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The Visible And The Invisible (Studies In Phenomenology And Existential Philosophy)



Synopsis

The Visible and the Invisible contains the unfinished manuscript and working notes of the book Merleau-Ponty was writing when he died. The text is devoted to a critical examination of Kantian, Husserlian, Bergsonian, and Sartrean method, followed by the extraordinary "The Intertwining--The Chiasm," that reveals the central pattern of Merleau-Ponty's own thought. The working notes for the book provide the reader with a truly exciting insight into the mind of the philosopher at work as he refines and develops new pivotal concepts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the most important books of philosophy written in the twentieth-century. That is a truly astounding accomplishment considering that the book remained unfinished at the time of Merleau-Ponty's sudden and unexpected death at the age of 53. The book as it exists today is really only the introduction to the work Merleau-Ponty had planned along with some rather cryptic working notes. Nevertheless, the ontology that Merleau-Ponty begins to work out in this work is utterly revolutionary. Ontology has been dominated since Descartes by the subject-object dichotomy (res cogitans and res extensa) and despite many valiant attempts has been completely incapable of twisting free of this schema. This gives rise to a whole host of philosophical problems (Does the external world exist beyond our consciousness of it? Even if it does exist can we ever know the world outside our own consciousness? Is the objective, physical world ontologically primary

(realism)? Or, is the mental, psychic world ontologically primary (idealism)?). Rather than attempting to align himself with one side or the other in these perennial philosophical debates Merleau-Ponty attempts, in this work, to finally twist free of the ontological schema that is responsible for producing these irresolvable aporias in the first place. Merleau-Ponty attempts to radically rethink the being of the world and provide a new ontology which is no longer dominated by a self-present (and interior) subject on the one side, and a purely exterior object-world on the other side. Merleau-Ponty writes, "What interests us is not the reasons one can have to consider the existence of the world 'uncertain' - as if one already knew what to exist is and as if the whole question were to apply this concept appropriately.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) was a French phenomenological philosopher; he died suddenly of a stroke in 1961 at age 53. He wrote many books such as Signs, The Primacy of Perception, Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem, The Structure of Behavior, The Prose of the World, In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays, etc. The Editorial Note to this posthumously-published book states, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty died on May 3, 1961. A manuscript was found among his papers which contained the first part of a work whose composition he had begun two years earlier. It is entitled "The Visible and the Invisible." We have found no trace of this title before March, 1959. Before then notes concerning this project bear the reference "Being and Meaning," or "Genealogy of the True," or, lastly, "The Origin of Truth."

CO-FOUNDER OF THE POST-MODERN MOVEMENT IN FRANCE: Merleau-Ponty, along with Beaufret, introduced Heidegger to France; and introduced him in a unique post-modern way that spawned an entire school of thought. Because of the significance of this result; this manuscript must be considered one of the most significant for the 20th century. It has shaped 21st century thinking profoundly. Whereas Beaufret emphasized the "dokounta-threshold" of Aristotle; Merleau-Ponty concentrates on the three transcendental-moments at the "threshold-of-being". This is the AXIS of his dialectic between centripetal-force and centrifugal-force. Each aspect is positioned on alternate sides of the AXIS. The concepts you are already familiar with in post-modern thinking now have their origin explained. Merleau-Ponty offers more here than Beaufret. His unconscious loop of Sophia-wisdom is contrasted with the conscious loop of gnosis-wisdom; without either side gaining dominance. They exist in reciprocity and necessity for each other. As a hint, you should understand that the "threshold-of-being", itself, contains the three moments of: unveiling signs, associating signs, and opening signs for consciousness. Each side of the dialectic has a circular sub-system

that serves it. The process is intricate, systematic, without being dogmatic; and "clearly" presented by a brilliant scholar. The ecstatic moment in the unconscious re-introduces us to consciousness. And, the "inertia-moment" in consciousness re-introduces us to the unconscious. The vertical-cut of this man's brilliant understanding was very brief. He died at only 53 years old. A very brief flash of brilliance that will affect us forever; and which is highly recognizable today in all post-modern thinking.

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