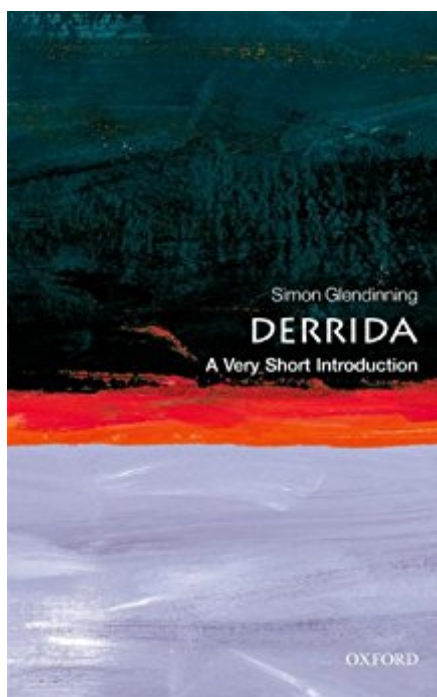


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Derrida: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher, developed his critical technique known as 'deconstruction'. His work is associated with ideas surrounding both post-structuralism and post-modern philosophy, and he was known to have challenged some of the unquestioned assumptions of our philosophical tradition. In this Very Short Introduction, Simon Glendinning explores both the difficulty and significance of the work of Derrida. He presents Derrida's challenging ideas as making a significant contribution to, and providing a powerful reading of, our philosophical heritage. Defending Derrida against many of the charges that were placed against him, he attempts to show why Derrida's work causes such extreme reactions. Glendinning explains Derrida's distinctive mode of engagement with our philosophical tradition, and shows that this is not a merely negative thing. By exploring his most famous and influential texts, Glendinning shows how and why Derrida's work of deconstruction is inspired not by a 'critical frenzy', but by a loving respect for philosophy. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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Customer Reviews

I'm not a big Derrida fan, but have tried from time-to-time to understand his appeal (one-time appeal) to so many American academics. Since most of Derrida's own writing is impenetrable (sometimes, I think, by design), I have turned to secondary accounts of his life and work and have found some understanding there. Prof. Glendinning's Very Short Introduction is for me, however, not one of the more helpful guides. Too much of the prose mimics Derrida's style in its unnecessary complexity, making much of its meaning obscure. Of course that could be the point since actual meaning (outside the mystical realm) does not seem to be possible in the written world Derrida purports to describe, deconstruct or dismember. Since so much of Derrida's "original" thought seems tied to Plato (who was closer in time to the real logos, that which was in the beginning, than was Derrida), I wonder if maybe reading Plato and forgetting Derrida altogether would be a more productive, beneficial and satisfying use of one's time for those interested in Derrida's Platonic razzmatazz. Yet the only tools I have at hand to express my views are "signifiers of signifiers." And this puts me far away from the original logos, and far out of touch with the idea of its mystical return, its second coming, which is, it appears, Deconstruction itself, or at least the prophet of Deconstruction, our latter-day Jeremiah who is signified "Jacques." So nothing I can say, or perhaps merely write, has any meaning, at least not any of which I can be aware. I think of the decoder rings in cereal boxes when I was a kid. Then I think of deconstruction. Who created the code on those rings? And was the code the original deconstructor?

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