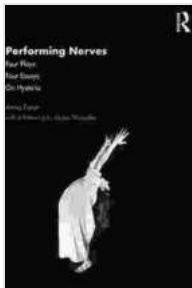


Performing Nerves: Four Plays, Four Essays on Hysteria

Hysteria, a complex and multifaceted condition, has captivated the imaginations of artists, writers, and medical professionals for centuries. Its enigmatic symptoms, ranging from physical manifestations to emotional outbursts, have defied easy categorization and treatment. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in hysteria, as scholars and artists explore its relevance to contemporary issues of gender, identity, and mental health.



Performing Nerves: Four Plays, Four Essays, On Hysteria by Anna Furse

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3333 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 242 pages
X-Ray for textbooks	: Enabled



Performing Nerves: Four Plays, Four Essays on Hysteria is a groundbreaking collection that brings together four plays and four essays that examine hysteria from multiple perspectives. The plays, written by contemporary playwrights including Sarah Kane, Elfriede Jelinek, and Naomi Wallace, offer vivid and unsettling portrayals of women struggling

with the physical and psychological symptoms of hysteria. The essays, by leading scholars in the fields of theater, literature, and psychoanalysis, provide illuminating analysis of the plays and explore the broader cultural and historical context of hysteria.

The Plays

The four plays in the collection offer a diverse range of perspectives on hysteria. Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (2000) is a searing and unflinching exploration of a woman's descent into madness. The play's fragmented structure and visceral language capture the chaotic and disorienting experience of psychosis, and its portrayal of self-harm and suicide is both harrowing and deeply moving.

Elfriede Jelinek's *What Happened When Nora Left Her Husband or Pillars of Society* (1979) is a darkly satirical take on Ibsen's classic play *A Doll's House*. Jelinek's Nora is a complex and contradictory figure, who oscillates between moments of rebellion and submission. The play explores the ways in which women are both empowered and disempowered by the social and cultural expectations that surround them, and its critique of patriarchy remains as relevant today as it was when it was first written.

Naomi Wallace's *One Flea Spare* (1996) is a haunting and poetic play that takes place during the bubonic plague in 17th-century England. The play follows the story of Nell Gwynne, a young woman who is accused of witchcraft and subjected to a series of brutal exorcisms. Wallace's play explores the ways in which women's bodies have been used as a site of control and punishment throughout history, and its powerful imagery and lyrical language create a visceral and unforgettable experience.

Suzan-Lori Parks's *Venus* (1996) is a retelling of the Greek myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. In Parks's version, Galatea is a black woman who is brought to life by her white creator. The play explores the complexities of race, gender, and sexuality, and its examination of the power dynamics between men and women is both provocative and insightful.

The Essays

The four essays in the collection provide a rich and diverse range of perspectives on hysteria. In "Hysteria: A History of Female Insanity," Elaine Showalter traces the history of hysteria from its ancient origins to its contemporary manifestations. Showalter argues that hysteria is a cultural construct that has been used to diagnose and control women who do not conform to social norms. Her essay provides a valuable historical context for the plays in the collection and helps to illuminate the ways in which hysteria has been used to pathologize women's experience.

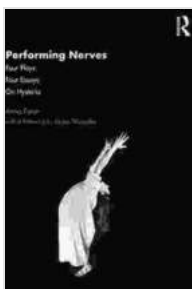
In "The Hysterical Baroque: Elfriede Jelinek's *What Happened When Nora Left Her Husband*," Erika Fischer-Lichte examines the ways in which Jelinek's play uses baroque imagery and rhetoric to create a sense of hysteria. Fischer-Lichte argues that Jelinek's play is a powerful critique of the ways in which women are objectified and silenced in patriarchal society. Her essay offers a close reading of the play's text and performance history, and provides a valuable analysis of its feminist and political implications.

In "Performing Psychosis: Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*," David Willinger explores the ways in which Kane's play uses theatrical techniques to create a visceral and immersive experience of psychosis. Willinger argues that Kane's play is a groundbreaking work that challenges traditional notions of

theater and mental illness. His essay provides a detailed analysis of the play's structure, language, and performance history, and offers a compelling argument for its significance as a contemporary work of art.

In "The Uses of Hysteria: Naomi Wallace's *One Flea Spare*," Lynda Hart explores the ways in which Wallace's play uses hysteria as a metaphor for the violence and oppression that women have faced throughout history. Hart argues that Wallace's play is a powerful indictment of patriarchy and its use of violence against women. Her essay provides a insightful analysis of the play's characters, themes, and historical context, and offers a compelling argument for its importance as a feminist work of art.

Performing Nerves: Four Plays, Four Essays on Hysteria is a groundbreaking collection that offers a rich and diverse range of perspectives on this complex and fascinating condition. The plays and essays in this collection provide valuable insights into the historical, cultural, and clinical aspects of hysteria, and they offer a powerful critique of the ways in which women have been pathologized and silenced throughout history. This collection will be of interest to scholars, artists, and anyone who is interested in the complex and multifaceted phenomenon of hysteria.



Performing Nerves: Four Plays, Four Essays, On Hysteria by Anna Furse

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3333 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 242 pages



Education And Peace Montessori 10: Where Learning Flourishes in a Haven of Harmony

A Symphony of Learning and Well-being Amidst the hustle and bustle of the modern world, there exists a sanctuary where learning and peace intertwine seamlessly—Education...



Unveiling the Wonders of Language and Literacy Development: A Comprehensive Guide

Language and literacy are fundamental aspects of human development that allow us to communicate, learn, and connect with the world around us. The journey...