

OBITUARY ON JØRGEN JØRGENSEN

(April 1, 1894 - July 30, 1969)

Pronounced at the Assemblée générale de l'Institut International de Philosophie, Entretiens de Heidelberg, on the 14th of September, 1969

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On my return to Denmark on August 1 from *The Fifth East-West Philosophers' Conference* in Honolulu I learned that my friend and teacher Jørgen Jørgensen had died two days earlier. For several years he had suffered from illness and increasing weakness, and it was only by mobilizing all his powers that he managed to preside at *Les Entretiens de Copenhague* three years ago. Nevertheless, at his 75th birthday on the first of April this year he had regained some of his old fighting spirit and alacrity, and the congratulators looked forward to enjoy his presence in meetings to come.

He was a member of our Institute from its beginning in 1937, and he was known as a prominent representative of Scandinavian logical empiricism, as an acute analytic thinker and as an encyclopedist at that. However, a purely aesthetic or theoretical world-view did not satisfy his vivacious and dynamic personality. According to the pattern furnished by Bertrand Russell, whom he highly admired, he used the powerful intellectual tools and the extensive knowledge which were at his disposal for interference with the social world in which he lived, in order to solve some of its problems. He hated verbosity, loose argumentation and unprecise use of language, and set a high standard to his students, his collaborators and himself. His logical power was connected with a propensity to melancholy and vexation in face of expectations which were not fulfilled, or ideals not actualized. He was a man of duty whose life seemed to be guided by the categorical imperative. At the same time he had a deep respect

for the facts and realities of life, which had a dominating place in the reflections and considerations which guided his decisions. *Fortitudo* and *clementia*, spiritual power and forbearance with human shortcomings, were combined in his complex personality in an extraordinary way.

He was known to the world of science and philosophy as the author of "*A Treatise of Formal Logic, its Evolution and Main Branches, with its Relations to Mathematics and Philosophy*" (1931), "*The Development of Logical Empiricism*" (1951) and for numerous contributions to journals and conferences where logical and epistemological problems were debated. He was also known as one of the organizers of *The International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, and was a co-editor of *Einheitswissenschaft*, already in 1934. In an article from 1938 in *Philosophy of Science*, "Encyclopedism as a Pedagogical Aim: a Danish Approach", Otto Neurath drew attention to his merits as an encyclopedist and pedagogue, so far only known to Scandinavian readers. In his philosophical work he was inspired by Harald Höffding, Herman Cohen, Bertrand Russell, Niels Bohr and the large group and prominent thinkers more or less directly stemming from the Vienna Circle, the Berlin Group and the Lwow-Warsaw School.

In November 1966 the University of Copenhagen conferred to him its honorary degree as *doctor philosophiae* in recognition of his unique contributions to the development of logic, epistemology and the philosophy of psychology in Denmark and abroad.

Few months before his death Jørgensen co-operated with the editorial board of *Danish Yearbook of Philosophy* in preparing a volume containing some of his works not easily accessible, and illustrating his intellectual development. Some of these articles were written about 30 years ago, but all of them bear the imprint of passion and scholarship, intellectual alentness and discipline which were the distinguishng marks of his extraordinary and rare personality.

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