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The Hermeneutic Imagination: Outline of a Positive Critique of Scientism and Sociology (Routledge Library Editions: Social Theory)

Josef Bleicher

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In his previous book, *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, Josef Bleicher offered an introduction to the subject, locating it mainly within the philosophy of social science, and looking at the profound impact it is having on a wide range of intellectual pursuits. This book follows on from this and expounds the author's view that the development of the hermeneutic imagination is an indispensable condition for reflexive sociological work and emancipatory social practice.

Dr Bleicher examines the various approaches to sociology – empiricist, functionalist, structuralist, interpretive, critical – by reference to a hermeneutic paradigm, and shows how the hermeneutic imagination leads to a redirection in sociology, away from scientistic presuppositions and towards an awareness of the dialogue which links the subject and object in the study of social phenomena. He argues that by allowing the hermeneutic imagination to develop, it is possible to counter the steering of social processes on the basis of technocratic imperatives, and to provide a rational anticipation of a better future.

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