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### The Philosophy of Time (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)



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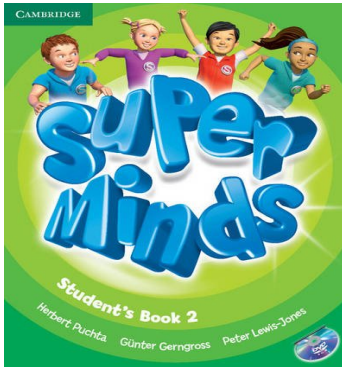
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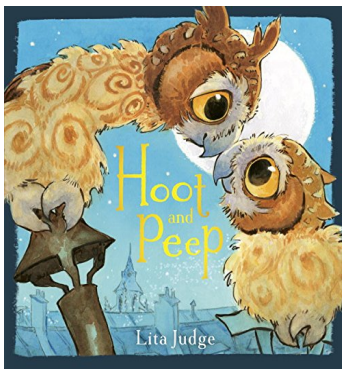
This volume provides a balanced set of reviews which introduce the central topics in the philosophy of time. This is the first introductory anthology on the subject to appear for many years; the contributors are distinguished, and two of the essays are specially written for this collection. In their introduction, the editors summarize the background to the debate, and show the relevance of issues in the philosophy of time for other branches of philosophy and for science. Contributors include J.M.E. McTaggart, Arthur N. Prior, D.H. Mellor, Sydney Shoemaker, Graeme Forbes, Lawrence Sklar, Michael Dummett, David Lewis, W.H. Newton-Smith, and Anthony Quinton.

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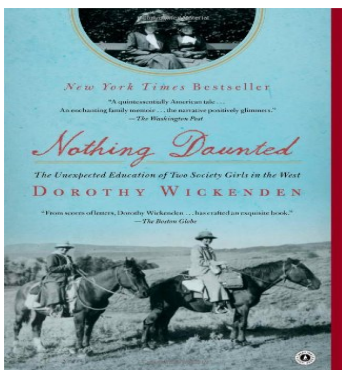
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**Review 1:**

Le Poidevin's volume is a must-read for anyone who either wants an anthology that lays out some of the most fundamental and important points of discussion for the philosophy of time, or those who are seeking a starting point (i.e., a set of classic, oft-referred-to texts) for study of the philosophy of time. It is a necessary preliminary to the subject, in my opinion. In beginning serious study of the philosophy of time, I have come across numerous references to the papers contained in this collection, so I think the volume is very nearly essential to studying the topic. I am open to suggestions regarding a better elementary anthology with equivalent relevance, but I have to say I have not come across one such volume that compares. Any work that does not contain McTaggart's classic paper, "The Unreality of Time," is an immediate dud. Le Poidevin's volume also contains other modern classics, such as works by Price, Shoemaker, and Mellor, to name some of the more notable ones.

I simply cannot express essentialness of this anthology to one's studies, as I think the metric for a work of this type, being that it is an anthology of modern classics in the philosophy of time and some of the most-cited papers of the century (or at least the most talked about ideas within the subject), is the number of citations. If there is one complaint I could give, it is that I wish Le Poidevin would have added a few more articles that were just as strategically chosen; or that some commentary were placed between the texts. It will be some time before another book will meet its match, in terms of function. I recommend this to all interested in the philosophy of time, due to the additional fact that the papers do not entail any technical physics, mostly remaining in the realm of general ontological assessment of time, as well as the realm of metaphysical exposition and inquiry.

**Review 2:**

Have 'jumped' thru most of it. This is a compilation of essays on TIME by a number of recognized philosophers with a variety of conceptions as to what TIME is. They review historical views and present their own, in a language format that is as complex and twisted as I have ever encountered. As a psychologist, I step back - at times - and wonder if they have lost the subject in the giant seaweed of verbiage, but by mustering my remnants of a first class Ivy League education I come out with considerable enlightenment. If you are a (very) serious investigator of this question (WHAT IS TIME) and have a superior command of the English language - including its grammatical structure - you will find this book well worth the money; for the challenges AND the insights. If you're looking for anything else - FORGET IT.

**Review 3:**

Relativity is a simple theory commonly presented in complex and confusing ways. Not in this Princeton Press book that uses an intelligent and very clear approach to present space-time and relativity concepts, being complete under these aspects. Its essence can be completely reached even by readers without superior mathematics skills.

**Review 4:**

This is an excellent collection of readings on the philosophy of time. The contents include twelve essays by twelve different philosophers (including the editors of the volume) -- the very first of which is taken from the famous thirty-third chapter of John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart's "The Nature of Existence". (Originally entitled "Time," the chapter is here retitled "The Unreality of Time.")

I remarked in my review of that book that McTaggart's argument has been tried and found

wanting, but one important partial exception is featured in this volume: D.H. Mellor's piece "The Unreality of Tense." Mellor does not, indeed, accept McTaggart's conclusion that time itself is "unreal," but he does take McTaggart to have provided a successful argument for a "tenseless" theory of time. (Mellor's piece is a revision of chapter 6 of his book *Real Time* -- the first edition, I presume.)

The other essays range over a wide variety of topics, from David Lewis's "The Paradoxes of Time Travel" to Michael Dummett's "Bringing About The Past," from whether time really "passes" or not and whether the nature of time is a philosophical or an empirical question to whether time has a beginning and whether change is real. I shall not try to comment on them all.

But the selections are excellent and the collection as a whole is very thorough. In short, this a fine set of readings for anyone with time on his hands.

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