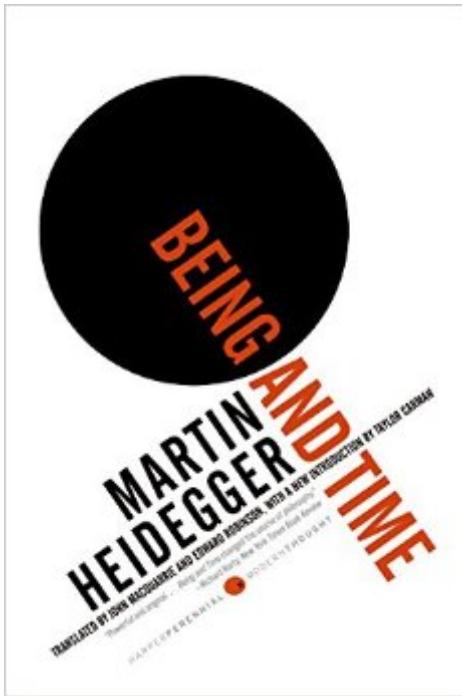


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Being And Time (Harper Perennial Modern Thought)



Synopsis

"What is the meaning of being?" This is the central question of Martin Heidegger's profoundly important work, in which the great philosopher seeks to explain the basic problems of existence. A central influence on later philosophy, literature, art, and criticismâ "as well as existentialism and much of postmodern thoughtâ "Being and Time forever changed the intellectual map of the modern world. As Richard Rorty wrote in the New York Times Book Review, "You cannot read most of the important thinkers of recent times without taking Heidegger's thought into account." This first paperback edition of John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson's definitive translation also features a new foreword by Heidegger scholar Taylor Carman.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Martin Heidegger's (1889 -- 1976) "Being and Time" (1927), together with Ludwig Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations" is one of the seminal philosophical works of the Twentieth Century. The work still remains difficult, obscure, and highly controversial. The book, and its author, provoke wildly varying responses. This translation, by Macquarrie and Robinson dates from 1962 and appeared in paperback only in 2008 with a useful introduction by philosopher Taylor Carman. Another translation, by Joan Stambaugh, appeared some years ago; but the Macquarrie and Robinson version, for all its difficulty, has become the standard version in English. Heidegger spent his early years in a seminary but abandoned Catholicism in 1917-1918. His interest in and ambivalence toward religion permeates "Being and Time." Heidegger was a friend of Edmund

Husserl, the founder of the philosophical movement known as phenomenology. "Being and Time" is dedicated to Husserl and includes several laudatory references to him. Heidegger was Husserl's assistant at Freiburg, but he wrote "Being and Time" when he had assumed a position at Marburg. He became Heidegger's successor at Freiburg upon Husserl's retirement in 1928. Before writing "Being and Time", Heidegger was regarded as a brilliant scholar and a charismatic teacher. But he had published little. "Being and Time" made him famous, virtually a celebrity, an accomplishment rare for a philosopher. Heidegger remained in the public eye through what became a notorious life through his political involvement with Nazism, and through a long life after WW II in which he did not expressly repudiate his earlier politics. Even though Heidegger turned Husserl on his head, the phenomenological influence in "Being and Time" is pervasive.

This is not the place to start if you want to understand Heidegger. If you want to understand Heidegger, you (happily) need to read a much shorter piece -- namely, chapter 1 only of An Introduction to Metaphysics. It's all right there. After you get through that tight little essay, you will understand the important things about who Heidegger was, what he was doing, and where he was going with it, intellectually speaking. Then you will be able to make an informed decision as to whether or not you wish to continue, one that is based on your own opinion, rather than the (many and strong) opinions of others. Heidegger is a highly controversial figure. Even his fiercest critics, however, acknowledge that his importance in philosophy is huge. (I am speaking of those critics of some stature, and disregarding the childrens' prattle found here.) Heidegger is important because he found a gaping and defining hole in every philosophical argument from Plato to the 20th century. Nietzsche had looked for it, and had suspected that something was there, something huge, but Heidegger nailed it once and for all. He deserves credit for this, and if you want to know what the hole was, see the citation above. It is what *else* Heidegger did that is the source of so much of the controversy and all of the criticism. Having produced a critique that laid the philosophical tradition of the west essentially to waste, he was vexed with the difficult problem of what to do next. He made some initial, obscure, vague, and frustratingly tentative attempts to construct something in its place. Being and Time is the prime example of that effort. It was an openly acknowledged failure.

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