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Kierkegaard: Fear And Trembling (Cambridge Texts In The History Of Philosophy)



Synopsis

In this rich and resonant work, Soren Kierkegaard reflects poetically and philosophically on the biblical story of God's command to Abraham, that he sacrifice his son Isaac as a test of faith. Was Abraham's proposed action morally and religiously justified or murder? Is there an absolute duty to God? Was Abraham justified in remaining silent? In pondering these questions, Kierkegaard presents faith as a paradox that cannot be understood by reason and conventional morality, and he challenges the universalist ethics and immanent philosophy of modern German idealism, especially as represented by Kant and Hegel. This volume, first published in 2006, presents the first new English translation for twenty years, by Sylvia Walsh, together with an introduction by C. Stephen Evans which examines the ethical and religious issues raised by the text.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With its muted, textual appearance and the word "Cambridge" hovering on top of the front cover, this edition of *Fear and Trembling* may scare off prospective readers, who are forgiven if they think, at first glance, this edition is aimed at dedicated specialists. It's not. Within these covers is a page-turning, logically-presented and faithfully-executed rendition of Kierkegaard's magnum opus: an edition suitable for almost anyone. The introduction by Baylor University's C. Stephen Evans is the most lucid commentary on *Fear and Trembling* I've ever read. Engaging, terse and fluid, Evans's essay lays the groundwork for a translation that conveys the Copenhagen writer's lyrical,

dramatic and philosophic intentions with equal aplomb. When compared with the Penguin Classics edition, this rendition is more accessible, a quality I attribute to Sylvia Walsh's sensitive understanding of the original text and Evans's ability to relay Kierkegaard's stealthy, pseudonymous writings to a modern audience. Some additional notes: 1) rather than merely document information, Evans conveys the author's jocularly and spirit (e.g., "Tuning Up" and "A Preliminary Outpouring from the Heart" instead of the Penguin edition's "Attunement" and "Preamble from the Heart"); 2) the footnotes provide helpful contexts and insights; 3) the layout and font help to stave off reader fatigue; 4) despite its accessibility, the translation is accurate (e.g., the way in which the distinction between an individual and the particular is navigated), and 5) allusions to icons of modern culture (e.g., Martin Luther King and John Lennon) add contemporary relevance to the 19th century Dane's work without cheapening the overall effect.

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