



## Duration and Simultaneity: Bergson and the Einsteinian Universe (Philosophy of Science)

By Henri Bergson

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### Duration and Simultaneity: Bergson and the Einsteinian Universe (Philosophy of Science) By Henri Bergson

Henri Bergson (1859 - 1941) introduced new life to French philosophy, examining the non-mathematical sciences from a philosophical stance. He introduced the concept of non-linear time to philosophical investigations of change. For this and other work he received the Nobel Prize in 1924. *Duration and Simultaneity* deals with one of the great Bergsonian themes, time. A central contention is that science and philosophy alike systematically misrepresent the nature of time. Bergson suggests that the traditional association between the model of space and time is incoherent. Unlike space, time is not measurable by objective standard. This contention is tried out here against the major movement in physics of the day; relativity. Tracing the development of the theory from special' to general' relativity, Bergson finds that a fundamental requirement of the theory is an impossibility - the assumption that the experiences of two observers moving at different speeds within two different physical systems might be thought of as simultaneous. This is to ignore the limits of possible experience.

As with much of Bergson's thought the book has had a complex reception in both the world of physics and philosophy. This edition is supplemented by a number of extracts bearing on the debate of Bergson's critique of relativity, including a previously untranslated interview between Einstein and Bergson.

This edition enhances the 1922 edition with an introduction by Robin Durie which appraises the book's early reception and examines the currency of Bergson's thought on time for the philosophy of science today. Durie lectures in Philosophy at Staffordshire University, is on the board of the Forum for European Philosophy and is the Secretary of the British Society of Phenomenology. He is also the author of *Face to Face*.

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*By Henri Bergson*

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

Duration and Simultaneity has always held a special place amongst Bergson's writings. As profound as it is perplexing, its challenge to the scientific approach to time - through the concept of 'lived time' - remains as relevant today as it did 80 years ago. -- *John Mullarkey*

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