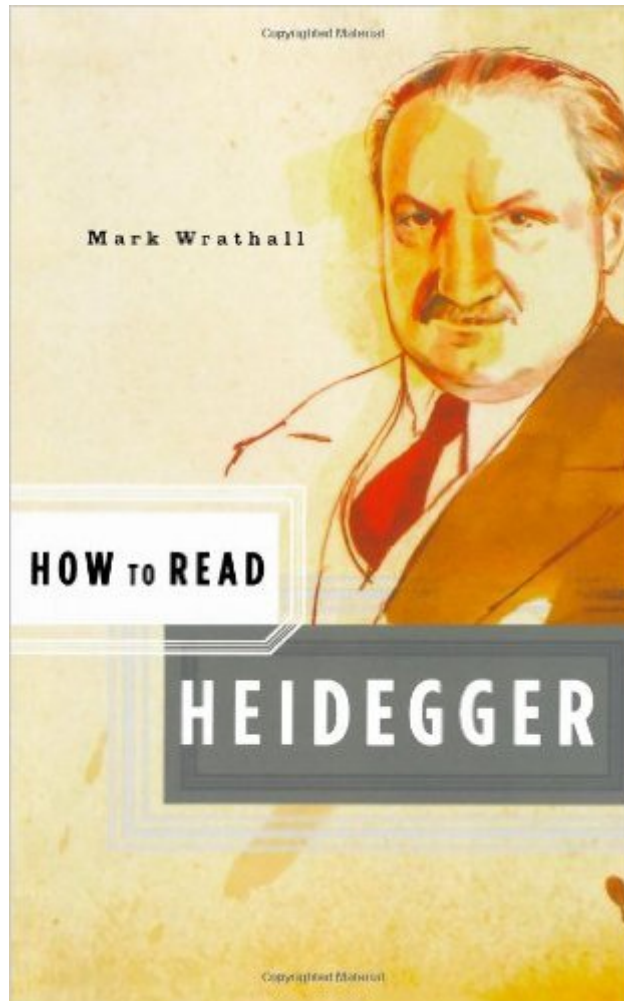


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How To Read Heidegger (How To Read)



Synopsis

Intent on letting the reader experience the pleasure and intellectual stimulation in reading classic authors, the How to Read series will facilitate and enrich your understanding of texts vital to the canon. Martin Heidegger is perhaps the most influential, yet least readily understood, philosopher of the last century. Mark Wrathall unpacks Heidegger's dense prose and guides the reader through Heidegger's early concern with the nature of human existence, to his later preoccupation with the threat that technology poses to our ability to live worthwhile lives. Wrathall pays particular attention to Heidegger's revolutionary analysis of human existence as inextricably shaped by a shared world. This leads to an exploration of Heidegger's views on the banality of public life and the possibility of authentic anticipation of death as a response to that banality. Wrathall reviews Heidegger's scandalous involvement with National Socialism, situating it in the context of Heidegger's views about the movement of world history. He also explains Heidegger's important accounts of truth, art, and language. Extracts are taken from Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time*, as well as a variety of his best-known essays and lectures.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To the chagrin of some and to the delight of others, Heidegger's influence seems to have bloomed in the past decade. No longer a mere hopelessly whimsical obscurantist, his once berated name even pops up in Analytic philosophy courses. None of this has made Heidegger's text easier to understand, of course. But anyone wanting to penetrate his spiny thicket of obscure and recursive

prose in English can now find much more help. Guides for "beginners" have bred like rabbits recently. Additional volumes seem to fall from the sky every few months. Nonetheless, many of these "introductions" would probably not serve absolute beginners (i.e., those lacking backgrounds in philosophy) very efficiently. Heidegger's work remains notoriously difficult to distill into facile chunks, particularly in isolation from the long philosophical tradition his work addresses. Enter Mark Wrathall's "How To Read Heidegger." This short book seems to pinpoint those readers possessing virulent curiosity about Heidegger's ideas but not possessing extensive philosophical backgrounds. Of course this involves a tradeoff in overall depth and breadth, but the absolute newcomer will at least puncture that nagging question "what's all this fuss about Heidegger?" Though this 118-page book only skims the surface of Heidegger's main ideas, it nonetheless covers a lot of ground. Both "early" and "late" Heidegger appear. First, a short introduction provides a defense against charges of illogicism (or even alogicism) while setting the overall context. It's important to understand that Heidegger did challenge the primacy of science (at least ontologically) but he never thought that science was misguided or should "go away."

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