



Wittgenstein: A Social Theory of Knowledge

David Bloor

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From the rear cover of this 213 page book: David Bloor's book presents a systematic exposition of Wittgenstein's later philosophical work, emphasizing its strong sociological and naturalistic thrust. In his later writings, Wittgenstein was consistent in stressing the priority of society over the individual and regarding individual actions and beliefs as natural phenomena. His appreciation of the full significance of the fact that people are social animals and that knowledge is a collective achievement led him into building what might be called 'a social theory of knowledge'. His work represents a determined assault on some of our most cherished myths about knowledge and rationality. Unfortunately, his antipathy to positive theorizing meant that he stopped short of propounding theories based on the concepts explored in his writing, such as his central theme of language-games. [This book] shows how Wittgenstein's ideas can be developed using examples drawn from history, anthropology and the social sciences. The book breaks out of the narrow conventions that usually surround discussions of Wittgenstein's works, not only by its use of empirical material, but also through the author's attempt to develop a systematic theory of language-games. Throughout the book, careful attention is paid to the relationship between Wittgenstein's ideas and those of other thinkers such as Buhler, Skinner, Habermas, Durkheim, Mary Douglas, and Winch."

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