

Unveiling the Enigmatic Performance: A Journey into Performance Phenomenology and "To the Thing Itself"

Performance, a multifaceted and enigmatic realm, has captivated the minds of philosophers, artists, and scholars alike. In recent years, performance phenomenology has emerged as a groundbreaking approach to understanding the unique nature of this ephemeral and embodied experience. At the heart of this philosophical exploration lies the seminal work "To the Thing Itself" by German philosopher Martin Heidegger, which offers a profound and thought-provoking examination of being and presence. This article delves into the intricate tapestry of performance phenomenology, elucidating its key concepts and exploring how it illuminates the essence of performance itself.

Performance Phenomenology: Unveiling the Embodied Experience

Performance phenomenology investigates the lived experience of performance, focusing on the interplay between the performer, the audience, and the environment. It seeks to capture the immediacy, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity that characterize this unique form of expression. Through an immersive and embodied approach, performance phenomenology strives to understand the ways in which performance shapes our understanding of the world and our place within it.

Performance Phenomenology: To The Thing Itself (Performance Philosophy)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Phenomenology and Architecture: Examining Embodied Experience and Graphic Representations of the Built Environment

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...the task of architecture extends beyond its material, functional, and measurable properties—and even beyond aesthetics—into the mental and existential sphere of life. (Juliana Palomares, *Architect*, 2015)

We can describe a work of architecture by its objective characteristics—descriptions that are independent of an occupant or viewer. These characteristics include location, physical context, style, age, dimensions, proportions, and materiality. An objective description is quickly exhausted as dependent qualities come into view. These include the function or use, and the meaning or symbolism found in the design. These dependent qualities are notable not only because of their subjectivity but because of their variability. Meaning or symbolism intended by the architect at the time of a building's construction may be lost or transformed over time. Architecture may take on new meaning to future occupants. The Pantheon in Rome was valued as a temple to the Roman gods by the ancient Romans, as a Christian church by medieval Romans, and as a mausoleum beginning in the Renaissance. Architects and engineers today admire it as an early concrete structure, which remains the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world (Fig. 1).

The independent and dependent characteristics of a work of architecture indicate the distinction between the objective world and the world as an individual being experiences and understands it. Edmund Husserl described these two worlds in *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907*. Here he says that there is a spatial and temporal world around us, but that we are the "centers of reference" for this world. The environment objects (Objektien), with their properties, changes, and relations, are what they are for themselves, but they have a position relative to us, initially a spatio-temporal position and then also a "spiritual [cultural] one" (cited in Woodruff Smith, 2013, 219). Similarly, Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes this duality in his course notes from the Collège de France in the 1950s, building on biologist

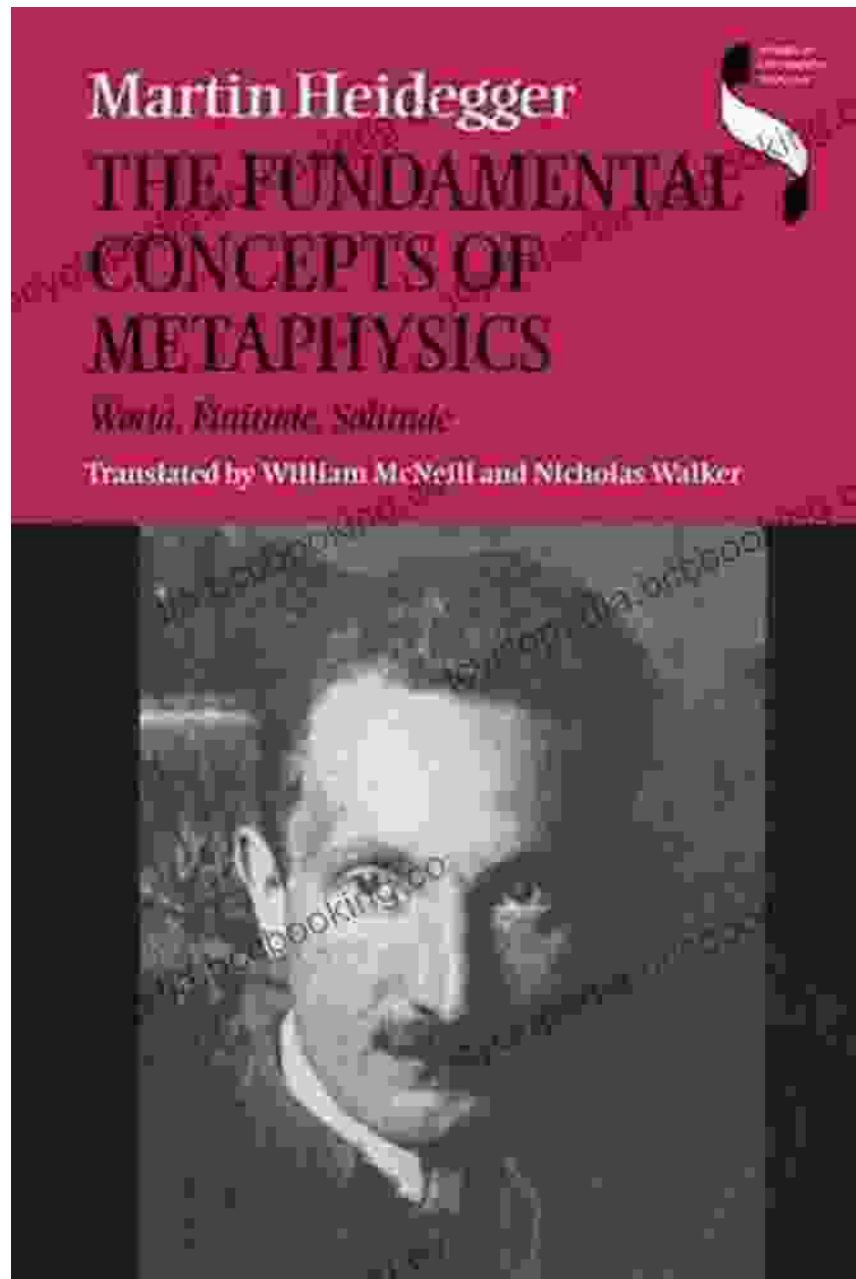
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"To the Thing Itself": Heidegger's Quest for authentic being

In his influential work "To the Thing Itself," Martin Heidegger embarked on a philosophical journey to uncover the essence of things, beyond their mere representation or objectification. He argued that true understanding lies in an encounter with the "thing itself," an encounter that is immediate, unmediated, and devoid of preconceptions. This concept of "thingness" resonates deeply with performance phenomenology, as it seeks to capture the authentic and unmediated experience of performance.



Performance and Presence: The Ephemeral and the Enduring

Performance is an inherently ephemeral art form, existing only in the moment of its enactment. Yet, despite its fleeting nature, performance has the power to leave a lasting imprint on its participants and observers. Through performance phenomenology, we can explore the paradoxical nature of performance as both ephemeral and enduring. We can delve into

the ways in which performances create a sense of liveness and immediacy, while also leaving behind traces and memories that resonate long after the curtains have fallen.



Intersubjectivity and the Shared Experience

Performance is fundamentally a social act, involving performers and audience members in a shared experience. Performance phenomenology recognizes the intersubjective nature of this experience, examining the ways in which performers and observers co-create meaning and understanding through their interactions. It explores the dynamic interplay between the subjective experiences of each individual and the collective experience of the performance as a whole.



Performance as Ritual and Transformation

Rituals are an integral part of human social and cultural life, and performance often takes on a ritualistic dimension. Performance phenomenology investigates the ways in which performances can evoke a sense of sacredness, community, and transformation. It explores how

performances can create a space for reflection, catharsis, and the exploration of deep-seated emotions and beliefs.



Performance phenomenology offers a rich and nuanced lens through which to understand the enigmatic nature of performance. It invites us to immerse ourselves in the lived experience of performance, to encounter it as something that is both immediate and enduring, ephemeral and transformative. By engaging with the ideas presented in "To the Thing Itself," we can deepen our appreciation for the unique qualities of performance and its profound impact on our human experience.

Performance Phenomenology To The Thing Itself Performance Philosophy is an indispensable resource for anyone seeking to explore the philosophical underpinnings of performance. Through its insightful analyses and thought-provoking insights, this book illuminates the essence of

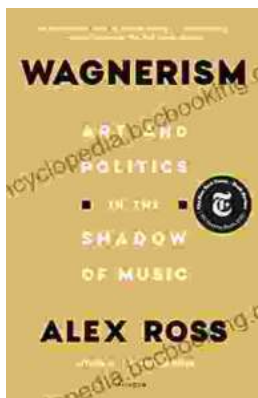
performance, revealing its capacity to shape our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world around us.



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