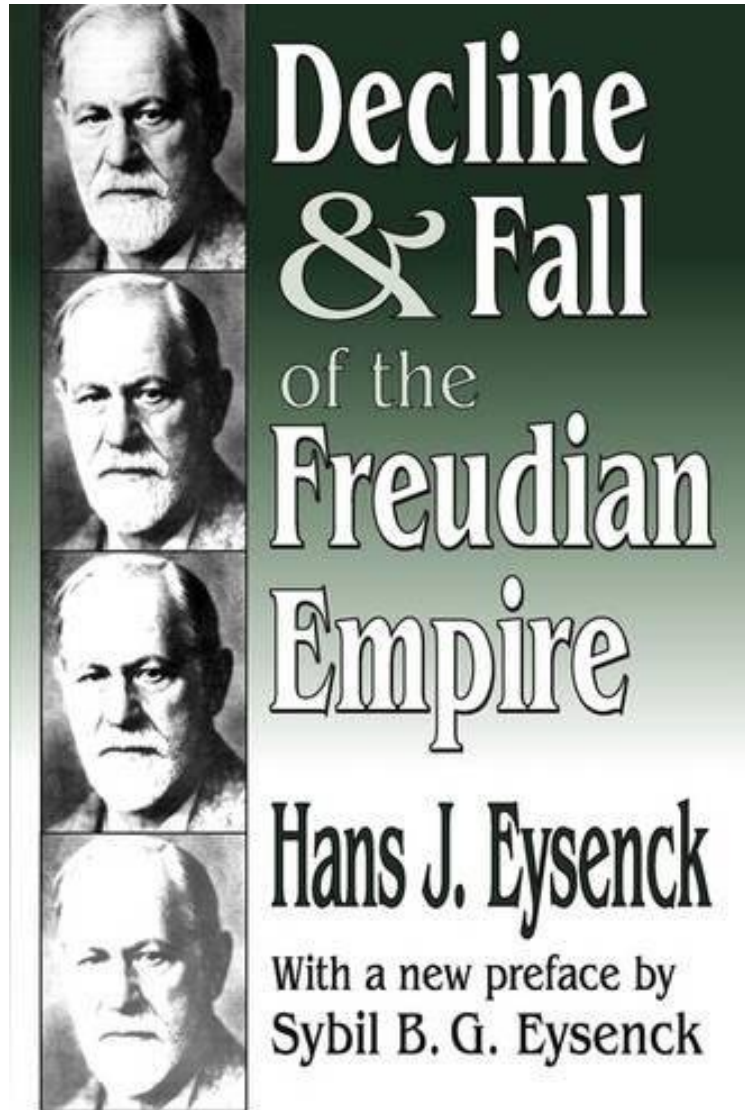


(Free pdf) Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire

Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire

Hans Eysenck

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Hans Eysenck : Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. UnreliableBy David WaltersDecline and Fall of the Freudian Empire is one of many books in which Hans Eysenck has attacked Freud and psychoanalysis. It could best be called unsatisfactory. Eysenck is obsessed with trying to depict Freud and psychoanalysis in the most unfavorable light possible, and as such not an author to be relied upon. He depicts Freud as someone so intolerant that he would

excommunicate from the psychoanalytic movement anyone who disagreed with him even slightly. Eysenck is exaggerating to an unconscionable degree (numerous figures within the psychoanalytic movement who had significant disagreements with Freud were never expelled for their dissenting views). Eysenck claims that Freud's patient Anna O was suffering from not from hysteria but from tuberculous meningitis, a claim that even other critics of Freud have disputed (see, for example, the discussion in Malcolm Macmillan's *Freud Evaluated* and Richard Webster's *Why Freud Was Wrong*). Eysenck discusses highly complex issues in grossly over-simplified terms. He dismisses Karl Popper's view that psychoanalysis is pseudo-scientific due to being unfalsifiable. Eysenck claims that while there are "considerable difficulties in devising good tests" of psychoanalysis these are "no greater than the difficulties of devising suitable tests for Einstein's theory of relativity." He makes no real attempt to prove this claim, which I find unbelievable. Eysenck wrongly claims that "when Freudian theories are subjected to experimental or observational tests, the results do not support them; they fail the test." Having put some effort into reading the literature on the success or failure of attempts to experimentally test psychoanalytic ideas, I am persuaded that Eysenck's claim is simply anti-Freudian propaganda. I do not dismiss the possibility that some Freudian claims could be or already have been disproved by suitably designed tests, but a much more likely result of attempting to test them is that the tests would fail to prove anything one way or the other. Eysenck is blinding himself to the truth by claiming otherwise.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. **THE PSYCHOLOGIST CRITIC LASHES OUT AGAINST FREUD AND PSYCHOANALYSIS** By Steven H Propp Hans Jrgen Eysenck (1916-1997) was a British psychologist of German origin, known for his work on intelligence testing [The IQ argument] and personality; he wrote many books such as the trilogy: *Uses And Abuses of Psychology*, *Sense and Nonsense in Psychology*, and *Fact and Fiction in Psychology*, as well as his autobiography, *Rebel with a Cause*. He wrote in the first chapter of this 1985 book, "This book assesses the present day status of Freud's theories in general, and evaluates his claims concerning the scientific status of these theories, and the value of his therapeutic methods." (Pg. 19) He notes "the sudden and unexpected change that took place in Freud at the beginning of the 1890s... He was a nonconformist member of the bourgeoisie, conservative and orthodox. All of this changed abruptly... where previously he had been extremely straight-laced and Victorian in his sexual attitudes, he was now advocating the complete overthrow of all conventional sexual morality... his [writing] style now became extraordinarily speculative and theoretical... Other symptoms of a personality change ... were the Messianic conviction of a mission... and the general dictatorial tendency to rule over his followers and expel them for any slight doubts about the complete and general truth of his theories... Thornton [in *The Freudian fallacy: Freud and cocaine*]... has put forward a very clear-cut hypothesis which would explain all of these sudden changes in terms of an addiction Freud developed to cocaine." (Pg. 37-38) He argues, "the few cases extensively discussed by Freud must be regarded not as outstanding successes but as therapeutic and probably diagnostic failures." (Pg. 59) He summarizes a 1965 paper he wrote, which reached conclusions such as: "When untreated neurotic control groups are compared to experimental groups of neurotic patients treated by means of psychotherapy, both groups recover to approximately the same extent..." (Pg. 69) He concludes, "Freud and psychoanalysis must be regarded as a failure... This legacy has had many extremely bad consequences for psychiatry and psychology... [such as] the effect on the patients. Their hopes of cure and rescue have been dashed time and time again, and in some cases they have actually been made worse by psychoanalysis... the failure of psychology and psychiatry to develop into properly scientific studies of normal and abnormal behavior. It is probably true to say that Freud has set back the study of these disciplines by something like fifty years or more... Freud's teachings have undermined the values on which western civilization is based... his influence on the whole has been malignant." (Pg. 201-203) He adds, "psychoanalysis is on the way down... it has lost any academic credibility, and ... as a method of treatment it is being used less widely... [Freud] was, without doubt, a genius, but of propaganda... [and] of literary art... This may be a harsh judgment, but I think the future will support it." (Pg. 207-208) Eysenck's critique is admittedly "harsh," but whether one accepts it or not, his is a very useful critique (although a lot of it is taken from secondary sources, such as Thornton), that both supporters and critics of Freud and psychoanalysis can learn from.

10 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Not the last word, but essential reading By Peter A. Kindle Make no mistake about it, Eysenck does not think much of Freud. At times his tone adopts a polemical flavor that I personally find distasteful. Yet the facts remain. Anyone hoping to understand Freud and psychoanalytic theory must read Eysenck, if only to be aware of the questions that must be faced. Eysenck gives four rules about interpreting Freud. First, do not believe what Freud and others have to say about his life. Check out the facts for yourself. Eysenck claims that most biographical material about Freud is designed to promote hero worship. Second, do not believe the claims about the effectiveness of the psychoanalytic method. Look at the evidence for yourself. For example, in the famous case of Anna O, Eysenck documents Freud's failed "cure" and continued treatment by medical doctors of her tuberculous meningitis. Third, do not accept claims of originality in Freud's theory. Eysenck traces use of even the "unconscious" to Freud's predecessors. Fourth, do not accept Freudian evidence for the correctness of his theories. Eysenck claims that the facts often disprove, rather than support, Freud's claims. Eysenck is not the last word. Psychoanalysis continues today. There are proponents who have extended Freud's theories. There have been new attempts to find value in Freud's work. Nonetheless, Eysenck is

essential. In a sense he started the entire controversy!

About the Author Hans J. Eysenck (1916-1997) was professor of psychology at the University of London and the director of its psychological department at the Institute of Psychiatry. He was best known for his experimental research in the field of personality. Among his many books are *Rebel with a Cause*, *Dimensions of Personality*, *The Dynamics of Anxiety and Hysteria*, *Intelligence*, and *Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire*. Sybil B. G. Eysenck, wife of the late author Hans Eysenck, is co-director of Personality Investigations, Publications and Services (PIPS), an organization devoted to the promotion of the writings and research of Hans J. Eysenck. She is the co-author, with Hans Eysenck, of *Psychoticism as a Dimension of Personality and Personality Structure and Measurement* and the co-editor, with Donald Saklofske, of *Individual Differences in Children and Adolescents*.