

Book Reviews

GEOFFREY KEYNES, *The gates of memory*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xi, 428, illus., £12.50.

An autobiographer unveiling his self-portrait can pick an excuse from a wide variety, ranging from the sincere attempt to entertain his friends to a sackcloth-and-ashes apology *pro sua vita*. Sir Geoffrey Keynes, by borrowing from Blake his title, invites us to look upon his real self, a self that as he depicts it, many of his friends and none of his acquaintances will easily recognize. Within this confident and wondrously competent man does there truly exist the self-effacing, shy and timorous mortal who fails exams and abases himself before the superior intellect of his friends? Is the key to the mystery to be found in the early years spent in the dazzling aura of a too-brilliant brother? Only time and maturity let his own light shine, brilliantly enough for most. Perhaps here too lies the reason for his unyielding search for perfection, be it in the writing and designing of a book or the devising of a surgical operation.

As a medical innovator, Keynes recounts his memorable part in the stories of blood transfusion, the treatment of hernia, of mammary carcinoma, and, in his sixth decade, of myasthenia gravis. As historian, his bibliographies with a human interest have been flanked by biographies with William Harvey at the summit. With these eventful tales come literary anecdotes, fascinating in their variety. Chance acquaintance like the fortuitous discovery of rare books and pictures met in Keynes a connoisseur whose expertise let him appreciate and make the most of what chance put in his way. He is a connoisseur of more than precious things, of precious people too. He writes of eminent folk, but he pays tribute to those lesser beings whom he made his friends. Had he been at a loss – it is unthinkable – for a title, he might with aptness have called his book ‘The Testament of Friendship’.

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H. B. GIBSON, *Hans Eysenck: the man and his work*, London, Peter Owen, 1981, pp. 275, illus., £11.95.

Hans Eysenck is undoubtedly the most famous psychologist presently working in Britain. To the man in the street, he is closely identified with the genetics of intelligence, and as a psychologist who frequently chooses to express his ideas in books published by Penguin. In fact, Eysenck has played an extremely important role in academic psychology, as author of a comprehensive theory of personality development, champion of an autonomous profession of clinical psychology, and leading figure in a form of psychotherapy called “behaviour therapy”. He has also been involved in many professional, as well as public, controversies, during the past four decades. Such an individual is not easy to write about with balance, but Gibson has succeeded in producing a well-rounded and informative biography. Using his personal knowledge of his subject and possessing a good grasp of the main strands of psychological research in post-war Britain, Gibson paints a sympathetic but not uncritical portrait. This book also deftly handles the larger developments at the Institute of Psychiatry, where Eysenck works, particularly the relations between Eysenck and Sir Aubrey Lewis, and the debates between psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and clinical psychologists. Few, however, would agree with Gibson’s elevation of Eysenck to a position of Freudian proportions, although his comparison of Eysenck and Freud is illuminating.

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