

Review of: "Social responsibility, disciplinary moral identity, and not-so-value-free biomedical research(ers)"

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This is an excellent review of the existing literature on the vexed problem of value freedom, and develops the useful idea of distinctive disciplinary moral identities. The focus is on biomedicine, where it is assumed that the goals are good, and that this justifies the disciplines, regardless of the individual motives of the participants. But these are also the most ethically challenged, in the sense that they are the disciplines which most frequently involve risks or harms to the subjects of research, who are instruments of research, not always beneficiaries. The paper makes the point that ethical training and collaboration with humanists may have perverse effects, such as leaving the issues to the humanists after the research is designed, or inflating the researchers sense of command of the ethical issues. It is solution oriented. My concern is that the solutions and indeed the framing of the issues tends to ignore the reality of the incentives that actually drive and constrain research, which repeatedly lead to fraud, money-seeking, and questionable adherence to the consensus that pays best. That is the reality of "co-production" in action. Writers like Kitcher are unintentionally providing ideological cover for this problematic system. And perhaps a focus on "ethics" in general has the same effect.