

count as good reasons for adopting that view of rationality. Suppose his arguments are sound. Then we have good reasons for adopting the instrumentalist conception of rationality. But those reasons, which justify that conception of rationality, are not instrumental; they do not suggest that adoption of the instrumentalist conception will further our ends.

We can draw two conclusion from this. First, instrumentalism cannot be the whole story about rationality, for it is itself not justified instrumentally.¹⁰ Rather, it presupposes a larger view according to which rationality is a function of good reasons, and in which instrumental reasons are only one kind among many. Second, and more relevant to the present topic, Laudan's defence of the utopian strategy depends upon the instrumentalist conception of rationality, which (as we have seen) is inadequate. A charge of utopianism shows that a goal is irrational only if the only sort of reason for pursuing a goal there can be is instrumentalist. Once we reject the instrumentalist conception of rationality, however, we see that one can have a good non-instrumental reason for pursuing a utopian goal.¹¹

The second sort of axiological challenge — the objection to a goal of inquiry that it fails to conform to the values implicit in communal practice and judgment — is unconvincing, in the absence of a fuller picture of how conflicts between goals and practices are to be resolved.

Laudan is clear that the force behind this sort of axiological challenge derives from scruples concerning (pragmatic) contradiction:

On pain of being charged with inconsistency (not to mention hypocrisy, dishonesty, etc.), the rational person, confronted with a conflict between the goals he professes and the goals that appear to inform his actions, will attempt to bring the two into line with each other (Laudan, 1984, p. 55).

Suppose I am accused of such contradiction. I can escape my difficulty either by changing my professed goals, or by maintaining those goals and changing my actions:

Whenever a case can be made that a group of scientists is not practicing what it preaches, there are *prima facie* grounds for a change of either explicit or implicit values. The change may come, of course, in either area, or in both. One may retain one's professed goals and force them to shape one's practical judgments and actions; or one may adopt a new set of explicit values that accord more nearly with the [sic]

¹⁰This is similar to the self-reflexive difficulty with non-normative versions of naturalism noted earlier.

¹¹An example might be the goal of truth. Even if we grant Laudan his claim that truth is epistemically utopian in that we can never tell whether we've got it, we may still have other reasons for recognizing it as a goal of scientific inquiry: for example, that positing it as a goal provides us with the most compelling and comprehensive overall understanding of scientific practice and theory. Of course, making good on this claim would be very difficult. The point here is simply that, if such a story could be told, we would then have a good reason for recognizing truth as a goal of inquiry, despite the sustained charge of epistemic utopianism.