»The View from Within« from Without

Edited by
NOAH EFRON and
ARIEL FURSTENBERG

Religiöse Dynamiken
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“The View from Within” from Without

On Changing One’s Normative Framework

Edited by
Noah Efron,
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Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

"Bar Lakish – when I would state a matter, he would raise twenty-four objections against it, and I would answer with twenty-four answers, and from this the teaching grew broad."

--Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Metzia 84a

Menachem Fisch and Itzik Benbaji, the authors of *The View from Within,* the remarkable work under consideration in this volume, are men who *believe* in argument and who excel at it. They are men who believe in the power of criticism, and the value of engaging in criticism: bringing it to bear on others, and taking seriously criticism brought to bear by others and seeking to take it seriously, internalize it, make it one's own.

This present volume is several times over a product of Fisch's and Benbaji's exquisite talent for critical back-and-forth. For one thing, each chapter represents an effort by a philosopher, historian, classicist, scholar of rabbinic literature, or scholar of comparative religion to engage, test, challenge and criticize the ideas set forth in *The View from Within*. What's more, as one feels reading the papers, the colloquy of scholars behind the essays in this book is one that was cultivated over years of discussion and debate. They begin long after introductory ground-clearing and setting of terms was accomplished, and after a sort of intellectual rapport and trust were established. One registers this perhaps most of all in the wise and unguarded response to each of the essays provided by Menachem Fisch. It is because of all these things that this volume is so brilliant an exemplar of the philosophy that it subjects to scrutiny.

The View from Within is now a decade and a half old. In the interim it has only become more apposite and needed than it was before. It is possible to feel that, since *The View from Within* was first published, our abilities to absorb criticism, and to change our minds, have deteriorated at disquieting speed. The essays and exchanges in this book offer a reassuring reminder that a meeting-of-minds is still possible, and that a change-of-mind is still possible, even if these remain hard things to accomplish.

Every book is a collaboration of a great many people, and this one more than most. The authors of the essays, of course, lay aside the matters that occupy them as a matter of course, and brought their genius and expertise to bear on the issues raised by *The View from Within*, an act of both intellectual audacity and generosity. Yossef Schwartz, Christian Wiese and Orit Bashkin agreed to include the volume in their remarkable series and offered critical insight and oversight throughout the process. The staff at Mohr Siebeck were the very models of careful and patient professionalism: Markus Kirchner, Laura Maier, Tobias Stäbler, Katharina Gutekunst, Knut

Günzel and Julius Furthmüller. Bob Land produced the index. Bar Ilan University generously contributed to the cost of production of this volume. All of these people demonstrated remarkable patience as this project weathered personal trials, a pandemic and numerous wars.

And, of course, none of this could have existed were it not for Menachem Fisch and Itzik Benbaji, whose work continues to inspire and provoke, and to offer constructive avenues for addressing challenges that have only grown greater and more important with each passing year.

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Introduction

Noah Efron and Ariel Furstenberg

The constitutive function of linguistic normative frameworks, on the one hand, and their susceptibility to change, even radical change, on the other hand, create one of the most challenging philosophical problems. Menachem Fisch and Itzik Benbaji in their book *The View from Within* contribute profoundly to this philosophical conundrum, first, by making it explicit and elaborating on it and, second, by offering their proposal to the possibility of rational replacement of normative frameworks. The heart of the problem is one's inability to stand outside one's own normative framework ("the view from nowhere") and compare it to a critic's radically different normative framework in order to rationally choose the better one. More generally, this is the challenge of cultural relativism. Fisch and Benbaji begin their analysis by asking: can external criticism stimulate a normative framework transformation? They conclude that although *interpersonal* deliberation is central in attempting to transform one's normative framework, the "site of rational normative change is the arena of *intrapersonal* deliberation: the ultimate discourse of rationality is that of the self".[1] In other words, the initial transformative act is when external criticism is endorsed as self-criticism.

The possibility of rational normative framework conversion according to Fisch and Benbaji is constructed upon several stages: an *external* trusted critic, a tentative moment in which one holds side by side his/her own framework and an incongruous one, a disorienting sense of self-estrangement ('destabilizing', 'ambivalenting'), *internal* self-criticism and finally normative transformation. This constructed process is the point of departure for the various critiques found in the first half of this book. Thus, one can divide the contributions according to numerous facets. For example, the role of an *external* critic, an 'other', in this transformative process, or the necessity of self-estrangement in moving forward. Alfred I. Tauber does not see the external critic as central to the process as Fisch and Benabji do, Elijah Millgram focuses on one's own process, yet with an eye to the boundaries between oneself and his/her neighbors, Ishay Rosen-Zvi analyzes dialogues with the Other as providing a fresh gaze on oneself and Jeremy Wanderer takes it further by suggesting that the trusted critic plays an *internal* role even in the self-deliberating stage. Finally, from a Kantian point of view, stressed by Eli Friedlander, the notion of the Other is imbedded within

[1] Menachem Fisch and Yitzhak Benbaji, *The View from Within: Normativity and the Limits of Self-Criticism*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 2011, 278.

the idea of a universal voice: "To speak with a universal voice would be to take upon myself to represent everyone in my judgment."

Tauber focuses on the initial precipitating point of the framework transformation. He takes the cognitive psychological and empirical view on 'creativity' as the foundational process that ends in revising one's normative view. In this respect Tauber follows Rorty's 'tinkering' – describing a loose associative process – as the source of normative transformation. Novelty emerges from a flow of *unconscious* associations that merge together, while the rational inspection comes as a second stage after novelty introduces new relationships and *different* configurations. Tauber brings into the discussion the important role of the *non-conscious* in creating new thought structures through the notion of "deliberation-without-attention". Importantly, one's non-conscious structures are not detached from his/her normative framework; moreover, they must be an expression of one's normative framework. Nevertheless, it is suggested that non-conscious thought processes are better able to weigh alternative choices as well as to employ divergent thinking, as opposed to the convergence strategies of conscious thought. From this perspective, "the 'view from within' portrays thinking as a sub-conscious interplay of ideas, which may be reconstructed by a retrospective analysis but does not necessarily follow prescribed rules, or normative standards we might impose retrospectively." In reading Tauber's exposition one might experience a slight shift from the Fisch and Benbaji *framework*, thus creating a *destabilizing* feeling regarding some basic notions of rationality and the constitutive role of an agent's normative linguistic framework. This in itself is a good reflective starting point exemplifying the transformative process exhibited in *The View from Within*.

Millgram's aim is to turn Fisch and Benbaji's transformative method to be not only *effective* but also *legitimate*. Legitimate in the sense that when an agent accepts, even tentatively and ambivalently, premises which his normative framework commits him to reject, he/she should not be making a mistake by holding on to a contradiction. Millgram introduces the notion of *reflective equilibrium* and its justified use in areas such as political theory, linguistics and even in philosophy of logic. Now, since equilibrium describes a static and stable end, the question arises: is *reflective equilibrium* the goal or only part of the process within normative framework transformations?[2] In the context of normative framework transformations, Millgram suggests that the static endpoint of *reflective equilibrium* acquires a new role here as the indication to "blur the boundaries between yourself and your neighbors, that is, to take on some of their views, albeit ambivalently, as your own". Thus starting a dynamic process of rational normative transformation in line with *The View from Within*.

[2] For a similar Brandomian moment on reflecting upon one's commitments and entitlements see analysis of static vs. dynamic goal in Ariel Furstenberg, "Traditional and Conceptual Dynamics according to an Inferentialist Theory of Meaning", *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 8(2) (2016), 228–229.

Millgram's *reflective equilibrium* leads one into feeling balanced within a constellation of views. The analogy of this intellectual and psychological balance in the realm of aesthetic judgment is what Friedlander following Kant describes as the 'sense of *proportion*'. Taking aesthetic judgment as the purest manifestation of the capacity for *internal criticism*, thus of Kant's understanding of self-criticism, Friedlander uses it as the lens from which he analyses the relation between the dimensions of the *idea* ('thin' concepts) and its realization in the world of *experience* ('thick' concepts). In this move Friedlander takes 'judgement' to occupy the place of 'reason', and in a higher form as reason's manifestation as self-criticizing. In his exposition Friedlander explicates and clarifies several notions and issues central to *The View from Within* such as 'dynamics of reason', 'universality', 'common sense', 'systematicity' and 'consistency'. Friedlander claims that the third critique, *The Critique of Judgment,* brings all these central notions and issues together, and provides us with "the dimension of mediation between nature and freedom" which opens up the possibility for framework transformation and change.

Focusing on Fisch and Benbaji's claim that the process of changing one's normative framework includes two separate activities, first *interpersonal* deliberation with a trusted critic and second *intrapersonal* deliberation, Wanderer aims at providing an alternative. Although Wanderer can agree with the idea that the transformative act is realized when external criticism is endorsed as self-criticism, he nevertheless feels that something is missing. His analysis of the *speech acts of criticizing* and *convincing* opens up alternatives to Fisch and Benbaji's understanding of the interpersonal exchange as a *prelude* for the main intrapersonal acts of ambivalence, self-criticism and finally normative transformation. The speech act of criticizing is presented by Wanderer as a *self-conscious interpersonal transaction*, understood as a *single act* describable from two different perspectives. By reciprocal recognition of the intention to criticize, the two-stage process linked by cause and effect turns into a unified single act. However, this does not explain the 'change of mind' process; therefore, Wanderer complements the picture with analysis of the speech act of *convincing* and rational persuasion. In convincing and being convinced there is an additional expressive characteristic of "inviting an exchange", a constant openness to potential challenge by both interlocutors. Thus, the process of transforming one's normative framework can be portrayed, not as a two-stage cause and effect process, but as a unified act with ongoing openness to challenge.

Following Fisch and Benbaji in recognizing the role of an *external critic*, an Other, in transforming one's normative framework, Rosen-Zvi focuses on the notion of 'the Other' in Rabbinic literature. As Rosen-Zvi points out, Rabbinic literature is a natural arena for such analysis as this corpus explicitly expresses a dialogical culture. But what form does the 'trusted critic' take in Rabbinic literature? Can, for example, a gentile, a heretic, an apostate, an ignoramus or a prostitute serve as a dialogic partner? Rosen-Zvi chooses to read the dialogue stories in which an Other appears, neither as a description of real events, nor as a mere rhetorical device, but rather as part

of an *epistemological quest*, as a *reflective* tool. This of course can be a way to externalize inner tensions, explore internal ambiguities, experiment with alternative possibilities or represent a possible self. However, the epistemological quest goes deeper and more direct through the voice of the Other whom provides an "external gaze which allows for reflection on the issues which are discussed in the study house." Rosen-Zvi brings several examples of dialogue stories, each with a different 'Other' and with a different lesson to be learned. In certain cases, the content of the dialogue itself is not the fuel for the transformative power, but the narrated situation itself. In other cases, the outsider is someone whom the rabbis can have a serious conversation with. Through the mouth of the Other the Rabbis "can discuss thorny and provocative issues without being compelled to reject them on the spot." Even the notion of repentance and 'change of heart' can be brought about by the perspective of an Other. Finally, Rosen-Zvi analyses the role of the Rabbinic *yetzer* which is an intelligent interlocutor; raising the question: can the *yetzer*'s perspective be referred to as an external gaze, as an Other, which we should be in dialogue with or there is a limit to conversation and dialogue?

All these philosophical issues are live ones, and important. And while Menachem Fisch and Itzik Benbaji are philosophers of the first rank, they are not *only* philosophers. Fisch is a renowned historian of science. Benbaji is an expert in jurisprudence. Both men have written extensively and wisely about politics and about history, and their expertise in these areas is evident in *The View from Within*.

It is no surprise, of course, that an approach devoted to addressing the challenges of making sense of a world with a multiplicity of cultures and frameworks, each with its own standards and norms, a multiplicity richly described by historians, anthropologists, sociologists, legal scholars and others, comes alive in the hands of scholars from these disciplines, as they mine the messy, "historically contingent world where framework change happens", as the renowned scholar of Greek literature and culture, Simon Goldhill, put it in his essay (as part of what Fisch and Benbaji call his "butt-kicking critique of the book's philosophical stance.")

Revisiting the uneasy run-in between John Herschel and Joseph von Fraunhofer, distinguished historian of science Myles Jackson observes that "scientists (or experimental natural philosophers) involved in trading zones are often exposed to the explicit or implied critique of trusted practitioners of different frameworks and research traditions", which critiques "potentially challenge normative commitments." In the case of Herschel and Fraunhofer, Jackson writes, the encounter "clearly challenged the Englishman's view of science." Still, "there is … no evidence that he later changed his view as a result of meeting the Bavarian optician." Fraunhofer, in his insistence on secrecy, potentially challenged Herschel's believe in the openness of science, but Herschel was unmoved. Jackson then presents a very different sort of case, that of Wilhelm Eduard Weber's companionable collaborations with the mechanicians J. August D. Oertling and Christian Hoffmann, in which their differing frameworks and research traditions seemingly produced no impulse or, indeed, need, for revisit-

ing normative frameworks. Weber, Oertling and Hoffman inhabited a boisterous trading zone congenially, the rational frameworks of the men unaltered by their interaction. Jackson concludes that:

> rational frameworks also come with their own momentum, as evinced by Herschel's tenacity when defining the universal character of science. Trading zones are sites of rather complex and complicated social interactions, particularly when they occur between two or more individuals from different communities possessing different rational frameworks and rules of engagement. Fisch and Benbaji have provided historians of science and technology with a powerful heuristic tool with which to examine the interactions of different cultures.

In their appreciative reply, Fisch and Benbaji gently suggest that, as a result of his vexed interaction with Fraunhofer, perhaps Herschel may have changed his "rational framework" after all.

Distinguished historian of science Niccolò Guicciardini describes Robert Hooke as a figure given, by his nature and by his position, to ambivalating, even before being confronted by normative critique. Hooke, as Guicciardini portrays him, was many things at once: a mechanic and a scientist, at home in the workshops of watchmakers, the laboratory at Gresham College and the plush halls of the Royal Society. Hooke, in a sense, was a hybrid figure leading a hybrid life, suggesting that the spur to absorb and respond to challenges to rational frameworks may not be ideational alone. Fisch and Benbaji, in their reply, embrace Guicciardini's suggestion as a useful addition to their claim ("something we never thought of, something that only a concrete, historically rich case study could alert us to"), writing that "thanks to Guicciardini, stories of social straddling similar to Hooke's, we now see, can be told about each of these creative thinkers, which can far better explain their predisposition to crafting the game-changing normative hybrids they authored."

Simon Goldhill, the renowned scholar of Greek literature and culture we have already mentioned, seeks in his enchanting essay to cajole, incite and goad Fisch and Benbaji to expand their description of people come to alter their normative frameworks, to make room in this description for cajoling, incitement and goading. Goldhill takes Fisch and Benbaji to task for suggesting, as he sees it, that their theory attributes changes in normative frameworks to "sensitive and thoughtful inner dialogues and self-monitoring in the company of trusted normative critics." Such happy circumstances can allow people to swap or change their normative frameworks, Goldhill recognizes, but so too can more chaotically human circumstances, rife with ridicule, poking fun, humiliation, bullying, coercion, the pull of charisma and carnal attraction, and other such mortal affections and afflictions. "Framework change is hinted at, encouraged, developed, supported, and achieved not just as a question of an individual's rationality", Goldhill writes, "but also as a dynamic of group affiliation over time [and] the dynamics of group affiliation cannot be limited to the momentum of rationality." Group affiliation, a *sensus communis*, is a product not just of rationality, but of many other things, among them ridicule, humiliation and all the rest. Fisch and Benbaji reply that of course the sorts of *Oh-so-human* non-rational

things that Goldhill adduces can and often *do* account for how normative thinking changes, but not for the more narrow question they have set out to answer, namely, "Can a normative framework transition be deemed *rational* and, if so, how?"

In her essay, Kimberley C. Patton, a scholar of the comparative and historical study of religion, offers demonstration after demonstration ("accounts from other fields", she calls them) of the "generative" capacity of Fisch's and Benbaji's analysis, taking their analysis for a spin through wonderfully varied landscapes. Patton finds, for instance, in the work of neuropsychiatrist Andrew Gerber physiological evidence for the sort of ambivalation that is described in *The View from Within* (which evidence Fisch and Benbaji stoutly disavow in their response to Patton's essay). She considers the deliberations of the U.S. Supreme Court, in which revisions of establish rulings may be a product of "ambivalation resulting from comparative exposure to changing social realities, rendering the framework now 'discordant' with those realities" (although, Patton notes, the Court's self-representation will often deny that any change in normative frame has taken place at all). Patton then uses Fisch and Benbaji's approach to consider religious experiences in which a transformation of normative frameworks is accomplished while moving "beyond the pale." Patton considers what happens in ritual spaces in sanctuaries which, though we imagine them to be otherwise, "are often porous, heterodox arenas of shared religious activity and multiply-interpreted meanings." Such ritual spaces, Patton finds, "introduce the possibility of ambivalation to religiously orthodox (closed) ideologies." Further, she locates the same potential in engaging in "the 'foreign' ritual of another tradition", an act that can have a transgressive power to alter normative frameworks. "True change", Patton concludes:

> can only be accomplished by taking the vulnerable step into the marketplace of the other, the trading-zone of experience, where one must speak in unfamiliar ways, as must the other, in order mutually to be understood. All, even God, must there endure the discomfort of ambivalation.

Reading this collection of wise and creative critical essays (and the authors' generous and probing response to each), one registers that this is a book that practices what it preaches. One feels the warmth and trust between the steadfast critics whose essays make up this book and Professors Fisch and Benbaji. In the end, one registers, too, how the ongoing exchange between the critics and the criticizes (of which this book is partial, if still wonderfully illuminating example) has left all sides rationally, and profoundly, changed.

The View from Within: A Cognitivist Account

Alfred I. Tauber

> The awkward fact that reason, as we know it, is never aware of its hidden assumptions – has been too much for some philosophers, and even scientists to admit.[1]

The View from Within plays a variation on Thomas Nagel's famous theme of *The View from Nowhere*.[2] There, Nagel contrasted the objective and personal views of the world and argued for the just standing of each and how the proper balance between the two might be sought. However, Fisch and Benbaji are not primarily concerned with establishing some sort of reconciliation or defining the jurisdiction of the subjective. Instead, they are attempting to understand how *new* interpretations of the world are generated given the strictures of normative views of reality. Such breakthroughs that depict the world anew constitute a revised triangulation between the world, the epistemological agent, and the community that must, in the end, judge the novel presentation. If successful, "the view from within" generates a revised objective description of the world, i. e., one to which all may subscribe. How does that occur?

Confining the discussion to the rational within strict confines of "reason" strikes me as injudicious. At the risk of oversimplifying, *The View from Within* describes the process of knowledge's revision as a property of reason itself, *reason* understood in a particular normative way. In other words, the entire process of breaking normative accounts and establishing new ones is described as rational, i. e., "reasonable" all the way down. I believe a broader approach is required, and so I would advocate a line of inquiry closer to that of Nagel's attempt to provide a balanced account of subjective and objective operations, for I am convinced that "reason" originates in subjectivity and its fundamental processes are tacit. Of course, "subjective" has many meanings, and that is a matter we must sort out, but it suffices to note here that in the barest terms, the source of my dissatisfaction lies in the narrow vision of reason they endorse. After a short review of the argument presented by Fisch and Benbaji, I will posit (and merely outline) why their notion is too restrictive and thus unable to address the question at hand.

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[1] L. L. Whyte, *The Unconscious before Freud*, London: Julian Friedman Publishers 1978, 41. Quoted in A. Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, London: Hutchinson & Co. 1964, 177.

[2] Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1986.

I. The Problem

The View from Within seeks not only to understand the character of knowledge acquisition and scientific change but also to reassert the intuition that reasoned discourse, which is dominated by communal languages, norms, practices, and theories, nevertheless has ample room for creative movement to revise those outlooks. In their wide-ranging study, Fisch and Benbaji examine the character of reason and the ability of an individual knower to effectively distance herself from the normative framework in which she functions in order to be self-critical and innovative. They frame their critique in dialogue with the recent writings of leading contemporary philosophers in a detailed analysis of the character of reason, the problem of relativism, and how to comprehend scientific change more generally. Firmly placed within the context of current debate, the authors provide a thorough evaluation of recent arguments, as well as offering an important critique of normative reason in scientific discourse.

Fisch and Benbaji, like others concerned with understanding objectivity and the acquisition of scientific knowledge within the larger context of conceptualizing rationality, have had to consider scientific reason challenged by constructivist formulations and postmodern attacks.[3] Of the many ways of addressing this issue, let us consider two kinds of reason in dialectical interplay – *discursive* and *social*. The social level of communal exchange, criticism, and consensus is here coupled to the discursive problem of how normative commitments might be altered in the setting of scientific change driven by innovative findings, anomalies, and external challenges. Fisch and Benbaji consider the most deliberative character of reason, and how normative commitments might be altered by reasoned argument to generate epistemological insecurity and reassessment. In this sense, they are internalist "defenders" of reason. Accordingly, discursive reason is formulated within a long philosophical tradition in which rationality and advancement of science owe far less to a confident reliance on data, methods, and warrants than to the self-doubting Socratic "dialectic of interrogation" to which facts and theories are regularly subjected. Incapable (as a matter of logic) of objectively confirming her efforts, let alone of *proving* them, the scientist can, in principle, boast no more than to have prudently subjected her work to the most thorough tests available. That knowledge is incomplete and must be scrutinized through the lens of skepticism remains the key precept of critical investigation of all kinds. This epistemology serves science as it did philosophy from its earliest awakening, namely, boldly facing complacent assumptions and beliefs.

Attempting to define the conditions by which reason operates, the authors pit Kant's autonomy of reason against the post-Kuhnian varieties of pragmatism that acknowledge the impossibility of insular reason to achieve its ostensible goals. Find-

[3] My own views on this topic have been presented in Alfred I. Tauber, *Science and the Quest for Meaning*, Waco, TX: Baylor University Press 2009, 77–107.

ing irresolvable problems at each end of the spectrum, Fisch and Benbaji have presented a portrayal of scientific change through a critique of rationality as the normative vehicle of scientific discourse and how change occurs within the constraints imposed by language. (Note, this focus is upon the individual scientist, not the collective.) They confront Rorty, and, by affiliation, all those who have argued the impossibility of finding a critical "Archimedean point" for assessing language or the reality, which may be described by rational methods. Rorty, as an "ironist" (one who knowingly functions in full awareness of the normative constraints on his rationality), assumed a relativist position and argued that scientific change accordingly arises through "tinkering" – undirected experimentation – that in due course generates new vocabularies and metaphors. According to Fisch and Benbaji, this process, the utility of which is only appreciated retrospectively, leaves the ironist unable to critically appraise her station and then to proceed under assumed rules of rationality. She thereby forfeits the idea that intellectual or political progress is rational. Fisch and Benbaji want to save normative rationality, and while they do not enlist the "outside of the framework" position, they still resist Rorty's relativism and skepticism and, more specifically, the *ad hoc* randomness of Rorty's notion of scientific change.

So how does such rational self-questioning function and upon what might it be based given the normative strictures in which we think? No short summary of a highly nuanced and astute reading of the "reason problem" does justice to the complex argument presented by Fisch and Benbaji. However, note that they have actually combined two separate discussions into one, and they have drawn from diverse philosophical voices to make their point. Their argument couples two positions: (1) "comparative irrealism" accepts that no normative property shared by conflicting normative outlooks exists that would allow their ranking, and (2) just because such comparisons cannot utterly discredit one outlook over the other, *still*, internal self-criticism allows for evaluation and change. They thereby assert normative reason's self-criticism within a relativist framework. This position is necessarily based on *intra*-subjective, not inter-personal, criticism, and, in this regard, they separate themselves from other, more communally based arguments most prominently associated with Brandom, Walzer, and MacDowell. The authors find themselves attracted to Frankfurt's picture of the self-reflective self, but they are disturbed by the absence of an integration of the inter-personal, interpretive elements of critical discourse. Despite the open-ended nature of that inquiry (one to which they cannot be fairly held to account), Fisch and Benbaji have combined the two positions outlined above and have settled on an "ambivalently" generated disturbance from without to spur intra-subjective criticism. In their view, imaginative self-criticism offers an effective range of reason to examine itself, despite the strictures on reason that they have so carefully identified.

I doubt, however, that their prescription for the disequilibrium offered by intra-subjective scrutiny suffices, and so I take a more sympathetic view toward the inter-subjective than they allow. But this is a fair disagreement and arises from my closer

adherence to the pragmatist position.[4] Pragmatists have argued that rationality becomes a category of action, a means to expose and solve problems, and thus offers a method by which inquiry might gauge its success or failure as determined by a broader set of goals and standards. This instrumental quality of rationality breaks the strictures of language by enlarging the inquiry's frame of reference. The individual problem is set in a context that itself has an orientation conferred by larger issues, which then direct the more local investigation. By standing outside the immediate framework, with recurrent reference to local strictures, a critical position may putatively be obtained.

Sociologically informed pragmatists cite the fluidity of interactions between scientific communities and the ever-present opportunism of practicing scientists to enlarge their critical purchase on their investigations, where "reason" must be understood as active dialogue *between* actors. These actors revise their thinking in response to these opportunities and different kinds of knowledge. So, on this stage, the character of modern interdisciplinary science has radically changed the older monolithic, formalistic accounts of scientific practice, and with these new scientific structures, new ways of describing rational thinking have become apparent. Following this general bearing, Fisch and Benbaji cautiously adopt the heuristic of an orienting function of a "meta-framework" as proposed by Friedman, coupled to Galison's notion of the "trading zone", in which more fluid dynamics might lend themselves to the initial destabilization offered by external scientists and various social forces. On this view, a broader perspective appears to guide the scientist in her more local inquiries in which a perspectival advantage cannot be obtained.

This approach has appeal; however, the psychological mechanisms, or even the parameters for drawing such a conclusion, are not provided. Confined to an abstract philosophical discussion, these claims find little support beyond the conjured arguments already rehearsed and thus suffer the charge of "opinion", as opposed to the benefits of a better-grounded argument based on empirical studies. The question deserves a wider arena, and at the end of my comments I will return to this lacuna.

II. A Plea: Ground the Argument

Most would concede that reason does allow for breaking the strictures of common thinking. That is not the issue, for evolutions of ideas and knowledge *do* occur. The question is how? Or put in a more philosophical tone, let us recall that Adorno, in perhaps an ironic echo of Kant, described normative intentionality as the product of the *active*, willful direction of our thoughts, without which only the passive mirror

[4] Tauber, *Science and the Quest*, 111–129 and further developed in Tauber, *The Triumph of Uncertainty. Science and Self in the Postmodern Age*, Budapest: Central Europe University Press 2022, 193–210.

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