

one's actions and practical judgments. Whichever way it goes, the engine driving axiological change is grounded in a theory of rationality, acting to overcome a state of disequilibrium (Laudan, 1984, p. 55).

But if I can change either my explicit goals or my judgments and practices, then the charge of pragmatic inconsistency is not a challenge to one's axiology. It is a challenge rather to the set of goals and judgments/practices. If one holds that practice is primary,¹² so that in cases of conflict between goals and practices the goals must yield, then the charge would be to one's axiology. But Laudan is clear that one can meet the challenge by maintaining one's avowed goals and altering one's practices to fit. If so, the charge is not rightly understood as an axiological challenge.

In cases of conflict between goals and practices, one must decide which to change. But not any change will do; rather, one must *rationaly* decide whether (and how) to alter one's goals or one's practices. Should one argue that it is the goals which must give way — as in the case of changing goals from that of explanation by observables to that of explanation by unobservables, via the 'method of hypothesis'¹³ — one must offer reasons for thinking that it is the goals that should be changed. The rationality of the change of axiology is secured only by argument concerning the relative merits of alternative changes, including changes which restore equilibrium by changing not axiology but practices and judgments instead. Thus, the charge of pragmatic inconsistency is not rightly regarded as an axiological challenge; moreover, restoring equilibrium is not sufficient for establishing rationality. Finally, the rationality of axiological change must be seen, here as earlier, as fundamentally epistemic rather than instrumental — values and aims are rationally altered when a compelling case can be made for the adoption of alternative aims. Such a case can, but needn't, be made on the basis of instrumental considerations.¹⁴

I quite agree with Laudan that rational axiological critique is both possible and central to philosophy of science. My aim in this section has not been to deny the possibility of such critique. Rather, my aim has been to point out that

¹²As Nelson Goodman sometimes seems to do. For criticism of the view, see Siegel (1984a).

¹³As several commentators have noted, Laudan's sharp separation of methodology and aims or goals is dubious. In Laudan (1984), pp. 55–62, this case is treated as an axiological dispute; but it is clearly a methodological dispute as well. See Doppelt (1986), pp. 232–233; Brown (1986). It should also be noted that Laudan's discussion of the shift to the method of hypothesis alternates between explanation and justification of the change: one may explain the change (in part) by noting the tension between the old axiology/methodology and scientific practice; but one can justify it only by providing reasons for honouring the practice and changing the methodology/axiology to fit rather than vice versa. See Laudan (1984), p. 59, for this alternation between explaining the change and justifying it/establishing its rationality.

¹⁴Indeed, even the case for the undesirability or irrationality of inconsistency between axiology and practice, though it can be made instrumentally, is best made epistemically, by noting the relationships between the notions of consistency and good reasons. Laudan's remarks on the theory of evidence (1984, p. 98), though made in another context, acknowledge the non-instrumental character of at least some good reasons.