

OBITUARIES

Noted Psychologist Hans J. Eysenck Dies at Age 81

By Richard Pearson
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Hans J. Eysenck, 81, a popular, pioneering and controversial German-born British behavioral psychologist best known as a champion of the statistical analysis method and his opposition to the discipline of psychoanalysis, died Sept. 4 at a hospice in London. He had cancer.

Since the 1950s, Dr. Eysenck had vocally propounded the view that the experimental methods used in the physical sciences, particularly statistical tests, should be applied in psychology, psychotherapy and especially psychoanalysis.

Dr. Eysenck, who spent decades as head of the Psychology Department of the University of London's Institute of Psychiatry, was a pioneer in the development of "behavior therapy." That is a method of treating patients by addressing their immediate problems, a process he said could be done in a limited number of sessions rather than the seemingly unending, indirect method of psychoanalysis.

He also developed radical and immensely controversial theories on subjects ranging from tobacco and cancer to crime and the occult to IQ testing and genetics. He spread his views in more than 75 books and a thousand technical articles.

His writing gained him a worldwide audience of general readers as well as scientists. He once explained that his books ranged from "Uses and Abuses of Psychology," which he wrote in two weeks and which sold millions of copies, to the scholarly, scientific and academic "Reminiscence, Motivation, and Personality: A Case Study in Experimental Psychology," which he said took him 15 years of research and writing and sold "several hundred" copies.

In the words of a true scholar, he announced that he had deduced a "strong negative correlation between sales and the time taken to write a book."

His more popular books included works published by Penguin Books, such as "Sense and Nonsense in Psychology" and "Check Your Own IQ."

In 1971, he published "The IQ Argument: Race, Intelligence and Education," in which he suggested that it

was possible that genetics might explain differences in IQ scores between blacks and whites. This resulted in his becoming a target of student protesters in Great Britain and the United States.

Although many scientists attacked this finding on scientific or philosophical grounds, few accused Dr. Eysenck, who had left his native Germany rather than join the Nazi Party, of any kind of racism.

Other controversial works included his 1965 book "Smoking, Health and Personality," which propounded that smoking does not cause cancer but is a symptom, along with cancer, of mysterious hereditary and emotional illnesses.

In addition to his books and articles, he edited the standard "Handbook of Abnormal Psychology" and the three-volume "Readings in Extroversion and Introversion." He also contributed articles to the "Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences." In 1962, he founded and began a long stint as editor of the journal Behavior Research and Therapy.

His 1952 book "The Structure of Human Personality," in which he posited that human personality can be defined in terms of intelligence, neuroticism, introversion-extroversion and psychoticism, led to the development of the Maudsley Personality Inventory. Also known as the Eysenck Personality Inventory, the psychological battery became widely used in Britain.

Hans Jurgen Eysenck was born in Berlin. Both his parents acted, and the future psychologist himself appeared in a film at age 3. Refusing to join the Nazi Party to attend college, he went to France and studied French literature and history at the University of Dijon and then to England, where he studied British history and literature at Exeter University.

He then decided he wanted to become a physicist, so he enrolled in the University of London. While registering, he was informed that German science credits were not acceptable for London but that he would be admitted to study psychology. Although, he later claimed, he did not even know what psychology was, he heartily accepted.

Dr. Eysenck fell in love with the

subject and was fortunate in being able to study under Sir Cyril Burt, the noted psychologist who was an early advocate of statistical studies, and the legendary statistician Karl Pearson. Dr. Eysenck graduated in 1938 and received his doctorate, also from the University of London, in 1940.

During World War II, he was a research psychologist at an emergency hospital near London that treated mentally disturbed service personnel. After the war, he joined the staff of London's famed Maudsley Hospital, perhaps Britain's leading psychiatric training ground. In 1947, he became head of the hospital's psychology department, and the next year, he joined the faculty of the University of London. In 1950, he became head of the university's new psychiatry institute, located at Maudsley Hospital.

In addition to his work in Britain, he served as a visiting professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California-Berkeley.

Early in his career, he became known for his interests in behavior modification and personality and for his lack of enthusiasm for Freudian psychoanalysis. In the early 1950s, he began attacking psychoanalysis in the profession's own journals, maintaining that there was no statistical evidence to prove that the treatment actually worked.

His marriage to the former Margaret Malcolm Davies ended in divorce.

Survivors include his wife, the former Sybille Bianca Giulietta Rostal, whom he married in 1950 and who lives in London; a daughter from his second marriage, Connie Eysenck of Bethesda; a son from his first marriage; three sons from his second marriage; and eight grandchildren.