



**Phenomenology and the Social World: The  
Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and its Relation to  
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*Laurie Spurling*

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# Phenomenology and the Social World: The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and its Relation to the Social Sciences (Routledge Library Editions: Phenomenology)

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The term 'phenomenology' has become almost as over-used and emptied of meaning as that other word from Continental Philosophy, namely 'existentialism'. Yet Husserl, who first put forward the phenomenological method, considered it a rigorous alternative to positivism, and in the hands of Merleau-Ponty, a disciple of Husserl in France, phenomenology became a way of gaining a disciplined and coherent perspective on the world in which we live.

When this study originally published in 1977 there were only a few books in English on Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. It introduced the reader and suggested how his thought might throw light on some of the assumptions and presuppositions of certain contemporary forms of Anglo-Saxon philosophy and social science. It also demonstrates how phenomenology seeks to unite philosophy and social science, rather than define them as mutually exclusive domains of knowledge.

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