



Observing Ourselves: Essays in Social Research

Earl Babbie

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Is it possible for human beings to study other humans as scientifically as physicists and microbiologists study inorganic matter, cells, and tissue? According to Dr. Babbie, one of the most recognized names in applied sociology, the social scientist must understand more than just the methodology involved in research.

Babbie's conviction that the power of social research lies more in the realm of questions than in the realm of answers prompted him to compose fifteen short essays addressing some of the fundamental philosophical and methodological issues involved in the scientific study of human beings. Among the topics expertly addressed in this compelling collection are: the impact of concepts and indicators on our perception of reality; the possibility of value-free science; the impact of the tautologies of truth, reality, and existence on objectivity; the effect of changing paradigms; the deterministic paradigm versus the existence of free will; the impact of the observer on the subjects being researched; and the power of introspection—of observing oneself.

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