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*Du Bois' Democratic Defence of the Value Free Ideal*

The value free ideal for science may be understood as the belief that “social, ethical, and political values should have no influence over the reasoning of scientists” (Douglas 2009, 1). Philosophers of science debate the proper role of non-epistemic value judgements in scientific reasoning. Many, perhaps most, modern authors oppose the value free ideal, claiming that we should not even try to get scientists to eliminate all such non-epistemic value judgements from their reasoning. W.E.B. Du Bois, on the other hand, has a defence of the value free ideal in science that is likewise rooted in a conception of the proper place of science in a democracy. In particular, Du Bois argues that the value free ideal must be upheld in order to, first, retain public trust in science and, second, ensure that those best placed to make use of scientifically acquired information are able to do so. This latter argument turns out to relate Du Bois' position on the value free ideal in science to his defence of epistemic democracy. In my talk I will elaborate upon and defend Du Bois' arguments in favour of the value free ideal.

Reference: Heather Douglas. *Science, Policy, and the Value-Free Ideal*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 2009.