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Paul Feyerabend:
A Century of Challenging Orthodoxies

Book of Abstracts

Day 1 Classroom

Day 2 Classroom

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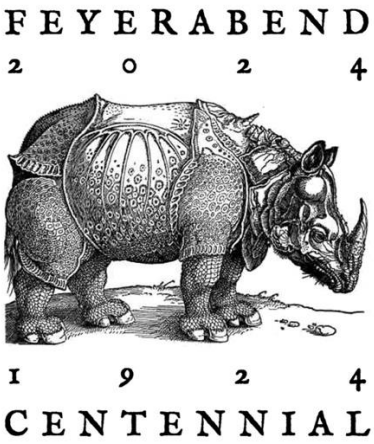

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Introduction

This symposium aims to celebrate Feyerabend's centennial by exploring how his ideas continue to challenge and inspire contemporary thought across various domains. We invited contributions that reflect Feyerabend's impact on epistemology, philosophy of science, and philosophical methodology in a broader general sense. Topics of interest include (but are not limited to) theoretical pluralism, epistemological anarchism, the role of intellectual traditions in shaping scientific knowledge, and the intersection of science and democracy. We were particularly interested in contributions that demonstrate how Feyerabend's philosophy can be applied to current issues in science and society, showcasing the relevance of his work in today's intellectual landscape. The symposium features a total of 11 talks, each lasting 60 minutes, providing ample time for in-depth discussion of the presented ideas.

Bojan Borstner, Tadej Todorović, Borut Trpin (organisers)

Abstracts of Contributed Talks

Feyerabend Reads Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. A Closer Look At Feyerabend's Criticism

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2022 marked the 100th anniversary of Thomas Samuel Kuhn's birth and 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of Paul Karl Feyerabend's birth. Timewise it is a good opportunity to take a closer look at Feyerabend's harsh criticism of Kuhn with a more than appropriate time lag, especially since Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is undoubtedly still the dominant theory of science in the social sciences today across all subjects. Thus, this criticism is also still current and relevant.

Kuhn's theory of science is very ambiguous in the sense that it does not give the reader a straightforward answer as to whether or not it is intended as a methodological prescription or a description of science. A methodological prescription would tell the scientist how to proceed to fit the term 'scientific' and would automatically express Kuhn's own opinion, whereas a description of what is generally called 'scientific' would have to exclude any personal evaluation of Kuhn. Kuhn's writings allow for both interpretations.

This Kuhnian ambiguity is not at all a side issue, but is at the heart of the problem of Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. It has had a great impact on those in the scientific community who have understood it as a methodological prescription; they have utilised the theory as a recipe, enabling them not only to improve their studies, but finally, to turn their fields into a 'science'.

Referring to the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Feyerabend writes about Kuhn: "I was quite unable to agree with the *theory of science* which he himself proposed", and "was even less prepared to accept the general *ideology* which I thought formed the background of his thinking."(Feyerabend, *Against Method*, (3rd ed.) 1993: 197). As if this were not enough, Feyerabend adds, "this ideology, so it seemed to me, could only give comfort to the most narrowminded and the most conceited kind of specialism. It would tend to inhibit the advancement of knowledge. And it is bound to increase the anti-humanitarian tendencies which are such a disquieting feature of much of post-Newtonian science." (ibid., 197f.)

Such a devastating critique needs further investigation. The paper will examine the main arguments of Feyerabend's attack on Kuhn's scientific thinking.

Reading Parmenides – Between Popper and Feyerabend

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To-be-added.

"To See the Right Things You Need the Right Instruments" On Feyerabend, Method, and the Ontological Turn in Anthropology

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In this paper, I explore the relevance of Paul Feyerabend's work in anthropology, contrasting nuanced understandings of "relativism." This exploration encompasses Feyerabend's general epistemology, his cross-disciplinary concerns—such as his references to Whorf's linguistic relativism—and classical and contemporary discussions in anthropology and epistemology. A focal point of this discussion is Feyerabend's relationship with German anthropologist Hans Peter Duerr. The correspondence between both was published as a book, *Briefe an einen Freund*, and Duerr went so far as to publishing an article titled *In defence of Paul Feyerabend*.

Nevertheless, in his most influential work—*Dreamtime, Concerning the Boundary between Wilderness and Civilization*—Duerr is also critical about some aspects of Feyerabend's relativism, all of which happens in a very peculiar and playful register, acknowledging a sort of 'honor among thieves' agreement, a shared sense of humor. One could say that they took each other seriously (enough...).

Interestingly, *Dreamtime* prefigured the ontological turn in anthropology by about thirty years. The perceptual and experiential relativistic framework Duerr proposed only gained significant attention with the advent of this ontological turn. This indicates that Duerr's work was ahead of its time, foreshadowing key developments in anthropological theory.

Feyerabend's challenge to methodological monism and his advocacy for methodological pluralism are particularly relevant to contemporary anthropological debates. His assertion that "to see the right things you need the right instruments" resonates with the ontological turn's emphasis on the diversity of human experiences and the need for varied methodological approaches to understand these experiences fully.

Anthropology, especially through the ontological turn, has increasingly acknowledged the importance of multiple epistemologies and the value of relativistic perspectives. Feyerabend's work supports this by arguing against rigid methodological constraints and advocating for a more flexible, context-dependent approach to knowledge production. This aligns with current anthropological practices that embrace diverse ways of knowing and being.

In conclusion, addressing epistemological and philosophical questions from an anthropologically informed perspective reveals the profound impact of Feyerabend's ideas on the field. His contributions encourage a more inclusive and pluralistic approach to understanding human experiences, challenging the dominance of any single methodological framework. By reviewing recent developments and cross-disciplinary contributions, this paper highlights the enduring relevance of Feyerabend's thought in contemporary anthropology. His work not only complements but also enriches the ongoing debates within the discipline, advocating for a more nuanced and open-ended approach to knowledge.

Feyerabend's Definition of Incommensurability as a Prelude to an Operative and Formal One

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The concept of incommensurability was independently introduced by Paul K. Feyerabend (1962 and 1975) and Thomas S. Kuhn (1962) to highlight cultural conflicts between scientific theories. Kuhn defined the notion of incommensurability as arising from a variation of paradigms; whose change is marked by a sharp Gestalt phenomenon, which bars the simultaneous existence of conflicting paradigms. In contrast, Feyerabend acknowledged radical conflicts between theories, whose basic notions manifest variations in meaning; which however do not bar the mutual translatability of the two theories. Although he stated that "it is hardly ever possible to give an explicit definition [of incommensurability]" (Feyerabend 1975, p. 166) in some cases he traced back this notion to the "principles of construction" of the theories (Feyerabend 1975, pp. 205-206).

In the ensuing debate most scholars criticized the notion of incommensurability as potentially leading to irrationalism and the collapse of reason. However, they disregarded the principles of theory construction and worse a definition of what a scientific theory precisely is. As a fact, this debate did not improve the recognition of science foundations and ultimately was inconclusive.

In the 1980s, an operative and formal definition of incommensurability was proposed by Drago (1987). He interpreted Feyerabend's "principles of construction" as two basic dichotomies: one concerns the two kinds of infinity (either actual infinity which classical mathematics makes use of, or potential infinity upon which constructive mathematics relies); the second dichotomy concerns the kind of theoretical organization (either the axiomatic-deductive organization which is governed by classical logic, or the problem-based organization which is governed by intuitionist logic). Of course, the interpretation of experimental observations is differently influenced by the different choices. A scientific theory is characterized by two choices on the two dichotomies, i.e. a specific mathematics and a specific theoretical organization. Since between the two alternatives of each dichotomy there is no common standard, two theories whose choices on a dichotomy are different lack of fundamental connections concerning this dichotomy; therefore these theories are called incommensurable and, owing to this difference in the "contextual theory of meaning", the meanings of basic notions may be radically different. A historical change of the dominant theory so that also the basic choices change is called a revolution. The pluralism in science is the co-existence of theories relying on different choices on the two dichotomies. The relevance of these definitions is proved an analysis of their occurrences in the history of both theoretical physics, and the other branches of science.

In conclusion, the above definition of incommensurable theories: a) substantiates Feyerabend's few suggestions about the notion of incommensurable theories; b) qualifies Feyerabend's informal notion through a formal one; c) offers an accurate foundation of Feyerabend's informal pluralism; d) although excluding a "logical [deductive] relation" between the two theories does not present mutual contradictions and mutual untraslatability; hence it determines a "disunity of science" without severing human

rationality because the divisions are not insurmountable.

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The Uncertain World of Orthodoxy

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Any product of human activity is imperfect and has specific shortcomings. People always strive to eliminate them and propose alternatives. Their initial point is the new bold picture of the world. However, such a picture is also a deficient product of human activity. If this picture does not properly describe the existing product, then corresponding attempts to improve the latter fail. An example is the communist recipe to reform capitalist society, which is pictured as the eternal fight of antagonistic classes for power and superiority.

Science is also a human product. Its central elements are scientific theories. They introduce a comprehension of science and its performance.

We apply these general considerations to Feyerabend's case. His anarchistic view of science was directed against the previous orthodox view, which treated science as a pure rationalist activity with strict rules for its realization.

But what is revolutionaries like Feyerabend's view of theories? In essence, it is the same one as orthodoxy. Both sides use simplified and partial views on theories. Real scientific theories are more complex than one usually assumes. For instance, Feyerabend elaborated an anarchistic understanding of science without any theories.

Nevertheless, P. Feyerabend became one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. His meditations about science became widespread in the philosophy of science.

The authors refrain from pretending to form the right and final vision of Feyerabend's philosophy of science. However, our position is based on the principle that the core of any natural science is continuously developing theories, each of which has its domain. The maturity of the dominant theories determines the characteristics of the corresponding science.

After analyzing Feyerabend's monographs using a contextual search for the word "theory," we came to the following conclusions.

1. In his works, there is no explication of what he understood by theories.

2. The word "theory" is one of the most used in Feyerabend's vocabulary. In more than two and a half thousand pages of his major works, this word appears more than six thousand times. There are many very different contexts for its use. Nevertheless, from his chaotic usage it follows that he did not make distinctions between these kinds of "theories."

3. Instead of elucidating the functions and role of theory at the forefront of science, Feyerabend unsystematically cites many particular cases of erroneous judgments of outstanding scientists in order to put forth and substantiate the anarchic thesis (anything goes) about the absence of scientific methods at all. This view became one of the cornerstones of postmodernist philosophy.

4. It is necessary to be especially cautious in applying Feyerabend's fuzzy notions of theory to characterize those sciences in which theories are in their infancy

and where the word “theory” factually replaces such words as “idea,” “notion,” “supposition,” “hypothesis,” “doctrine,” “assumption” etc. Let us rephrase the Testament: Do not make idols ... of the philosophers of science. It is typical for them to repeat old prejudices instead of analyzing real scientific theories.

5. In light of the polysystemic reconstruction of scientific theories, some problems and pseudo-problems of Feyerabend’s philosophy can be reexamined.

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Paul Feyerabend and Mental Health: Foundations for a Democratic Psychiatry

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Paul Feyerabend's contributions to philosophy have challenged the relationship between scientific experts and society in many disciplines. Though Feyerabend's work focuses on the physical sciences, I am interested in developing a deeper understanding of how his thought may be applied to mental healthcare. The history of mental health treatment has been riddled with many controversies. On the one hand, there are clinical practitioners who make decisions based on scientific research and sometimes determine courses of treatment against a patient's will. On the other hand, the authority of these mental health practitioners has been questioned from many different angles. The anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960's and 70's constitutes one such example, wherein several individuals – many of whom were psychiatrists themselves – criticized the legitimacy of psychiatry as a medical discipline (Szasz 1974) or called for a broader understanding of mental illness as situated within systems of social oppression (Basaglia 1987). More recently, the neurodiversity movement has begun to challenge the medical conceptualizations of conditions such as autism (Baron-Cohen 2017). Feyerabend criticized mainstream healthcare options for their inability to meet patient needs and advocated for alternative medical treatments (Feyerabend 1978, 194), but relatively little work has been done to explore the applicability of his thought within healthcare systems. To begin filling this gap in the literature, I would like to present my research on the relationship between Feyerabend's thought and the treatment of mental disorders. This topic is increasingly relevant today, given the replication crisis in the biomedical sciences and dissatisfaction with mental healthcare expressed through media outlets (e.g. Mad in America n.d.). My presentation seeks to explore how mental health practitioners should interact with patients by determining the relevance of scientific expertise for the discipline and identifying points where more patient input may be desirable. I first give a historical overview of how the current mainstream model of mental illness – which I call the medical model – has come about, and what role scientificity played within its development. This model arose as an alternative to the psychodynamic model that was popular in the mid-twentieth century, and its advocates often claim that it is preferable due to the amount of scientific evidence in its favor (e.g. Klerman 1984, 539). I apply Feyerabend's methodology in his analysis of the Copernican revolution (Feyerabend 2010) and show that there is no clear consensus on what constitutes scientific practice within psychiatry. Given this lack of clarity on what scientific evidence is and why it offers better clinical outcomes, I suggest that patient preferences – as opposed to merely field reports gathered by clinical experts – should play a greater role in determining mental health policies.

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The Normativity of Imagination and the Evolution of Thought Experiments

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According to Bokulich and Frappier, understanding thought experiments ("TEs") as Waltonian props for the imagination cannot explain their widespread evolution, since the content of a TE is fixed once and for all by its narrative and prescriptions to imagine. That is, what is true in the fictional scenario constrains the researchers' imagination not to imagine otherwise. I suggest that the normative dimension of the imagination is far more flexible than Walton claims, especially in the context of TEs. Feyerabend's philosophy, along with its methodological dadaism and a broad appeal to the epistemic role of the imagination, can show this by highlighting the fruitful role of violating prescriptions to imagine in scientific practices.

I focus on the power of subjective imaginings to develop debates based on TEs. Readers of TEs are not passive subjects; rather, they are receptive researchers who rely on an initial fictional narrative to challenge (or to strengthen) the epistemic stance for which a TE was designed in the first place. By recognizing themselves as engaged in the same TE, researchers express their own epistemic voices and become interested in the contributions of others – which often violate the original prescriptions to imagine.

This dialectical process can be framed through the Waltonian notions of "work world" and "game worlds", that is, the intersubjective set of fictional truths provided by a prop and the subjective imaginings generated by participants in the game of make-believe. According to Walton, a proper player creates her game world by building on the work world and trying to minimize mismatches between the two worlds. However, the philosophy of Feyerabend can highlight the fruitful role of slightly off and divergent game worlds. By violating and amending the prescriptions to imagine, researchers engaged in a TE give their creative game worlds such a prominent role that they eventually evolve the work world itself. A TE is a collective enterprise that is open to reinterpretations, refinements and negotiations among members of research communities. As such, it can evolve through the dialectical interaction of an initial work world and the divergent game worlds proposed by researchers.

Even though the practice of TEs is not as tightly constrained as it is often suggested, the emphasis on the violations of prescriptions to imagine does not entail a denial of the normative dimension of imagination. There are two sides to this dimension, though: for one, there is Walton's emphasis on the compliance with the prescriptions to imagine. On the other side, there is Feyerabend's focus on the epistemic fecundity of violating the rules of imagination. Therefore, both accounts are complementary and highlight the normativity of the imagination, even though from opposite perspectives. The evolution of TEs is based on our abilities to both follow and break rules in collective research settings. If we always comply with prescriptions to imagine, we will be held captive by fixed myths. Conversely, if we always violate the rules, we will not take any step forward. Both extremes lead to fossilized and unproductive TEs.

Keywords: Thought Experiments; Imagination; Fiction; Paul Feyerabend; Kendall Walton

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SELF-REFERENCE
SELF-REFERENCE #2

A Sketch of Feyerabend's Theory of Experience: Experience Fluidness and Plurality

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Feyerabend's understanding of experience is central to his philosophy of science, yet it remains an overlooked subject. This paper aims to provide a clear explanation of Feyerabend's theory of experience by refuting the widely held misconception that he rejected the importance of experience in scientific knowledge development (especially because of some titles of his papers (e.g. "science without experience" (1969) or "knowledge without foundations" (1961), which adds fuel to relativistic-anarchistic fire (Farrell, 2003)). We argue that Feyerabend's theory of experience is characterized by three key features: first, it is theoretically dependent; second, it is fluid and plural rather than stable; and third, it has a role in the development of knowledge but not a foundational place. Together, they shape a theory of experience. But does Feyerabend have a theory of experience? Feyerabend actually developed "a sketch of a new theory of experience" (Feyerabend, 1965, p. 186), therefore, the term theory here is a broad outline that indicates how science deals with experience (Feyerabend, 1993).

We argue that Feyerabend's philosophy is not just a proposal for deconstruction (Feyerabend, 1999 [1963]), but also an attempt to reconstruct the relationship between experience and theory in a way that recognizes the autonomy of each. The paper also provides a clear interpretation of Feyerabend's view on experience by showing that it is not intended to serve as the main foundation of knowledge because of a supposed stability, but rather to increase the empirical content and provide a proliferation of alternative epistemological views (Feyerabend, 1999 [1963]; Oliveira, 2021). Thus we will debunk the approach that Feyerabend's philosophy rejects experience, turning it into something with no importance at all to knowledge, while also saving part of a critical empiricism. By presenting a case for a Feyerabend's theory of experience in a clear and concise manner, this paper contributes to a better understanding of his philosophy.

Keywords: Fluidness, speculation, experience.

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Do We Live in Feyerabend's Utopia? Reflections on Autonomy, Trust, and Democracy

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In his seminal book "Science in a Free Society" (1978), Paul Feyerabend extends his anti-foundationalist views on the philosophy of science that he developed previously in "Against Method" (1974) to discuss the relationship between scientific expertise and democratic decision-making. His controversial thesis is that scientific expertise should possess no special authority in policy choices and that the scientific tradition should be regarded as equal with other valid traditions of thought and practice in pluralistic societies. In other words, Feyerabend calls for a separation of science and state in analogy to the separation of religion and state. To him, such a step would be a logical extension of the enlightenment tradition that empowers individuals to make up their own minds and to distrust authority of any kind.

Our objective in this talk is to assess Feyerabend's vision with regard to the problem of conceptualizing the relation between scientific and democratic institutions in shaping policy. This problem has lost nothing of its importance in the 21st century. On the contrary, our current era is characterized by an even further increase in theoretical and practical pluralism as well as pressing concerns that cannot be solved without rigorous scientific scrutiny. How would Feyerabend judge these developments of our time? Do for example fact-based responses to the Corona pandemic prove that his views cannot be upheld anymore? Today, many philosophers argue contrary to Feyerabend that trust in scientific expertise instead of "thinking for oneself" without being sufficiently informed is crucial for the flourishing of democratic societies (s. for example the upcoming book by Thomas Grundmann: "Expert Authority. When Laypeople Should Not Think for Themselves", 2024). Nevertheless, a continuous engagement with Feyerabend's thoughts could improve the often insufficiently differentiated debates of our current time with arguments that remain worthy of consideration.

Feyerabend, Astrology, and Open-mindedness

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Recent discussions of Feyerabend's controversial defense of astrology and other fringe practices rest on the charitable interpretation that he lacked any principled commitment to the truth or efficacy of heterodox forms of knowledge. According to Kidd (2016) a principled justification for Feyerabend's defense can be found: it serves as a vindication of epistemic pluralism and the epistemic integrity of science. By drawing on the resources of contemporary virtue epistemology, we can interpret Feyerabend's critique as targeting negative intellectual attitudes—such as epistemic arrogance, rigidity, and dogmatism—frequently exhibited by some members of the scientific establishment. I represent the dialectics in terms of the appeal to ignorance reasoning. The reasoning underlying the 1975 Humanist petition signed by 186 prominent scientists can be formalized as: "There is no proof for the truth or efficacy of astrology. Therefore, the claims of astrology are false." Feyerabend critiques the first premise, arguing that the undersigned scientists exhibited epistemic vices, including dogmatism, ignorance, and intellectual laziness. Yet this raises a critical question: What stance should we adopt toward astrology and other fringe practices or traditions? Charitable contemporary readings (e.g., Oberheim, Farrell, Kidd) might reformulate the position as follows: "Astrology has not been falsified. It is possible that the claims of astrology are true. Therefore, one should remain open-minded about astrology's claims."

I argue, first, that Feyerabend's critique of the Humanist statement is itself flawed due to fallacious reasoning—specifically, the fallacy of "missing the point." Even critics of scientific arrogance must adhere to the standards of intellectual integrity they demand from others. Second, the reasoning for open-mindedness is problematic when our epistemic position regarding a fringe claim is sufficiently strong to exclude its truth. In such cases, the possibility of the claim being true is weak and justifies, at most, a mere openness. This leads to a broader concern: How do we distinguish between positive epistemic pluralism—characterized by humility, creativity, and open-mindedness—and more problematic forms of science denialism, such as climate change denial, anti-vaccination movements, or AIDS denialism? Shaw (2017) offers a useful distinction between the "crank" and the "responsible inquirer." A crank disregards the general state of knowledge, ignores objections, and refuses to test their theories against challenging evidence. But these are precisely the epistemic virtues of rationalism engraved in scientific methodology: a respect for available evidence and "reasonable" inference, awareness of alternatives and a willingness to modify or reject those beliefs that fail to conform to the evidence. The key question is whether Feyerabend's anarchistic epistemology can accommodate these virtues. While Feyerabend critiques the rigidity of mainstream science, can his framework also account for the intellectual virtues that safeguard science from slipping into denialism? Addressing this tension is critical to understanding the boundaries of epistemic pluralism.

Feyerabendov epistemološki anarhizem in meje propozicionalnega gledanja na znanstveno spoznanje / Feyerabend's Epistemological Anarchism and the Limits of the Propositional View of Scientific Knowledge

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Povzetek: Na kratko predstavim glavne Feyerabendove ideje o epistemološkem anarhizmu, njegovo polemiko z Lakatosem glede spoznavnega normativizma v razvoju znanosti ter domnevnega Feyerabendovega skepticizma ter Feyerabendove argumente za epistemološki anarhizem. Med drugim ugotavljam, da Feyerabendova misel čudno blodi med evolucijo in revolucijo, ne da bi jo mogli pravzaprav natančno opredeliti. Pomembno omejitev Feyerabendovih pogledov na znanost vidim v njegovem pogledu na znanstvene teorije kot množice oz. sisteme stavkov, tako da se soočenje med teorijami dogaja kot tekmovanje med prepričanji, s kateri se branijo ali napadajo določeni stavki. Vendar obstaja vrsta »nestavčnih« pogledov na znanstvene teorije, s katerimi lahko na racionalen način razložimo osrednje točke Feyerabendovega »anarhizma«, npr. inkomeruzabilnost teorij, njihovo celostnost, teorijsko obloženost dejstev itd., ne da bi zato tvegali težko sprejemljive domneve, kot je "anything goes", spoznavni relativizem itd. Sklepam, da je Feyerabend , klasično "stavčno" naziranje znanstvenih teorij razvil do njegovega neizogibnega paradoksnega roba, čeprav se je v svojih zadnjih delih nekoliko odmaknil od stavčnega naziranja v smeri neke vrste »epistemske perspektivičnosti«, ki dopušča tako neomejen pluralizem perspektiv kot tudi spoznavni realizem.
Ključni termini: epistemološki anarhizem, znanstveno spoznanje, skepticizem, propozicionalni pogled, inkomensurabilnost

Summary: I briefly present Feyerabend's main ideas about epistemological anarchism, his polemic with Lakatos regarding cognitive normativism in the development of science and Feyerabend's alleged skepticism, as well as Feyerabend's arguments for epistemological anarchism. Among other things, I note that Feyerabend's thought wanders strangely between evolution and revolution, without being able to precisely define it. I see an important limitation of Feyerabend's views on science in his view of scientific theories as multitudes or systems of sentences, so that the confrontation between theories takes place as a competition between beliefs, with which certain sentences are defended or attacked. However, there are several "non-propositional" views of scientific theories that can rationally explain the central points of Feyerabend's "anarchism", e.g. incommensurability of theories, their integrity, theoretical coating of facts, etc., without risking difficult-to-accept assumptions such as "anything goes", cognitive relativism, etc. I conclude that Feyerabend developed the classical "propositional" view of scientific theories to its inevitable paradoxical edge, although in his last works he moved away from the sentence view in the direction of a kind of "epistemic perspectivalism", which allows both an unlimited pluralism of perspectives and cognitive realism.
Key words: epistemic anarchism, scientific knowledge, skepticism, propositional view, incommensurability

Med filozofi, ki so se prav v sredi burnih let študentskih uporov, iskanja alternativ ustaljenim redom oblasti in idej vpisali v red onih, ki so nam priskrbeli pomembne "drugačne uvide" v dogajanja, ki ohranjajo in poganjajo naš svet, spada tudi Paul Feyerabend, avstrijsko-ameriški teoretik in filozof znanosti, ki je nedavno tega preminil v starosti sedemdesetih let. Feyerabendova zasluga je, da so teoretska razmišljanja o spoznavni teoriji znanosti postala stvar javnih razprav in polemik, da je izvršil zelo radikalno kritiko logičnega empirizma, izhajajoč iz njegovih lastnih principov. Znamenita osnovna misel njegovega dela "anything goes" (vse gre) pa je postala eno od standardnih gesel vseh, ki jim gre za postavljanje različnih "alternativ".

Paul Feyerabend je brez dvoma najbolj znani in »razglašeni« zagovornik neomejene svobode v zagovarjanju oz. branjenju vseh vrst domnev in tez, ne glede na to, na katero teorijo ali miselni sestav se opirajo, znanstven, religiozen, metafizičen itd. Znan je po geslu »Anything goes«, ki ga je formuliral v svoji njegovi najbolj znane knjigi: Proti metodi. Oris anarhistične spoznavne teorije« (Feyerabend, 2000). Po tej teoriji so vse znanstvene teorije nedeljive celote teorijske in empirijske vsebine, oz. teorijskih in empirijskih stavkov. Še zlasti za empirijske stavke velja, da so "obloženi" s teorijo, tako da ni nobenega, od teorij(e) prostega empiričnega izkustva, ki bi služilo za preverjanje ali zavračanje hipotez in teorij. Zato se vsaka argumentacija v prid določeni teoriji prevede konec koncev na retoriko. Feyerabend kljub tako izrecno poudarjenemu holizmu teorij, njihovi nesorazmernosti itd., ne sprejema Kuhnove teorije o izključni nadmoči neke paradigme nad normalno znanostjo in o izrinjanju vseh ostalih rivalskih paradigem. To je po Feyerabendu izrazito negativni dogmatizem, ker preprečuje nastanek in obstoj alternativnih teorij in vso (normalno) znanstveno dejavnost podvrže eni paradigmi. Feyerabend očita Kuhnu, da si predstavlja zgodovino znanosti kot menjavanje revolucij in dogmatične okostenelosti normalnih znanosti.

Sam razume razvoj znanosti kot množico nenehnih in medsebojno povezujočih se mikrorevolucij, t.j. spreminjanj teorij znotraj celotnega teorijskega polja vseh znanosti. Jedro njegove knjige pa je polemika z drugim velikim teoretikom znanosti, namreč Imrejem Lakatosem. Oba sta se na začetku strinjala, da bosta napisala skupno delo z naslovom »Za in proti metodi«, kjer naj bi Lakatos branil spoznavni normativizem in pomen metodoloških meril v znanostih, kot edino oporo spoznavnemu napredku znanosti (in tudi sicer), Feyerabend pa naj bi to kritiziral prav s svojim epistemološkim anarhizmom. Na žalost pa je Lakatos l. 1974 nepričakovano umrl in tako je ostal njun načrt nedokončan. Poznamo le Feyerabendov del«, ki je seveda ustrezno polemičen in mestoma »ekstremen«. Podoben bi bil verjetno tudi Lakatosev del, če bi ga uspel dokončati. Znani si le nekatera Lakatoseva predavanja o znanstveni metodi, ki jih je l. 1973 imel Lakatos na London School of Economics, kjer sta tedaj delovala tako Lakatos kot Feyerabend. Ta predavanja bi bila verjetno podlaga za Lakatosev »del« načrtovane skupne knjige. Kasneje jih je l. 1999 izdal Matteo Motterlini, v kateri je objavil tudi do tedaj neznano zagreto dopisovanje med Lakatosem in Feyerabendom (Motterlini, 1999). Lahko rečemo, da je resnično škoda, da prvotno načrtovana skupna knjiga ni izšla, saj bi nam ponudila naravnost razkošen uvid v skupno epistemološko ozadje obeh nasprotujočih si teoretičnih konceptov o spoznavni osnovi hipotez, znanstvenih teorij in metod.

Navajam le en primer njunega »spopadanja«. Marca 1973 je Lakatos pisal Feyerabendu, da je preučeval njegov sestavek »Proti metodi« (iz 1970) (ki je bil zametek njegove kasnejše istoimenske knjige), in da je ob tem postajal vedno bolj zaskrbljen. Po njegovem mnenju je v njegovem anarhističnem stališču temeljna slabost, ki je prav tako slabo kot njegovo lastno (»pro racionalno« stališče). Feyerabendu je očital, da če je konsistenten, potem bi moral imeti pogum in postati skeptik. Vendar pa Feyerabend pravi, da anarhizem ni enak skepticizmu. Če je temu tako, potem ima Feyerabendova drža dva obraza, eden je obraz skeptika, drugi pa Kuhnovskega avtoritarca. Lakatos še ironično dodaja, da bo v knjigi vse osvetlil tako, da bo Feyerabend ubit in bo večina ljudi verjela, da ga brani (Motterlini, 1999: 323). Feyerabend je kmalu promtno odgovoril na te Lakatoseve trditve. Odločno je zavračal njegovo ugotovitev, da je dejansko skeptik, vendar tega noče priznati, kajti skeptik ostaja pri tem, da ne verjame ničemur in se potem mirno bavi z običajnimi rečmi. Vendar to ni dovolj konsistentno. Če bi skeptik hotel ostati konsistenten, potem bi se moral ukvarjati prav z »vse gre«, tj. ukvarjati se s kako propagando, bratiti kak status quo ali ga zavračati ipd. »Vse gre« torej ni skepticizem, temveč pozna tudi »zakon in red«, argumente, iracionalizem itd. Spoznavni anarhist si lahko za nekaj časa celo dovoli sodelovati v igri racionalistov, da bi jih potem zmedel. Klasični skeptik je vsekakor nekonsistenten, ko misli, da ima dobre razloge za to, kar počne. On presoja, navkljub svojemu skepticizmu (prav tam: 324). Vendar to ne velja za Feyerabenda samega. Imre Lakatos ni odgovoril na to Feyerabendovo zbadljivo pismo.

Feyerabend se v »Proti metodi« sicer vsekakor strinja z Lakatosovo ugotovitvijo (npr. iz sestavka »Zgodovina znanosti in njenih racionalnih rekonstrukcij« iz l. 1971), da vse znanstvene teorije nenehno plavajo v morju alternativnih teorij, anomalij, možnih protiprimerov. Strinja se tudi z njim, da falzifikacija kake hipoteze omeni soočenje dveh nasprotnih si teorij ob pomoči določenih dejstev, ne pa soočenje teorije z nekim protiprimerom, kot je menil Karel Popper v svojem falzifikacionizmu. Pri tem za Feyerabenda ni nobenih obvezujočih pravil za izbiro posamezne teorije. Vsa morebitna pravila so le delno zanesljiva, nobeno nam ne da algoritma izbire. Zato tudi ni načelne razlike v spoznavni vrednosti med znanstvenimi in zunajznanstvenimi teorijami, npr. med astronomijo in astrologijo. V tej točki Feyerabend ostro odstopa od vseh ostalih popperjancev, ki so naravnost obsedeni od iskanja demarkacijske črte med znanostmi in psevdoznanstvenimi oz. zunajznanstvenimi teorijami. Ker lahko obravnavamo le odnose med teorijami v celotnem teorijskem polju, ne pa zgolj posamezne verige teorij, Feyerabend ne sprejema tudi Lakatoseve ideje o znanstvenih raziskovalnih programih, v katere bi se uvrščale določene teorije. Zamisel o znanstvenih raziskovalnih programih omejuje proliferacijo teorij (množenje različnih teorij v teorijskem polju in konkurenca med njimi). Feyerabend zato tudi ne sprejema Lakatosevih meril za ocenjevanje raziskovalnih programov (progresivnosti, degenerativnosti), ki jih šteje za neupravičene metodološke norme. V svoji knjigi »Proti metodi« je na kratko odgovoril Lakatosovi trditvi, da je prikriti skeptik z ugotovitvijo, da se spoznavno teoretski anarhizem razlikuje tako od skepse kot tudi od političnega (religioznega) anarhizma. Za skeptika so vsa pojmovanja bodisi enako dobra ali enako slaba ali pa se sploh vzdrži takšne sodbe; nasprotno se spoznavno teoretski anarhist ne sramuje braniti sodbo, ki je najbolj trivialna ali ki najbolj razkači (Feyerabend, 2000: 218).

V svoji knjigi "Proti metodi" je Feyerabend še zaostril kritiko Lakatosa (in Kuhna) in izostril tudi svoje lastno stališče. Feyerabend tam obširno dokazuje, da Lakatoseva merila ali standardi znanstvene racionalnosti in napredka niso natančno opredeljena, tako da ne morejo voditi h konkretnim odločitvam v zapletenih zgodovinskih situacijah. Kako naj tedaj razlikujemo program, ki vsebuje takšna pravila od "kaosa anarhizma" (pred katerim želi pobegniti Lakatos), se sprašuje Feyerabend. Feyerabend dalje proglasi Lakatosa kar za nevarnega konservativca. To pa zaradi Lakatosevega odgovora na Feyerabendovo kritiko, v katerem Lakatos (navidezno) podpira eksterno moč znanstvenih avtoritet, urednikov znanstvenih revij, vodij raziskovalnih skupin, financerjev programov, češ da "prisilijo" posameznika k temu, da odstopi od degenerativnega programa.

Feyerabend zato vztraja pri trditvi, da so v znanosti dovoljene vse raziskovalne smeri, postopki, metode, če le ne vodijo k zunanjim skrčitvam števila konkurenčnih teorij. Le v stalnem medsebojnem spopadanju oz. medsebojnih kritikah se te teorije izostrijo tudi v sebi, pridobivajo na vsebini in formi. Tako nam preostaja le odprto polje različnih teorij, ki v sebi združujejo tudi ustrezno izkustvo, kajti vsaka teorija sebi primerno preoblikuje tudi jezik o dejstvih, ki so zanjo sprejemljiva oz. pomenljiva. Pluralizem teorij ni nekaj začasnega v znanosti, kar bo z napredkom znanosti izginilo, ko bo nadomeščeno z "eno pravo teorijo", temveč je bistvena poteza vsega znanja, ki hoče biti objektivno. Pri tem niso nobene teorije a priori izključene iz sodelovanja v znanosti, celo takšne ne, kot so astrologija ali mitologija Hopi Indijancev.

Vendar je Feyerabendova epistemologija le na videz neznansko radikalna, dejansko je mnogo bliže nenehnim evolucijskih spremembam prepričanj kot nenehnim prelomom. Če nobena teorija ne more monopolizirati celotnega teorijskega polja, potem je tudi znanstvena revolucija, kjer naj bi prišlo do zamenjave tega monopola, le videz velike spremembe, ki prikriva nenehne in stalne "male pomike" v teorijskem polju, stoječe v ozadju revolucije. Toda po drugi strani znanstvene revolucije obstajajo, toda to so sedaj kar ti mali pomiki. Če je vsaka teorija po Feyerabendu zaključena semantična celota, potem vsaka sprememba teorije spremeni celotno polje, zlasti pa teorijske termine, ki opredeljujejo bistveno vsebino teorije. Torej se vedno zgodi nek celosten preskok iz ene v drugo teorijo. Tu se zopet izgubi evolucija. Pridemo do sklepa, da Feyerabendova misel čudno blodi med evolucijo in revolucijo, ne da bi jo mogli pravzaprav natančno opredeliti.

Razumljivo je, da je Feyerabendov epistemološki anarhizem ostro zavrača tudi vse poskuse, da bi znanostim (zlasti naravoslovnim) dali kak položaj arbitra glede resnice in stvarnosti. Po njegovem mnenju tak položaj znanosti natanko ustreza položaju cerkve in njene doktrine v srednjem veku. Tako, kot je bila potrebna renesansa in nato novoveška kritika teologije, da se je odprla pot za svobodno raziskovanje, je danes potrebna kritika znanstvenega dogmatizma in zlasti povzdignjenega družbenega položaja znanosti, da bi se odprla pot za svobodno raziskovanje in teoretiziranje. V teh tezah je Feyerabend združil svoj epistemološki anarhizem z neke vrsto socialnega anarhizma, ki pa se tokrat ne loteva institucije države, temveč institucije znanosti. Tako pride do vsekakor vznemirljivega sklepa, da ni mogoče oddvojiti znanost od vsega ostalega, da je znanost le ena od mnogih ideologij, ki gibljejo družbo in jo moramo tudi jemati za takšno. Formalno oddvajanje znanosti od države je zato enako neizogibno kot je bilo pred tem potrebno doseči formalno oddvajanje cerkve

od države. V propagiranju teh svojih trditev je Feyerabend tudi sam večkrat posegel za retoriko, za ad hominem argumenti itd., pač v skladu s svojo "metodologijo". In seveda naletel na masovne "proteste" in "zgražanje" akademskih teoretikov in filozofov znanosti.

Kljub svojim nedvomno prodornim uvidom v tkivo znanstvene prakse pa je Feyerabend do konca ostal zvest nekaterim premisam, ki so vse prej kot samorazumljive, čeprav jih z njim delijo tudi mnogi drugi teoretiki. Takšno je npr. prepričanje, da se bistvo znanstvene teorije izčrpa v množici stavkov, propozicij, ki jih proizvedemo. Tak "stavčni (propozicijski) pogled" na teorijo je tudi danes gotovo dominanten, toda ali je tudi upravičen? Prav razvoj teorije znanosti po Kuhnu je pokazal, da je znanstvene teorije nemara bolj upravičeno imeti za skupke dejavnosti, s katerimi gradimo in tolmačimo različne bolj ali manj teorijske modele stvarnosti. Modeli stvarnosti niso skupki stavkov, temveč strukture stvari, položajev stvari in procesov, ki jih lahko opišemo s kakim formalnim aparatom (npr. s kombinacijo matematičnih in logičnih opredelitev modelne strukture).

Seveda so znanstveni stavki pomembno, celo osrednje orodje tega procesa, toda sam proces se ne zoži le na njih. Podrobnejša analiza pokaže, da "modelnoteorijski" pojem znanstvene teorije lahko na racionalen način razloži inkomeruzabilnost teorij, njihovo celostnost, teorijsko obloženost dejstev itd., ne da bi zato tvegali težko sprejemljive domneve, kot je "anything goes", spoznavni relativizem itd. Nimam prostora za utemeljitev te kritike, ki so jo podrobno razvijali npr. teoretiki ti. strukturalne (ali modelne) teorije znanosti (npr. Johseph Sneed, Wolfgang Stegmüller, Wolfgang Balzer, Carlos Moulines dr,) (več o tem gl. v Stegmüller, 1976, Ule, 1992), lahko pa sklenem z mislijo, da je Feyerabend klasično "propozicijsko" naziranje znanstvenih teorij razvil do njegovega neizogibnega paradoksnega roba, in da so aporije in nenavadne trditve, ki jih je postavil glede znanosti, v veliki meri rezultat omejenosti tega naziranja, ne pa rezultat notranjih omejitev v samih znanostih. V tem, da je tako radikalno in brezkompromisno vlekel svoje zaključke iz na videz splošno sprejemljivih premis, je tudi največja vrednost Feyerabendovega dela, ki nas tako prisili, da pogledamo "čez rob" teh premis.

To pa obenem ponuja tudi nov pogled na znanost in njeno prakso. Na tej poti je Feyerabend ob vsem spotikanju ob čeri relativizma in izenačevanja razlik med znanostmi in ideologijami sam naredil nekaj pomembnih korakov. Feyerabend sam se je po dokončanju svojih osrednjih »anarhističnih« del (Proti metodi, Znanost v svobodni družbi, Spoznanje za svobodne ljudi) nekoliko odmaknil od epistemologije znanosti in se pomaknil k zagovoru splošnejšega kulturno-estetskega pluralizma, kjer bi se lahko ohranilo neznansko bogastvo kulturnih in nazorskih razlik in ga ne bi nenehno podiral zahodnjaški kulturni imperializem s sodobno znanostjo kot poglavitnim orodjem oz. orožjem. Te njegove misli so prišle najbolj do izraza v njegovi zadnji, žal nedokončani knjigi »Conquest of Abundance« (Osvajanje obilja)(1999b). V tej knjigi je Feyerabend med drugim načel novo in zanimivo temo »perspektivičnosti«, zavzame se namreč za ohranjanje in obrambo pluralnosti in medsebojnega prepletanja različnih pogledov na realnost oz. perspektiv, ne da bi zavračal realnost oz. bit samo. Svet je morda »bogat« različnih perspektiv, vendar je še vedno urejen tako, da je brez redukcionizma perspektiv na le eno dominantno perspektivo dostopen znanstvenemu raziskovanju. Kot ugotavlja Ronald Giere, ki je

dolgo časa branil svojo verzijo »modelne teorije« znanosti in jo kasneje spremenil v svojsko teorijo perspektivičnosti, imamo (poznega) Feyerabenda lahko za svojskega zagovornika pluralizma perspektiv, ki pa ne zavrača znanstveni realizem kot tak (Giere, 2016). Če ta Gierejeva domneva drži, potem morda Feyerabend ni tako daleč od modelno-strukturnih pogledov na znanost oz. znanstveno spoznanje, saj je v vseh teh pogledih dopuščeno oz. celo favorizirana množica različnih modelov realnosti, ki jih ponujajo različne znanstvene hipoteze in teorije, ne da bi se zato podrlo posredno nanašanje znanosti na vsem ljudem skupno realnost.

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Schedule

Tuesday, December 3, 2024
Room: 2.18
9:45–10:00 – Opening Remarks
10:00–11:00 – Ulrich Arnswald (University of Innsbruck / University of Kaiserslautern-Landau / Dnipro National University): Feyerabend Reads Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. A Closer Look at Feyerabend's Criticism
11:00–12:00 – Danilo Šuster (University of Maribor): Feyerabend, Astrology, and Open-mindedness
12:00–13:30 – Lunch Break
13:30–14:30 – Jonas Pöld (Hans-Albert-Institut) & Florian Chefai (Hans-Albert-Institut): Do We Live in Feyerabend's Utopia? Reflections on Autonomy, Trust, and Democracy
14:30–15:30 – Alexander Gabovich & Volodymyr Kuznetsov (Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences) – Virtual Presentation: The Uncertain World of Orthodoxy
15:30–16:00 – Coffee Break
16:00–17:00 – Bojan Borstner (University of Maribor): Reading Parmenides – Between Popper and Feyerabend
17:00–18:00 – Antonino Drago (University "Federico II" of Naples, Italy) – Virtual Presentation: Feyerabend's Definition of Incommensurability as a Prelude to an Operative and Formal One

Wednesday, December 4, 2024
Room: 2.8
09:00–10:00 – Daniele Molinari (University of Parma): The Normativity of Imagination and the Evolution of Thought Experiments
10:00–11:00 – Juan Esteban de Jager (University of Ljubljana): "To See the Right Things You Need the Right Instruments": On Feyerabend, Method, and the Ontological Turn in Anthropology
11:00–12:00 – Rita Kimijima-Dennemeyer (KU Leuven): Paul Feyerabend and Mental Health: Foundations for a Democratic Psychiatry
12:00–13:30 – Lunch Break

13:30–14:30 – Deivide Garcia da Silva Oliveira (Federal University of Sergipe, Department of Philosophy) – Virtual Presentation: A Sketch of Feyerabend's Theory of Experience: Experience Fluidness and Plurality

14:30–15:30 – Andrej Ule (University of Ljubljana): Feyerabendov Epistemološki Anarhizem in Meje Propozicionalnega Gledanja na Znanstveno Spoznanje / Feyerabend's Epistemological Anarchism and the Limits of the Propositional View of Scientific Knowledge

Organizers

- Bojan Borstner (University of Maribor)
- Tadej Todorović (University of Maribor)
- Borut Trpin (University of Maribor)

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