beloff's *The Importance of Psychical Research* (1987), Arthur Ellison's *The Reality of the Paranormal* (1988), Charles McCarty's *Psychical Phenomena and the Physical World* (1973) and Frank T. L. Leary's *Between Science and Religion* (1974) would be of value. Ervin Laswell's *Parapsychology: a Bibliographic Guide* (1975) and Nicholas Marke-Irby's *Books on the Paranormal* (1980) are useful; as are Andrew MacKaye's *Apparitions* (1980) and David Christie-Murray's *Voices of the Mediums* (1980). Martin Gardner's *How Not to Test a Psychic* (1989) is an important item.

There appear to be very few mistakes in this book, although I was surprised to see the historical section of Gauld & Cornell's *Poltergeists* (1979) was attributed to Tony Cornell instead of to Alan Gauld. But altogether t