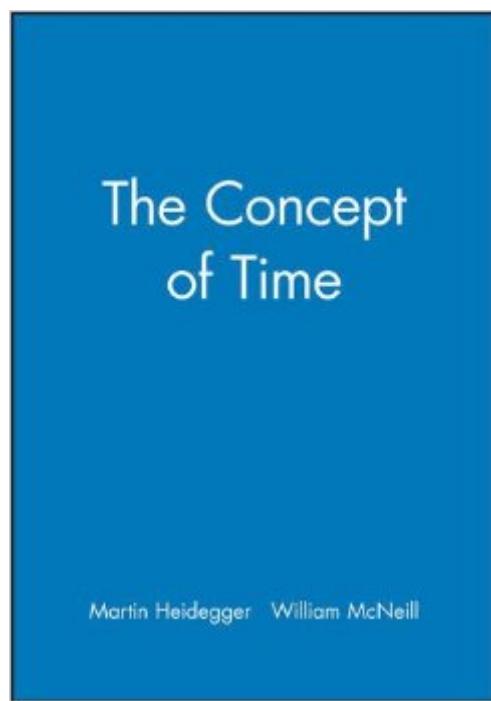


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# The Concept Of Time



## Synopsis

The Concept of Time presents the reconstructed text of a lecture delivered by Martin Heidegger to the Marburg Theological Society in 1924. It offers a fascinating insight into the developmental years leading up to the publication, in 1927, of his magnum opus Being and Time, itself one of the most influential philosophical works this century. In The Concept of Time Heidegger introduces many of the central themes of his analyses of human existence which were subsequently incorporated into Being and Time, themes such as Dasein, Being-in-the-world, everydayness, disposition, care, authenticity, death, uncanniness, temporality and historicity. Starting out by asking: What is time?, Heidegger proceeds to radicalise the concept of time and our relation to it, ending with the question: Are we ourselves time? Am I time?

## Book Information

Paperback: 76 pages

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell; 1 edition (April 8, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0631184252

ISBN-13: 978-0631184256

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (7 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

The 'Concept Of Time' is a lecture Heidegger delivered to the Marburg Theological Society in July of 1924. Heidegger introduces his 'ontological' way of asking the question 'what is time?' Heidegger's way of asking and answering the question of time is not physical 'clock-time', theological or cognitive. Rather, time is rendered intelligible through existence - Dasein. Heidegger distinguishes between authentic time as running back from the future and the inauthentic spatialization of time as a now point 't' next to spatial coordinates 'x,y,z'. Many readers are highly intimidated by Heidegger's masterwork 'Being and Time' because of its length, breadth of thought and fusion of language. 'The Concept of Time' is a very short and clear piece and makes an excellent primer for 'Being and Time' and his thought in general. Highly recommended for the

beginner and any serious scholar who ignored it in the past.

A valuable read for those interested in Heidegger, and I think, because of the different approach to the topic of time, this might be a better place to start for those planning on jumping into "Being and Time." In fact, the title is a bit misleading, as many of Heidegger's titles are, as it is more of an introduction to his conception of time. Moreover, it is sort of the groundwork for what one encounters in "Being and Time." That's not to say that this little book won't be valuable to someone who has already read his magnum opus. There were numerous items that Heidegger pointed to, regarding time, that I don't recall coming up in "Being and Time," or that I found better (more clearly) explicated what was meant in "Being and Time." Overall, this is a fascinating book that is so short I think it's a must-read: the payoff far exceeds the time and effort required, even if only mildly interested in the text.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was an influential and controversial German philosopher, primarily concerned with Being, and phenomenology---who was widely (perhaps incorrectly) also perceived as an Existentialist. His relationship with the Nazi party in Germany has been the subject of widespread controversy and debate [e.g., *Heidegger and Nazism*, *Heidegger and the Nazis*, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany*, *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism*, etc.] He wrote many other books, such as *Being and Time*, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *Basic Writings*, *Nietzsche*, Vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, Vol. 2: *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, *Nietzsche*: Vol. 3: *The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*; Vol. 4: *Nihilism*, *The Question Concerning Technology*, etc. The Translator's Preface notes, "The Concept of Time" is a translation of a lecture which Heidegger delivered to the Marburg Theological Society in July 1924. The lecture presents in a concise yet developed form many of the analyses which were subsequently expanded into Heidegger's major work *Being and Time* (1927). On account of its concise form (the analyses being presented, as Heidegger says, "in the form of theses" rather than that of detailed explication), the lecture can only be adequately understood and assessed in the light of that later work. Heidegger states, "If time finds its meaning in eternity, then it must be understood starting from eternity. The point of departure and path of this inquiry are thereby indicated in advance: from eternity to time. If our access to God is faith and if involving oneself with eternity is nothing other than this faith, then philosophy will never have eternity." Philosophy can never be relieved of this perplexity. The theologian, then, is the

legitimate expert on time. (Pg. 1) He states, "Time is that within which events take place. This is what Aristotle has already seen, in the context of the fundamental kind of Being pertaining to natural being: change, change of place, locomotion" (Pg. 1) Since time itself is not movement, it must somehow have to do with movement. Time is initially encountered in those entities which are changeable; change is in time. (Pg. 3-4) He explains, "Dasein is that entity which is characterized as being-in-the-world. Human life is not some subject that has to perform some trick in order to enter the world. Dasein as being-in-the-world means: being-in-the-world in such a way that this Being means: dealing with the world; tarrying alongside it in the manner of performing, effecting and completing, but also contemplating, interrogating, and determining by way of contemplation and comparison. Being-in-the-world is characterized as CONCERN." (Pg. 7) He asserts, "The authenticity of Dasein is what constitutes its most extreme possibility of Being" (Pg. 7) Authenticity as the most extreme possibility of Dasein's Being is that ontological determination in which all the aforementioned characters are what they are. The perplexity concerning our grasp of Dasein is grounded not in the limitation, uncertainty or incompleteness of our cognitive faculty, but in the very entity to be apprehended: it is grounded in a fundamental possibility of its Being. (Pg. 10) He continues, "Dasein is authentically alongside itself, it is truly existent, whenever it maintains itself in this running ahead. This running ahead is nothing other than the authentic and singular future of one's own Dasein. In running ahead Dasein IS its future, in such a way that in this being futural it comes back to its past and present. Dasein, conceived in its most extreme possibility of Being, is TIME ITSELF, not IN time." (Pg. 13-14) He observes, "What Dasein says about time it speaks out of everydayness. Dasein as clinging to its present says: the past is what is past, it is irretrievable. This is the past of the everyday present which resides in the present of its busyness. This is why Dasein, thus determined as present, fails to see what is past. That way of viewing history arising in the present merely sees in history an irretrievable busyness: what was going on. The contemplation of what was going on is inexhaustible. It loses itself in its material." (Pg. 19) He concludes, "Philosophy will never get to the root of what history is so long as it analyses history as an object of contemplation for method. The enigma of history lies in what it means to be historical." (Pg. 20) He continues, "Let us repeat the question" (Pg. 1) It has transformed itself. "What is time?" (Pg. 1) became the question: "Who is time?" (Pg. 1) More closely: are we ourselves time? Or closer still: am I my time? In this way I come closest to it, and if I understand the question correctly, it is then taken completely seriously. Such questioning is this the most appropriate manner of access to and of dealing with time as in each case mine. Then

Dasein would be: being questionable. (Pg. 22) This very short book will be of keen interest to anyone studying the development of Heidegger's thought, or of *Being and Time* in particular.

Warning: this pre-dates "Being and Time," Heidegger's masterwork, and, by extension, late Heidegger ("Introduction to Metaphysics," "Identity and Difference"). So please don't think of this book as giving you the whole - or even a decent part - of Heidegger's thought. What it does give are some thoughts on time, being, and another way of looking at history that are invaluable to a student of philosophy. It is a good introduction to learning how to think like a philosopher (not that I'm any good at it, but still). Heidegger in this lecture explains how time should be thought of in the context of our death (the possibility of 'not-being' causes 'being' to think about time seriously in the first place). With that in mind, 'being' at a particular time can be thought of as future-looking, even though to look at the future such 'being' must work through the past - such a 'working through,' of course, creating the present. There's far more than that in the product, and I would encourage you to get a copy. It is a quick read, but Heidegger's reasoning is memorable, and his notion of what "Dasein" is, why time should not be thought of in the context of eternity, and how history should be looked at are all important for those of us who want to learn about how to think through such issues.

Heidegger's 1924 lecture on the Concept of time is an unusually clear enunciation of many of the central concepts bearing on the phenomenology of temporality. Much of this lecture would later be elaborated and developed in his celebrated *Being and Time*, and indeed, *The Concept of Time* is often called the Ur-form to *Being and Time*. You will find many of the fundamental concepts that constitute the ecstatic horizon of temporality, particularly the temporal individuation of Dasein. This is an essential text both for new and seasoned readers of Heidegger.

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