

## Being And Martin Heidegger

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Martin Heidegger is widely considered to be the father of modern atheistic existentialism. He is the author of some 70 works. His writings (particularly his later writings) have also been influential in the development of postmodern thought, but a detailed discussion of that connection is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, for the purposes of this paper we will focus on his connection to existentialism.<sup>1</sup>

The format of this paper will be first, to present some background information about Martin Heidegger – biographical information and major influences – and the basics of his thought. Second, we will present a critique of his position. Lastly we will offer an apologetic approach to answer this position.

### Background

Martin Heidegger was born into a poor Roman Catholic family, on September 26, 1889, in Messkirch, Germany.

In 1907, while a student at a secondary school in Konstanz, Heidegger was given a book by the parish priest. That book was the dissertation of Franz Brentano, titled, *On the Manifold Meaning of Being according to Aristotle*. Martin Heidegger said it was, “the chief help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy.”<sup>2</sup> “Brentano succeeded in demonstrating that the question of being captivated Aristotle as the single most important question.”<sup>3</sup>

On September 30, 1909, Heidegger entered the seminary with plans to become a Jesuit priest. However, his novitiate into the Jesuit order lasted just two weeks. On October 13th, he withdrew without taking minor orders.

In 1911, he began to study theology at Freiberg University under Carl Braig, and read his book, *On Being: An Outline of Ontology*.<sup>4</sup>

Some months later [he] learned of a multivolume work that a student of Franz Brentano had published a decade earlier – Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations*...Husserl's own project, which his second volume called a “phenomenology,” intrigued the young Heidegger.<sup>5</sup>

This calls for a brief explanation of Phenomenology. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.”<sup>6</sup> Simply put, Phenomenology is a method of describing phenomena in terms of our perception of them. It focuses, not on the nature of the objects perceived, but with...

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