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Pensées And Other Writings (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

For much of his life, Pascal (1623-62) worked on a magnum opus which was never published in the form the philosopher intended. Instead, Pascal left a mass of fragments, some of them meant as notes for the *Apologie*. These became known as the *Pensées*, and they occupy a crucial place in Western philosophy and religious writing. Pascal's general intention was to confound scepticism about metaphysical questions. Some of the *Pensées* are fully developed literary reflections on the human condition, some contradict others, and some remain jottings whose meaning will never be clear. The most important are among the most powerful aphorisms about human experience and behavior ever written in any language. This translation is the only one based on the *Pensées* as Pascal left them. It includes the principal dossiers classified by Pascal, as well as the essential portion of the important *Writings on Grace*. A detailed thematic index gives access to Pascal's areas of concern, while the selection of texts and the introduction help to show why Pascal changed the plan of his projected work before abandoning the book he might have written.

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Customer Reviews

"It is an outstandingly clear translation."--Doug Kennard, Moody Bible Institute"Excellent edition and translation."--Professor Forrest Williams, University of Colorado"With its informative introduction, clear translation, and accessible arrangement, this volume would serve admirably in sparking discussion in class and in inducing students to ponder unexpected questions."--(Dom) Pashcal M. Baumstein, O.S.B., Belmont Abbey College"Very readable. A fine translation."--Professor Michael Boylan, Marymount University"This is the edition of the *Pensees* I've been waiting for. I'll definitely use it in undergraduate courses."--Doug Blount, Criswell College"This is a solid translation and Anthony Levi's introduction brings a definite plus to it."--Catherine Danielou, University of Alabama at Birmingham --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Text: English (translation) Original Language: French --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a review of the Oxford World's Classics edition of the *Pensées*, translated by Honor Levi. First of all, this is a translation of a selection of the *Pensées*, not all of them. This could be either a pro or a con, depending on what you want. The selection, and the attractive presentation, definitely makes for an easier read, but it also obscures somewhat the chaotic nature of the original. The numbering is according to the Sellier edition only, and there is no concordance provided for other numbering systems. I personally found the introduction verbose, with too much about the ins-and-outs of Jansenist disputes and a tendency to make pompous and debatable/wrong claims en passant (e.g. Montaigne's *Essays* "remain committedly Catholic but conservative and defensive, with a relativist core that has been mistaken for scepticism"). Besides the *Pensées*, there are extracts from the *Discussion with M. de Sacy* (only the things that Pascal himself says "why could the entirety of this short and strange text not have been included?"), the *Art of Persuasion*, and some of Pascal's writings on grace (some not previously translated into English, I think). The translation is OK, in places a little free ("esprit de géométrie" vs. "esprit de finesse" becomes "mathematical mind" vs. "intuitive mind"). One really bizarre downside of this edition is that all of the translations of Pascal's Latin biblical quotations are taken from the rather non-literal English Jerusalem Bible. Thus "fascinatio nugacitatis" (Wis. 4:12) becomes "the fascination of evil," which misses the point, while the crucial half-verse "vere tu es deus absconditus" (Isaiah 45:15) is rendered as "truly God is hidden within you," a New-Agey non-translation that makes nonsense of Pascal's idea.

Very nice edition with a thorough thematic index and enlightening notes in the back of the book. Superb translation from French. Enjoy !

All my adult life I have seen references to Pascal, and read little quotations from *Pensees*. But somehow I had never read them myself. Big mistake! Now corrected.

I had checked this book out from the local library having read some excerpts included in a college magazine. I have not been disappointed. Pascal has amazing insight and perspective into humanity. This book is for the "thinker."

BLAISE PASCAL INTENDED TO WRITE A BOOK FILLED WITH WISDOM; INSTEAD DEATH INTERVENED. WHAT WAS LEFT IS THESE 'PENSEES', OR 'THOUGHTS.' PASCAL HAD OUTLINED HIS INTENTIONS FOR THE BOOK BY SHORT, PITHY COMMENTS ON EACH SUBJECT HE INTENDED TO GO INTO AT GREATER LENGTH. THESE 'THOUGHTS' HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED FOR GENERATIONS AND HAVE BECOME HIS MOST FAMOUS 'BOOK'! WHY? BECAUSE THE "SHORT, PITHY" SAYINGS WERE FOUND TO BE OFTEN SO GOOD, SO ACCURATE OR TELLING THAT THEY WERE PROBABLY BETTER THAN THE INTENDED BOOK! BEING INTERESTED IN THE CONTROVERSY, HE GOES INTO THE QUESTIONS SURROUNDING PREDESTINATION AND JANSENISM AT MORE LENGTH; BUT THERE IS PLENTY HERE FOR ALL! EVEN AS IT STANDS, IT IS AN UNFINISHED MASTERPIECE! RQ

Deep!

I disagree with the 5 star review now at the top of the list. The Penguin version not only gives the *pensees* in order - which is all this book does- but also groups them by subject, so if you're interested in P's thoughts about a specific item (like Distraction, say) you can find it in the table of contents and then read all of his thoughts on it in one place. This version only gives the original text, and if you're interested in a specific subject, you have to look it up in the index, only to find that the index is extremely inaccurate and sends you lines that don't even mention what you're interested in. The Penguin classics version is less attractive visually than this one, but at least it was produced by a helpful intelligence, unlike this one.

It is okay, but I was a little disappointed. I just felt that some of its sayings were a bit archaic & even

debatable. Maybe they just weren't written with clarity. It was not the best religious classic I have ever read.

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