KIERKEGAARD’S *FEAR AND TREMBLING*

Written by an international team of contributors, this book offers a fresh set of interpretations of *Fear and Trembling*, which remains Kierkegaard’s most influential and popular book. The chapters provide incisive accounts of the psychological and epistemological presuppositions of *Fear and Trembling*; of religious experience and the existential dimension of faith; of Kierkegaard’s understanding of the relationship between faith and knowledge; of the purported and real conflicts between ethics and religion; of Kierkegaard’s interpretation of the value of hope, trust, love, and other virtues; of Kierkegaard’s debts to German idealism and Protestant theology; and of his seminal contributions to the fields of psychology, existential phenomenology, and literary theory. This volume will be of great interest to scholars and upper-level students of Kierkegaard studies, the history of philosophy, theology, and religious studies.

**Daniel Conway** is Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Texas A&M University. He is the author of many books including *Nietzsche’s Dangerous Game* (Cambridge, 1997), *Nietzsche and the Political* (1997), and *Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morals: A Reader’s Guide* (2008). He has also edited and co-edited several volumes including *Søren Kierkegaard: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers* (2002) and *The History of Continental Philosophy, Volume II* (with Alan D. Schrift, 2010).
CAMBRIDGE CRITICAL GUIDES

Titles published in this series:

Hegel’s *Phenomenology Of Spirit*
EDITED BY DEAN MOYAR AND MICHAEL QUANTE

Mill’s *On Liberty*
EDITED BY C. L. TEN

Kant’s *Idea For A Universal History With A Cosmopolitan Aim*
EDITED BY AMÉLIE OKSENBERG RORTY AND JAMES SCHMIDT

Kant’s *Groundwork Of The Metaphysics Of Morals*
EDITED BY JENS TIMMERMANN

Kant’s *Critique Of Practical Reason*
EDITED BY ANDREWS REATH AND JENS TIMMERMANN

Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*
EDITED BY ARIF AHMED

Kierkegaard’s *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*
EDITED BY RICK ANTHONY FURTAK

Plato’s *Republic*
EDITED BY MARK L. MCPHERRAN

Plato’s *Laws*
EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER BOBONICH

Spinoza’s *Theological-Political Treatise*
EDITED BY YITZHAK Y. MELAMED AND MICHAEL A. ROSENTHAL

Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*
EDITED BY JON MILLER

Kant’s *Metaphysics Of Morals*
EDITED BY LARA DENIS

Nietzsche’s *On The Genealogy Of Morality*
EDITED BY SIMON MAY

Kant’s *Observations And Remarks*
EDITED BY RICHARD VELKLEY AND SUSAN SHELL

Augustine’s *City Of God*
EDITED BY JAMES WETZEL

Descartes’ *Meditations*
EDITED BY KAREN DETLEFSEN

Kant’s *Religion Within The Boundaries Of Mere Reason*
EDITED BY GORDON MICHALSON

Kant’s *Lectures On Anthropology*
EDITED BY ALIX COHEN

Kierkegaard’s *Fear And Trembling*
EDITED BY DANIEL CONWAY
KIERKEGAARD’S *FEAR AND TREMBLING*

*A Critical Guide*

EDITED BY

DANIEL CONWAY
Contents

List of contributors vii
Acknowledgments xi
List of abbreviations xii

Introduction 1
Daniel Conway

1 Homing in on Fear and Trembling 6
Alastair Hannay

2 Fear and Trembling’s “Attunement” as midrash 26
Jacob Howland

3 Johannes de silentio’s dilemma 44
Clare Carlisle

4 Can an admirer of silentio’s Abraham consistently believe that child sacrifice is forbidden? 61
C. Stephen Evans

5 Eschatological faith and repetition: Kierkegaard’s Abraham and Job 79
John Davenport

6 The existential dimension of faith 106
Sharon Krishek

7 Learning to hope: the role of hope in Fear and Trembling 122
John Lippitt

8 On being moved and hearing voices: passion and religious experience in Fear and Trembling 142
Rick Anthony Furtak
Contents

9 Birth, love, and hybridity: Fear and Trembling and the Symposium 166
   Edward F. Mooney and Dana Lloyd

10 Narrative unity and the moment of crisis in Fear and Trembling 188
   Anthony Rudd

11 Particularity and ethical attunement: situating Problema III 205
   Daniel Conway

12 ‘He speaks in tongues’: hearing the truth of Abraham’s words of faith 229
   Jeffrey Hanson

13 Why Moriah?: weaning and the trauma of transcendence in Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling 247
   Vanessa Rumble

Bibliography 263
Index 273
Contributors

Clare Carlisle is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy of Religion at King’s College London, where she is also Director of the AKC Programme. Her books include Kierkegaard’s Philosophy of Becoming (2005), Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling (2010), and On Habit (2014).


John Davenport is Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University. He has published widely on Kierkegaard, topics in moral psychology, existentialism, and philosophy of religion. With Anthony Rudd, he co-edited Kierkegaard After MacIntyre (2001), which defended the relevance of Kierkegaard’s ideas for contemporary debates about virtue and teleological conceptions of selfhood. In addition to published articles on Either/Or, the Concept of Anxiety and Stages on Life’s Way, he has recently published three essays on Fear and Trembling, faith in the Postscript, and Levinas’ and Derrida’s responses to Kierkegaard’s account of Abraham. His new monograph, Narrative Identity, Autonomy, and Mortality: From MacIntyre and Frankfurt to Kierkegaard (2012), defends MacIntyre’s narrative approach to practical identity and the stronger conception of narrative selfhood found in Kierkegaard’s “Purity of Heart.”

C. Stephen Evans is University Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Baylor University and a Professorial Fellow at Australian Catholic University. His most recent books include God and Moral
viii

Contributors


Rick Anthony Furtak is Associate Professor and Chairperson in the Philosophy Department at Colorado College. His published works include Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Ancient Quest for Emotional Integrity (2005) and Rilke’s Sonnets to Orpheus: A New English Version (2007), and he recently edited Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript: A Critical Guide (2010). Most of his writings deal with issues in moral psychology, existential thought, and the project of literary philosophy. He also finds inspiration in ancient Greek and early American philosophers. Currently he is completing a series of poems on mortality and illness, as well as a book about truthfulness in affective experience. During 2014 and 2015, he will be the President of the North American Søren Kierkegaard Society.

Alastair Hannay is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oslo. He was for many years editor of Inquiry and is author of Mental Images—A Defence (1971, 2002), Kierkegaard: The Arguments of the Philosophers (1982, 1999), Human Consciousness (1990), Kierkegaard: A Biography (2001), Kierkegaard and Philosophy: Selected Essays (2003), and On the Public (2005). He has translated several of Kierkegaard’s works for Penguin Classics and more recently for Cambridge University Press (Concluding Unscientific Postscript) and Liveright/W.W. Norton (The Concept of Anxiety). He is also engaged in the ongoing Princeton critical edition of Kierkegaard’s Journals and Notebooks.

Jeffrey Hanson is Research Fellow in Philosophy at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne. He is the editor of Kierkegaard as Phenomenologist: An Experiment (2010) and co-editor with Michael R. Kelly of Michel Henry: The Affects of Thought (2012).

Contributors

Sharon Krishek is Assistant Professor at the Philosophy Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of Kierkegaard on Faith and Love (2009) and Kierkegaard’s Philosophy of Love (in Hebrew, 2011), and has published papers on Kierkegaard in journals such as the Journal of Religious Ethics, Faith and Philosophy, and the International Journal for Philosophy of Religion.

John Lippitt is Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Hertfordshire and Honorary Professor of Philosophy at Deakin University. His publications include Humour and Irony in Kierkegaard’s Thought (2000) and the Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling (2003; second edition under contract). He is editor of Nietzsche’s Futures (1999) and co-editor of Nietzsche and the Divine (with Jim Urpeth, 2000), The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard (with George Pattison, 2013), and Narrative, Identity and the Kierkegaardian Self (with Patrick Stokes, forthcoming 2015). His other interests include the virtues; the relationship between philosophy and theology; and the relevance of philosophy to psychotherapy. His most recent book is Kierkegaard and the Problem of Self-Love (2013).

Dana Lloyd is a doctoral student in Religion at Syracuse University. She holds a BA and MA in philosophy, and a degree in Law, from Tel Aviv University.

Edward F. Mooney is retired from the Departments of Religion and Philosophy, Syracuse University, and is Visiting Professor at Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His most recent books are Excursions with Kierkegaard: Others, Goods, Death, and Final Faith (2012), and Lost Intimacy in American Thought: Personal Philosophy from Thoreau to Cavell (2009). Earlier books include Selves in Discord and Resolve: Kierkegaard’s Moral Religious Psychology (1996) and Knights of Faith and Resignation: Reading Fear and Trembling (1991).

Anthony Rudd is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. Olaf College, Minnesota. He is the author of Self, Value and Narrative: a Kierkegaardian Approach (2012), Expressing the World: Skepticism, Wittgenstein and Heidegger (2003), and Kierkegaard and the Limits of the Ethical (1993).

Vanessa Rumble is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Boston College, where she is founder and director of the Psychoanalytic Studies
Program. She serves on the editorial board of the new English language critical edition of Kierkegaard’s *Journals and Notebooks* published by Princeton University Press. She has published articles on Kierkegaard and Scandinavian culture and is writing a book on Kierkegaard and his German predecessors.
Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the generous support provided by the College of Liberal Arts and the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research at Texas A&M University. I also wish to acknowledge the hospitality of the faculty, staff, and administration of Amherst College, where this project first took shape. I also wish to thank Desirae Embree for her editorial assistance. I gratefully acknowledge the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre for granting me permission to reprint pp. 172–73 in Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter vol. 4. Finally, I am pleased to thank Hilary Gaskin and Rosemary Crawley at Cambridge University Press for guiding this manuscript into print.

This book is dedicated with love and gratitude to my three ethical authorities: Claire, Olivia, and Evie.
Standard abbreviations are employed throughout this volume for the following Kierkegaardian texts. For other editions cited, and for works by other authors, see the bibliography and the footnotes to individual chapters.

### In English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Abbreviations


In Danish


SKS  Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter, ed. Niels Jorgen Cappelorn et al., projected 55 vols. (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 1997–). Cited by volume and page number, and (in some cases) by entry number.

No attempt has been made in this volume to standardize the contributors’ references to Johannes de silentio, the pseudonymous author and presumed narrator of Fear and Trembling. Some contributors prefer his full name (or formal title), while others favor informal, shorthand
references, such as “Johannes,” “silentio,” “Silentio,” or “de silentio.” It is the editor’s judgment that the resulting variety of references is a natural (and perhaps intended) consequence of Kierkegaard’s decision to publish *Fear and Trembling* as a pseudonymous work.