



Analogical Investigations: Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Human Reasoning

G. E. R. Lloyd

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Western philosophy and science are responsible for constructing some powerful tools of investigation, aiming at discovering the truth, delivering robust explanations, verifying conjectures, showing that inferences are sound and demonstrating results conclusively. By contrast reasoning that depends on analogies has often been viewed with suspicion. Professor Lloyd first explores the origins of those Western ideals, criticises some of their excesses and redresses the balance in favour of looser, admittedly non-demonstrative analogueal reasoning. For this he takes examples both from ancient Greek and Chinese thought and from the materials of recent ethnography to show how different ancient and modern cultures have developed different styles of reasoning. He also develops two original but controversial ideas, that of semantic stretch (to cast doubt on the literal/metaphorical dichotomy) and the multidimensionality of reality (to bypass the realism versus relativism and nature versus nurture controversies).

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