

VALUE SUBJECTIVISM NOT A THEORY

The thesis that "values are not objective, are not part of the fabric of the world" (e.g. Mackie 1977 p. 15) "is a negative doctrine, not a positive one: it says what there isn't, not what there is" (id., p. 17). It is hardly a doctrine, much less a theory: it is in the same methodological category as the theses that there are no unicorns, witches, or devils. All these negative theses are important but they do not amount to theories. A theory is a set of "positive" statements about properties of objects held to exist either materially or formally. Such "positive" statements have, either singly or jointly, a deductive power: they entail any number of further statements. On the other hand negative statements are bereft of deductive power. Their power resides in their confrontation with

singular statements of the same kind. For example, the general thesis that
of witchcraft
there are no witches can be used to argue that the accusation/against John
Doe is preposterous.

Inv 82842
FT 003