
This book professes four goals: 1) to summarize and clarify current positions on the value controversy; 2) to suggest the weaknesses of such positions; 3) to present two current, but contrasting, standpoints; and 4) to offer a proposed orientation that goes beyond these positions in order to stimulate and set a focus for debate.

The first half of this work is a review of the literature centering around the notion of a value-free social science. This notion is characterized by an emphasis on increasing knowledge for its own sake while systematically excluding questions of value, i.e., “extra-epistemic values.” Foss argues that this position is both inaccurate and inadequate. “Inaccurate” because sociologists inherently betray their extra-epistemic values in their work, e.g., by the particular subject and focus of study, by the particular method chosen, or by the means of knowledge dissemination. “Inadequate” because it ignores questions of value, even though these concerns do, in fact, arise. Thus, for Foss, the real question confronting sociologists is not whether to adopt an extra-epistemic value orientation, but which orientation should be adopted. He utilizes reference material from various viewpoints, criticizes them, and makes his own stance known. A clear, neatly argued, although not particularly original, presentation is made.

In chapters Three and Five, the skeptic's view and the naturalistic-evolutionary view are considered. The skeptic asserts, following Weber et al., that questions of value cannot be empirically answered, that one cannot derive “ought” from “is”. Foss largely ignores other critics of this position, criticizing it himself on the grounds that it still fails to address the problem, *viz.* that extra-epistemic values inevitably enter into sociological inquiry.

The naturalistic-evolutionary view presented here is a summary of C.H. Waddington's *The Ethical Animal*. In contrast to the skeptic's position, Waddington holds that ethical systems can be chosen according to factual criteria. Ethics arise out of societal interaction and have survived because they promote survival and
rebuttal rests upon the clarity of his proposal—something which, in fact, it lacks. The major questions which remain are: Exactly what is freedom? How do we know when we see it? How do we achieve it? While an interesting compatibility between both the skeptic’s and the naturalistic-evolutionary views regarding the value of freedom is pointed out, freedom is left ill-defined. For instance, is there a difference between quality and quantity of choices? Does the imposition of means to freedom constitute a breach of it? Is the orientation itself a value imposition to those traditional cultures, etc.? Foss skirts these issues by stating that the profession should first agree on his broad orientation as a starting point for debate and clarification. However, debate is stimulated by clear, provocative arguments, not suggestions for discussion. In addition, the inclusion of his proposed orientation seems misplaced if aimed at the profession, since this work is largely a summary and an introduction to the value controversy.

University of Kansas

Lanny Ace Thompson