



A Realist Philosophy of Social Science: Explanation and Understanding

Peter T. Manicas

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This introduction to the philosophy of social science provides an original conception of the task and nature of social inquiry. Peter Manicas discusses the role of causality seen in the physical sciences and offers a reassessment of the problem of explanation from a realist perspective. He argues that the fundamental goal of theory in both the natural and social sciences is not, contrary to widespread opinion, prediction and control, or the explanation of events (including behaviour). Instead, theory aims to provide an understanding of the processes which, together, produce the contingent outcomes of experience. Offering a host of concrete illustrations and examples of critical ideas and issues, this accessible book will be of interest to students of the philosophy of social science, and social scientists from a range of disciplines.

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