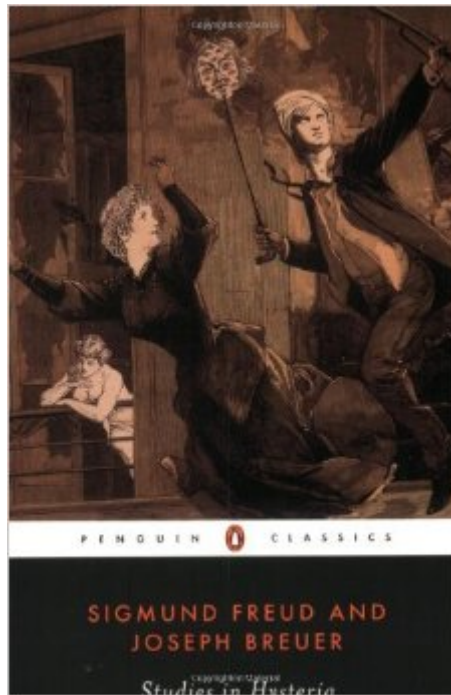


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Studies In Hysteria (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Hysteria "the tormenting of the body by the troubled mind" is among the most pervasive of human disorders; yet, at the same time, it is the most elusive. Freud's recognition that hysteria stemmed from traumas in the patient's past transformed the way we think about sexuality. *Studies in Hysteria* is one of the founding texts of psychoanalysis, revolutionizing our understanding of love, desire, and the human psyche. As full of compassionate human interest as of scientific insight, these case histories are also remarkable, revelatory works of literature. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

This new translation, by Nicola Luckhurst, of Freud's *Studien über Hysterie* is a remarkable achievement, surpassing James Strachey's classic translation. What makes it better? It stays very close to the text - obviously. Paradoxically, this means that the text is rougher, and more open. Luckhurst's translation preserves Freud's physical metaphors, the peculiarity of style and with this the feel that Freud is developing a new language for his new science, psychoanalysis. In this translation, Freud is not the dour, august professor but the young explorer discovering sexuality and

desire. Luckhurst has an exquisitely sensitive ear for Freud's language. For example, she picks up a number of metaphors related to pregnancy, labor, and childbirth that had disappeared in Strachey's translation: "These metaphors, often neutralized in earlier translations, seem important in that they indicate an unconscious feminine identification - by which I mean Freud's empathy (or counter-transference) for his patients as women and as mothers. Recovering these metaphors may allow hysteria to signify differently, as we hear Freud's patients dis-identify with their maternal or pregnant self, and project it into the psychoanalyst." For anyone interested in Freud and psychoanalysis, the Translator's Preface is worth the price of the book. In sum: this new translation of one of the founding texts of psychoanalysis is a great read - and it will change the way we read Freud.

A fascinating book that explores the hidden factors behind anxiety, written when Freud was still studying his first hysterical patients that became famous in the psychoanalytic literature. The collaboration with Breuer was actually sealed with this book, but ironically it was also the end of their friendship. Apart from the psychoanalytic concepts, the reader can really enjoy the five case studies included in "Study on hysteria". Only one case study was written by Breuer and this goes to show that Freud really wanted to go deep into the unconscious whereas Breuer after the first patient didn't go any further; basically because he would have had to confront himself with the patient's sexual drives as well as his instincts. This is a very stimulating book that allows the reader to appreciate the kind of female patients affected by hysteria before the 20th century, that were not understood by most psychiatrists. Freud managed to understand why the repression of the sexual instinct led to a neurosis.

This may be one of the very few works of scientific research which is more than 100 years old, and is still being read by the non-professional. Since the work is so well known, and since another reviewer has commented on the translation, a matter on which I am not qualified, I will limit myself to the virtues of the Kindle edition. Often, Kindle editions of older works are dumb as bricks. But this edition has at least three facets which are essential for a scholarly book, in addition to the usual ability of Kindle to search texts. First, it has a complete, active table of contents, including references to the Bibliography, Notes, and printed index. Second, it has active "drill down" notes. This may be the second most valuable asset of e-books, after searching. Footnotes are bad enough, when there are many, because they are often hard to read. End notes are a disaster if you really need them (as when you are writing a paper.) The third is the combination of printed index

and the fact that the Kindle gives the page number of the printed edition. Searching may be quicker, but the original index will give you the places where a topic discussion is important, as when it spans several pages. I did notice one glitch, which was unworthy of an edition at this price. The Active table of contents reference to a list of abbreviations pointed to the space between the previous and the following entry. Somehow, that list was left out. I got this book when I was doing a paper on the Salem Witch Trials, and it was eminently helpful. There are few references more impressive than when you cite "really important" sources from the likes of Freud, Darwin, Einstein, Newton, and Faraday rather than to some secondary reference about these people and their work.

I'm not disputing the first reviewer who gave the book one star because it is a poor translation. Strachey's translation is good enough, though, to make the book readable, and it should be read by everyone. Freud's clarity of thought and insight and pure intelligence is well represented in this book, and it serves as a decent introduction to elementary psychoanalysis.

Bought this as a gift for a student going to college that is trying to decide if they want to get into a field like this as a major. She really enjoyed the book and thought it very informative. Well worth the price. Delivered quickly and damage free.

A warning to anyone contemplating buying the Kindle edition listed here. It's a copy of the A. A. Brill translation, not the Nicola Lockhurst/Penguin edition it's paired with. I tried to contact about this, but true to form, doesn't seem there's a way to communicate with them! ;-)

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