

Kierkegaard's Writings, Volume VI: The Sickness Unto Death

Kierkegaard's Masterpiece on Despair, Anxiety, and the True Self A Timeless Exploration of Human Existence

Soren Kierkegaard, the 19th-century Danish philosopher, is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers in Western philosophy. His writings have captivated readers for generations with their profound insights into human existence, faith, and despair. Among his most significant works is "The Sickness Unto Death," published in 1849. This seminal work delves into the depths of human psychology, exploring the nature of despair, anxiety, and the true self.

Understanding the Sickness Unto Death

The Sickness Unto Death is not a physical ailment but a spiritual malady that afflicts the soul. It is a state of existential despair that arises from a fundamental lack of self-understanding and a disconnect from one's true purpose in life. Kierkegaard argues that this sickness manifests itself in various forms, including:

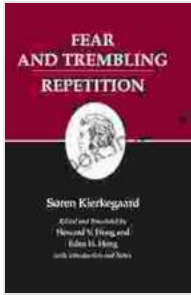
- **Despair of not willing to be oneself:** This form of despair occurs when an individual refuses to embrace their authentic self and instead chooses to conform to the expectations of others.

Kierkegaard's Writings, VI, Volume 6: Fear and Trembling/Repetition

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 7308 KB



Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 465 pages



- **Despair of willing to be oneself:** This despair stems from the fear of acknowledging and accepting one's true self and the consequences that may follow.
- **The despair of not willing to be oneself but willing to be what one is not:** This despair is the most profound and debilitating form, as it involves a complete denial of one's own existence and a desire to be something that one is not.

The Role of Anxiety

Anxiety plays a pivotal role in the Sickness Unto Death. Kierkegaard distinguishes between two types of anxiety:

- **Immediate Anxiety:** This anxiety is rooted in the fear of specific events or situations.
- **Deeper Anxiety:** This anxiety is existential in nature and arises from the recognition of one's finitude and the uncertainty of existence.

Kierkegaard argues that deeper anxiety is an essential aspect of human life. It is not something to be avoided but rather confronted and embraced

as a catalyst for personal growth and self-awareness.

The True Self

At the heart of Kierkegaard's philosophy is the concept of the true self. He believes that each individual has a unique and authentic self that they are destined to become. To achieve this true self, one must overcome the Sickness Unto Death and embrace their own existence fully.

Kierkegaard provides several paths to overcome the Sickness Unto Death, including:

- **Faith:** Kierkegaard believed that faith in God can provide the strength and guidance needed to overcome despair and anxiety.
- **Repentance:** Repentance involves acknowledging and accepting one's true self, including both the good and the bad.
- **Action:** True self-knowledge leads to action. By actively pursuing one's purpose in life, individuals can overcome despair and become the people they were meant to be.

Legacy and Influence

"The Sickness Unto Death" has had a profound impact on philosophy, theology, and psychology. It is considered one of Kierkegaard's most important works and continues to be widely read and studied today. Existentialist philosophers and theologians, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul Tillich, have been heavily influenced by Kierkegaard's insights into despair, anxiety, and the true self.

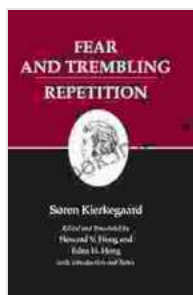
Call to Action

Kierkegaard's "The Sickness Unto Death" is a challenging but rewarding work that invites readers to confront the fundamental questions of human existence. It is a book that has the power to transform lives and inspire individuals to embrace their true selves. If you are seeking a deeper understanding of your own existence, "The Sickness Unto Death" is a must-read.

Kierkegaard's Writings, Volume VI: The Sickness Unto Death [Image](#) >

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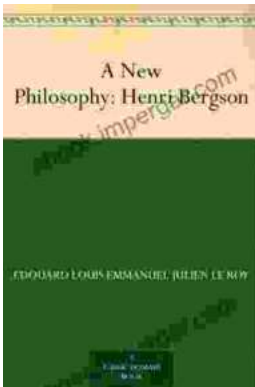


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