



TRIBUTE TO HANS EYSENCK*

On the evening of Monday 21 July 1997—the second day of the *8th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Individual Differences (ISSID)* at the University of Aarhus, Denmark—a gala dinner was held to celebrate the scientific achievements and influences of Professor Hans J. Eysenck. Formally, the dinner was a platform to allow the presentation of a recently compiled Festschrift: *The Scientific Study of Human Nature: Tribute to Hans J. Eysenck at Eighty* (edited by Helmuth Nyborg, 1997). However, events since the conception of the project made the event an occasion that no-one who was there will forget; the night will be remembered as a landmark in individual differences.

Hans had been very ill, and had been left with problems in walking and speaking. Most of us wondered whether he could possibly make it to the ISSID meeting. His indomitable spirit and the loving attentions of his wife Sybil and son and close companion Darrin got him there. And when Hans and Darrin arrived at the conference on Monday afternoon the audience stood and applauded spontaneously in a gesture that was a mixture of wonder, gratitude and esteem.

Hans took his place at the top table for the gala dinner in his honour. Each course of the meal had been chosen as a favourite of Hans's. Between courses we were entertained by the reminiscences of those who knew and had worked with Eysenck. Given the situation these brief memoirs might easily have been mawkish or stuffy; of course, we all knew Hans too well to risk either. Each tribute was short, informative and witty—Jeffrey Gray, the breezy master of ceremonies, called people without much warning to say their pieces.

There would be no point in going through all the tributes: it is more important to emphasize how much *fun* they were, by contrast with typical dinner speeches. And they were true tributes—given out of respect and with affection. Many related personal anecdotes that spoke about Eysenck's encouragement of people's own ideas, his generosity with his time and as a host, his personal humility and approachability, and his legendary introversion (among the speakers were Gordon Claridge, Ernest Barrett, Robert Stelmack, Nathan Brody and Petra Netter). Eysenck never incubated unthinking disciples, and it is a mark of his great success as the father of ISSID that prominent among those who spoke so admiringly of his contributions were researchers who have disagreed with him in important areas: among these were Paul Costa, Jeffrey Gray and Marvin Zuckerman. Jan Strelau spoke enthusiastically about the encouragement Eysenck gave to psychology from the former Eastern Bloc countries.

The evening was a celebration of the man and his achievements. His championing of personality traits, of intelligence, of behavioural psychotherapy. His self-critical, natural science approach. His encouraging of others in the same field to sing in their own voice. His magisterial editorship of *Personality and Individual Differences*. And so forth. Such events become more memorable because of key moments of shared, intense emotion. This came unexpectedly when Arthur Jensen interrupted his brief memoir to praise Hans's courage and lack of vanity in appearing at the conference and dinner. Art's subsequent pause and the emotion in his face expressed what couldn't be spoken. For those few moments individual differences among the large party pretty well ceased to exist; Art was able to communicate the feelings we hold for the man and his nobility in the face of illness.

The evening's crowning moment came when Hans accepted the Festschrift from its editor, Helmuth Nyborg. Those many of us who wrote chapters for this large book appreciate the unusual care and speed with which Helmuth took the project from conception to realization. Like the evening, the book is a true tribute; its chapters are heavy with Eysenckian influence, but none is deferential. Truth is master, not Eysenck's fiat. The book celebrates the facts that Eysenck chose important areas to study and encouraged the only possible approach to those areas: natural science. It is clear from the book that Eysenck's influence is greater because his college is a Diaspora rather than an empire; and the influence will be longer lasting because of this.

Finally, I must emphasize that the gala celebrated the Eysencks as a team as well as a person. ISSID members know how inseparable were Hans and Sybil, and their joint works and lasting, obvious love for each other were inspirational and exemplary. Sybil's partnership with Hans has underpinned his scientific influence and success, and has supported him beyond measure in the last year. We toasted them both.

Ian Deary